GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAM CLOSURE OR SUSPENSION
Recommended jointly by the University of Louisville Faculty Senate APC and P&B Committees
June 22, 2018

1. **Preamble**
   The University's academic programs should evolve over time to better serve student needs as well as the demands of new areas of knowledge and discovery. In addition to creating new academic programs, the University may at times contemplate the discontinuance of academic programs. Under Redbook 4.5.3, academic programs may be suspended or closed under three conditions: first, as the result of a declaration of financial exigency by the University; second, in the case of the discontinuance or reduction of a unit, a department, program or service based on academic viability; and third, as the result of the periodic process of program review.

   In each case, Faculty Senate bylaws require review by the Academic Programs Committee for "any academic program being proposed for elimination, or those for major alterations in structure." The Planning and Budget Committee of the Faculty Senate also has a role in evaluating program closures. The Faculty Senate bylaws for this committee include authority to evaluate "budget matters pertaining to academic programs and priorities." The Faculty Senate review process includes review by both Committees, the Executive Committee, and presentation to the full Faculty Senate.

   The faculty must play a central role in the program closure decision-making process since it is the faculty who possess the requisite expertise to judge the academic value of a program. The role of the Faculty Senate is to consider the impact of program closure or suspension on the University's academic mission, faculty welfare, and the unit.

2. **Review Guidelines**
   In all situations involving the recommendation of a program closure or suspension, the Faculty Senate will review:
   (a) the rationale for the suspension or elimination of the program,
   (b) the impact of the suspension or elimination on the unit, department, University's mission, strategic plan, and its goals, including the criteria in Redbook 4.5.3.A.2, and the plan to reduce any negative impacts;
   (c) the impact of the suspension or elimination of the program on faculty and staff (employment, workloads, etc.), student enrollment, financial resources, and other university programs;
   (d) compliance with Redbook 4.5.3.A.2 and 4.5.2, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSOC) program closure policies;
   (e) the proposed effective date for program closure or suspension; and
   (f) The teach-out plan for students in the program after the effective date of the suspension or elimination.

3. **Closure or suspension as a result of financial exigency**
   The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) defines a financial exigency in existential terms as an "imminent financial crisis which threatens the survival of the institution as a whole." When academic program closures or suspensions are contemplated in the context of financial exigency, the Faculty Senate must be consulted before a final determination is made. The Faculty Senate's evaluation of the recommendation will consider the following:
   a. A declaration of financial exigency must include consultation with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Planning and Budget Committee, and the Senate body as a whole.
   b. All stakeholder groups must be engaged in discussions of program closure or suspension and the financial justification for the declaration of financial exigency.
   c. All financial and other data supporting the determination that a financial exigency exists.
   d. Before a final determination is made that a financial exigency exists, it must be forwarded to the Faculty Senate Chair for review by the Executive Committee and the full Faculty Senate.

4. **Closure or suspension as a result of academic considerations**
   a. When academic program closures or suspensions are contemplated in the absence of a declaration of financial exigency, the decision to recommend closure resides with the faculty at multiple levels of governance.
   b. When applicable, academic program closure or suspension recommendations should first be reviewed and approved within the department in which the program is housed and should be approved by a majority vote of the relevant faculty bodies according to unit bylaws.
   c. Academic program closure or suspension recommendations must be approved by a majority vote of the College or School in which the program is located, and by each College or School participating in a program in the case of interdisciplinary programs.
   d. After the approval of the relevant faculty bodies, the recommendation must be forwarded to the Faculty Senate Chair for review by the Executive Committee and the full Faculty Senate according to the process described in section 6 below.

5. **Closure as a result of program review**
   a. When a regular program review results in a recommendation to the Provost for program closure or suspension, the Provost will consult with the unit Dean, and the unit Dean will consult with both the program and the unit faculty.
   b. If after consultation with the relevant unit faculty bodies, and the unit Dean, the Provost recommends program closure or suspension, the recommendation must be forwarded to the Faculty Senate Chair for review by the Executive Committee and the full Faculty Senate according the process described in section 6 below.

6. **Faculty Senate Review Procedures**
   a. All academic program closure or suspension recommendations must be recommended to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and full Senate by Senate Academic Programs and Planning and Budget Committees. The APC and P&B recommendation must include a report on the impact of the closure on tenured faculty. A recommendation for academic program closure or suspension must receive a majority vote of the Faculty Senate before being sent to the Board of Trustees.
   b. The Planning and Budget Committee will be the primary reviewer for centers and institutes, in consultation with Academic Programs Committee. Similar to proposals for new centers and institutes, the closure or suspension will include meetings with the center/institute representatives and *ex officio* committee members who represent the Provost's Office. The Planning & Budget Committee will make recommendations to the Executive Committee and full Faculty Senate.
   c. The Academic Programs Committee will be the primary reviewer for all degree, certificate and program recommendations in consultation with the Planning and Budget Committee. Similar to proposals for new degree, certificate and other academic programs, the closure or suspension will include meetings with the certificate/degree/program representatives and *ex officio* committee members who represent the Provost's Office. The Academic Programs Committee will make recommendations to the Executive Committee and full Faculty Senate.
   d. Review must include all financial and other data, including budgetary plans, for all programs being suspended or eliminated, and information to monitor changes for budgetary and faculty welfare issues.
   e. Review of the required teach-out plan for all recommendations for closure or suspension, which may involve a teach out agreement with another institution, to ensure that currently enrolled students can complete the program before its closure. This plan must be submitted to SACSOC for approval.
   f. Review of compliance with Redbook 4.5.3.A.2 and 4.5.2, and SACSOC program closure policies, will include:
      i. The requirement that every and all efforts must be expended to reassign tenured, probationary and other covered faculty elsewhere in the University.
      ii. Assurance that all efforts have been made to reassign all other faculty and staff.

      iii. The Redbook 4.5.2.C notice requirements for the termination of tenured and probationary faculty, when dismissal is unavoidable.
      iv. The Redbook 4.5.3.A.2 requirement that all faculty terminated as a result of program closure or suspension have the right to review by the University Faculty Grievance Committee.

Documents:

1. AAUP Guidelines: https://www.aaup.org/report/financial-exigency-academic-governance-and-related-matters

2. U of L Redbook: http://louisville.edu/provost/redbook/contents.html/chap4.html#4a5s3

3. SACSOC Program Closure Policy http://www.sacscoc.org/subchg/policy/Closeprogramcampusinstitution.pdf

4. Faculty Senate Bylaws: https://louisville.edu/facultysenate/bylaws