

AO 24: Low-yield Program Review

24.1 Overview

NSHE requires low-yield programs to be “reviewed in consultation with the Faculty Senate within three years of the program reaching [low-yield] thresholds to determine whether there are sufficient factors to support the program’s continuation or merger with other programs.” NS has three years to take action after a program has been designated as low yield. The action can include (but is not limited to) discontinuation, merger, or exemption from low-yield status.

The President will provide a report to the Chancellor on low-yield programs within three years of the program qualifying as low yield.

24.2 Review Procedures

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) will produce a report each June with the most recent graduation rates and numbers for each program and the graduation rates and numbers for the previous two years. Graduation data will include graduates from the previous summer. Concentrations within a major are included in the program’s graduation data.

If a program has not graduated at least 20 students over the last three years, the program will be flagged for review. OIE will send this report to the President, the Provost, and the Faculty Senate Chair.

The Provost, in consultation with the Faculty Senate Chair, will appoint a committee to review each flagged program. The committee will have no more than 5 members and must include a Faculty Senate representative and at least one tenured or tenure-track faculty member from the affected program, if one exists. The committee will evaluate the program, using OIE data, and produce a report. This report will:

- Evaluate the program’s role in serving the University’s mission.
- Determine if the program is meeting a demonstrated workforce or service need for the state or region, including projected future needs.
- Review graduation data and predict future numbers.
- Determine if the program supports an underrepresented community or group.
- Review the program’s potential for receiving external grants.
- Include information about the program’s budget.

The committee may recommend an exemption to low-yield status based on any of the criteria above. In addition, Board of Regents policy allows NS to generate specific exemption criteria. Our institutional exemption criteria include:

- The program provides an essential service to other units or programs.
- The program suffered from high budget cuts, causing a drastic reduction in resources or faculty.
- The program suffered due to the absence of full-time faculty or PhD-qualified faculty for an extended period.
- The program is not operating at a financial loss (the funds generated are greater than or equal to the program's cost).

The conclusion of the report will include the committee's recommendation. The recommendation can include (but is not limited to): an exemption to low-yield status, merging the program with another program, or eliminating the program.

The report will be emailed to the dean and the Academic Faculty Senate Chair. The dean will review the report, include their recommendation, and send the report to the provost. NS may exempt a program from low-yield status if it is one of several programs provided by an academic unit or can be justified for other reasons deemed adequate by the provost and consistent with BOR criteria. This decision will be made annually by the provost after reviewing the report.

After the provost reviews the report and dean's recommendation, a final report will be sent to the president. The president will evaluate the recommendations and incorporate them into the report to the Board of Regents.

24.3 Related Information

24.3.1 Revision History

- Approved by Dr. Erika Beck on 5/14/2013 and President Bart Patterson on 5/14/2013.