SENATE REVIEW OF PROPOSALS FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAM EVALUATION IN THE CONTEXT OF POSSIBLE DEACTIVATION & TERMINATION

I. Preface

By University Senate Bylaws, the Senate Committee on Academic Programs and Continuing Education (APACE) is responsible for “developing long-range plans for the academic affairs of the University” and for “reviewing and recommending” policies with regard to new and current academic programs. In particular, APACE has a long-established role in both the creation of new academic degree programs and in the review of these programs as part of the ongoing program review process. While the input of departments and colleges is a critical part of the assessment of academic programs, APACE’s role is distinct and is valued for allowing faculty, students, and administrators (including the Provost and college deans, all of whom are sitting members of APACE) formally to examine and to assess academic programs from a University perspective. In light of these facts, APACE is the appropriate Senate body to consider issues involving the continuation of academic programs, including questions of potential deactivation and termination.

II. Procedure

Overview: A Senate evaluation of an academic program in the context of its possible deactivation or termination shall consist of a two-stage process: evaluation and recommendation. In the evaluation stage, APACE shall compile a report on the strengths and weaknesses of the academic program based on established indicators. The APACE report will be submitted to the Fiscal Advisory Committee to the President (FACP) for consideration. In the recommendation stage, FACP will recommend a course of action which may entail the deactivation or termination of the program in question but may alternately entail reorganization, strengthening, or other measures. If deactivation or termination of the program is recommended by FACP, then the matter will return to APACE at this stage, and APACE will make a formal recommendation regarding the deactivation or termination of the program and forward its recommendation to the Senate Executive Committee.

A. Evaluation

1. A proposal to evaluate an academic program in the context of its possible deactivation or termination shall be submitted to APACE in writing by the Provost, the Senate Executive Committee, and/or the Dean of the college housing the academic program in question. The Chair or Director of the academic program in question, as well as the Dean of the college in which the program is housed, shall have the option of submitting an
accompanying written response to the proposal.

2. A proposal which has been submitted to APACE initially will be assigned to one of two APACE sub-committees, the Graduate Council or the Undergraduate Council, depending on the level of the academic program in question. (In cases of programs simultaneously put forth for deactivation or termination at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, the chair of APACE will appoint a joint subcommittee consisting of the chair of either the Undergraduate or the Graduate Council and four additional members from each subcommittee.) The chair of the appropriate subcommittee will then do the following:

(a) Solicit recommendations for prospective review-team members from the Provost, the Dean of the college housing the academic program in question, the Chairs of APACE and Budget, and the Chair/Director of the academic program. (See stipulations in section b.)

(b) Appoint a three-member review team to conduct an initial assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Each member of the review team shall be from a different college. The review team shall consist of one member of APACE (ideally a member of the subcommittee in question); one member of the Senate Budget Committee; and one member of the faculty (ideally a Senate member) with an expertise in the academic area of the program being reviewed and who shall be designated by the Dean of the college which houses the program in consultation with the program’s Chair/Director. None of the three members of the review team shall be a member of the academic program being considered for deactivation/termination or of the department in which said program is housed.

(c) Instruct the three-member review team to write a report assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the academic program structured around the Senate-approved, eight-point Template for Academic Program Review Self Study and based upon assessment indicators as established by the joint APACE/Budget Subcommittee on Program Costs and Organization. This report may take into account the written proposal for deactivation/termination; the written responses, if any, from the Chair/Director of the program and the Dean of college in which it is housed; previous program review documents pertaining to the academic program in question; interviews; and other data and resources supplied to the team or that the team should deem appropriate.

3. The report of the review team on strengths and weaknesses of the program will be brought back to the appropriate subcommittee (the Graduate Council, Undergraduate Council, or jointly appointed GC/UC subcommittee, depending on the level(s) of the academic program) as a whole for deliberation, after which the subcommittee will forward a report to APACE. It is the expectation that the review of proposals by these bodies will help to insure the consistent application of the assessment indicators across academic programs.

4. APACE will consider the report of the Graduate Council, Undergraduate Council, or jointly appointed GC/UC subcommittee on strengths and weaknesses of the program and, in turn, forward a report to FACP.
B. Recommendation

1. Based on the APACE report, FACP shall deliberate on the question of deactivation or termination of the program in question. If FACP recommends the deactivation/termination of an academic program, it shall forward this recommendation in writing to APACE for final deliberation.

2. In the context of their existing evaluations of the strengths and weaknesses of the academic program produced during the evaluation stage, the APACE subcommittee (Graduate Council, Undergraduate Council, or joint GC/UC subcommittee) and the three-person review team which were originally assigned to evaluate the academic program shall formulate a written recommendation to APACE regarding deactivation/termination of the program. This written recommendation will be presented to APACE which will, in turn, formulate a final recommendation with regard to deactivation/termination of the academic program. This APACE recommendation will be forwarded to the Senate Executive Committee.

C. Timeline

The three-member review team will be appointed within 10 days of the submission of a proposal for deactivation or termination. The evaluation report of the three-member review team will be completed within 45 days after the review team is formed. The initial APACE report on strengths and weaknesses will be provided to FACP within 30 days of receipt of the report of the review team. In cases in which FACP formally recommends deactivation or termination, APACE shall make a recommendation concerning deactivation/termination to the Senate Executive Committee within 15 days of receipt of the FACP recommendation.

D. Expedited review

In cases in which the Provost, the Dean of the college housing the academic program in question, and the chair/director of the academic program shall all support, in writing to APACE, the deactivation or termination of an academic program, the above process may be expedited. Under such circumstances, the proposal to deactivate or terminate will be considered by APACE as a whole committee in lieu of being sent to subcommittee. If a two-thirds majority of APACE shall approve, an APACE recommendation to deactivate or terminate the program shall immediately be forwarded to the Senate Executive Committee. If a two-thirds majority of APACE does not approve, then the proposal to deactivate or terminate shall be sent through the full evaluation and recommendation process.