

**Sunsetting Ad-Hoc Committee**  
**Report to the College Academic Senate**  
**March 27, 2014**

**Review of Charge:**

Review the colleges' current "program sunsetting" process, and recommend changes if necessary.

**Findings:**

The group began its work in early December 2013. At that time it was apparent that a few pieces of a sunsetting process existed (from 2007), but those pieces had not been approved by the Chancellors Cabinet or endorsed by College Senate. It was apparent that few on the committee, at that time, knew that any form of a process existed. The committee chose to focus on what happens at the "front end", specifically considering how decisions are made about whether or not a program should be sunset.

In January 2014 the committee met again. In a bit of a surprise to some on the committee, a sunsetting process dated December 2013 was presented and reviewed. This process had since been approved by Chancellors Cabinet but was unknown to the faculty of the committee. The process provides a basis for documenting a minimal amount of rationale associated with sunsetting a specific course and sunsetting an entire program. Approvals associated with the processes begin with the Academic Dean of the program and move up to the level of Chancellor and Registrar. Still, however, with this process in place the answer to the question as to who makes the initial decision to begin the discovery phase to determine if the health of a program is such that sunsetting may be an alternative, was left unanswered.

Emphasized to the group, in subsequent meetings, was the point that the decision to sunset a program likely will not come as a surprise to anybody involved. Typically conversations would have been taking place for several months (if not years) between the faculty of the program, the Academic Dean, Office of Curriculum and Student Learning, and legitimacy of the direction each of those groups envision the health of the program, validated by the curriculum review process. Nevertheless, the circumstances around determining the health of one program versus another are very different. Therefore those conversations will be different from program-to-program.

**Conclusions:**

While there appears to be a process in place, what is still unclear and undocumented is justifications (backed by data) that take place, at the front end, regarding the health of a program leading to the decision to sunset or take a "wait and see approach". Additionally, a clearly defined set of benchmarks that lead to such a decision are also missing. Currently there is a misunderstanding that if a program falls below 20 graduates over a three year period, the program will automatically be sunset.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Office of Curriculum & Student Learning has developed an extensive questionnaire aimed at collecting and analyzing data to justify the need for the establishment of a new program. The data used to answer the questions provided, is collected and analyzed collaboratively by faculty, Academic Deans, and the Office of Student Learning. The goal is to provide a data-driven approach and extensive collaboration between all parties regarding the survival or lack thereof in the new program proposal. A similar questionnaire could be created to provide the same degree of data-driven collaboration when the health of a program is in question.
2. Existing data could be analyzed in order to define a clear set of benchmarks that would be used to determine the health of a program and the possible need for sunseting. Those benchmarks could then be piloted to validate their accuracy. Example benchmarks could be:
  - a. Less than 20 graduates over 3 years
  - b. 15-20% decline in enrollment/graduates over a one or two year period.
  - c. Fill rates (80/20 rule suggested, but class fill rate currently averages 74%)
  - d. 15% Market Share (other schools' offerings; supply and demand concept)
  - e. Accreditation considerations
3. Both 1 and 2

Respectfully Submitted

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