

Document X

GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAM REVIEW AND DISCONTINUANCE

Introduction

These guidelines articulate the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's policies and procedures for conducting regular review of its academic programs (including degree programs, options, and concentrations) and for conducting program and unit reviews necessitated by severe financial crises. This document has been devised to ensure that instruction and research remain the core functions of the University, to protect academic freedom and tenure, and to preserve academic due process.

Effective management practices dictate the regular review of programs to ensure that students have access to degrees that have merit and value and that prepare them for their lives beyond the university. Such program reviews should distinguish temporary variations from long-term trends that affect the quality of the education offered by the university and the mission of the institution. The retention of viable academic and research programs is the University's first priority.

Multiple constituencies have an impact on the governance of universities. These communities of interest rely on the joint efforts of involved parties to foster an understanding of the interdependence of governing boards, university administrators, faculty, and students in university decision-making, as well as the need to engage in cooperative action to solve educational challenges, including program review and discontinuance. Effective management and governance is dependent upon the broadest possible exchange of information. In particular, the roles of faculty in program evaluation and review are critical, especially in times of University retrenchment.

For these reasons, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette subscribes to the principles of shared governance and is committed to meaningful faculty involvement in decisions relating to the reduction of instruction and research programs. These roles include active faculty participation in:

- determining criteria for academic program review, evaluation, and consideration for reduction or elimination;
- decisions to reduce or eliminate a degree program, option, or concentration;
- decisions related to faculty status related to the program review; and
- decisions leading to a declaration of financial exigency.

The principal vehicle for this faculty involvement is the Program Review Committee, a standing university committee. Membership on the Committee will consist of a tenured representative of each academic college and the library, with members serving a three-year term. Nominations of members for this Committee will be initiated through the Faculty Senate, which will advance at least two nominees for each position. The President and Provost will select the membership from the Faculty Senate list of nominees. The Provost or his/her designee will also serve on the Committee.

I. Criteria for Academic Program Review and Discontinuance

When making decisions concerning academic programs, criteria of quality and effectiveness shall be taken into account. Faculty will have a role in determining the weighting of the criteria. These criteria include but may not be limited to the following:

- A. the program's relationship to the University's mission, vision, and strategic plan

- B. a program or unit's contribution to general education requirements or support offered for other programs
- C. its ability to recruit and retain high-quality professors and students
- D. its promotion and enhancement of the educational and cultural level and the general health and well-being of the surrounding region that the university serves
- E. student placement into jobs and/or graduate and professional degree programs to meet critical needs within the state
- F. longitudinal data and trends, number of students in a major and number of graduates over at least a five-year period
- G. program revenue and cost
- H. contributions to the University's standing as a research institution
- I. excellence in scholarship and research activities, including, but not limited to, externally-funded research, performance, exhibition, and publication, which bring recognition to the University.

II. **Circumstances for Workforce Restructuring**

The University recognizes that three possible conditions exist for the termination by the University of a faculty member who holds appointment with continuous tenure.

- A. *Dismissal for Cause.* Procedures for dismissal of tenured faculty for cause are detailed in the *Faculty Handbook*, Section V, "Faculty Personnel Policies" and Documents II and XVIII in Appendix A.
- B. Program discontinuance based on criteria articulated in Section I, "Criteria for Academic Program Review and Discontinuance." A program review may result in the recommendation for its discontinuance based primarily on educational reasons, e.g., a long-term decline in enrollment, low-completer status, the merger of specific programs for strategic alignment, persisting limited demand, or redundancy of the same or very similar programs in the state.
- C. Program discontinuance because of declared financial exigency. A declaration of financial exigency, approved by the UL System Board of Supervisors, results from an imminent financial crisis threatens the viability and survival of the institution. In times of serious financial threats, faculty shall participate in the University's decision to request that a condition of financial exigency be declared by the UL System Board of Supervisors.

III. **Implementation of Program Discontinuance and Financial Exigency.** In the case of program discontinuance either for educational reasons or because of financial exigency, the University shall follow the following procedures:

- A. Process for Program Discontinuance
 1. The Program Review Committee will participate in the decision to recommend program discontinuance.
 2. If a program is to be eliminated, the University president or his/her designee shall present a recommendation for discontinuance to be discussed with the faculty members in the affected program. The meeting will include academic leadership with oversight of the program, including the dean of the college that houses the program, the Dean of the Graduate School (if appropriate), and the program's administrator or department head.
 3. The University will provide to faculty in the program

- a. a description of the procedures and criteria used in making the decision to recommend discontinuance; and
 - b. reasonable disclosure of the information and data used by the decision-makers.
 - c. A timeline for shuttering the program that takes into account student needs for completion
4. Faculty who are terminated because of program discontinuance will receive a letter attesting to the fact that their termination is the result of discontinuance, not performance.
5. The University will communicate with students enrolled in the discontinued program to facilitate their completion of their degree requirements.

B. Principles for Workforce Restructuring

The following general principles should be applied in dealing with any case of workforce restructuring.

1. All reductions in faculty that result from program discontinuance will be made through natural attrition first, insofar as is possible.
2. Unless a financial exigency has been declared by the University and approved by the UL System Board of Supervisors, terminations of tenured and non-tenured faculty will adhere to dates and times as specified in the *Faculty Handbook*, Section V, under the entry titled, "Non-Reappointment."
3. In the case of program discontinuance or declared financial exigency, the University will proceed with terminations of faculty in the following order:
 - a. temporary faculty
 - b. regular continuing faculty who have served less than seven years and who are not tenured
 - c. regular continuing faculty who have served seven years or more or who are tenured

An exception may be made to this order of termination in the case in which a clear-cut need for maintaining instructional expertise requires retaining an untenured faculty member over a tenured faculty member. In this case, the University's proposal to terminate the tenured faculty member and retain the untenured faculty member must be endorsed by the Program Review Committee.

C. Adequate Notice

In times of financial exigency, the University will make every effort to provide adequate notice to faculty who are terminated because of program eliminations which occur in response to the financial crisis.

D. Right to Appeal

Faculty members who have received a notice of termination due to program discontinuance, and who believe there are other reasons causing their termination, or who have concerns as to whether the criteria have been properly applied, have the right to appeal and to receive a fair and timely inquiry before the University Grievance Committee as detailed in the *Faculty Handbook*, Document XVII.

IV. Placement and Support for Faculty Affected by Program Discontinuance and/or Termination due to Adverse Financial Conditions

The University shall make reasonable efforts to locate appropriate alternative employment and to provide University services and resources to assist faculty members in securing employment within the University or elsewhere in the following ways:

- A. University officials will provide an appropriate letter for the faculty member's use stating that termination was related to financial distress and/or program discontinuance;
- B. job counseling through Career Services will be made available to the faculty member and should include investigation of employment opportunities outside of the University, including whether a comparable faculty position at another institution under the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System or within the state is available;
- C. counseling related to job loss will be made available through the Counseling and Testing Center;
- D. attempts to transfer the faculty member to another program in which the faculty member is appropriately qualified or credentialed within the University will be made,;
- E. the University will offer reduced-tuition course enrollments for one academic year after termination to facilitate a terminated faculty member's retraining.

If a discontinued degree program is reestablished within a three-year period, the University shall attempt to rehire faculty members who were terminated for reasons of program discontinuance or financial adversity.

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