

**California State University, Stanislaus**  
**Policy for the Suspension and Discontinuance of Academic Programs**

**A. Policy**

This Policy defines the procedures and requirements for the Suspension and Discontinuance of Academic Programs. This policy requires that a decision for program suspension or discontinuance result from the Academic Program Review process or a Special Program Review, and is in compliance with CSU Chancellor's Office Executive Order EP&R79-10, Discontinuance of an Academic Program.

**B. Scope of Policy**

All California State University (CSU), Stanislaus Academic Programs are covered by this Policy.

**C. Definitions**

*Academic Program:* A program of study which leads to a bachelor's, master's, or doctorate degree or minors, concentrations, emphases, options, and certificates for academic credit.

*Academic Program Review:* A process to improve programs through a focused, in-depth self-study. The Academic Program Review self-study is completed by faculty who determine academic quality, assess student learning outcomes, and develop an implementation plan for program improvement. At CSU Stanislaus the self-study is completed once every seven years.

*Discontinuance:* The elimination of a program following a Special Program Review. No new students will be admitted to the program immediately following the President's decision to discontinue the program.

*Discontinued Program:* A discontinued program is removed permanently from the CSU Academic Program Record. For a discontinued program to return to active status, the program would need to begin the curricular process for approval of a new degree program.

*Special Program Review:* A review process called by program faculty or others to review Academic Programs (as defined in D. Procedures, 2. Special Program Review Request) following the Provost's recommendation to suspend or discontinue a program.

*Suspension:* A period of time during which no new students will be admitted to the program. A Special Program Review is completed before a final decision is made regarding program suspension.

*Suspended Program:* A suspended program may return to active status within a five-year period. Programs in suspension may be discontinued after a yearly review or at the end of the five-year suspension period (as defined in D. Procedures, 6. Program Suspension Reinstatement and Annual Report).

**D. Procedures**

**1. Academic Program Review (APR)**

Academic programs at CSU Stanislaus are assessed on a seven-year cycle in order to assure learning and continuous improvement.

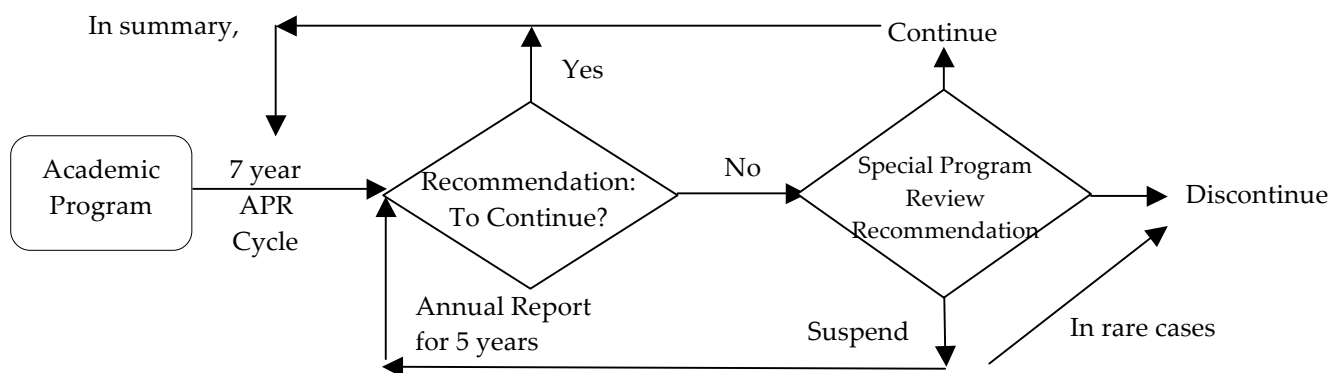
The Academic Program Review Procedures state that the following self-study criteria are to be reviewed to determine recommendation actions to the Provost:

- a. changes since the last academic program review;
- b. data review (enrollment trends, retention and graduation rates, degrees conferred, time to degree, student/faculty ratio);
- c. commitment to student learning (achievement of student learning outcomes through indirect and direct methods);
- d. curriculum and instruction (program delivery including advising, general education service, contribution to university's mission);
- e. faculty (expertise and effectiveness);
- f. resources (facilities, fiscal, technological, library);
- g. implementation plan (external consultant review, resources needed to implement recommendations).

One result of the APR self-study is to recommend to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs one of the following actions:

"1. Program approved for continuance ..."; or "2. Program approved for continuance with specified modifications and under conditions noted..."; or "3. Program recommended for suspension..."; or "4. Program recommended for discontinuance. The university's policy for program discontinuance is initiated." [NOTE: Change in policy will require change in APR Procedures.]

Following the APR self-study's recommendation and the Provost's decision to recommend suspension or discontinuance of a program, program faculty or others call for a Special Program Review; a program may not be suspended or discontinued without a Special Program Review. Normally, a program will be suspended for a period of time prior to discontinuance. Program suspension provides an opportunity to develop a plan for restoring program viability. In rare cases or circumstances, a program may be discontinued without suspension. The challenges associated with the program may be so severe that discontinuance is the preferred option. In those rare cases, the recommendation to discontinue immediately should be made during the committee review process and gain consensus from the three levels of review (Special Review Committee, UEPC / Graduate Council, and AS). All recommendations to suspend or discontinue are subject to approval by the Provost/VPAA.



## 2. Special Program Review Request

A Special Program Review is initiated for the purpose of determining whether program suspension or discontinuance is warranted and may be requested at any time by:

- a. a majority vote of the faculty of the program; or
- b. a majority vote of the Academic Senate; or

- c. a majority vote of the University Educational Policies Committee; or
- d. the college dean, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and/or the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs; or
- e. a majority vote of the college committee constitutionally charged with academic program review; or
- f. a majority vote of the Graduate Council (if a graduate or postbaccalaureate program).

The request shall be submitted in writing to the University Educational Policies Committee / Graduate Council, the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

A program data profile accompanying the request must include, but is not limited to:

- a. the most recent APR / accreditation reports and accompanying self-study criteria (Section D. 1. a-g);
- b. an assessment of how the suspension or discontinuation would affect General Education, other degree programs, other campus activities, and the curricular priorities and mission of the College, the University, and the CSU;
- c. a detailed analysis of quantitative and qualitative costs and benefits potentially realized by suspension or discontinuance of the program, including impacts on :
  - students, faculty (including on-campus faculty transfers), and staff;
  - library support, university services, current or pending grants;
  - the community
- d. a plan to allow currently enrolled students to complete the program; and
- e. the academic term and date when the proposed suspension or discontinuation would take effect.

### **3. Special Program Review Committee Members**

Within 30 days of the receipt of a request for a Special Program Review for possible suspension or discontinuation, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, jointly, and in agreement with the Committee on Committees shall appoint a Special Program Review Committee to conduct the review. This committee shall consist of:

- a. three tenured faculty, at least one of whom shall be from the affected program;
- b. the Dean of the College in which the program is housed; and
- c. a student representative selected by Associated Students, Incorporated.

The Special Program Review Committee shall study the data profile and propose recommendations as defined in D. Procedures, 5. Special Program Review Report and Recommendations.

### **4. Special Program Review Process**

As a minimum, the Special Program Review process shall include:

- a. a review of the program data profile;
- b. consultation with all available full-time faculty members who have taught courses in the program within the last two academic years;
- c. consideration of projected future enrollment;
- d. a survey of students presently enrolled in the program or potentially seeking enrollment (including service area community college students and faculty) to determine the impact of suspension or discontinuation;
- e. the development of plans and alternatives to allow enrolled students to complete the degree program or a related one in the event a recommendation is made to suspend the program;

- f. consultation with other administrators and experts to develop an effective recovery plan;
- g. at least two public meetings to gain input on the suspension or discontinuation proposal from various university stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, administrators, and community members; and
- h. recommendations, such as:
  - consideration of alternatives that might increase student enrollment in the program;
  - consideration of alternatives for providing financial support for the program, if any.

**5. Special Program Review Report and Recommendations**

The Special Program Review Committee shall evaluate its findings in a written report with a recommendation for program suspension or discontinuation to the University Educational Policies Committee / Graduate Council, and the Academic Senate. The University Educational Policies Committee/Graduate Council shall consult with the Faculty Budget Advisory Committee concerning the fiscal implications of the recommendation prior to forwarding their recommendation to the Academic Senate. The report and recommendation of the Special Review Committee as well as the recommendations of the University Educational Policies Committee / Graduate Council, and the Academic Senate, including any supporting statements, shall be forwarded to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the President, and the affected program for their review. The Provost's recommendation is submitted to the President for a decision.

**6. Program Suspension Reinstatement and Annual Report**

If the President decides that program suspension is warranted, during the suspension period, new students will not be admitted to the program. Students already in the program will be accommodated so they can complete the program in a timely manner.

The faculty of the suspended program shall develop a plan for reinstatement in consultation with the dean and other personnel with required expertise. This plan should be responsive to the recommendations provided by the Special Review Committee, University Educational Policies Committee / Graduate Council, Academic Senate, and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

The faculty of the suspended program shall report progress made toward program viability in the form of an Annual Report (due by April 15 of each academic year). The Annual Report is submitted to, and must be reviewed by, the University Educational Policies Committee / Graduate Council, in consultation with the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs.

The Annual Report shall set goals that will allow for the re-implementation of the program, normally within a five-year timeline. If the program is able to demonstrate viability at or before the end of the five-year period, it may be reinstated by a vote of the University Educational Policies Committee / Graduate Council, subject to approval by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. At the end of the five-year period, the program faculty may apply for another five-year extension of suspension, subject to the approval of the University Educational Policies Committee / Graduate Council and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

If a suspended program is unable to fulfill its goals within the first five-year period or after any of the prior one year reviews, and the University Educational Policies Committee / Graduate Council and Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs conclude that a continuation of suspension is not likely to result in re-establishment of the program, the University may begin the process of

discontinuing the program. Given that extensive review occurred before suspension, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, after consultation with the relevant reviewing bodies named in this policy, may waive further review and discontinue the program. Circumstances that may lead to this conclusion include (but are not limited to) 1) failure of program faculty to submit an annual progress document in a timely manner, 2) failure of program faculty to meet goals and/or deadlines included in their reimplementation plan, 3) substantive changes in circumstances that make recovery of the program unlikely. If a suspended program is discontinued early, the relevant reviewing bodies and administrators will explain their reasoning in writing to the Academic Senate.

## 7. Program Discontinuance

If the President decides that program discontinuance is warranted, the campus will follow procedure in accordance with CSU Chancellor's Office Executive Order EP&R 79-10, regarding review by the Chancellor of program discontinuance proposals:

- a. "The campus president shall inform the Chancellor of the proposed discontinuance;
- b. The Chancellor will review the proposal for system-wide effects with advice from whatever groups he deems appropriate, and may request additional information from the campus if needed for this review;
- c. The Chancellor will ordinarily provide comments on all such proposals within 30 days. He will inform the President of any system concerns so that these may be considered in the final decision; and
- d. The President shall not take any administrative action leading to the *de facto* or official discontinuance of an academic program before the Chancellor has commented on the proposal."

The President shall then announce the final decision as communicated by the Chancellor. In the event this decision is official discontinuance of an academic program, the President shall:

- a. Announce a cutoff date beyond which no new students, including transfer students, will be permitted to enter the program. Normally, an academic program shall not be discontinued less than two full semesters following the final official announcement by the President of program discontinuance; and
- b. Request that the Registrar prepare an official list (as of the cut-off date) of all students who are enrolled in the program; and
- c. Direct the Registrar to notify all students on this list within 15 days of the following alternatives to assist them in earning their degrees:
  - 1) The date by which the degree requirements must be completed in order to receive the specified degree from this university;
  - 2) The closely related degree programs offered by this campus to which the student may wish to transfer;
  - 3) The availability of similar programs, if any, offered by other institutions in the CSU system; and
  - 4) The extent to which substitutions may be considered in meeting the requirements for the degree.

During this transition period, course offerings shall be designed to assist students in the program to complete program requirements.

- d. In consultation with appropriate administrators and faculty committees, make every reasonable effort to assist in the placement of faculty members displaced by program discontinuance in other appropriate programs or activities in the university, or other campuses in the CSU system.

Approved by EPC 3/11/83  
Approved by Academic Senate (5/AS/83/EPC) 4/7/83  
Approved by President 5/5/83  
Reviewed and reaffirmed by EPC 1/7/88  
Revised and Approved by UEPC 9/25/03  
Revised by UEPC 12/04/03  
Revised and Approved by UEPC 2/26/04  
Amended by UEPC 3/23/04 during Academic Senate Meeting  
Approved by Academic Senate (19/AS/03/UEPC) 3/23/04  
Approved by President (19/AS/03/UEPC) 5/21/04  
Revised and Approved by UEPC 10/13/11  
Revised and Approved by UEPC 4/5/12  
Approved by the Academic Senate (20/AS/11/UEPC) 5/1/12  
Approved by President Hamid Shirvani on 6/5/12

## APPENDIX

### Basic (Core) Undergraduate Programs

In developing the original planning policies for the CSU, the Board of Trustees recognized that certain academic programs at the undergraduate level were so fundamental to the university they should not be required to meet the “need and demand” criteria established as prerequisites for offering other programs. The assumption of a “core” is equally critical to both campus and system reviews where discontinuation is being considered. Such programs are identified as basic core undergraduate programs. The following list is adapted with alteration from the Trustees’ 1963 list of subjects.

#### Recommendation XI

The following disciplines are the only ones wherein need and demand should not be the preeminent criteria for offering undergraduate programs. In evaluating these undergraduate programs, qualitative criteria regarding program integrity should be paramount.

#### Humanities and Fine Arts

Art	Philosophy
English	Speech/Communication
Foreign Languages	Theater Arts/Drama
Music	

#### Natural Sciences and Mathematics

Biology	Mathematics
Chemistry	Physics
Geology	

#### Sociology and Behavioral Sciences

Anthropology	Political Science
Economics	Psychology
Geography	Sociology
History	

Other programs comprised of the above disciplines which an individual campus may define as basic to its mission, such as ethnic and/or interdisciplinary studies programs.

#### **Graduate Programs**

Certain attributes of graduate education—including increased emphasis on scholarship, rigor, and structures supportive of them—suggest that qualitative criteria are of equal importance to need and demand in reviewing graduate programs. The use of qualitative criteria as a major factor in decisions to delete, retain, or add programs argues against a minimum complement of master’s degree programs that

would be standard to each campus. Graduate programs should not be automatic offerings of every department at each campus, but should be located only where all relevant criteria can be satisfied.

Reference

Academic Program and Resource Planning in the California State University and Colleges: July 1980, November 2011