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University of Wisconsin System  
**Proposed Guiding Principles for Program  
Realignments/Discontinuations/Eliminations**

June 2, 2009 - DRAFT

**Preamble**

**Guiding Questions**

- 1) How would we in the UW System approach decisions regarding program realignments?

Establish criteria to be used in the assessment or review of programs. The process of establishing these criteria should include representation from as many stakeholder groups as is feasible, and the established criteria of assessment should be widely known by the campus community. Examples of such criteria may include the following:

- a) Need for the program
- Demand as may be defined by:
    - Applications, admissions, and enrollment;
    - Linkages of the program to other programs within the institution;
    - Role of the program in the UW System; and
    - Role or contributions of the program to the local, regional, state, or national economy.
  - Special attributes of the program:
    - Uniqueness of the program – is it the only one of its kind in the region, state, or nation?
    - Is the program essential to the institution's mission, its academic plan, or its strategic plan?
    - How many similar programs exist in the region or state?
    - Is the program part of a political or legislative mandate?
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- b) Program cost and productivity
    - What is the cost for operating this program relative to other programs within the institution?
    - What is the cost for operating this program relative to similar programs across the system?
    - Does the institution have an established minimum average annual degree production requirement for degree programs? If so, what is the performance of the concerned program relative to this requirement?
    - Is there a significant amount of research output (if applicable)?
    - Does the program provide support services to other programs at the institution?
    - Does the program attract external funding to the institution?
  - c) Program quality
    - What is the standing of this program compared to other programs within the institution and relative to similar programs across the system in regards to:
      - Physical and financial resources?
      - Faculty?
      - Accreditation?
- 2) What are other steps that will need to be taken in order to go forward with program realignment/discontinuation/elimination efforts?
- a) Determine an appropriate and flexible measure of degree productivity (that takes into account institutional enrollments, program array, etc.).
  - b) Sort out those programs that warrant assessment due to a low level of activity, low productivity, and/or high cost as defined by the institution.
  - c) For each of these programs, conduct a self assessment that includes consideration of the following:
    - Why was the program initially established (its history)?
    - Was it provided a reasonable level of resources to ensure its success (degree of investment)?
    - Was it provided the appropriate leadership to ensure its success?
    - Can the level of activity or productivity be raised and/or the costs be lowered within a specified period of time by making some changes or by reconfiguring it (combining it with another program)?
  - d) Share with other provosts across the system intent to shelve or suspend program, combine program with another, or eliminate program.

- 3) Before making the decision to reconfigure, discontinue, or eliminate a program, what other considerations (including political) must be taken into account?
- a) Impacts on students, faculty, and staff
    - How will students be affected and what accommodations will be made?
    - How will faculty and staff be affected and what accommodations will be made?
  - b) Political, socio and cultural impacts
    - Extent of political support for the program within the community, region, and state.
    - Extent of minority and women enrollment in the program.
    - Does the program serve equity, diversity and inclusivity goals?
  - c) Economic impacts
    - The extent of job losses, if any.
    - The extent of impact on local business.
    - The amount of external funding that could be lost.
- 4) Who should be involved in making such decisions and to what degree?
- a) Shared governance
    - Faculty
    - Academic Staff
    - Students
    - System Administration
  - b) Consultative
    - Staff
    - Alumni
    - Other stakeholders