



Academic Program Closure Policy

Responsible Office	Curriculum and Academic Review Committee (CARC)
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Contact	Cindy Shearer, Chair, CARC cshearer@ciis.edu

The academic quality of the University is maintained by careful and timely program review, planning, and analysis. In a time of constant flux, programs and universities must adapt and change to stay viable, responding to shifts in culture, societal issues, student demographics, and the discipline(s). The criteria described below are to be used as guides for determining if a program should continue to exist at CIIS. In any decision to open or close a program, the University should consider if the program is a wise use of University resources and appropriately benefits students, faculty, and the mission of the University.

The Curriculum and Academic Review Committee (CARC) oversees processes for the opening and closing of academic programs, significant events in any academic institution. CARC has developed clear criteria for both of these processes. In both circumstances, careful deliberation is required before CARC makes a recommendation to the Provost, who recommends to the President, who recommends to the Board of Trustees. The ultimate authority for opening or closing a program is vested in the Board of Trustees. The Seven Commitments of CIIS are integral to all decision-making with the school so all parties are asked to reflect on them in the process of opening or closing programs.

A separate policy delineates the considerations for opening a new academic program. This policy statement is focused on criteria for closing an academic program, although it does reference the criteria for opening a program as these processes are related.

Definition

Program of instruction includes a degree program, major, minor, or other integrated curriculum.

Criteria for Reviewing Programs for Closure

Programs of instruction come to the attention of CARC for consideration for closure under one or more of the following criteria:

- The program is unable to complete a satisfactory program review within the timeframe delineated by CARC. (CARC initiates the review).
- The program review and external evaluation find the program is not of acceptable quality or is no longer aligned with the mission, academic objectives, and priorities of the University. (CARC initiates the review.)
- Evidence suggests there is not student demand for the program (few or no students inquiring or applying) and/or the program no longer provides sufficient benefit to the institution to continue it. (The Provost initiates the review.)
- Evidence indicates that the program is not successful in retaining and graduating students. Using the length of the program as a guideline, the program does not show students are making significant progress toward completion of the degree. It may also have a graduation rate of under 50% for Bachelors or Masters programs or a graduation rate of under 40% after the required time to degree for doctoral programs. (The Provost initiates the review.)

Before making a recommendation for closure, CARC must consider:

- The University and community's needs for or the benefits of the program.
- The quality of the program and promise of future excellence. CARC should consider the quality of the faculty, the value and particular character of the program, and the performance of the students.
- The importance of the program as a support to other University programs or to the mission or strategic plan.
- Performance data including trends and projections, admission, retention, completion, cost/benefit analysis.
- Actual or projected revenues and costs of the program, *e.g.* is the program under consideration too costly in relation to other educational needs? Is the program so central and valuable that its high costs and low enrollments are acceptable alternatives to closing? Can the program be made less costly or combined with another to bring it more in line with the financial resources of the University?
- Potential savings or losses from the elimination of the program.

Process for Reviewing Programs for Closure

When CARC notifies a program of possible closure, the review process will be conducted in a timely fashion, in consideration of the individuals involved. A timeline is provided below.

The review process leading to closure will be conducted in three phases:

1. Determination of Possible Program Closure and Action Plan:

- A program will initially be advised of the possibility of review for closure at the point in the academic year when one or more criteria for review for closure have been identified and reported by CARC or the Provost. The program Chair and School Dean will be invited

to the next scheduled meeting of CARC to discuss the criteria identified, to review the closure process, and to discuss developing an action plan and the timeline.

- Upon identification for possible closure, the program will be required to develop an action plan within three months to remedy the weaknesses identified. The Action Plan should be developed and presented at a regularly-scheduled meeting of CARC within the three-month period. (If this period falls during summer, the plan should be presented at the first meeting of CARC in the new academic year.) If the program is unable to develop such a plan, the process moves to step 3 below.
- The program will develop an action plan designed to rectify the challenges within one year. The program will be able to draw on the resources of the institution, such as Admissions, Marketing, Registrar, Development, and Provost's office, to prepare and present a viable plan. The relevant School Dean must support the action plan. The program may also use the plan as an opportunity to suggest curriculum changes, liaisons with other programs, propose hiatus or other short-term options for not enrolling students, new delivery options, and other means to meet enrollment goals, improve quality, and otherwise demonstrate its benefit to the University.
- The School Dean and Program Chair will present the action plan to CARC for review at the first CARC meeting after the three-month deadline. If CARC accepts the plan, the program will have one year to implement it and will be asked to present on its progress following fall semester. If CARC does not accept the plan, it will provide an explanation and move the program toward closure (See #3 below.)

2. Implementation and Assessment of Action Plan and CARC Recommendation for Continuance or Closure

- The program will present a progress report in the form of a memo 5 or 6 months into implementing the action plan and their recommendations for next steps.
- CARC will review what is presented and will recommend: (a) that the program changes and recommendations continue to be implemented and the program be set for an interim program review in two years (three years from date of the initial CARC/ Provost review or (b) that the program changes and recommendations are not accepted and the program be moved toward closure.
- If for any reason, the program has not implemented its action plan, CARC will recommend it for closure.

3. Closure Process

If CARC recommends a program for closure:

- The committee will make the recommendation to the Provost.
- The committee may recommend a program be discontinued immediately or that it be phased out. CARC may recommend an immediate teach out, or for currently enrolled students to be placed in an acceptable alternative program.
- The Provost will review CARC's recommendations and recommend action to the President who will review and recommend action to the Board of Trustees. Decision on closure rests with the Board of Trustees.

- The Provost will ensure that appropriate accrediting organizations such as WSCUC are informed.

Status of Faculty in a Program Set for Closure

The CIIS Faculty Handbook (see p. 5) states that if a program is to be discontinued, faculty with unexpired contracts may be terminated with the assurance that reasonable effort will be made to find other suitable positions for them within the University. CARC recommends the University make every effort to ensure that faculty in discontinued programs have the opportunity to remain employed through the completion of their contracts.

CIIS Faculty Handbook p. 5:

b. Discontinuance of Program or Department Not Mandated by Financial Exigency

Termination of a Core Faculty member appointment before the end of the contract may occur as a result of bona fide formal discontinuance of a curricular program, department, or School. The Chief Academic Officer, in consultation with the applicable department chair, shall make recommendations on such major changes. The decision to discontinue formally a program or department of instruction must be based essentially upon educational considerations, as determined by CARC and the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees who make recommendations to the Board for action. Educational considerations should not include cyclical or temporary variations in enrollment. Rather, they should reflect long-range judgments that the educational mission of the University as a whole will be enhanced by the discontinuance.

Before the administration issues notice to a faculty member of its intention to terminate an appointment because of formal discontinuance of a program, department, or School, the University should make every effort to place the faculty member concerned in another suitable position. If no position is available within the institution, the faculty member's appointment then may be terminated with provision for severance salary equitably adjusted to the faculty member's length service."

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