

## University of Louisiana System

**Title: *ACADEMIC PROGRAM  
DISCONTINUANCE***

**Effective Date: June 25, 2015**

**Cancellation: April 23, 2015**

**Chapter: Faculty and Staff**

### **Policy and Procedures Memorandum**

One of the primary goals of a university is to promote and maintain high quality academic programs. Consistent with this goal of academic excellence, each university should adopt policies and procedures to provide for regular, periodic review of all academic programs. Occasionally, for educational and/or budgetary reasons, it may be in the university's best interest to discontinue an academic program. Such a decision should be made after consultation with the appropriate faculty groups and in accordance with the policies outlined below.

#### I. Definitions

- A. Academic Program: A degree program, option, concentration, minor, department, school or college, or other academic unit such as a center or service area.
- B. Externally-Initiated Directive: A formal directive issued by the Board of Regents or the UL System Board of Supervisors to discontinue an academic program.
- C. Internally-Initiated Directive: A proposal to discontinue an academic program which originates from the institution president.
- D. Program Discontinuance: The formal termination of an academic program by the Board of Regents or the UL System Board of Supervisors.

## II. Review and Approval Process

### A. Internally-Initiated Proposals

1. Proposed program discontinuance shall be based on educational need, resource allocation, budget constraints, or combinations of educational strategies and financial considerations.
2. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be analyzed in relation to the university's strategic plan prior to formalizing final recommendations.
3. There shall be faculty participation in considering the possible discontinuance of an academic program.
4. Diligent effort shall be made to review and discuss proposals with the members in the department or program, the department chair, the dean of the school or college, the vice president for academic affairs.
5. The University President shall make recommendations for final actions.
6. All plans for program discontinuance will be submitted by the institutional president to the UL System President no later than 60 days from the institutional president's final recommendation.
7. Approval by the UL System Board of Supervisors and the Board of Regents as applicable shall be required prior to the termination of any program.

### B. Externally-Initiated Directives

The directive should include the effective date and scope for any program discontinuance. At that time, the Board of Supervisors and/or the Board of Regents shall provide the institution with the necessary implementation procedures and guidelines in accordance with the specific directive.

## III. Termination of Faculty

Timing for phasing out programs and displacing faculty members will be based on institutional needs, including analysis of reasonable time for enrolled students to complete their degree program and budget constraints.

### A. Non Tenured Faculty

A faculty member without tenure who is terminated for reasons of program discontinuance will be given notification consistent with Board RULES.

B. Tenured Faculty

1. Termination of appointments of tenured faculty may occur as the result of program discontinuance. Unless there is a compelling reason to do otherwise, termination order shall be based on faculty rank and seniority.
2. Recommendations on termination of appointments of individual faculty members will be made by the University President in consultation with appropriate faculty and administrators.
3. All plans for termination of individual appointments will be reviewed and approved by the System President and the Board of Supervisors prior to implementation.
4. Unless there is a compelling academic reason to do otherwise, no appointment of a faculty member with tenure will be considered for termination until the appointments of faculty members without tenure in the program have been considered for termination.
5. Tenured faculty whose appointments are to be terminated shall receive not less than two full academic semesters/three full quarters' notice prior to termination. Notice shall be provided no later than the first scheduled day of classes of the semester/quarter of such notice.
6. However, in the event that any of the following budgetary conditions occur:
  - a. Natural disaster(s) that result in the closure of the institution and/or the inability to carry on daily operations;
  - b. Diminishing financial position that endangers the ongoing ability of the institution to carry out its mission as signaled by risks associated with some or all of the following factors:
    - i. Debt rating downgrades, or high risk of downgrades
    - ii. Accreditation risks due to financial instability
    - iii. Low Composite Financial Index scores
    - iv. Instability related to operation revenues needed to meet payroll obligations
    - v. Declines in enrollment that threaten bond repayment obligation or ongoing revenue obligations
    - vi. Declining reserves that threaten financial stability
  - c. State funding reductions of a magnitude that require a rapid restructuring that cannot be achieved without reducing personnel expenses of all or most employees, including tenured faculty;
  - d. Institution being on "fiscal watch" for multiple years as defined by the University of Louisiana System; and/or
  - e. Severe uncertainty related to funding sources (state and tuition/enrollment) that require rapid decision process outside of the required process with ordinary program discontinuance.

the following abbreviated or shortened notification periods will apply:

- a. for actions that are to be effective the spring semester/quarter, or winter quarter, notice shall be provided no later than August 15;
  - b. for actions that are to be effective the fall semester/quarter, notice shall be provided no later than January 15.
7. In all cases, the notification letter may be sent before actual Board of Supervisors' approval is granted. However, the termination from employment may not occur until the Board of Supervisors has approved in its minutes, such termination of programs, as well as the termination of the specific employee(s).

IV. Obligations to Tenured Faculty

- A. Before terminating the appointment of a faculty member with tenure because of program discontinuance, reasonable efforts will be made to find another position within the university for which the faculty member is academically qualified, where a position is available.
- B. Assistance will also be provided by the System Office for possible relocation to another campus within the System or to another institution within the state. Inter-campus transfers will be made if mutually acceptable.

V. Other Rights of Tenured Faculty

If a program is reinstated within three years from the effective date of discontinuance, tenured faculty members who were terminated as a result of this action will be considered for reinstatement.

VI. Other Rights of All Faculty

- A. To the extent possible, faculty members will be provided counseling regarding employment opportunities outside of the university.
- B. A faculty member whose appointment is terminated for reasons of program discontinuance has the right to appeal claims of denial of due process rights to a university-wide committee established for this purpose.
- C. No appeal will be considered by the Board of Supervisors.

VII. Notification to Students

- A. Before terminating a degree program, reasonable effort will be made to allow students to complete such program.
- B. Program or campus transfers will be made if mutually acceptable to the student and the receiving department.

- C. Students will be provided advising assistance with respect to their academic program options.
- D. Students will be notified of program closure and timing for phasing out programs.

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*Policy References:*

Campus Policies on Program Discontinuance

*Review Process:*

Presidents' Council  
Faculty Advisory Council  
Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs  
Board Members  
Legal Counsel

*Distribution:*

University Presidents