

**A REPORT SUBMITTED TO FACULTY COUNCIL BY THE
TASK FORCE ON REVISING THE PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM
APPROVAL, SUSPENSION AND DISCONTINUANCE PROCESSES AT CSU**

**III. Policies around the process for suspension and discontinuance of
programs and courses**

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Mission

The task force was charged with producing a report to be received by Faculty Council that makes recommendations on the following subject matters:

- I. Outline improved processes and workflow for program review and management
- II. Create a framework for resolving program and curricular disputes
- III. Produce clear policies around the process for suspension and discontinuance of programs and courses

Committee Work

The Curriculum Task Force was convened in spring 2026 and met approximately seven times during the spring semester. The task force generated a single report with three sections aligning with the three aforementioned issues.

III. Policies around the process for suspension and discontinuance of programs and courses

Summary

This Academic Program Discontinuance Policy (Policy) sets forth the process for suspending or discontinuing academic programs, which can occur through review by the Colorado State University Faculty Council University Curriculum Committee (UCC) or administratively by the Provost in accordance with University Policy and the Policies of the Board of the Governors of the Colorado State University System.

By the *Academic Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual*, UCC is responsible “to receive or initiate recommendations pertaining to each and every...program offered for academic credit by any unit of the University” and “to evaluate all proposals for ...changes in existing courses and programs...before consideration and approval by the Faculty Council.” (C.2.1.9.5 Standing Committees: Membership and Function). In the vast majority of cases, UCC is the appropriate body to consider issues involving the continuation of academic programs, including questions of potential deactivation and termination.

The Board of Governors requires regular review of each academic program (CSUS Board Academic Program Review Policy 303), including, “Analysis of continuing need, quality, and resource adequacy based on three years of data on student enrollments, student profiles, outcomes assessments (including alumni surveys), numbers of graduates, and other pertinent considerations....” Moreover, the Board policy on academic programs calls for each university to “maintain a robust academic planning process to assure well-vetted proposals” for moratoria (temporary suspensions) or discontinuances (permanent deactivations) (CSUS Board Academic Program Proposal and Addendum Policy 302). Moreover, the Board policy recognizes a range of reasons for suspensions or discontinuances, including a lack of bona

fide need, unneeded duplication, and lack of resources. The Board further requires regular reporting of program suspensions or discontinuances.

The input of departments and colleges is a critical part of the development, approval, assessment, review, and discontinuance of academic programs. UCC also has a long-established role in recommending approval of academic degree programs to the Faculty Council. UCC's role is distinct and is valued for allowing faculty, students, and administrators (including the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, who is an *ex officio* member) formally to examine and to assess academic programs from a University perspective.

The pathway toward suspension or discontinuance is, in the vast majority of cases, intended to be initiated and led by the faculty of the department(s) offering the program. Such decisions are a routine part of the academic strategic planning process, as departments seek to be responsive to new or foreclosing developments in their disciplines, student demand, external partners, or the labor market.

The faculty of a department may seek to place a suspension on a program for a period not to exceed two academic years and may reinstate the program within that period. A proposal for suspension/reinstatement must be approved by the department, the college, and UCC. Similarly, the unit(s) offering an academic degree program may propose to discontinue the program—that is, permanently remove it from the university catalog. In such cases, the path to approval includes the department, the college, the UCC, the Provost, and the Board of Governors.

There are rare occasions when program suspension or discontinuance may be initiated administratively by the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (“Provost”). In these cases, the Provost should initiate a conversation with the Chair of the Department about the suggested discontinuation to understand the department's perspective on the status of the program and any planned changes.

If a suspension has not been (or will not be) lifted (i.e., the program has not been reinstated) by the end of the second academic year, the Provost should take action to discontinue the program, so that students have accurate and current information about the programs being offered, and so that the Board of Governors understands that the university acts as a responsible steward of state funds in managing its academic inventory.

Administrative discontinuance will be carried out *only* when a program fails to meet or exceed the university-established minimum thresholds for enrollment or degree-awards for two successive three-year averages. Given the unique nature and variable costs of programs, the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs will determine appropriate thresholds for various programs. Additionally, administrative suspension or discontinuance may be initiated for programs that fall below the following standards set by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (4.02 Policy and Procedures for the Discontinuance of

Academic Degrees with Low Program Demand):

- Baccalaureate degrees must graduate 10 students in the most recently reported year or a total of 20 students in the last 3 years
- Masters degree programs must graduate 3 students in the most recently reported year or a total of 5 in the past 3 years
- Doctoral degree programs must graduate at least 1 student in the most recently reported year or a total of 3 in the last 3 years

Definitions

- **Suspension:** This status is used either as a precursor to discontinuance while existing students in the program are completing their program of study or for a temporary suspension while an institution takes a strategic pause, typically to redevelop a program. Suspension means no new students may enroll in the program, but continuing students may continue to enroll to complete their program of study. The Board of Governors must be notified of the suspension of a program, per Board policy. A program may be in suspension status for up to two years, at which point it must either be formally reinstated (by notification to the Board) or discontinued.
- **Discontinuance:** This status means the institution has completely stopped offering the program and is no longer authorized by the Board of Governors or the Higher Learning Commission to offer it. No students can be enrolled in a discontinued program. If a department wishes to offer a discontinued program, it must go through the new academic program proposal process. The Board of Governors must be notified of a program's discontinuance, per Board policy.

Procedures

I. Routine Suspension or Discontinuance Originating from an Academic Unit.

If a proposed Suspension or Discontinuance originates from its academic unit, a proposal should be submitted to UCC in writing.

Proposal Format: Department-initiated Suspension or Discontinuance

Proposals should include the information below, as well as any items required by the originating department or college.

- Type of proposal (suspension or discontinuance)
- Department / College
- Contact name and email/phone
- Date of submission
- Implementation term
- Program title
- CIP code

- Rationale for change
- Catalog changes: program curriculum to be removed, and any resulting changes to related programs.
- Enrollment Trends over the last 5 years
- Teach-out Plan
- Anticipated impact on other programs within the offering department, the college, or the university.
- Offices, departments, committees, and individuals consulted during the development of the proposal.
- Approval path for program proposal, noting all formal department- or college-level votes.

Approval Process: Department-initiated Discontinuance

The approval process for proposals consists of the steps below.

1. Proposals should be considered and approved by the originating academic department. Approval by the departments at this stage, including any formal vote, should be noted as specified in the program deactivation proposal.
2. Proposals require the approval of the dean of the college responsible for the administration of the program. Individual colleges may elect to require that proposals first be reviewed or formally considered by college faculty, a college undergraduate or graduate committee, or some other college-level body. Approval at this stage, including any formal vote, should be noted as specified in the discontinuance proposal.
3. The dean should send approved discontinuance proposals to the chair of UCC, and either the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Affairs or the Dean of the Graduate School. The Vice Provost for International Affairs should be included if the proposal involves collaboration with an international partner institution. These university administrators may request that notable issues be addressed before committee review commences, or they may provide feedback on the proposal as part of the review process to be addressed before the final proposal is recommended to the Faculty Council.
4. UCC may elect to invite the proposing parties to attend a meeting at which the proposal is discussed. At a meeting to which the proposing parties will be invited, UCC will deliberate and vote on the proposal. Prior to a vote, requests may be made to the proposing parties for changes to be made to the proposal.
5. The chair of UCC will notify in writing the Chair of the Faculty Council, and either the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Affairs or the Dean of the Graduate School, of the committee's recommendation. The Provost will review the

recommendation prior to a vote of the Faculty Council for approval.

6. Once approved, the Provost or designee will notify the Board of Governors.
7. The Higher Learning Commission requires the institution to submit a teach-out plan, which begins immediately upon Faculty Council approval of the discontinuance.

II. Administrative Discontinuance.

A program may undergo administrative discontinuance if it fails to meet or exceed the university-established minimum thresholds for enrollment or degree awards across two consecutive three-year averages. The Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President establishes guidelines for internal monitoring and action plans to ensure that CSU's academic programs do not fall below the established thresholds. If a program does not meet the USG's established thresholds, the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President will alert the college and department to prepare a monitoring and action plan for the program over the next two academic years. If, at the end of the two-year monitoring and action plan, the program has failed to surpass the university-established minimum thresholds for enrollment or degree awards, then the program will be discontinued administratively, with notification to the department, college/school, UCC, the Faculty Council Executive Committee, the Faculty Council, and the Board of Governors as an informational item.

III. Program Discontinuance

Once a program has been paused through a suspension, the Office of the Provost coordinates with the college and department to ensure that the program is closed to admission of new students starting in the effective term following the suspension. The faculty will continue to teach out the students remaining in the program, until there are no active students remaining in the program. If, at any point during the suspension period, the department and college conclude that they are not interested in reinstating the program, and all students have been taught out, they may submit a request for discontinuance directly to the Provost. Any such discontinuance will be provided as an information item to UCC, and notified to the Board of Governors.