

# Proposal to Terminate an Academic Program

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A proposal to terminate an academic program may be initiated by a department, the Dean's office of the home unit, or the Provost. The sections below describe the proposal requirements and processes related to no-contest and contested terminations. Proposals for termination are considered no-contest if the program initiates or agrees with the termination. Termination proposals are considered contested if initiated by a party other than the program itself, and the program does not support the request by a majority vote of the department or program. Following review by the Faculty Senate Curricular Affairs Committee (CAC), all termination proposals must also be considered by the Faculty Senate and presented to the Board of Trustees for a vote.

**No-Contest Termination Requests:** In the case where the program initiates and/or agrees with a request for termination, a termination proposal can be put forth by the chair/program director in the form of a memo. The memo should present the rationale for the request, a brief history of the program, the number of students currently enrolled in the program and a plan to facilitate their completion, and a record of the faculty vote on the termination request. Following approval according to college/school-level procedures (e.g. department/program, unit curriculum committee, and dean's office; unit faculty in some units), proposals should be submitted to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Student Success. Graduate programs also require a support letter from the Graduate College Executive Committee and Dean. Upon successful review by the Provost's office, proposals will be sent to the CAC for review and approval. Once received, proposals will be circulated for a minimum of 15 days prior to a vote by the CAC. As noted above, termination of a program also requires a vote of approval by the Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees. See the Timeline for Policy & Proposal Review Process available [here](#) for further details.

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**Contested Terminations:** A contested termination process should be initiated *only after other possible avenues for resolution have been explored* including, but not limited to program changes, partnerships with other programs/departments, compromises that would allow a no-contest termination, and program deactivation. Proposals for contested terminations must be prepared using the guidelines below. Proposals should address all questions/items, and data should be provided as support wherever relevant.

Termination proposals must be reviewed at the college/school level prior to submission in accordance with college/school procedures (e.g. department, unit curriculum committee, and dean's office; unit faculty in some units). Graduate programs also require a letter from the Graduate College Executive Committee and Dean. At each level of review, the head of the relevant voting body should submit a letter in support of the termination, or a letter that summarizes the reasons for not approving the termination including any additional information relevant to review of the termination by the CAC (e.g. impacts of termination not included in the proposal). Once college/school-level review of a proposal is complete, proposals should be submitted to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Student Success. The review process and timeline are described in detail following the proposal requirements. Incomplete proposals will be returned with a request for the missing information; the timeline will not begin until a proposal is considered complete by both the Provost's office and the Chair of the CAC. *Proposers should carefully review the timeline below and plan accordingly.* When initiating a contested termination, proposers and those contesting the termination should be prepared to respond promptly to Provost and CAC subcommittee requests for additional information or materials in order to avoid preventable delays in the process.

The role of the CAC in contested terminations is to evaluate the request at a curricular level only; *the outcome of the contested termination process is therefore a recommendation solely regarding the curricular viability and quality of the program, not the financial feasibility of maintaining the program*. Data related to program efficiency and resource use provides valuable context in that resources are necessary to support program quality, but financial concerns are not a factor in the CAC's evaluation. Faculty employment, *including as a result of program terminations approved by the Board of Trustees*, is addressed in the contractual agreement covering bargaining unit faculty, and in the Larner College of Medicine Faculty Handbook (for LCOM faculty) and is outside the purview of the CAC.

Unless a hiatus in operation is explicitly acceptable to the program faculty (as reflected in a majority vote), the Dean, and the Provost, a program will operate as normal during the termination review process; *a termination will not be considered finalized until voted on by the Board of Trustees*. If a program is terminated, students in the program at the time of termination will be given the opportunity to complete the program within a reasonable timeframe.

### Guidelines for Contested Termination Proposals

#### **I. Abstract**

A one-page summary of the essential information from each of the sections below. Please submit this abstract both as an introduction to the proposal and as a separate document; proposals will not be considered complete without the abstract.

#### **II. Rationale for Termination and Summary of Communications with the Program**

- A. Clearly describe the reasons for requesting termination of the program at this time, including reasons why other options such as deactivation or partnership with another unit/program are not appropriate.
- B. Summarize all communications with the program regarding the requested termination, including the details indicated below. Include all written communications (e.g. emails, memos) in an appendix to the termination request.
  - individuals involved and roles/positions
  - primary points of discussion
  - any compromises offered by either party
  - outcome(s) of the communication
- C. Describe the specific steps taken to reach an agreement between the proposal initiator and the program faculty.

#### **III. Program History**

- A. When was the program initiated?
- B. Have there been any significant changes, including name changes, since the time of initiation? If so, provide a summary of these changes.

#### **IV. Program Quality and Internal Demand**

*Address all questions outlined below, providing relevant data as support.*

- A. What are the current learning objectives of the program? For programs that require formal assessment (i.e. degree programs), provide evidence obtained through the assessment process to indicate how well students are meeting the stated learning objectives.
- B. Were any concerns related to program quality raised during the most recent assessment of the program through

the Academic Program Review process, or for externally accredited programs, in the most recent accreditation review? Concerns may include whether program staffing was sufficient to maintain quality and/or whether the curriculum reflects expectations within the field.

- C. Are courses required for the program offered on a regular and consistent basis? For graduate programs, are sufficient courses at the 6000-level or above offered to maintain program quality?
- D. For programs that include a required, mentored component (e.g. research project; dissertation/thesis; internship; practicum), is there sufficient support and oversight of students?
- E. Provide enrollment data for the past 10 years or lifetime of program, whichever is shorter. How do the trends compare to enrollment in similar programs nation-wide?
- F. Are there any concerns related to advising of students in the program?
- G. Have students in the program raised any concerns related to the quality of their educational experiences?

#### **V. External Demand and Societal Needs**

- A. Is there limited or decreasing demand regionally and/or nationally for individuals with the knowledge/skills of graduates of the program? Provide relevant evidence such as employment trends, placement of graduates, etc.
- B. Is the program not providing graduates with the skills/knowledge necessary to be successful following graduation from UVM? If so, have potential changes to remedy the situation been discussed?

#### **VI. Contribution to Missions and Long-Range Plans**

- A. Is the program misaligned with current university-level missions, mission as a land-grant university, strategic priorities, vision, and/or academic goals (e.g. university-wide curricular requirements)? If so, explain how; if not, explain the effects of deactivating the program on the ability to achieve the current university-level missions, strategic priorities, and academic goals.
- B. Is the program misaligned with current college/school-level missions, strategic priorities, vision, and/or academic goals? If so, explain how; if not, explain the effects of deactivating the program on the ability to achieve the current university-level missions, strategic priorities, and academic goals.
- C. Do UVM's peer and competitor institutions offer similar programs? Would loss of the program affect UVM's ability to attract high-quality students?

#### **VII. Program Sustainability**

- A. Are there currently insufficient faculty resources to teach required courses and/or oversee other required program components (e.g. research projects; internships)? If so, have potential partnerships with other departments/units been explored?
- B. Are there anticipated, voluntary losses of faculty (e.g. via retirement) that could affect the ability of program to maintain quality?
- C. Include data from the Office of Institutional Research that is relevant to the financial sustainability of the program.
- D. Are other programs being negatively impacted by investment resources in the program? If so, provide specific evidence.

#### **VIII. Impact of Termination**

- A. What are the potential impacts of termination on any closely associated programs at UVM (e.g. a minor or

- certificate program in the case of a request to terminate a major)?
- B. Will course offerings be affected if the program is terminated? If so, provide:
    - a list of the courses including enrollment trends for the past six semesters
    - evidence of communication with any units/departments/programs that include the courses listed above in their required and/or elective courses
  - C. Are the enrollments in other programs and/or courses outside the program being considered for termination likely to be affected? Include evidence of communication with any potentially affected units/departments/programs.
  - D. Would termination of the program affect research projects of any faculty outside the program (e.g. via loss of collaborations)?
  - E. Are there any community partners that would be affected by termination (e.g. service learning projects; practicums; internships)? If so, provide evidence of communication with the community partners, including offers to maintain those partnerships in new administrative locations.
  - F. How would termination affect the responsibilities and roles of faculty involved the program?
  - G. Provide a detailed teachout plan for accommodating program completion for all students currently enrolled in the program should it be terminated.

#### Process and Timeline for Contested Terminations

As noted previously, completed proposals should be submitted to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Student Success. If the Provost determines that the proposal is complete and a reasonable case has been made for terminating the program, the Provost will forward the proposal to the Faculty Senate with a request for review by the CAC. The Provost has **two weeks (14 days)** to make a decision.

The proposal abstract will then be circulated via email to all faculty, academic deans, and department chairs with a link to a survey to submit feedback/comments; the survey will be available for **15 days**. The full proposal will be made available on request to the Faculty Senate.

At the time of circulation, a subcommittee consisting of two CAC members who are *not* part of the home unit (college/school) of the program will be appointed to review the proposal. All feedback collected during the public comment period will be made available to the CAC subcommittee. During their review, the subcommittee may ask the proposers to respond to specific comments. Additionally, the subcommittee will meet with the authors of the proposal, the dean of the responsible unit, and program faculty, and may request additional information as part of their review. Upon completion of their review, the subcommittee will write a report summarizing any additional information gathered during the review process, make a recommendation to support or reject the termination proposal, and provide rationale to explain their position.

The full **CAC will discuss and vote on the subcommittee's report at the meeting following the close of the 15 day comment period, unless significant issues arise that require additional time for the CAC subcommittee to complete its review**. CAC members will be provided with the full proposal along with the subcommittee's report as part of the meeting materials. The CAC will vote to support or reject the proposal for termination.

Following the meeting, the Chair of the CAC will write a memo that includes the CAC decision and a brief summary of the rationale for the decision. The memo and the CAC subcommittee's report will be sent to the Faculty Senate President and the director/department chair of the program **within 5 days** of the CAC vote. A copy of the memo will be sent to the Provost for information purposes only.

After receiving the memo, the program has **30 days** to submit a written rebuttal to the Faculty Senate President; the program can also choose not to submit a rebuttal.

The CAC memo and rebuttal (if submitted) will be **considered by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) at their next meeting**. The FSEC may accept the CAC position or send the matter back to CAC for further discussion, with specific instructions about what aspects of the report require additional consideration and a deadline for the CAC response. If additional consideration is requested, the FSEC will consider it at their next meeting.

Once accepted by the FSEC, the termination will be placed on the agenda for a vote the **next Faculty Senate meeting**. Materials including the CAC memo, rebuttal submitted by the program if any, and any other information deemed relevant by the FSEC will be **sent to all Faculty Senators immediately** to allow sufficient time for consideration prior to the Faculty Senate meeting.

Results of the Faculty Senate vote will be communicated to the President and Provost **the day after the Faculty Senate meeting**. As noted previously, all program terminations must be approved by the Board of Trustees.