

# Proposal to Terminate an Academic Program

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A proposal to terminate an academic program may be initiated by a faculty committee, a department, a school, a college, or the Provost. Following unit-level approval (department, unit Curriculum Committee, and dean's office), proposals should be submitted to the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs.

**No-Contest Termination Requests:** In the case where the request to terminate comes from the program itself (a “no-contest” termination) and where there are no implications for loss of faculty and/or staff, a request for termination can be made by the chair/program director in the form of a memo, accompanied by a support letter from the academic unit Dean; a support letter from the Graduate College Dean is also required for graduate programs. 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 proposal.

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**Contested Terminations:** All proposals for a contested program termination will be prepared using the format given below, explaining the reasons, and providing supporting evidence and rationale for the proposed termination. A program termination review will be conducted using this format as a guideline and adhering to the timeline presented below.

This format does not address the employment situation of the faculty involved in the program should it be terminated. That issue is addressed elsewhere in the contractual agreement covering the bargaining unit faculty.

## **The Operation of the Program During the Termination Review**

In many cases, suspending operation of the program or calling for a hiatus in admission to the program could be sufficiently damaging to the program that it would constitute a de facto termination, making the anticipated review by the Curricular Affairs Committee irrelevant. Consequently, *unless a hiatus in operation is explicitly acceptable to the program and the Provost*, the University will operate the program on a “business as usual” basis. Students in the program will be given the opportunity to complete the program in a reasonable time, regardless of the decision on termination.

## **Guidelines for Proposals to Terminate a Program (Contested Terminations)**

The proposal must include:

- I. An executive summary of the program's position, problems, performance and prospects based on criteria adapted from the established process for academic program reviews:**
  - A. Contribution to mission and objectives

- B. External demand and societal need
- C. Internal demand
- D. Quality
- E. Effectiveness
- F. Efficiency

The proposal to terminate must present an adequate argument that the program is deficient with respect to some of these criteria in order for a Review for Termination to be authorized. The proposal must specifically identify which criteria are deemed deficient.

## **II. Criteria**

Whenever appropriate, the initiator must present supporting evidence in the form of data provided by the University's Office of Institutional Research and any relevant ratings, rankings, accreditation reviews or "best practices" benchmark information from external sources. Citations of sources of all external evaluative data should be identified.

**For each category deemed to be problematic, the initiator must substantiate the problems and indicate why the problems cited are cause for termination.**

### **A. Contribution to Mission and Plans**

Is the program misaligned with or not expected to make sufficient contributions to Department, School or College, and University level missions, strategic priorities, and academic plans? Would another alignment be appropriate?

### **B. External Demand/Societal Needs**

Is the program deficient with respect to indicators of external demand for:

1. graduates with particular types of knowledge or skills required to make social institutions work?
2. persons who are informed and responsible citizens?

### **C. Internal Demand**

Is the program deficient with respect to trends in enrollments of students whose primary area of study is:

1. in the program?
2. elsewhere in the University?

### **D. Quality**

Does the program show weaknesses or downward trends with respect to:

1. recruitment or retention of qualified and productive faculty?
2. recruitment, retention or performance of good students?
3. external reputation as judged by external scholarly and professional groups?

### **E. Effectiveness**

What are the barriers and problems with respect to accomplishing the educational, research, and service purposes of the program, including where relevant:

1. collaboration with other programs within the University?
2. connections with institutions outside the University?
3. capacities to assess and use student outcomes for making improvements in curriculum design and delivery?

#### **F. Efficiency**

Is the program inefficient in deploying resources to accomplish its purposes and sustain viable operations based on trend analyses provided by the Office of Institutional Studies of data such as:

1. FTE students taught per FTE faculty;
2. headcount majors per FTE faculty;
3. student credit hours taught by full time versus part time faculty;
4. instructional costs per student credit hour;
5. sponsored research dollars per FTE faculty.

What are the opportunity costs and tradeoffs of continuing versus terminating the program?

1. Impact on enrolled students?
2. Impact on faculty, staff and administrative personnel?

### **III. Information gathering and deliberative steps**

Indicate specifications of the major information gathering and deliberative steps concerning the program's status that preceded the initiator's report proposing program termination. These specifications should identify the data analyzed, faculty committee analysis, feedback from advisory groups, discussions and votes taken in faculty meetings, and other evaluative process steps.

Explain communications and other actions that will be carried out to address concerns of affected student, faculty, staff and alumni constituencies if, based on the initiator's report, a formal program termination review subsequently is undertaken.

Describe major features of an orderly program phase-out plan based on the assumption that a termination review is conducted, and that program termination subsequently is approved.

#### **I. Dissemination of the Proposal**

If the Provost determines that a prima facie case has been made that warrants a termination review by the Curricular Affairs Committee, the Provost is responsible for forwarding the proposal to the Faculty Senate within 14 days of receipt.

The initiator(s) will include a one-page abstract with the proposal. The Faculty Senate Office will distribute the abstract to the following:

The Chair of the Curricular Affairs Committee  
 The Senate Executive Council  
 All Department Heads/Chairpersons  
 All Academic Deans  
 All Chairpersons of College/School Curriculum Committees  
 Representatives of Appropriate Student Groups and other interested parties. Copies of the proposal may be studied online, at the Senate Office, and Bailey/Howe Library.

The Curricular Affairs Committee will review the proposal according to the guidelines presented above for proposal preparation guided by the following timetable.

## Timetable for Contested Termination Review

Days are counted from receipt of the proposal in the Provost's Office.

(Weekend days count, but holidays, summer and days in the December – January break do not count.)

1.	The Provost will evaluate the proposal. If the Provost determines that a <i>prima facie</i> case has been made for termination, the proposal will be forwarded to the Faculty Senate; if not, the Provost will advise the author(s) of the proposal of its rejection, with explanation, and copy the chair of the Curricular Affairs Committee.	Day 14
2.	The Senate office will immediately forward the proposal to the chair of the Curricular Affairs Committee (CAC).	Day 16
3.	The chair of CAC will appoint a subcommittee to conduct the review and will forward the full proposal to the program faculty and invite comments.	Week 3
4.	The subcommittee will undertake the following activities: (a) Set up on request a public forum to collect input from the University and public about the proposed termination. The forum will be announced by ..... and held by .....(The forum will be announced to the University by email, and, if appropriate, to the public by newspaper and other media. The proposal will be made available on a Senate web page, at the Senate office and in the Bailey/Howe library.) (b) Meet with the faculty of the program suggested for termination. (c) Meet with the dean(s) of the program suggested for termination.	Week 4 Week 7 Week 6 Week 6
5.	The subcommittee will make a recommendation to CAC to approve or reject the proposal. CAC will discuss the recommendation and vote to support or reject the proposal to terminate.	Week 9*
6.	CAC immediately reports its action to the Senate Executive Council, to the Provost (for information only), and to the director of the program under consideration.	3 days after #5
7.	The program may prepare a rebuttal to the CAC position, and submit it to the Executive Council.	2 weeks after #5
8.	The Executive Council 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.	No later than next meeting of EC after receipt of #6 and #7.
9.	With Executive Council approval, the CAC report and program rebuttal (if available) are reported to the Faculty Senate.	At next meeting of the Senate.
10.	Unless the Senate overturns the decisions of CAC and Executive Council, the recommendation is officially forwarded to the President and Provost.	3 days later

\* Reported at the regularly scheduled CAC meeting after the 9-week mark.