Ad Hoc Committee on Articulation, Coordination and Coherence of Academic Delivery across the State University System

"We are no strangers to budget reductions and the ongoing challenges of the Legislature to balance demands amid continually constricting state revenues. Our institutions have conducted evaluation after evaluation to address real and projected funding shortfalls. We continue to make informed decisions about different programs, services and activities.

Universities have developed both measured and sophisticated ways to assess the balance of program productivity and quality of programs. The question now before us as a System – and one that is equally important to the Legislature – is whether we can apply these efforts to academic delivery evaluation across the entire System.

Just as the CFOs have taken charge of identifying opportunities through shared services on the business and operations side of the house, the Provosts are best positioned to tackle an "inventory" in the academic arena."

Chancellor Brogan, August 24, 2010.

Some examples of academic efficiencies implemented across the State University System:

- Since 2007, universities have closed or placed in inactive status more than 100 institutes and centers; terminated or placed in inactive status dozens of full degree programs and numerous other tracks within degree programs; and merged/consolidated some departments and colleges. During 2009-2010 alone, the universities closed 26 more institutes and centers and placed an additional 11 in an inactive status. The universities terminated an additional 20 degree programs this year and placed another 23 in inactive status. They also terminated or placed in inactive status numerous other tracks/concentrations within degree programs.

- Universities have reduced the array of general education courses available to students, optimizing the utilization of faculty resources.

- Where possible and academically appropriate, universities have reduced the number of "like" courses delivered across departments (e.g. research methods and/or statistics), choosing to consolidate them into college-wide courses serving large number of students with fewer faculty resources.

A. **The Purpose:**

- To ensure an optimal level of accountability with regard to the efficient use of state and tuition-based resources in addressing the broad goals of the State University System of Florida and its member institutions:
  - Access to and production of degrees.
  - Meeting statewide professional and workforce needs.
  - Building world-class academic programs and research capacity.
  - Meeting community needs and fulfilling unique institutional responsibilities.
- To facilitate collaboration, articulation, and coordination across the State University System with regard to meeting access and statewide needs when considering recommendations for approval, inactive status, and/or termination of state-subsidized degree programs.
- To develop and implement a systematic process for the annual review of the degree productivity of academic units across the State University System.

B. **The Proposal:**

It is recognized that the number of degrees awarded in a particular program at the baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral level is not the sole measure of an academic unit's productivity in support of State University System and institutional strategic priorities. However, each university shall conduct an annual review of state-subsidized academic degree programs by starting with a list of programs based on established degree production threshold criteria. Thereafter, the university shall consider other productivity factors.

The threshold criteria are as follows:

- **Baccalaureate Programs**: An average of less than six (6) degrees awarded per year over a five year period.
- **Master's, Specialist, Advanced Programs:** An average of less than four (4) degrees awarded per year over a five year period.
- **Doctoral Programs**: An average of less than three (3) degrees awarded per year over a five year period.

The Process:

1. Once a year, in alignment with the university annual reporting and work plan calendars, the Board of Governors' Office shall provide each university with a list of all degree programs (six-digit CIP code level) by degree level with data for five-year headcount enrollment and degrees awarded. The list will highlight all degree programs that fall short of the degree productivity threshold criteria listed above.

2. A university shall conduct a self-study for each of the highlighted programs and will propose, to the Board Office, one of the following recommendations for each of the programs:

    I. **Continuation**, with specific rationale provided. Examples might include such explanations as:

- The program is new.
- The program is identified as an "opportunity" degree program with little or no additional cost.
- Continuation of the program is essential to meeting critical (e.g., education and nursing) state and local needs.
- The program shares curriculum components with other programs, for instance, in the same four-digit CIP code.
- A major program or personnel transition is taking place.
- The program is in a unit that is highly productive using other metrics (e.g., research, service, service courses) approved by the university board of trustees. For instance:
    - The program is in a unit that awards a higher number of degrees at all levels (baccalaureate, master's, doctoral).
    - The program is in a unit that awards a high number of degrees based upon the resources invested (e.g., degrees/faculty FTE).
    - The program is in a unit that delivers a high number of student credit hours to all degree programs (e.g., general education) and/or specialized curriculum components of degree programs offered by other units (e.g., student credit hours/faculty FTE).
    - The program is in a unit with high levels of scholarly, research, and creative productivity that might be measured by number of publications, citations and impact, total/federal R&D expenditures (and R&D expenditures/faculty FTE), number of patents and licenses issued, license income, and/or start-ups.
    - The program is in a unit with significant community engagement and/or clinical productivity.
    - The program is in a unit with high national rankings (e.g., National Research Council).
    - The program has a high number of enrolled students, and there is a corrective action plan in place to improve graduation rates.
    - Other strategic performance measures.

    II. **New Collaborative or Joint Delivery Model**, for instance with other System partners.

    III. **Other Corrective Action Plan**. Examples might include:
- Curricular revisions.
- New marketing initiatives.
- Resource re-allocation.

IV. **Program Placed in In-Active Status** (with phase-out plan*).

V. **Termination of Program** (with phase-out plan*).

3. For degree programs being recommended for **continuation**, the rationale shall be reviewed by Board of Governors' staff in collaboration with university staff in order to assess sufficiency of the explanation provided.

4. Degree programs recommended for **new collaborative or joint delivery model** or **other corrective action,** as well as any degree programs recommended for **continuation** but for which university and Board staff cannot reach agreement on the sufficiency of the rationale, shall be identified in the University Work Plan that is reviewed and approved by the university board of trustees.

5. Degree programs recommended to be **placed in in-active status** or **terminated** shall be identified in the university Annual Report that is reviewed and approved by the university board of trustees.

6. These data shall be maintained in a System database and shall be updated annually with the standard submission of a new year of degrees awarded data.

7. Each year, the Council of Academic Vice Presidents will dedicate one meeting to reviewing all recommendations to suspend and/or terminate degree programs for the purpose of ensuring that:

   • An appropriate level of access (including geographical delivery) to pursue a degree in the selected field (by level) is provided for students across the State of Florida;
   • Opportunities are examined for collaborative design and delivery (including joint degrees) of degree programs utilizing shared resources (including but not limited to faculty resources and online delivery) across multiple State University System institutions;
   • BOG staff will work with provosts to develop a comprehensive understanding of the impact of a program termination on others (including the Florida State College System and ICUF institutions) delivering the degree; and
   • Board of Governors' degree productivity goals are met.

* Providing students are already enrolled in a degree program, an institution cannot simply make a decision to immediately terminate a low-producing degree program. "Teach out" requirements are established by the Commission on Colleges, of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), Florida's regional accrediting agency. http://sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/teach%20out.close%20institution.pdf