

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM  
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

**ADDITION TO ACIS-1:  
MONITORING LOW-DEGREE-PRODUCING PROGRAMS EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2010**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Background**

In 2009, the UW System undertook an extensive review of its undergraduate degree program array. This review was referred to as the “UW System 2009 Program Realignment Initiative.” The goals of this initiative were to assess the following: 1) enrollment in various degree programs; 2) duplication and frequency of degree programs; and 3) degree production. Another goal of the initiative was to develop guiding principles for program discontinuations or eliminations while taking into consideration the capacity of the system as a whole to provide certain programs to the citizens of Wisconsin. In February 2010, the report on the initiative was presented to the Education Committee of the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents.

The report was received with great interest by the Education Committee. The Committee was particularly interested in programs that produced an average of no more than five degrees a year over the ten-year period the study covered, especially when these programs were offered by 50 percent or more of the UW institutions. The Committee requested that the UW System Office of Academic Affairs find ways to address:

1. Degree programs producing fewer than an average of five degrees a year over a given period;
2. Degree programs producing fewer than an average of five degrees a year over a given period and offered by 50 percent or more of the UW institutions.

After consultation with the UW System Provosts and Faculty Representatives, the Office of Academic Affairs developed a plan for monitoring low-degree-producing academic programs. The plan provides guiding principles that uphold institutional autonomy in determining program array while also ensuring that the UW System continues to provide the citizens of Wisconsin with a broad range of high-quality academic programs while making the best use of limited resources. The guiding principles will become a part of ACIS-1, the UW System’s statement of the Regent Policy on Academic Planning and Program Review, and will be presented to the Education Committee at its June 2010 meeting.

**Requested Action**

For information only; no action is required.

**Discussion**

The University of Wisconsin System is instituting the following guidelines, effective July 1, 2010, to address the concerns of the Education Committee of the Board of Regents regarding low-degree-producing programs:

1. The office of the Associate Vice President for Academic, Faculty, and Global Programs will conduct a review of all undergraduate majors in the UW System for degree productivity every five years. This review may be conducted separately or in conjunction with other University of Wisconsin System required reviews of academic programs. This review will commence with low-degree-producing programs identified in the 2009 Program Realignment Initiative.
2. For undergraduate degree programs offered by *less than* 50 percent of the UW institutions, including individually designed majors and very specialized programs that are not expected to produce a large number of graduates, degree productivity expectations will be addressed by individual campuses based on their mission and resources.
3. For undergraduate degree programs offered by *more than* 50 percent of the UW institutions, the degree productivity expectation is 25 graduates over a five-year period or an average of five per year. The review period for new programs in this category will begin six years after the degree program's implementation.
4. For each program or major not meeting the degree productivity expectation, the provost will submit a brief justification and request for continuation. If approved, the program will remain in the regular or normal program review cycle.
5. A program or major where the degree productivity expectation is not met and substantive questions remain will enter a monitoring phase for a period up to five years. If, at the end of the monitoring period, the program has still not achieved the degree productivity expectation, the institution will be encouraged to pursue any of the following options:
  - a. Combining the program with another program;
  - b. Offering the program in collaboration with another institution where there may be interest;
  - c. Suspending new enrollment into the program;
  - d. Closing the program.
6. Institutions may establish and follow policies or guidelines that require more stringent expectations than these proposed guidelines. At institutions where such policies/guidelines already exist and require more stringent expectations, those campus policies/guidelines will take precedence over the ACIS-1 guidelines.
7. Justification and request for a program or major continuation should be submitted to the Office of the Associate Vice President for Academic, Faculty, and Global Programs along with the annual report on program review. In addition, this information will be added to the request for the annual report on program review.

## **RELATED REGENT POLICIES**

University of Wisconsin System Academic Planning and Program Review (November 10, 1995),  
Academic Informational Series #1 (ACIS-1.0, Revised April 2010)