



## Academic Program Elimination Policy

### I. Purpose

An academic program (programs, degrees, majors, or certificates) may be eliminated for many reasons, including, but not limited to, change in campus mission, loss of accreditation, enrollment problems, faculty shortages, quality of the delivery, and/or lack of resources. Any program under consideration for termination or reorganization must go through a thorough and timely evaluation and involve factors internal to the unit while also analyzing that unit within the context of the College's mission. A review might result in various decisions, e.g., restructuring, transferring, limiting, or terminating some/all programs.

### II. Policy

An academic program can be evaluated for possible elimination for the following reasons (although this list is not exhaustive):

1. The result of the program review process or the lack of implementation of the recommendations of a program review, as indicated by shifts in enrollment, cost of instruction, shifts in missions and responsibilities, quality indicators, etc.;
2. Loss of accreditation;
3. Lack of, or low, enrollment;
4. Program illegality;
5. Critical financial exigency/crisis for the College as a whole as determined or declared by the Board of Regents.

The Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) or Provost/VPAA's Designee shall submit a review and recommendation to eliminate an educational program through the Elimination Proposal Process (below).

Subsequent program reinstatement must be submitted as a proposal for a new program with or without significant restructuring. Both elimination recommendations and reinstatement proposals are submitted to the Board of Regents for action.

#### Financial grounds for program elimination

Definition: A critical financial exigency is an actual or imminent financial crisis, as determined by the Board, that threatens the survival of the College as a whole and that cannot be alleviated by measures other than terminating programs. Cost savings alone is insufficient grounds to eliminate a program. Should the financial state of the College become such that costs must be reduced due to critical financial exigency, Northern New Mexico College shall apply a transparent decision-making process by:

- Informing in writing faculty and staff members in a program that may be suspended or eliminated:
  - that such action is being considered; and



- given at least two weeks to provide written input to the Elimination Review Committee (ERC) (see III.C below). Those entitled to notice include tenured and tenure-track faculty, contingent faculty, and staff members.
- Before the Regents vote on any proposals for program elimination for critical financial exigency, the program faculty will have the opportunity to render an assessment of the program in writing to the Board of Regents.

### III. Elimination Proposal Process

- A. Negative program review, failure to address the program review recommendations, loss of accreditation, or financial exigency:
  - 1. After a negative program review, failure of the program to address the recommendations from a program review, a loss of accreditation, lack of enrollment, or critical financial exigency, the Provost/VPAA shall notify the President, the Faculty Senate, the Educational Policy Committee (EPC), and all unit members of the program (faculty, contingent faculty, and staff) about a potential program elimination consideration. The Office of the Provost will create the Elimination Review Committee (ERC) to develop a Program Elimination Proposal.
  - 2. The Provost/VPAA shall provide the ERC with any information relevant to the decision of recommending a potential elimination (for example, a negative program review, proof of accreditation issues, or the program review feedback, historical enrollment data). If the program elimination consideration was triggered by critical financial exigency, the administration should also provide the ERC with the financial reasons for the consideration.
- B. Appointment of the Elimination Review Committee (ERC):
  - 1. The Provost/VPAA shall appoint an ERC, which will include a minimum of three members of the EPC who are: (1) not part of the program under elimination review; (2) recommended by the EPC Chair. The ERC will also include the Higher Learning Commission accreditation liaison, two academic chairs (not part of the program under review), and one director from the student services area appointed by the Provost/VPAA. The ERC will select one of the three faculty members of the EPC to chair the ERC. The ERC shall complete an evaluation and provide recommendations within four (4) weeks of receiving its charge.
  - 2. If the Provost/VPAA and the EPC jointly determine the ERC needs to work when faculty are not under contract, the college will compensate the faculty members according to the conditions of employment of their contract (Collective Bargaining Agreement or Faculty Handbook, whichever is the case of the particular faculty member).

# NORTHERN New Mexico College



## C. Criteria for the Program Elimination Proposal

1. When evaluating a program elimination recommendation, the ERC will comprehensively assess whether a program should be eliminated using the program review criteria, which include some of the following:
  - a. Student learning outcomes assessment;
  - b. Historical, present, and projected enrollment of the program;
  - c. Changes in demands of the program from students and employers;
  - d. The value and particular character of the program;
  - e. The performance of its students in terms of retention, graduation, and employment;
  - f. Consideration of the program concerning other educational and program needs of the College, School, or Academic Department, including the needs for the program in the overall mission of the academic department;
  - g. Consideration of the services of the faculty to the college;
  - h. Consideration of the cost or lack thereof of maintaining the program; and
  - i. Service and value to other units within the College.

## D. Program Elimination Proposal

The ERC shall develop a Program Elimination Proposal, which will use the latest program review information and a comprehensive assessment, including the following criteria:

1. An evaluation of the quality of the program involved from the program review documentation, which must include the following
  - a. Student learning outcomes assessments;
  - b. A five-year summary of program enrollments (number of majors and number of graduates) and a number of full-time faculty equivalent (FTEs) associated with the program;
  - c. A five-year summary of program budget
  - d. The specific rationale for the program's elimination, including an indication of the campus process used to reach the recommendation;
  - e. The potential cost to revitalize the program and its effect on the sustainability of the rest of the programs;
  - f. Programmatic value as it relates to the general college area of service and the State of New Mexico; and
  - g. Relationship of the program to the institutional mission.
2. The effect of program elimination on General Education and other programs, including the faculty-to-program ratio for other programs;
3. A recommended plan for the possible retrenchment, reassignment, or reduction in force of faculty and program staff that is in line with the credentials policy of the Accreditation Agencies and the applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement(s). Reductions in force will be handled in accordance with the applicable collective bargaining agreement;

# NORTHERN New Mexico College



4. A timeline for the program elimination;
  5. A teach-out draft plan to graduate the remaining students in the program;
  6. Consideration of written input timely received from the appropriate faculty committees, the program faculty, and the Faculty Senate before completing the proposal; and
  7. Consideration of written input timely received from the program's External Advisory Board.
- E. The ERC will submit the Program Elimination Proposal to the Provost/VPAA. The Provost/VPAA will make the Program Elimination Proposal available to the President, Academic Deans, Council of Chairs, the Faculty Senate, and all unit members under consideration for their information.
- F. The Provost/VPAA and Academic Deans (or Designees) will review all proposals and decide upon one of the following three actions:
1. Program Elimination Proposal accepted;
  2. Program Elimination Proposal rejected with a rationale to substantiate decision;  
or
  3. Program Elimination Proposal returned with a request for additional information. In this case, the ERC will have one month to respond to the requests.
- G. The Provost/VPAA will, in turn, make a recommendation concerning the Program Elimination Proposal to the President. Their recommendations shall be provided to the Academic Deans, the Council of Chairs, the Faculty Senate, and all unit members under consideration.
- H. The President will make their recommendation of the Program Elimination Proposal to the Board of Regents. The President's recommendation shall be provided to the Academic Deans, the Council of Chairs, the Faculty Senate, and all unit members under consideration.
- I. If a program is eliminated, no new students will be admitted, and all students affected will follow the teach-out process approved by the institution.
- J. This policy shall be reviewed and updated as needed by the Educational Policy Committee and the Administration.

## **IV. Exemption Request:**

In cases where the Academic Department decides that a program is no longer needed, for example, when there is a lack of enrollment, the Chair/Director that oversees the program may submit an Exemption Request Form (ERF) to the EPC. The EPC will review the ERF and determine if a complete process must occur or a direct recommendation

# NORTHERN New Mexico College



to eliminate the program can be made. In such cases, the EPC recommendation will be voted upon by the Faculty Senate, the President of that body will then deliver the Senate determination to the Provost/VPAA.

---

**Responsible Division/Unit:** Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

**History:** Approved by the Board of Regents 6/23/2023