

Criteria for Closure of Academic Programs

North Central State College

Chief Academic Officer and Council of Deans

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not finalized

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The decision to close any academic program must be done in a deliberate manner because of the potential impact on students and faculty involved with the program in question. This document is intended to insure that all critical factors are considered when the process of closing a program is initiated and considered.

There are several important factors to be reviewed when considering a program for closure but initially low enrollment is the first sign that a program is in trouble. The Ohio Board of Regents requires new programs to graduate at least eight students by their fourth year of operation. Using the Operating Manual of the OBR as a guideline a graph can be constructed to determine the operating profitability of a program based on the FTE students it generates.

PROJECTED REVENUE AND DIRECT PAYROLL EXPENSES RELATED TO PROGRAM VIABILITY

Projected FTE	15	12	8	6
General Stdy Subsidy (1114 x FTE)	8355	6684	4456	3342
Tech Subsidy (2625 x FTE)	19688	15750	10500	7875
Student Fees (12 hrs x 3 x 82 x FTE)	44280	35424	23616	17712
Total Revenue	73323	56858	38572	28929
Personnel	39000	39000	39000	39000
Benefits	9750	9750	9750	9750
Total P/R plus	48750	48750	48750	48750
Profit/Loss	24573	9108	(10178)	(19821)

The above data suggests that a program should have at least 10 FTE students to be viable financially. One measure of FTE students is graduation rates. If a program graduates less than 8 students a year for a period of three years, it could be considered a financial risk. The above data reflects only minimum direct payroll costs. Other costs

that may factor into a decision include administrative costs, supplies, travel, capital purchases, etc.

Although low enrollment and low graduation rates are often the initial factors driving closure, job placement is also given consideration by the Ohio Board of Regents. According to OBR, a minimum of 75% of a program's graduates must be placed in a related technology for it to be considered a viable program. When graduates have difficulty being placed, a survey of prospective employers can be initiated to determine the degree that potential employability will be available in the future.

Some programs may be essential to either the mission of the college or to the community at large. A program may have low enrollment but still find that its graduates provide necessary services for the community (i.e. Respiratory Therapy, Radiology). Some questions to be considered before closing a program should include:

1. Is the program central to the college's mission?
2. Does the program reflect regional culture in some unique way?
3. Is the program mandated by legislative action?
4. Is the program necessary to maintain institutional diversity and balance in course offerings and services?
5. Is the program one of a kind in the state of Ohio?
6. Does the program stimulate the local economy in some important way?
7. Does the program provide a necessary complement to other programs (i.e., Accounting to Business Management)?
8. Does the program meet a compelling need for some sector in the college's service area?

After careful consideration of the above questions, enrollment numbers, and employment opportunities, it should become clear whether a program is destined for closure. When closure becomes the most logical alternative the following steps should be taken.

1. The Dean makes a recommendation to the Dean's Council and a decision is made to investigate the program for closure, modify the program, or more aggressively market the program.

If closure is the obvious choice:

2. The Vice-president of Learning takes the recommendation to the President's Advisory Committee.
3. The Dean takes the recommendation to the department housing the program.
4. The department responds to the recommendation. The department's response should include a detailed plan for the future role of any faculty attached to the program. The response should also address how the students already enrolled in the program will be able to complete the program in some predetermined timely fashion.
5. The Dean's recommendation and the Department's response should be forwarded to the Faculty Caucus for consideration.
6. The Dean's recommendation, department's response and any comments from the Faculty Caucus and the President's Advisory Committee are forwarded to the Curriculum Committee for review. The dean must be available at this meeting to answer questions and provide a summary of the factors leading to the discontinuance of the program.
7. Once the Curriculum Committee has responded to the recommendation, the dean will make a final recommendation and forward it to the Vice-president of Learning.
8. The Vice-president of Learning will take the Dean's recommendation and all pertinent responses to the president for a final decision.
9. If the decision is made to discontinue the program, the Vice-president of Learning informs any concerned campus constituents including records and registration, admissions, the Student Success Center, etc.
10. The Dean and the department with the help of Human Resources and Student Services begin to implement the steps in their detail response (step # 6).
11. The Board of Trustees acts on the recommendation to discontinue as appropriate.