

October 8, 1990

*Superseded by 95-01*

Revision of Policy Statement 85-03 dated January 15, 1985

**Discontinuance Of Academic Programs**

The overriding challenge to California State University, Long Beach, during the first three decades of its existence was its explosive growth into one of the nation's largest institutions of public higher education. In the years ahead the overriding challenge will be the very different one of preserving and enhancing the quality of its programs when additional state resources are no longer in prospect. Projections of enrollment indicate stability at best and possibly a prolonged period of steady decline, compounded by continuing long-term and short-term internal shifts. Recent experience suggests that state funding may decline even in relation to overall enrollment.

Limited adjustment to reductions in the University budget can be achieved by making across-the-board changes in staffing formulas at the School level and by attrition (i.e., abolishing positions as they become vacant). Such an approach cannot be pursued indefinitely without adversely affecting program quality and balance and thus harming the educational mission of the University. When short-term adjustments are made, resources must be diverted from programs with enrollment demand, in an effort to sustain resource levels for programs that have experienced enrollment declines. Academic programs may need to be discontinued when they no longer serve student or societal needs, or when the University cannot provide the resources to offer them. Moreover, in the face of a projected enrollment the only way growing programs can be nourished or new ones established is by periodically re-evaluating and, if necessary, discontinuing old ones.

Discontinuance of an existing academic program may be recommended when (1) the quality of a program is alleged to be significantly deficient in terms of the standards prevailing elsewhere in the University; (2) questions arise as to whether the resources devoted to a particular program or programs can more beneficially be employed elsewhere in the University; (3) financial exigency requires a review of all University programs; or (4) the program cannot be offered because there is no student demand or no qualified faculty, or because bodies external to the University mandate discontinuance.

The responsibility for recommending to the President a course of action in any of those situations rests primarily with the faculty. The responsibility for carrying out any course of action decided upon rests with the administration.

For purposes of this policy document (PS 85-03), an academic program is defined as a sequence of courses leading to a bachelor's, master's or professional degree, a formal degree option, a minor, a certificate, or a credential. It does not refer to the department(s) or other administrative unit(s) that may offer the courses involved.

**I. INITIATION**

1. A program discontinuance may be requested by the department chair with the approval of a majority vote of the full-time probationary and tenured faculty of the department but only in regard to a program of that department; by the dean or faculty council of a School but only in regard to a program within that School; by the Planning and Educational Policies Council or Graduate Council, as a result of a program review; by the Academic Senate; or by the Vice-President for Academic Affairs.

If the request to discontinue a program originates with a body other than the department offering the program, all tenured/tenure-track faculty members in the department(s) offering the program must be notified of the action before it is forwarded to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs.

2. The request to discontinue an academic program must be directed to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs.

3. Upon receipt of a request to discontinue an academic program, the Vice-President for Academic Affairs shall initiate a program discontinuance study, except for those situations described in paragraph I.4.

4. The request to discontinue an academic program shall be sent to the appropriate University Councils, omitting a program discontinuance study, when the initiating body presents evidence of one or more of the following conditions. Even for the situations described below, a program discontinuance study shall be carried out if requested by any individual student, faculty member, or administrator.

- There is no evidence that any students have been enrolled in the program during the previous three years.

- There is so little student demand for the program that necessary courses have not been offered for the previous three years.

- The program is one of several alternate programs offered within the same academic unit, and one of the alternate programs better serves student needs.

- Faculty members needed to teach the courses for the program have retired or otherwise left University employment, and the academic area's long-range planning indicates that new hiring would be better done in other areas of specialization. In this case, the academic area should present evidence of such planning, such as a program review or other planning document.

- An agency external to the campus, such as a credentialing agency or accreditation agency, required discontinuance of a given program.

## II. PROGRAM DISCONTINUANCE STUDY

1. When a program discontinuance study has been officially requested, the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, with the advice of the Executive committee of the Academic Senate, shall select a panel of at least five (5) full-time probationary and tenured faculty members mutually acceptable to both parties to conduct the study and shall specify the date by which the study should be completed, which shall be no more than three (3) months after the selection of the panel. If a specific program has been proposed for study, members of the department(s) directly affected shall be provided an opportunity to confer with the Vice-President and the Executive Committee prior to the selection of the panel. In such cases, the panel shall include a minimum of three (3) members from outside the school primarily responsible for offering the program, and no member of the directly affected department(s) or disciplines shall be permitted to serve.

2. In making its recommendations, the program discontinuance study panel shall consider the following criteria.

Any decision concerning program discontinuance must be based on careful evaluation of the program in terms of its quality and especially its faculty and students, special equipment and facilities, and library holdings, as measured by appropriate objectively based and verifiable data.

Other criteria, some or all of which will have a bearing on this decision, are:

- Maintenance of the character of the University as an urban, comprehensive institution with a diversity of programs in the liberal arts and sciences and applied and professional fields.

- The relationship of the program to the general mission of the University, as described in the current Self-Study Report for Reaffirmation of Regional Accreditation submitted to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, and as further defined in the CSULB Academic Master Plan.

- The relationship of the program to other programs of the University and to general education requirements.

- The importance of the program to the larger community.

- Present and prospective student demand.

- Availability of similar programs at other campuses in the region, especially within The California State University system.

- Comparison of cost to similar programs in the CSU system as based on a variety of cost indicators including, but not limited to, normative staffing formula, student-faculty ratio, equipment need, and operating expenses.

- Impact on affirmative action for employees and students.
- Impact on layoff of academic and staff personnel.

The study panel shall conduct its proceedings in public session except that in issues of personnel the study panel may meet in executive session. All interested parties, particularly students enrolled in the program, shall be given reasonable opportunity to present information they consider relevant to the question. The panel shall have access to the data necessary to render an informed judgment on the prescribed criteria, subject to the constraints imposed by the Public Records Act.

The study panel shall make its recommendations in writing, supported by a summary of the evidence, to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs. These recommendations may consist of the provision of additional resources to improve quality (along with an indication of the additional resources needed and suggestions of where they may be obtained), a combination with one or more other programs at this University, consolidation with a similar program at another CSU campus, curtailment, or discontinuance. A recommendation in favor of discontinuance shall specify reasonable mechanisms to permit students enrolled in the program to complete their degrees. The directly affected department(s) shall have thirty (30) working days to file a formal complaint.

### III. REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Vice-President for Academic Affairs shall have five (5) working days to transmit the recommendations of the study panel and the response of the directly affected department(s) simultaneously to all appropriate University Councils, which shall have twenty (20) working days to append their own recommendations.

Thereafter, the Vice-President for Academic Affairs shall have ten (10) working days to transmit the recommendations of the study panel, the response of the directly affected department(s) and the recommendations of the University councils, along with the Vice-President's own recommendations, to the Academic Senate.

The Academic Senate shall have an additional twenty (20) working days to consider these materials and make its own recommendations. Thereafter, all materials bearing on the study- and-review process shall be transmitted to the President.

Under the circumstance that more than one program discontinuance is being studied concurrently--particularly if the studies have been precipitated by insufficient budget--the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, the Councils, and the Academic Senate may make comparative recommendations regarding the programs under study as well as an absolute recommendation on each. A reasonable amount of time shall be allocated to this process.

The President's decision shall be made known within twenty (20) working days to the directly affected departments and the Academic Senate. If a program is to be discontinued, the President shall submit, along with the decision, a summary of the evidence and of the study-and-review process to the Office of the Chancellor for further review of the system-wide impact, and shall provide a copy of these materials to the Academic Senate.

The Chancellor will ordinarily provide comments on all such proposals within thirty (30) days and will inform the President of any system concerns so that these may be considered in the final decision.

The President shall not take any administrative action leading to the de facto or official discontinuation of an academic program before the Chancellor has commented on the proposal.

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\* Government Code, Chapter 3,5, Inspection of Public Records 6254. Except as provided in Section 6254.7, nothing in this chapter shall be construed to require disclosure of records that are any of the following . . . (c) Personnel, medical, or similar files, the disclosure of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

#### **IV. SAFEGUARDS FOR STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF**

1. Once a decision has been made to discontinue an academic program, students shall be given thirty (30) days to declare their interest in completing that program. Thereafter, no additional students shall be admitted to the program except by permission of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs. To give students a fair opportunity either to complete the program or to transfer to another program or university, the actual termination process should be phased over a reasonable period of time. The steps of the termination process and the schedule for its implementation shall be included in the official announcement of the intended discontinuation.
2. Safeguards for faculty and staff are contained within the the appropriate memoranda of understanding between the Board of Trustees and the exclusive bargaining agents.
3. The Faculty Panel which conducted the discontinuance study shall monitor the steps of the termination process or of the process for any relevant actions less than termination. The Panel shall be advised regarding the process by the appropriate administrator(s) and shall consult with the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate if it perceives any problems. The Chair of the Academic Senate and the Chair of the Panel are empowered to report their concern to the President and the Academic Senate for whatever action either may deem appropriate.

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**EFFECTIVE: IMMEDIATELY**



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
LONG BEACH

POLICY STATEMENT

January 15, 1985

NUMBER: 85-03

FILE: Program  
Discontinuance

The subject policy was recommended by the Academic Senate in its meeting of October 4, 1984 and received the concurrence of the President on January 15, 1985.

SUBJECT: DISCONTINUANCE OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The overriding challenge to California State University, Long Beach, during the first three decades of its existence was its explosive growth into one of the nation's largest institutions of public higher education. In the years ahead the overriding challenge will be the very different one of preserving and enhancing the quality of its programs when additional state resources are no longer in prospect. Projections of enrollment indicate stability at best and possibly a prolonged period of steady decline, compounded by continuing long-term and short-term internal shifts. Recent experience suggests that state funding may decline even in relation to overall enrollment.

Limited adjustment to reductions in the University budget can be achieved by making across-the-board changes in staffing formulas at the School level and by attrition (i.e., abolishing positions as they become vacant). Such an approach cannot be pursued indefinitely without adversely affecting program quality and balance and thus harming the educational mission of the University. When short-term adjustments are made, resources must be diverted from programs with enrollment demand, in an effort to sustain resource levels for programs that have experienced enrollment declines. Moreover, in the fact of a projected enrollment decline, the only way growing programs can be nourished or new ones established is by periodically reevaluating and, if necessary, discontinuing old ones.

When other potential solutions (such as restructuring of existing programs, development of service courses, elimination of course duplication, etc.) have been explored and found inadequate by an administrator or faculty body, as defined in Part II, paragraph 1 of this document, there are three situations in which consideration may have to be given to discontinuing existing programs: (1) when the quality of a program is alleged to be significantly deficient in terms of the standards prevailing elsewhere in the University; (2) when questions arise as to whether the resources devoted to a particular program or programs can more beneficially be employed elsewhere in the University; or (3) when financial exigency requires a review of all University programs. The responsibility

for recommending to the President a course of action in any of those situations rests primarily with the faculty. The responsibility for carrying out any course of action decided upon rests with the administration.

For the purposes of this policy document, an academic program is defined as a sequence of courses leading to a bachelor's, master's or professional degree, a formal degree option, a minor, a certificate, or a credential. It does not refer to the department(s) or other administrative unit(s) that may offer the courses involved.

## I. CRITERIA

Any decision concerning program discontinuance must be based on careful evaluation of the program in terms of its quality and especially its faculty and students, special equipment and facilities, and library holdings, as measured by appropriate objectively based and verifiable data.

Other criteria, some or all of which will have a bearing on this decision, are:

- Maintenance of the character of the University as an urban, comprehensive institution with a diversity of programs in the liberal arts and sciences and applied and professional fields.
- The relationship of the program to the general mission of the University, as described in the current Self-Study Report for Reaffirmation of Regional Accreditation submitted to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, and as further defined in the CSULB Academic Master Plan.
- The relationship of the program to other programs of the University and to general education requirements.
- The importance of the program to the larger community.
- Present and prospective student demand.
- Availability of similar programs at other campuses in the region, especially within The California State University system.
- Comparison of cost to similar programs in the CSU system as based on a variety of cost indicators including, but not limited to, normative staffing formula, student-faculty ratio, equipment need, and operating expenses.
- Impact on affirmative action for employees and students.
- Impact on layoff of academic and staff personnel.



## II. PROGRAM DISCONTINUANCE STUDY

A program shall be discontinued only as a result of a formal discontinuance study.

1. A program discontinuance study may be requested by the department chair with the approval of a majority vote of the full-time probationary and tenured faculty of the department but only in regard to a program of that department; by the dean or faculty council of a school but only in regard to a program within that school; by the Planning and Educational Policies Council or Graduate Council, as a result of a program review; by the Academic Senate; or by the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
2. When a program discontinuance study has been officially requested, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, with the advice of the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate, shall select a panel of seven full-time probationary and tenured faculty members mutually acceptable to both parties to conduct the study and shall specify the date by which the study should be completed, which shall be no more than three months after the selection of the panel. If a specific program has been proposed for study, members of the department(s) directly affected shall be provided an opportunity to confer with the Vice President and the Executive Committee prior to the selection of the panel. In such cases, the panel shall include a minimum of four members from outside the school primarily responsible for offering the program, and no member of the directly affected department(s) or disciplines shall be permitted to serve.
3. The study panel shall conduct its proceedings in public session except that in issues of personnel the study panel may meet in executive session. All interested parties, particularly students enrolled in the program, shall be given reasonable opportunity to present information they consider relevant to the question. The panel shall have access to the data necessary to render an informed judgment on the prescribed criteria, subject to the constraints imposed by the Public Records Act.\*
4. The study panel shall make its recommendations in writing, supported by a summary of the evidence, to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. These recommendations may consist of: the provision of additional resources to improve quality (along

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## II. PROGRAM DISCONTINUANCE STUDY (Continued)

with an indication of the additional resources needed and suggestions of where they may be obtained), a combination with one or more other programs at this University, consolidation with a similar program at another CSU campus, curtailment, or discontinuance. A recommendation in favor of discontinuance shall specify reasonable mechanisms to permit students enrolled in the program to complete their degrees. The directly affected department(s) shall have 30 working days to file a formal response.

## III. REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Vice President for Academic Affairs shall have five working days to transmit the recommendations of the study panel and the response of the directly affected department(s) simultaneously to all appropriate University Councils, which shall have 20 working days to append their own recommendations.

Thereafter, the Vice President for Academic Affairs shall have ten working days to transmit the recommendations of the study panel, the response of the directly affected department(s) and the recommendations of the University Councils, along with the Vice President's own recommendations, to the Academic Senate.

The Academic Senate shall have an additional 20 working days to consider these materials and make its own recommendations. Thereafter all materials bearing on the study-and-review process shall be transmitted to the President.

Under the circumstance that more than one program discontinuance is being studied concurrently -- particularly if the studies have been precipitated by insufficient budget -- the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Councils, and the Academic Senate may make comparative recommendations regarding the programs under study as well as an absolute recommendation on each. A reasonable amount of time shall be allocated to this process.

The President's decision shall be made known within twenty (20) working days to the directly affected departments and the Academic Senate. If a program is to be discontinued, the President shall submit, along with the decision, a summary of the evidence and of the study-and-review process to the Office of the Chancellor for further review of the systemwide impact, and shall provide a copy of these materials to the Academic Senate.

The Chancellor will ordinarily provide comments on all such proposals within 30 days and will inform the President of any system concerns so that these may be considered in the final decision.

The President shall not take any administrative action leading to the de facto or official discontinuation of an academic program before the Chancellor has commented on the proposal.



#### IV. SAFEGUARDS FOR STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF

1. Once a decision has been made to discontinue an academic program, students shall be given 30 days to declare their interest in completing that program. Thereafter, no additional students shall be admitted to the program except by permission of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. To give students a fair opportunity either to complete the program or to transfer to another program or university, the actual termination process should be phased over a reasonable period of time. The steps of the termination process and the schedule for its implementation shall be included in the official announcement of the intended discontinuation.
2. Safeguards for faculty and staff are contained within the appropriate memoranda of understanding between the Board of Trustees and the exclusive bargaining agents.
3. The Faculty Panel which conducted the discontinuance study shall monitor the steps of the termination process, or of the process for any relevant actions less than termination. The Panel shall be advised regarding the process by the appropriate administrator(s) and shall consult with the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate if it perceives any problems. The Chair of the Academic Senate and the Chair of the Panel are empowered to report their concern to the President and the Academic Senate for whatever action either may deem appropriate.

EFFECTIVE: IMMEDIATELY

