



WNCC Administrative Procedure

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| Title: | Curricular Program Support or Program Closure |
| Division: | Educational Services |
| Category: | Assessment and Evaluation |
| Reference: | Nebraska Revised Statute §79-846 BP-617 (Curricular Program Review) AP-617.01 (Curricular Program Review Procedure) HLC Procedure: “Provisional Plans and Teach Outs” (Sept 2022) |
| Number: | AP-617.02 |
| Date of Approval: | July 26, 2023 |
| Approval: | Greg Dart, President |

Definitions

CAO – Chief Academic Officer

Program Closure – The process by which the decision is made to cease offering an academic program.

Program Review – The process WNCC undertakes annually to gather information about the academic programs offered.

Program Support – The “status” of a program that is facing some form of challenge or challenges that need to be addressed, such as low-enrollment, poor assessment results, or significant resource needs like personnel or equipment.

Teach-Out Plan – “Federal regulation defines a teach-out plan as a written plan developed by an institution that provides for the equitable treatment of students if an institution, or an institutional location that provides 100% of at least one program, ceases to operate or plans to cease operations before all enrolled students have completed their program of study.”
(HLC Commission)

Procedure

Program Support

Programs may be recommended for program support as a part of the program review process described in AP-617.01, or when a need becomes apparent out of the program review cycles (i.e.,

declining enrollments, program obsolescence, loss/reduction of infrastructure available to support the program, etc.) New programs may be put on program support if they do not meet the goals established when the program was first initiated.

Process for Program Support Status Determination

1. In August of each calendar year, the President will advise the Board of Governors of the intent to request a full review of any academic programs that meet the conditions outlined above.
2. The Program Review Committee will conduct the annual program data review and the necessary five-year full internal program reviews and make a recommendation to the CAO. Those recommendations are:
 - a. Continue the program in its current state
 - b. Continue the program with minor changes (including specific recommendations)
 - c. Place the program in “program support”
 - d. Close the program
3. The CAO will review the recommendation of the Program Review Committee and forward their recommendations to the President.
 - a. If the program is recommended to continue as is, that recommendation will be sent as an item or information to the Board of Governors. The recommendation for minor changes to a program will also be forwarded to the Board of Governors as an item of information including the expected adjustments to the program.
 - b. If the program is recommended for “program support,” the CAO will work with the appropriate dean of instruction and program faculty to develop a plan for improvement, and the Board of Governors will be informed of that plan.
 - c. If the recommendation is for program closure, that recommendation and all supporting documents will be forwarded to the Board of Governors for its consideration (see below).

Program Support Review Process

Once a program has been identified for program support, it will follow a three-phase cycle for review. The CAO, appropriate dean of instruction, and program faculty will serve as the Program Support Committee for the program. Program support status can last no longer than three academic years. At that point, the program will either move to “continue” status or be recommended for closure.

I. Phase One – Data Collection, Research, and Draft Action Plan

- The following is a minimal list of criteria which the Committee shall consider:
 - a. Program viability analyzing the variables affecting program enrollments

- b. Adequacy of resources available to the program compared to the resources needed to make the program viable.
- c. New/innovative ways to increase the viability of the program
- The result of the data analysis will be a draft Action Plan for program improvement.
- The Committee will forward the draft Action Plan to the President so the President can provide the Board of Governors with evidence demonstrating that a change in circumstances has occurred necessitating program support and how the program will address those needs.
- With the support of the President and the Board of Governors, the draft Action Plan becomes official.

II. Phase Two –Implementation of the Action Plan

Data will be collected on an ongoing basis using program review metrics to understand whether the efforts of the Action Plan have impacted the program in a positive way. Plans will be modified as appropriate, and an update will be provided to the President.

The goal of the Action Plan implementation phase is to provide documentation that the modifications have been made and that the program is making the progress necessary for it to be viable and removed from program support as soon as possible.

III. Phase Three - Final Action

After no more than three academic years of program support, the Committee shall make a recommendation to the CAO regarding the final dissolution of the study. Recommendations may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- If satisfactory progress has been made, the Committee may recommend the program be removed from Program Support.
- If progress is being made but is not yet at a satisfactory level, plans can be modified as appropriate, and the Committee may recommend that the program continue on Program Support.
- If no or very little progress has been made to improve program viability, the Committee may recommend to the CAO that the program be closed.

Program Closure or Discontinuance

1. Academic (Credit) Program Closure

All decisions to close or discontinue academic programs rest with the Board of Governors, which may decide to close or discontinue a program for any reason.

If the Board decides to close or discontinue a program, the CAO will develop a teach-out plan to maintain the integrity of educational services to currently enrolled students.

Teach-Out Plans

When the decision is made to close an academic program, WNCC will first notify its institutional accrediting agency of the plan. The written teach-out plan must include:

- a. A timeline for the closure of the program.
- b. A complete list of currently enrolled students, redacting all personally identifiable information.
- c. A complete list of the academic programs offered by the institution and the names of other institutions with similar programs that could potentially enter into a teach-out agreement with the institution if students are unable to complete the program of study before closure is planned.
- d. A communication plan that provides all potentially eligible students with information regarding their options and the timeline for closure.
- e. A records retention plan that delineates the final disposition of student records.
- f. Information on the number and types of credits any teach-out receiving institution is willing to accept prior to the student's enrollment
- g. A plan for academic and financial aid advising.
- h. A list of all programmatic accreditors and state licensing agencies with which the institution submitting the plan has a relationship.

In accordance with WNCC's reduction in force policies, efforts will be made to find a schedule of appropriate classes for impacted full-time instructor(s) in other programs or areas.

II. *Non-Credit Program Closure*

Non-credit programs are designed to meet the needs of workforce development and regional employers. If the Executive Director of Workforce Development determines that a non-credit program is no longer meeting those needs, they may decide to temporarily place a program on hiatus or close the program permanently. No teach-out plans are required.

Revising this Procedure

This Administrative Procedure supersedes any prior WNCC policy, procedure, guideline, or handbook on this subject matter.

WNCC reserves the right to revise this procedure, as necessary, and for the changes to become effective immediately.

Original Adoption Date: July 26 2023

Revision Date:

Sponsoring Division: Educational Services