

Draft of Proposed BOG Policy Statement on Academic Program Planning

The University of North Carolina Board of Governors, the University's General Administration, and the constituent universities are to be guided in their academic degree program development, approval, and discontinuation actions by the needs of the people of North Carolina. Planning and procedures are to be nimble, efficient, and responsive to those needs at all levels. North Carolina citizens and institutions are to be globally ready to compete in a rapidly changing world. State needs embrace needs ranging from the local level to the competitive global environment.

Campuses will continue to play a leading role in identifying academic program needs at the local, regional and state levels and in formulating proposals to meet those needs. The University's General Administration will also engage in the identification of needs from a statewide perspective. In its role, General Administration develops procedures to review regularly workforce and societal needs and, on at least a biannual basis, determine degrees and programs beneficial to the State. In General Administration's role of reviewing for unmet state needs, it is to pay special attention to assessing whether all regions of the state are adequately served by the University.

Once needs are identified by the campuses or by General Administration, General Administration, in consultation with the campuses is responsible for forwarding recommendations to the Board of Governors regarding how best to meet those needs. All campuses are to have an opportunity to participate in a process for determining the best way to meet those needs. Disciplinary and cross-disciplinary processes are to be established to determine whether expansion of a current degree program, collaboration in a joint degree

program, an online degree program, or a stand alone degree program is the best option.

Campuses regularly review the priorities of their offerings and are to be prepared to discontinue programs that no longer meet any significant need.

General Administration takes the lead, in collaboration with the campuses, in expanding the availability of online degrees and other programs which can open access to higher education to more people from high school and college students to persons seeking life-long learning at any age. As the availability of online degree offerings matures, General administration, in collaboration with the campuses, incorporates online offerings into the assessments regarding program duplication and develops appropriate methodologies for dealing with program duplication.

While the responsibility for quality, efficiency, and productivity of academic degree programs rests at the campus level, General Administration is responsible for periodic reviews to determine whether productivity and quality review processes are followed. In collaboration with the campuses, General Administration, reviews and revises standards for offering degree programs at various levels and by various methodologies. The University is to balance responsiveness with due diligence and a state-wide perspective and assure a commitment to excellence.

The President is authorized to provide regulations to implement the policies adopted by the Board of Governors, and General Administration, subject to the President's approval, is authorized to revise and provide documents and Web sites to guide campuses in their academic program development and discontinuation actions.

Core Issues to Address in the Revision of the Academic Program Planning Policy

What is the relative role of General Administration and campuses in Academic Program Planning and Establishment?

Campuses will continue to assess needs and propose plans for academic degree programs.

GA will have more responsibility to identify needs and priorities, to promote collaboration or expansion, and to establish, in collaboration with the campuses, a framework for disciplinary and CAO discussion of best approaches.

How are needs and priorities for academic program planning to be established?

Campuses will identify needs and priorities and share those with GA. GA will do a biannual report on the State's needs and priorities in program development and program expansion which will set the context for priorities in new program development. As needs arise or are identified they would be shared across the system.

Campuses will have a special role to play in identifying local, regional, or state-wide needs and sharing those findings with GA.

How will collaboration and cooperation be promoted among the campuses?

GA, in collaboration with the campuses, will generate a format for disciplinary discussion among representatives from the campuses regarding the best course for the configuration of degree program in a disciplinary area. This will provide a feedback system to GA to gauge interest and need in a disciplinary area.

GA will generate opportunities for chief academic officers to discuss priorities of degree program development among disciplinary areas.

What role will online degree programs have in the development of academic programs?

More online degree programs will be encouraged both through campus proposals and GA analysis of needs and a call for campus responses.

There will be an exploration of integrating online majors delivered from one campus to resident students at another vs. majors being only face-to-face.

Over time there will be a need to integrate online degree programs into the assessment of duplication of programs.

How will having larger academic programs be balanced against smaller academic programs?

There is no general answer, but in some cases developing collaboration among campuses may overcome some of the disadvantages of small academic programs.

What will be the considerations for program development?

Here are some additional considerations that would be included in the assessment of proposed new degree programs:

- High need degree programs
- Expanding a degree program
- Establishing a joint degree program
- Collaborating in the offering of a degree program
- Availability of an online degree program
- Develop an online degree program
- Adding a degree program based on discontinuing an approved program

Priorities for degree programs within disciplines will involve discipline faculty from relevant campuses. Priorities among disciplines will involve chief academic officers or their representatives from relevant campuses.

These items will be considered in the process of program assessment. There are likely to be needs after this kind of assessment that can only be met by a new stand-alone degree program, as is the case now.

How will quality, productivity, and effectiveness be assessed?

Periodic review of existing academic programs for quality, efficiency, and productivity is a campus activity; periodic review of the standards for review and their effectiveness is a GA activity. This will include offerings that are face-to-face, at a distance, hybrid, and online. Productivity studies similar to ones done now are expected to continue.

New degree proposals will go through a process of quality assessment.

How will graduate program proposals be evaluated?

There will be an exploration of establishing standards for offering degree programs at various levels, especially graduate programs:

- Standards for health-related first professional degrees
- Standards for law-related first professional degrees
- Standards for applied doctoral programs
- Standards for research doctoral programs

The system will continue using current standards of need with emphasis on state and regional needs, non-duplication, employment opportunity, quality faculty, resources; add additional consideration described above. The main difference will be a distinction between applied and research doctorates and the appropriateness of each type of degree for different campuses.