

FAQ

Proposed Program Termination and Department Consolidation and Closure College of Arts and Sciences

Q: Why is the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) proposing to consolidate and eliminate departments and terminate low enrollment programs?

A: Between 2010 and 2016 the College experienced a 17% decline in enrollment and a 20% decline in student credit hours at the College. The decline in enrollments created a structural deficit in the College that was fully revealed in fiscal year 2017 (FY17). The pandemic and its associated stresses on the University have underscored and amplified CAS's structural deficit and CAS is now facing an unprecedented \$8.6 million deficit in the current fiscal year (FY21) and projected deficits of \$10.1M in FY22 and \$9.2M in FY23. CAS can no longer sustain our current departmental structure and the current range of majors, minors and master's programs without continuing to diminish all departments, majors, and programs and jeopardizing the overall quality of our education, our ability to respond to student interests, and our ability to evolve our curriculum which is so desperately needed for our future success.

Q: Is CAS the only college with a structural deficit?

A: CAS is the only college to experience a significant decline in students and student credit hours. Over the last several years CAS has been unable to align its faculty staffing with the lower enrollment and unable to generate new sources of revenue to close its structural deficit. CAS is far more dependent on undergraduate tuition than any other college and the stresses of the pandemic (fewer students, higher financial need) have had the greatest impact on CAS. Other colleges have also had to address budget deficits, but the deficits are far smaller.

Q: Why can't the University provide additional funding to CAS?

A: Revenue from undergraduate and graduate tuition, grants, and endowments goes directly to the colleges. The only resources held centrally are strategic investment funds. In 2018, the Provost and President committed \$2M of their strategic investment funds on a permanent basis to help address CAS' structural deficit. Despite the additional support, the structural deficit continues to widen.

Q: Is CAS the only college at UVM having to terminate low enrollment programs?

A: In a memo dated November 21, 2020 the Provost instructed all deans to examine their curricular offerings and terminate low enrollment undergraduate and graduate programs that did not meet specific standards. For undergraduate programs, low enrollment was defined by 25 or fewer students enrolled in the major and 5 or fewer students graduating in the major. This is part of a systematic and ongoing review of academic offerings to ensure that programs are appropriately resourced.

Q: How many majors and minors does the College currently offer?

A: The College offers 56 majors leading to the Bachelor of Arts or the Bachelor of Science Degree. The College also offers 63 minors. The proposal is to terminate 12 majors and 11 minors.

Q: What majors are to be terminated in the proposed plan?

A: A data-informed process was used to identify majors that enrolled 25 or fewer students (less than 0.5% of all CAS majors, including double majors) or graduated 5 or fewer students in the major (less than 0.5% of graduates) over the last three academic years (AY 2017-2108, 2018-2019, 2019-2020). Twenty-four majors were identified. Twelve of the 24 low-enrollment majors are recommended for termination.

Program	Department Housing the Program	Number of Students	Number of Degrees Awarded
--- Low Enrollment Majors Recommended For Termination ---			
Classical Civilization (BA)	Classics	19.7	4.0
Geology (BA)	Geology	7.7	0.7
Geology (BS)	Geology	19.7	6.3
German (BA)	German & Russian	13.3	1.3
Greek (BA)	Classics	7.0	0.3
GRS: Asian Studies (BA)	Interdisciplinary	9.7	2.0
GRS: European Studies (BA)	Interdisciplinary	3.0	0.7
GRS: Latin Amer & Carib S (BA)	Interdisciplinary	2.0	0.7
GRS: Russia/E European S (BA)	Interdisciplinary	0.3	0.0
Italian Studies (BA)	Romance Languages & Cultures	5.0	0.3
Latin (BA)	Classics	9.7	2.0
Religion (BA)	Religion	25.3	4.3

Twelve of the 24 low-enrollment majors are not being recommended for termination in the current plan. The majors that are not being recommended for termination are currently stable, not facing imminent faculty retirements, are programs whose courses are a subset of those offered as part of a more robust program, or are new and thus unproven.

Q: What minors are to be terminated in the proposed plan?

A: A data-informed process was used to identify minors that enrolled 15 or fewer students on average (less than 0.5% of all minors) over the last three academic years (AY 2017-2108, 2018-2019, 2019-2020) or graduated fewer than 5 minors on average over the last three years. Twenty-seven minors were identified. Eleven of the 27 low-enrollment minors are recommended for termination.

Program	Department Housing the Program	Number of Students	Number of Students Completing the Minor
--- Low Enrollment Minors Recommended For Termination ---			
Classics	Classics	8.3	2.0
Geology	Geology	12.3	5.7
Gerontology	Sociology	3.0	1.3
Greek Language and Literature	Classics	0.7	0.7
GRS - Canada	Interdisciplinary	0.3	0.0
GRS - Europe	Interdisciplinary	0.3	0.0
Italian	Romance Languages & Cultures	7.7	0.7
Italian Studies	Romance Languages & Cultures	5.3	3.0
Latin Language and Literature	Interdisciplinary	4.0	2.0
Speech and Debate	Theater	8.7	2.7
Vermont Studies	Interdisciplinary	3.0	0.7

Sixteen of the 27 low enrollment minors are not being recommended for termination in the current plan. These minors are currently stable, not facing imminent faculty retirements, are programs whose courses are

a subset of those offered as part of a more robust program or are new and thus unproven. However, moving forward it will be critical to continue to monitor enrollment in these and all other programs.

Q: What is the purpose of terminating low enrollment majors and minors?

A: Discontinuing low enrollment majors and minors allows the faculty who would normally contribute to teaching courses for those majors and minors to teach courses that may contribute in other ways including general education and Honors College courses. In addition, because of the ongoing structural deficit, it has not been possible to properly resource these small enrollment programs thereby jeopardizing their ability to maintain a high-quality academic experience.

Q: Will students still be able to study in the disciplines in which majors and minors are terminated?

A: Currently enrolled students can be assured that we will make appropriate arrangements to enable students to complete their education.

Q: Will terminating these majors significantly impact the recruitment of students who wish to study in these majors?

A: The table below shows the 3-year average of intended majors of admitted first-year students and first-year students who chose to enroll at UVM for the 12 majors that are recommended for termination. On average over the last 3 academic years a total of 15 students out of the 1206 who decided to attend UVM indicated their intention to major in these programs.

Program	Department Housing the Program	First-year Admitted Students	First-year Yielded Students
-- Low Enrollment Majors Recommended For Termination --			
Classical Civilization (BA)	Classics	24.7	4.7
Geology (BA)	Geology	20.7	3.0
Geology (BS)			
German (BA)	German & Russian	6.0	0.7
Greek (BA)	Classics	1.0	0.0
GRS: Asian Studies (BA)	Interdisciplinary	8.0	1.0
GRS: European Studies (BA)	Interdisciplinary	3.7	0.3
GRS: Latin Amer & Carib S (BA)	Interdisciplinary	4.7	0.3
GRS: Russia/E European S (BA)	Interdisciplinary	3.0	0.7
Italian Studies (BA)	Romance Languages & Cultures	3.0	0.3
Latin (BA)	Classics	6.0	1.7
Religion (BA)	Religion	10.7	2.3

Q: Will this proposal diminish the liberal arts at UVM?

A: UVM remains committed to being a liberal arts university at its core. To sustain this commitment, we must be judicious. This proposal eliminates 12 liberal arts majors, but 44 liberal arts majors remain providing a comprehensive selection for students. Moreover, courses in many of these programs that are proposed to be eliminated may continue to be offered.

Q: Which master's programs are proposed to be terminated?

A: Master's in Classics, Geology, and Historic Preservation will be recommended for termination. These are low enrollment programs where total program costs far exceed program revenue and for which we do not have sufficient student interest.

Q: What was the consultative process used in crafting this proposal?

A: The College has been working to address the structural deficit since 2017. College leadership, faculty, and staff have been involved in the decisions to reduce costs and as well as the efforts to increase revenue. In 2018, a task force comprised of faculty discussed reorganization of the College. Based on faculty feedback, the task force recommended that the College not pursue reorganization at that time. This budget crisis requires that the College take immediate and decisive steps to close the budget deficit. In the coming weeks, there will be meetings with faculty, staff, and other stakeholders to discuss the proposal for program terminations and department consolidation and closure.

Q: What is process for terminating an academic program?

A: Information on the process for terminating an academic program can be found [here](#).

Q: What is the current structure of the College?

A: The College currently has 21 academic departments. These departments range in size and complexity from the largest, English, with 43 faculty (29 tenured or tenure track faculty and 14 lecturers) and a \$5.3M general fund budget to Asian Languages and Literatures with 6 faculty (2 tenured faculty and 4 lecturers) and a \$703,000 general fund budget, and Classics, the smallest department, which has a total of 5 faculty (4 tenured and 1 lecturer) and a \$585,000 general fund budget.

Q: What departments will be consolidated or eliminated?

A: Under this proposal, the departments of Art & Art History, Music, and Theater & Dance will become a School of the Arts (or similarly named). The departments of Asian Languages & Literatures, German & Russian, and Romance Languages & Cultures will become a School of Languages (or similarly named). The departments of Classics, Geology, and Religion will be closed.

Q: Why create a School of the Arts and a School of Languages as opposed to a larger department?

A: A "school" provides greater visibility and provides more options for governance to address concerns of program autonomy.

Q: How was this proposed alignment of departments determined?

A: Faculty in Art & Art History, Music, and Theater & Dance have been discussing creating a school of the arts to better align resources and create synergies in teaching and scholarship. CAS currently has three separate language departments. It is common among universities to have a single department or school supporting

language instruction and faculty scholarship. While instruction among the seven different languages CAS offers has unique challenges, bringing the languages under one roof underscores their critical role in a liberal arts education, and allows for better coordination of pedagogical innovations in language instruction.

Q: How was it determined to propose to close the departments of Classics, Geology, and Religion?

A: After terminating low enrollment majors, minors, and graduate programs, the departments of Classics and Geology may no longer have academic programs. The Department of Religion is proposed to be terminated and while the Religion minor will continue, pending retirements will leave the department with 4 or fewer tenured faculty, too few to maintain a vibrant academic department.

Q: How much will CAS save with the proposed consolidation and elimination of departments?

A: Department chairs receive a stipend and course releases for their administrative work. Reducing the number of departments allows the College to recoup teaching and reduce the amount of money spent on administrative stipends. The total savings is anticipated to be in excess of \$600,000.