

AGENDA ITEM VII

ACADEMIC PROGRAM/LOW COMPLETER REVIEW

BACKGROUND

As part of an ongoing effort to increase efficiency, streamline delivery, and achieve an overall re-balancing of the postsecondary system, at its 27 January 2011 meeting the Board of Regents authorized a comprehensive review of academic programs in the state curriculum inventory. Though statewide reviews are historically conducted every 5-10 years, in light of continuing financial concerns this review followed one carried out in 2009. Unlike previous reviews, no degree program area was automatically excluded from review, so general education majors (mathematics, English, basic sciences) were included, as were teacher preparation majors.

Regents' staff identified 431 for which a campus and system review was mandatory based on the average number of program completers over the last three years reported (2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10). A program was targeted for review and examination as a "Low Completer" if, during the last three years, it had fewer than the following numbers of degrees conferred:

<u>Degree Level</u>	<u>Productivity Level</u>
Associate/Baccalaureate/Post-Bachelors	24 (avg. 8 per year)
Master/Post-Master/Specialist	15 (avg. 5 per year)
Professional/Doctoral/Post-Doctoral	6 (avg. 2 per year)

Campuses were invited to put forward additional degree programs in this review as an opportunity for organizing or restructuring academic programs; 25 programs were added to the list.

Lists of low completer programs and the response templates were sent to the four systems to forward to campuses after the January Board meeting. Documentation was also posted on the Regents' web site so that campuses and interested parties could easily access what they needed. Campuses were asked to conduct a self-review of each program and respond by 28 February with a proposition and justification for one of the following actions:

1. Termination, with a plan (teach-out or transfer) to expedite completion for students in the pipeline.
2. Consolidation, with a rationale, curriculum map, and plan for implementation.
3. Continuation or Maintenance, with a compelling argument and plan for increasing productivity. In cases where other programs of the same type and level exist in the state, campuses were asked for reasons to warrant duplication and expect marked increases in productivity, including arrangements for collaboration, new delivery mechanisms, etc.

Staff recommendations were made based on consideration of documentation presented to address issues outlined in each category, as well as the program's relative standing among similar offerings, especially in the area, and its relevance to institutional role and scope, particularly for graduate-level programs.

STAFF SUMMARY

Process for Staff Assessment

Staff began reviewing institutional responses upon receipt. At least two staff members read each response, focusing on program-specific issues raised, enrollment (particularly at the upper level) and completer history, and efforts in place to correct the productivity status. Other important factors included recent investments and expected impact, faculty strength and engagement, uniqueness, and relevance to region or area industry. Like program comparisons considered geographic proximity and strength of other enrollment options and whether or how the program contributed to a related graduate program (e.g., bachelor's to master's to doctorate). Also seriously considered was whether a major was required for its component courses to be offered, e.g., students today seem less likely to graduate with a foreign language *major*, but

the languages are popular and relevant as *minors* to augment other majors. Associate degrees at universities were very unlikely to be recommended for continuation unless they were uniquely related to the mission (an AS/Dental Laboratory Technology at the LSUHSC-NO).

Staff met to reach consensus on preliminary recommendations using: campus appeals, research notes, the statewide curriculum inventory annotated with average completer data for each program, and a state map annotated with 2- and 4-year campuses.

General Decision Factors

In addition to the considerations mentioned above, general decision factors were developed to organize and guide the discussion. Preliminary decisions were guided by the factors listed below along with the campus report. Additional information and alternative solutions were obtained through further discussion with system and campus liaisons, who often sought additional faculty input and clarification, as needed.

TERMINATE

- Average completers: Undergraduate <4; Masters <2; Doctorate <1.
- Pattern (number) of completers over last 5 years.
- Pattern (number) of declared majors over 3 years, especially upper level (junior/senior).
- Duplication in the geographic area, or in the state, depending on the area.
- Low expectations for productivity growth.

CONSOLIDATE

- Reasonably related majors with a relevant CIP code option.
- Curriculum design has a common core and defined concentrations.
- Combined completer numbers have a reasonable chance of meeting viability thresholds.
- Opportunities for interdisciplinary interaction for student and faculty benefit.
- Campus department(s) ready to consolidate and collaborate to help the program succeed.

CONDITIONALLY MAINTAIN

- Average completers: Undergraduate 4-7; Masters 2-4; Doctorate >1.
- Pattern of majors and completers is steady or rising.
- Graduates expected for 2010-11 (and beyond) based on recent interventions.
- Uniqueness to state and/or region, and alignment with unique campus mission or strengths.
- New approach, e.g., to collaboration, delivery, scholarships, curriculum design, etc. holds promise for quick returns.
- Correction of data/tracking problems impact yield; recent rise in majors with justified expectations of increased graduates; no cost sub-section of viable doctoral program; or related factors.
- Direct regional workforce impact with productivity plan.

MAINTAIN

- Average completers: Undergraduate >7; Masters >4; Doctorate >1.
- Unique in the nation or state.
- Accreditation/licensing requirements.
- Program nationally ranked; strong faculty/research base;
- Program is interdisciplinary option, supported by faculty from other strong programs.

Program Review Recommendations

Appendix A is a summary of staff recommendation by system, institution and program. These recommendations have been discussed with the chief academic officer of the relevant system and campuses, as they wished. (New curricula for teacher education consolidations must be confirmed by the LA Department of Education as meeting certification requirements before they may be fully approved.) Recommended actions for the 456 programs include the following:

TERMINATE (T) 109 Programs

The program will be terminated in the statewide curriculum inventory (CRIN), effective May 2011. Currently enrolled students who are declared majors in the program will be given an appropriate length of time to complete the major or to transfer to another program.

CONSOLIDATE (C) 17 Programs

The program will incorporate other programs as new concentrations within the major. In some cases the name and/or CIP may be changed slightly to better reflect the new combination.

CONSOLIDATE & TERMINATE (C+T) 172 Programs

The program is being changed to either become a concentration in an existing major or to combine with other majors to form a new degree program, usually as a concentration. The old program will be removed from the CRIN and the campus' catalog, and the new program will be monitored for productivity. Students currently enrolled as declared majors will be given an appropriate length of time to either complete the original major or transfer to the new curriculum.

CONDITIONALLY MAINTAIN (CM) 107 Programs

The program is approaching required productivity levels or has demonstrated a likelihood for reaching them or showing marked growth in completers in a short time, but there remain concerns for its future relevance or viability. Additional time is required to see if remediating actions or innovations will have an effect. Follow-up progress reports will be required, and programs will be reevaluated in two years based on enrollment and completer data from 2010-11 and 2011-12, at a minimum.

MAINTAIN (M) 51 Programs

There are no significant concerns for continued program relevant/productivity, or the program is close enough to viability thresholds to not require further monitoring until the next program review.

Attachment B is a more detailed spreadsheet, again sorted by system, campus, and program, which provides basic data on program completers, the campus request and staff recommendations with a very brief explanation of staff observations leading to that recommendation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The staff recommends Board approval of recommendations relative to 456 programs included in this review, including

- ***termination of 109 programs,***
- ***consolidation of 189 programs (including the cancellation of 172 on the curriculum inventory),***
- ***conditional maintenance of 107 programs,***
- ***and the addition of new programs in the Curriculum Inventory as part of the consolidations and restructuring as curriculum design is completed.***

Campuses with programs noted as "Conditional Maintenance" will report on progress annually, as entered in the tracking database.