

BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE

DIRECTORY OF POLICY STATEMENTS

Policy Number: IV.01:01

Date: Revised December 2021

SUBJECT: **Change in Status of Academic Programs: Merger, Deactivation, and Discontinuation**

Purpose

These policies establish principles and processes for merging, deactivating, and discontinuing academic programs. These policies align with the College's mission "to empower students to succeed and to inspire a lifelong passion for learning" and its dedication "to excellence in teaching, research, service, scholarship, creative activity, and cultural enrichment." Given the exceptional nature of changing the status of an academic program, shared governance is vital for these processes to be conducted with open, honest, and considerate discussion. All academic programs are subject to the policies described herein.

Definitions

Academic Program: a structured set of educational requirements to qualify for completion of undergraduate and graduate degrees, which include courses within general education (e.g., Intellectual Foundations), major and minor programs of study, credential programs, and credit and non-credit certificate programs.

Deactivation: suspension of an Academic Program intended for a limited period (no more than 3 years) during which the program's viability into the future is assessed. Deactivation Effective Date shall be announced at least 1 year (12 months) in advance. Intended outcome of deactivation is either Reactivation after internal review and reorganization, or Discontinuation.

Deactivation Effective Date: the first regular admission date for which new students will no longer be permitted to enroll in the program.

Deregistration: permanent elimination of an Academic Program from the State Education Department's Inventory of Registered Programs after review and approval by SUNY.

Discontinuation: suspension of an Academic Program intended on a permanent basis leading to Removal of the program from campus once all current students in the program graduate. Discontinuation Effective Date shall be announced at least 1 year (12 months) in advance. The intended outcome of Discontinuation is permanent removal of the program from campus and Deregistration.

Discontinuation Effective Date: the last graduation date for which a credential for completion of the program is awarded.

Financial Emergency: when it has been determined by the budget committee that the college is in a condition of financial exigency as defined by AAUP and in keeping with their current recommendations for determining financial exigency. "A severe financial crisis that fundamentally compromises the academic integrity of the institution as a whole and that cannot

be alleviated by less drastic means” than the termination of tenured faculty appointments (*Recommended Institutional Regulations 4c*). www.aaup.org (2021)

Merger: reduction of two or more distinct academic programs into a consolidated academic program, which may entail Discontinuation or Deactivation of the previously distinct academic programs.

Reactivation: lifting of suspension of an Academic Program after a period of Deactivation.

Removal: courses in an Academic Program are no longer offered on campus.

Suspension: status of an academic program that is not currently admitting or enrolling new students.

Shared Governance

Consistent with the ideas articulated by AAUP (1966), shared governance refers to “...appropriately shared responsibility and cooperative action among the components of the academic institution...and is intended to foster constructive joint thought and action...” While the consideration of a change of status of an academic program may be exploratory in nature, even informal exploration should involve discussions among the wide array of college stakeholders who have the potential to be impacted by that change (e.g., current and admitted students, faculty, staff, program coordinator, chairperson, and dean responsible for the program). If a decision is made to pursue a formal proposal to change the status of an academic program, processes parallel to those established for developing curricular proposals (new or revised courses or programs) shall be initiated.

Initiating a Change in Status

A formal proposal to change the status of an academic program may be initiated by the department chairperson, the academic dean, or the academic vice president who has authority over that program. A formal proposal may be initiated via memo announcing a proposed change in status, with copies sent to all relevant stakeholders (i.e., program coordinator, department chair, chair of College Senate, dean, provost). Once the memo is issued, the chairperson of the appropriate department and/or the chairperson of the relevant curriculum committee shall be responsible for holding meetings to determine stakeholders’ position on the proposal. Meetings with stakeholders are required to begin within 60 days of the release of the initiating memo and would be required to take place during the academic year. Final approval is expected within one academic year from the date of the initiating memo. In the case of a financial emergency a shorter timeframe may be accommodated.

A. If the proposal is initiated by the department with approval of the faculty, the department chairperson shall draft a statement containing the rationale for the proposed change in status and the anticipated impact (e.g., applicable components of the institution, community partners, academic field). This position statement shall be submitted to the associate dean, and shall become part of the documentation transmitted to each subsequent level of formal review. The department’s position statement shall be determined in conformity with department by-laws bearing on curriculum development matters. The results of these deliberations shall be put in writing with a full rationale for the position taken. The department’s proposal may be reviewed by other curriculum committees affiliated with the department (e.g., school-wide curriculum committee), consistent with departmental or school by-laws related to curriculum. Upon receipt of a proposal from a departmental or school-wide curriculum committee, the associate dean shall review proposals for a change in status. Proposals rejected at the dean’s level will be

returned to the department with an explanation, with possibility for revision and resubmission. Change of status proposals that are approved at the dean's level will be sent to the College Senate Office via the online workflow management system for subsequent review by the College Senate Curriculum Committee during the academic year and required to begin within 60 sixty days of the dean's level approval This path for curricular proposals, also described in DOPS Policy IV.02.00, will apply to proposals for a change in status of a program.

B. If the proposal is initiated by the academic dean, a statement of rationale for the proposed change, together with a statement of how the proposed actions conforms to the broader academic plan of the college and the appropriate faculty, shall be forwarded by the academic dean to the chairperson of the academic department(s) affected by the change in status. The academic dean will then determine whether or not to submit a formal recommendation for changing the status of the academic program to the academic vice president. If the academic dean decides to recommend in favor of the change in status, the dean must submit a written recommendation to the academic vice president, with a copy to the department chairperson. The recommendation shall include the rationale for the change in status, an assessment of the anticipated impact of the change on the department and program faculty and on the rest of the college community, and a statement of how the recommended change conforms to the broader academic plan of the college. In addition, the dean shall attach to the recommendation copies of all correspondence required by this process.

Change of status proposals that are approved at the dean's level will be sent to the College Senate Office via the online workflow management system for subsequent review by the College Senate Curriculum Committee during the academic year and required to begin within 60 sixty days of the dean's level approval. This path for curricular proposals, also described in DOPS Policy IV.02.00, will apply to proposals for a change in status of a program.

C. If the proposal is initiated by the academic vice president, a statement of rationale for the proposed change in status shall be submitted to the academic dean of the affected program and department. All the procedures outlined in section B, above, shall then be followed. The administration shall, before any action is taken to change the status of an academic program, propose a course of action to the College Senate and publish its proposal in the College Bulletin. The proposed plan shall address, as appropriate, the impact on students, faculty, resources, and mission of the College. The College Senate shall be allowed full access to pertinent information and documentation. A timeframe parallel to that which is followed in reviewing course and program proposals shall be provided to accommodate responses from the college community. Such a time frame shall allow the College Senate and the College Senate Curriculum Committee to formulate its recommendation to the College President.

Applicable Legislation and Regulations

When the college discontinues a program, the State University of New York and the New York State Department of Education procedures and regulations for deactivation and deregistration will apply.

A. Each deregistration and discontinuance must be approved by the SUNY Provost.

B. If a proposed discontinued program is the sole program in a HEGIS disciplinary area at a campus, discontinuance requires approval of the SUNY Board of Trustees, but the campus retains its master plan authority in that HEGIS disciplinary area, and the re-introduction of programs in that HEGIS disciplinary area would not require a master plan amendment.

Appendix A: Factors to Consider for Change of Status Process

- Forms & processes to be kept separate from policy documents. The following are factors to consider when adopting the process of Change of Status

- Consider development of workflows for scenarios A, B, & C.

AAUP reports

AAUP Report on Financial Exigency, Academic Governance, and Related Matters

AAUP Report on Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure

Relevant Union Policies

- UUP Article 35 Retrenchment

Impact

- Administer faculty surveys at department level to assess impact of Change of Status Collateral Effects on said department and other departments and programs.

- Implications on curriculum, internal and external to department, including prerequisite and corequisite courses, and minor concentrations.

- Include an audit of Library subscription resources utilized/required by the program, through necessity or accreditation, to discern if Change of Status warrants cancellation of digital subscriptions or physical resources.

- Include audit of Information Technology resources and specific software utilized/required by the program, through necessity or accreditation, to discern whether cancellation of resources is appropriate.

- Include audit of Instructional Design resources utilized/required by the program, through necessity or accreditation, to discern if Change of Status warrants cancellation of digital subscriptions or physical resources.

- Assess impact of enrollment on athletics and arts/music programs.

- Assess impact on use of Science Labs & Equipment

Community Implications/Impact

- Assess impact on opportunities for student, civic & community engagement participation

- Assess potential for negative economic or social impact on local community

- Assess impact on Buffalo State's Carnegie Community Engagement Classification,

- Assess impact on our ranking as a Higher Education Anchor Institution leadership, and Social Mobility Index