

# Review of the Proposals to Eliminate 12 Academic Programs

## Final Report

### Academic Planning Committee

#### Preamble

The Academic Planning Committee has been asked by the Provost and the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate to examine proposals for the elimination of 12 academic programs under UW Regulation 6-43. It is also within the charge of the Academic Planning Committee (UW Regulation 6-702) that “It will make recommendations concerning the initiation, quality, modification or termination of academic programs.” However, neither University Regulation indicates how this review should be conducted. The charge letter from the Provost does request input from the APC on 5 different questions, but does not indicate how the APC should conduct its review and from what context. This preamble is provided to address these issues and to provide context and precedent for any future reviews.

Essentially there are three general means whereby academic programs can be proposed for elimination.

The first means is by recommendation of the faculty of an academic unit. If those entrusted with the responsibility for the curriculum and requirements for any degree program determine that they are no longer able, for any reason, to offer a particular degree program, then they should propose the elimination of such a program. This is the expedited version of UW Regulation 6-43 (Section 5).

The second means is by recommendation from an academic review. Academic administrators have the oversight responsibility for the degree programs in their care. In accordance with the Higher Learning Commission’s standards for reaccreditation and in the best interests of UW, academic program reviews should be an on-going process in which all degree programs should be reviewed once each set number of years, as should be determined by University policy, unless more often is required. In our opinion, these reviews should be done to assess current viability, relevance, quality, sufficiency of resources, and “value” to the institution. Should deficiencies, such as those identified in Section III of UW Regulation 6-43, in one or more of these areas be identified, then the responsible academic administrator should either correct the identified deficiencies or recommend the elimination of the program. It appears to us that this is the intended purpose of UW Regulation 6-43.

Here is Section III of UW Regulation 6-43.

“The elimination of an academic program shall be based primarily upon educational considerations or financial exigency as specified under UW Regulation 6-41. An academic program may be eliminated for any one or more of the following reasons:

- A sustained record of low student enrollment
- A sustained record of low academic quality
- Obsolescence or duplication
- Lack of external need or demand for the program
- Loss of external accreditation
- A change in the priorities or direction of the University or a college, school, or department
- Any other substantial reason why the continuation of the academic program is not in the best interests of the University.”

The third means is by recommendation for financial reasons. It is our understanding that this is the purpose of UW Regulation 6-41.

We are supposedly in the second situation.

From what we have learned, last Spring the University decided to re-institute program reviews at UW in preparation for our next Higher Learning Commission accreditation review. In order to initiate this process, it was determined to begin with programs with low graduation numbers over the period from 2010 to 2015. Fifty plus programs were identified and reviews were conducted. After consultation with departments, department heads, deans, and the Provost a final list of 15 programs was generated. Before the official process was initiated, as detailed in UW Regulation 6-43, 3 programs were retracted (the graduate programs in Adult and Postsecondary Education, the MS degree in Environmental Engineering, and the BS degree in Energy Systems Engineering). This resulted in the final set of 12 programs that were forwarded to us on December 22, 2016 for consideration.

As indicated in the Academic Program Review section of the Academic Affairs web page, "While the trigger for a review is low demand/graduate numbers, the criteria for recommendations stemming from the reviews include mission centrality and quality of the program." We certainly agree that low student enrollment is an excellent red flag which can be used to target programs for closer scrutiny; however, it is hardly a reason unto itself for the elimination of a program. Therefore, as indicated on the Academic Affairs web page, we decided to focus our attention on issues of mission centrality and program quality. According to the Academic Affairs web page, "Quality includes external demand for graduates, internal demand for courses, and the quality of inputs, such as faculty credentials and facilities, and quality of outputs, such as attainment of student learning outcomes, placement of graduates, and grants, publications, and scholarly and creative work of faculty." This created a problem for the Academic Planning Committee. It appears from the Academic Affairs web page that we are following the process for program elimination as specified in UW Regulation 6-43 ["Process: The process follows UniReg 6-43 on program elimination."]; however, it does not seem to us that we are following the directive for program elimination as taken from Section III of UW Regulation 6-43 as quoted above. The 7 reasons for program elimination expressed in UW Regulation 6-43 do not seem to overlap much with the indicators of program quality expressed on the Academic Affairs web page.

After considerable debate, taking into account the gravity of the current situation at UW and the responsibility placed upon us, we decided to consider our charge from the context expressed on the Academic Affairs web page: mission centrality and program quality, and in the general academic spirit of UW Regulation 6-43. However, a couple of observations at this point are relevant. First, the proposals were difficult to read and nearly impossible to follow. They seemed to be the compilation of the work from several sources, often seemingly in conflict with one another, offering at times "reasons" for program elimination and at other times "reasons" for program retention. Second, the data provided in the proposals met the minimum standards as portrayed in UW Regulation 6-43; however, the data were often unrelated to the program under consideration, unrelated to the reasons for elimination, out of date, and/or inaccurate. The best information we obtained was by going directly to the academic unit associated with the targeted program. Third, reasons for program elimination often were outside the context of UW Regulation 6-43, and often were outside the academic context of mission centrality and program quality. Fourth, and perhaps the most haunting and troublesome, why are any programs being proposed for elimination, especially in the absence of a strategic plan and when we are on the eve of a new strategic plan (reasons 6 and 7 from Section III of UW Regulation 6-43) and are on the eve of

conducting numerous other reviews? It would seem only logical and reasonable to wait another year before proposing any programs for elimination. Why the rush?

Within this context and the principles presented in this preamble, we reviewed each program presented to us for its academic viability, relevance, and quality; and attempted to determine if the program could be offered with the resources currently available. It can be questioned whether we have the authority and more importantly the expertise to evaluate this last component. However, since it was often used as the central reason for the elimination of a program, we did our best to evaluate it within the context and our ability to evaluate the material provided to us.

In our view, the position of the APC must be on the side of the retention of existing programs, which were at one time established in the best interests of the University and have been accepted at all levels of the University. They are an accepted part of the history and culture of UW. Regardless of the size of such programs they should be retained unless it can be demonstrated that they cannot be offered through insufficiency of resources, should not be offered through insufficiency of quality, or are no longer in the best interests of the University. It should be noted that the last of these three is by far the most difficult to demonstrate, especially in a time when there isn't a strategic plan and reviews across all of the programs at UW have not been conducted.

End Note:

Many years ago the University approved the development of dual listed courses. These courses could be offered for credit to a mixed audience of undergraduate (4000 level) and graduate (5000 level) students. There are certainly many benefits of such courses to students, degree programs, and academic units. Such courses have become extremely popular across the University. Whether it was anticipated in the beginning or not, these courses have become the foundation of many master's degree programs at UW. In fact, several master's programs rely very heavily on them for the delivery of their master's curriculum (over 80% of the MA coursework). We were confronted with this situation in a few of the proposed program reviews. At the very least there seems to be a difference of opinion at UW as to the appropriateness of the dual listed courses and how many of them should be permitted in master's programs. The APC does not have the authority to over-ride existing UW expectations for degrees at any level. We are unaware of the University's position on the appropriate use of 4000/5000 level courses in master's programs. As such, we did not question the use of 4000/5000 courses in any degree program. However, we believe that the time has come for the University to review the use and appropriateness of the 4000/5000 courses in the educational mission of UW. The rumor at UW is that the Graduate "School" will be re-established "next year" in Academic Affairs. We believe that a University-wide review of the use and appropriateness of dual listed courses in the bachelor's and master's degree programs would be a good first task for this unit.

## Review and Recommendations

### Summary

1. BA – Secondary Education – Art: Endorse the recommendation to eliminate the program
2. BA – Secondary Education – Modern Languages: Endorse the recommendation to eliminate the program
3. BA – Secondary Education – Technical Education: Delay the decision to eliminate the program until the end of FY2018. At this time we endorse the recommendation to eliminate the program, UNLESS one or both of two contingencies can be achieved. First, retain if a sufficient minimum enrollment can be achieved for the next entering cohort. Second, retain if an MOU supporting cost sharing of the APL and program can be obtained.
4. MA – Languages – French: Endorse the recommendation to eliminate the program
5. MA – Languages – German: Endorse the recommendation to eliminate the program
4. and 5. were combined into a single recommendation (Language MA Programs)  
  
NEW PROPOSAL – Languages – World Languages MA: Endorse the recommendation to **create** this new MA program
6. Science Math Teaching Center (SMTTC): Endorse the recommendation to eliminate the administrative unit.
7. BA – Languages – Russian: Endorse the recommendation to eliminate the program
8. BA – American Studies: Recommend the retention of the program
9. MS – Neuroscience: Recommended the retention of the program
10. MA – Sociology: Recommend the retention of the program
11. MA – Philosophy: Delay the decision to eliminate and review in 3 year
12. PhD – Statistics: Delay the decision to eliminate and review in 3 year

## 1. BA Degree Program in Secondary Education – Art

From the information provided to the Academic Planning Committee in regard to the proposed elimination of the BA Degree Program in Secondary Education - Art, the following observations and recommendation are presented.

Currently there is only one faculty member who teaches in this program and she is in a phase-out retirement with an end date of July 1, 2018. The Dean of the College of Education has indicated that this position in secondary education will not be replaced. In effect, this program will automatically cease to exist in a little over a year. An alternative solution was suggested in which the program would be transferred to the Department of Art in the College of Arts and Sciences much like the existing program in music education within the Department of Music. It would be impossible for the Department of Art and the College of Arts and Sciences to take over the burden of offering this program without receiving the resources to offer it. As such, the College of Arts and Sciences has indicated that it cannot provide the alternative solution proposed.

Even though there is support for this program within the K-12 community in Wyoming, it was recognized by several school districts that they could relatively easily hire art education graduates from universities outside of Wyoming.

Although there are not many students in this program, the program and the graduates do provide a much appreciated connection between UW and the State's K-12 program. Without this program, this interaction will suffer somewhat, but given the size of the program, this will probably be a relatively minor loss.

The Dean of the College of Education and the Head of the Secondary Education Department both recommend the elimination of this program.

Recommendation: Given that neither the College of Education nor the College of Arts and Sciences can, or are willing, to contribute additional resources (replacement position) to this program, the program is in essence already eliminated and being taught out. In our opinion the University's involvement in the training of K-12 teachers in the State is one of the most important obligations of the University to the welfare and future of the State of Wyoming. With reluctance, it is our recommendation to endorse the elimination of this BA degree program in Secondary Education – Art. Although a failed proposal to move this program to the Department of Art was briefly considered, we would encourage both the Colleges of Education, and Arts and Sciences to be a part of any program reintroduction proposal.

## 2. BA Degree Program in Secondary Education – Modern Languages

From the information provided to the Academic Planning Committee in regard to the proposed elimination of the BA Degree Program in Secondary Education – Modern Languages, the following observations and recommendation are presented.

Our assessment of this program is very similar to that of the BA degree program in Secondary Education – Art.

Last Fall this program had 1 FTE assigned to it. This person resigned as of December 2016. The Dean of the College of Education has indicated that this position in secondary education will not be replaced. In effect, this program has already been eliminated. An alternative solution was suggested in which the program would be transferred to the Department of Modern/Classical Languages in the College of Arts and Sciences much like the existing program in music education within the Department of Music. It would be impossible for the Department of Modern/Classical Languages and the College of Arts and Sciences to take over the burden of offering this program without receiving the resources to offer it. As such, the College of Arts and Sciences has indicated that it cannot provide the alternative solution proposed.

Even though there is support for this program within the K-12 community in Wyoming, it was recognized by several school districts that they could relatively easily hire modern language graduates from universities outside of Wyoming.

Although there are not many students in this program, the program and the graduates do provide a much appreciated connection between UW and the State's K-12 program. Without this program, this interaction will suffer somewhat, but given the size of the program, this will probably be a relatively minor loss.

The Dean of the College of Education and the Head of the Secondary Education Department both recommend the elimination of this program.

Recommendation: Given that neither the College of Education nor the College of Arts and Sciences can, or are willing, to contribute additional resources (replacement position) to this program, the program is in essence already eliminated. In our opinion the University's involvement in the training of K-12 teachers in the State is one of the most important obligations of the University to the welfare and future of the State of Wyoming. Again, it is with reluctance that we endorse the elimination of this BA degree program in Secondary Education – Modern Languages. Although a failed proposal to move this program to the Department of Art was briefly considered, we would encourage both the Colleges of Education, and Arts and Sciences to be a part of any program reintroduction proposal.

### 3. BA Degree Program in Secondary Education – Technical Education

From the information provided to the Academic Planning Committee in regard to the proposed elimination of the BA Degree Program in Secondary Education – Technical Education, the following observations and recommendation are presented.

Currently there is one faculty member, an APL, who teaches the courses in this program. Primarily UW-Casper, but UW as well, have a substantial investment in this program beyond the APL. Although Technical Education programs are extremely expensive, primarily attributable to the equipment necessary to offer the curriculum, this program could probably be retained for the next 10 years for little more than the salary of the instructor, since equipment costs are now carried by Casper College and the Central Wyoming Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES).

The current cohort was admitted to the program in the Fall of 2016. These cohorts are admitted every other year and take a total of two years to complete their education. This cohort is scheduled to graduate in May of 2018. So the entire program will need to stay in existence until the end of FY2018.

There is fairly substantial support of and need expressed for the graduates of this program within the K-12 system of our State. There seems to be some disagreement between the Dean of the College of Education and the Head of the Department of Secondary Education as to whether technical education graduates can be obtained from regional institutions; however, there is a common perception that technical education openings exceed qualified applicants wherever they might come from. Even though there seems to be a substantial need, this program does not appear to be able to attract a substantial number of students. From what we have seen in these documents, it would appear that not only are the number of students in our technical education program declining, this trend is also seen in most other technical education programs nationally.

An alternative solution was proposed and is theoretically possible; however, the number of possible alternative instructors who would be available and willing to participate would make this solution so tenuously dependent on outside support as to render it completely unpredictable and unmanageable. We did not view the alternative proposal as feasible.

The College of Education Dean recommended the elimination of this program, but the Head of the Department of Secondary Education spoke passionately for its retention. Unlike the other two programs in secondary education, the instructor in this program plans to stay at UW. The elimination of this program would require the termination of this person's employment.

Recommendation: The BA degree program in Secondary Education – Technical Education is expensive; however, the primary cost associated with the continuance of this program over the near future is probably only associated with the salary of the APL teaching the program. Given that this program must be retained through the end of the current cohort, it is our recommendation that the decision to eliminate the BA degree program in Secondary Education (Technical Education) be delayed until the end of FY 2018 (the admission of the next cohort group).

In the re-consideration of the program prior to the start of the next cohort group, we propose two options.

First, it may be possible to adequately invigorate this program through the efforts of the current instructor and the associated downturn in the State's economy. There are potentially a number of individuals who would be interested in this program who have recently lost jobs in the area. Given that the program could be retained for essentially the salary of the APL it would be an ill-timed program elimination when interest may be at a high point and the substantial equipment investment could be put to continued use. We recommend retention of the program through the next cohort if a minimum size can be recruited. This size should be sufficiently large to enable the program to meet its graduation requirement for this next cohort.

Second, it may be possible to approach the Central Wyoming BOCES Board about the possibility of their absorbing a significant portion (in the range of 50%) of the costs of the program for two additional cohorts. BOCES and UW could agree to an MOU stipulating the level of BOCES support and the duration of that support. The MOU could also stipulate criteria for program recruitment success. If the program met those criteria, BOCES support would end after 4 years and UW would once again take on the full costs of the APL. If the program did not meet the success criteria, at the end of the time of BOCES support the program would be eliminated. This would allow UW to defray a significant amount of costs while also giving the program an opportunity to prove itself viable.

#### 4. and 5. Proposed Elimination of the MA Program in French and MA Program German, and the Proposed Creation of the MA Program in World Languages

From the information provided to the Academic Planning Committee in regard to the proposed elimination of the MA Programs in French and German, and the creation of the MA Program in World Languages, the following observations and recommendation are presented.

There is considerable support for language education within the University, from the K-12 community, and from past students. However, this support in general does not extend beyond the first couple of years of language instruction. There was little support, if any, for the degree programs and especially for the MA degree programs.

The productivity of these programs is marginal and certainly calls into question their viability. It would seem that a natural market for the MA degrees in these languages are the K-12 language teachers in the State who are looking for additional certification. The proposed World Languages MA degree program seems to be an attempt to attract these students into a more general program that would provide certification in two or more languages rather than a single language with the same effort. The Modern and Classical Languages Department has expressed a willingness to give up its MA degree in French and its MA degree in German if it could receive an endorsement of this proposed new MA degree. The Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences has expressed support of this new MA degree.

Currently French has 3 FTE and German has 3 FTE (with a possible retirement taking effect this year). The head of Modern and Classical Languages indicates that the BA degree can be easily and effectively offered with 2-3 FTE. Since, the majority of the courses at the graduate level in both French and German are dual listed with a corresponding undergraduate course (4000/5000), then it will be possible to provide the course work necessary for the new World Languages MA program with the current personnel in French and even with 2 FTE in German. The offering of the stand-alone MA in French and the stand-alone MA in German would be marginally possible at best with these resources, but the new MA could be offered.

Recommendation: We agree that the MA degree program in French and the MA degree program in German should be eliminated. **We further recommend that the concept of the proposed MA degree program in World Languages be adopted.** [It was discussed that perhaps a better title for this new program might be *World Languages and Culture*.] It would appear that the Modern and Classical Languages department can offer this program with the same resources necessary to offer the current BA degree programs.

## 6. Science Math Teaching Center

From the information provided to the Academic Planning Committee in regard to the proposed elimination of the Science Math Teaching Center, the following observations and recommendation are presented.

The first two reasons for proposing the elimination of the Science Math Teaching Center do not appear in UW Regulation 6-43. It could be argued that the third reason (lack of mission alignment with more current conceptualizations of science and mathematics education within the broader field of STEM or STEAM disciplines) could be an indication of obsolescence; however, this connection is not directly made. This makes our task rather difficult since we are being charged under UW Regulation 6-43 to evaluate this program's elimination. Perhaps Section III, Part G. could be applied "Any other substantial reason why the continuation of the academic program is not in the best interests of the University." However, it is apparent that the "academic program" is to be retained, but rather it is the administrative unit that is being proposed for elimination.

From the implementation section of the proposal, "The degree programs currently housed in the SMTC will be maintained by moving them to the most appropriately aligned university departments for future administration if the SMTC as an **administrative** unit is eliminated." (We have added the red for emphasis.) And as stated repeatedly throughout the documents, including the Dean's letter in support of the program's elimination, "... the spirit and past functions of the SMTC should be retained, enhanced, and coalesced into a cogently designed university center or institute focused on P-16 STEM education." It appears that the degree programs are to be retained along with the spirit and past functions of the SMTC. Thus, it does not seem that we are able to consider this proposal under our current charge.

Perhaps the larger question is whether the Academic Planning Committee actually has jurisdiction to review and make a recommendation in regard to this particular proposal. According to the Functions of the Academic Planning Committee as specified in UW Regulation 6-702 Section 5.B

"The committee's function is to review and make recommendations to the Faculty Senate on matters related to the structure and organization of the academic activities of the University. This review will be carried out in the context of the University's comprehensive development. The committee will recommend policies regarding priorities for long range development. It will make recommendations concerning the initiation, quality, modification or termination of academic programs. When changes in programs are related to the University's physical facilities the committee will also make recommendation with respect to them. In making recommendations the committee will take into consideration the educational system and needs of the State of Wyoming as well as University considerations."

It is clear that the APC is required to review and make recommendations in regard to academic programs, which as shown above are not included in this proposal; however, the interpretation of the phrase "structure and organization of the academic activities of the University" is unclear. It is our interpretation, as also expressed in our Preamble, that this phrase means the curricula and degree requirements of the various academic programs at UW. It is also our interpretation that this phrase means in the establishment of new structures, such as colleges, at the University. However, it is our understanding that the existing structures within a college are more administrative in nature rather than

academic. The academic activities of these administrative units (as highlighted in red above) is found in their curricula and degree programs. We believe that it is the responsibility of the administrative leaders to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the administrative units under their areas of responsibility. As such, we respect the decision of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Dean of the College of Education to recommend the elimination of the Science Math Teaching Center Administrative unit.

## 7. BA Degree Program in Russian

From the information provided to the Academic Planning Committee in regard to the elimination of the BA Program in Russian, the following observations and recommendation are presented.

The Russian program is highly regarded for the quality of its program, especially for its long-term and highly successful connection with Saratov State University.

The Russian program has experienced several reductions in personnel resources over recent years; Dr. Bagby (who established the connection with Saratov State University), Dr. Sigalov, and Anna Shur. Currently there is only 1 FTE associated with the Russian program; Mr. Joseph Krafczik. Mr. Krafczik's commitment to the Russian program has been and remains strong. Without question he has shouldered the primary responsibility for the Russian program over recent years and has been the sustainer of the connection with Saratov State University. Unfortunately, it is an impossibility for one individual in any academic discipline, no matter how committed, to offer an entire BA degree program.

Both Dr. Landeira and Mr. Krafczik should be applauded for their innovative and creative proposal for the delivery of the BA degree (essentially presented on pages 2 and 3 of the proposal) with only 1 FTE. However, as can be seen in the proposal, doing so requires considerable supplemental assistance beyond the 1 FTE. The assistance of Dr. Alexandrova (French program) may actually not be required, but at least she would provide an enriching perspective to the students beyond that of Mr. Krafczik. However, the assistance of Saratov State University would be mandatory and substantial for the delivery of both the minor and major in Russian. Study abroad opportunities are wonderful, exciting, and highly beneficial supplements to any degree program at UW. However, requiring them as part of any degree program goes beyond the reasonable expectations of students (especially financially) and beyond the general expectations of the University of its students.

Such a change to the degree program is substantial and as such would probably have to be proposed separately as a major change to the degree requirements and be separately approved by the Department Modern and Classical Languages, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Academic Planning Committee, the Provost, the President, and the Trustees. The APC decided to consider the academic integrity of this proposed change as though it had been officially proposed. It was the position of the APC that any academic program must require its students to be exposed to a variety of disciplinary perspectives, which cannot possibly be delivered by a single individual. Although it can be argued that the substantial exposure to an immersive language experience such as that provided by Saratov State University is exceptional as language training, it is decidedly outside the control of the University of Wyoming and does not necessarily represent the educational experience desired by the University for its students. Information was not provided to us as to the "educational" experience provided by the extensive time in Russia beyond simple language immersion. It was the feeling of the APC that the proposed BA degree in Russian does not meet the current standards of an academic program at the University of Wyoming.

Recommendation: The program in Russian Language has had a long, successful, and distinguished history at UW. Its contributions to the foreign exchange program and its connection with Saratov State University have been extremely valuable and will be missed. It is with reluctance that we endorse the recommendation to eliminate the BA degree program in Russian.

## 8. BA Degree Program in American Studies

From the information provided to the Academic Planning Committee in regard to the proposed elimination of the BA degree in American Studies, the following observations and recommendation are presented.

American Studies is a highly interdisciplinary program which relies rather heavily on courses from other departments in its BA and in its MA programs. As such, the FTE necessary for offering its curriculum is not as high in many other “comparable” units. As with many units at UW, American Studies offers many of its graduate courses through dual listed (4000/5000) options which enables it to effectively and efficiently offer much of the coursework needed in both the BA and MA degrees. As a consequence, the elimination of the BA degree will not reduce the number and/or frequency of courses offered by American Studies at the undergraduate level. As a reminder, Coe in 1965 gave \$750,000 to UW to found a School of American Studies to offer American Studies courses (both undergraduate and graduate) during the school year.

The strength of the American Studies Department at the University is decidedly its MA degree. Even though the emphasis from the beginning of this program at UW has been its MA degree, the BA degree has been a valuable supplemental degree that has never been aggressively marketed and has never really had a very large enrollment. Although it is not really an afterthought program, it has always been under the wing and shadow of the MA program. From the beginning, American Studies has been able to successfully offer both the BA and the MA degrees with as few as 2.0 FTE. Current and near future personnel resources for American Studies do not foresee a situation in which it would have fewer than 2.75 FTE. It is not established in the proposal that there are any resources, however small, solely dedicated to the BA degree program.

American Studies is aware that its strength and national recognition comes from its MA degree program. More than anyone else on campus they know that the quality of this program cannot be compromised and that their primary concern is maintaining sufficient resources (personnel) to continue offering this program at the level of quality that it has achieved. If their resources should drop to the point where the continuation of the BA degree would degrade the quality of the MA degree program, I am sure that the American Studies Department would be the first to recommend the elimination of the BA degree. This is not their current position, so we would assume that they have not reached this point. However, it appears that the BA degree is actually offered at an absolute zero additional cost program beyond the resources needed for the MA degree.

**Recommendation:** Since it appears that American Studies has sufficient current and near future resources to successfully continue to offer high quality programs in both its BA and MA degree programs in exactly the same format that it has for many years, we do not endorse the proposal to eliminate the BA degree program in American Studies and rather recommend that this program be retained.

## 9. MS Degree Program in Neuroscience

From the information provided to the Academic Planning Committee in regard to the proposed elimination of the MS degree Neuroscience, the following observations and recommendation are presented.

The Neuroscience MS program has not had a single graduate since 2013.

The strength of the Neuroscience PhD program is directly related to the quality of the faculty that comprise the program. This strength for over 30 years has derived in part from its extreme interdisciplinarity. The University has had a goal of increasing interdisciplinarity for several decades and yet, the Neuroscience program is the latest victim of an institution that has not fostered interdisciplinarity but only in truth tolerated it.

Although not the only illustration of the following point, the MS program in Neuroscience is an excellent example. What is the cost, in any sense of the word, to the University associated with any program that requires absolutely zero resources? In fact, doesn't the University benefit, the students benefit, the faculty benefit, everyone benefit from having as many of these programs as possible, as long as they can be offered of sufficient quality to enhance the reputation of and provide opportunities to the University? In what capacity, can such a program be viewed as an academic or budgetary liability? The Head of the Neuroscience program and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences both agree that this is a no cost program. Hence, why is it being recommended for elimination?

In reality, the MS program in Neuroscience is not being recommended for elimination, but rather being moved to the Zoology Department, where it would take on its new identity as an option or concentration within Zoology. On the surface, this might make some sense if the Neuroscience program was housed in Zoology, but it is not. It is an interdisciplinary program with its own responsibility and composed of faculty from across the University. As such, students working with a particular faculty mentor have a rather high probability of not being part of the Zoology discipline. Hence, the fall back option or concentration in Zoology does not reflect their interest or education. In addition, why should Zoology get the benefit (MS degree beans) for the efforts of faculty in other disciplines? To make this fair would require that options or concentrations would have to be created in all of the member neuroscience disciplines. This would result in chaos and would vastly increase the number of non-used programs at UW. Thus, the simplest solution would seem to be to retain the existing MS degree in Neuroscience.

Recommendation: We do not see the benefit to UW in the elimination of the MS degree in Neuroscience, since the program is not really being proposed for elimination, but only proposed to move to another location. We cannot see any academic reason for this proposed elimination and consequently recommend that the MS degree in Neuroscience be retained as is.

## 10. MS Degree Program in Sociology

From the information provided to the Academic Planning Committee in regard to the proposed elimination of the MA degree in Sociology, the following observations and recommendation are presented.

The Department currently has 4 FTE, which both the Department and the Dean (separate communication) agree is sufficient for offering the BA degree. The majority of the courses in the MA program are dual listed with corresponding courses in the BA program (4000/5000). Hence, the majority of the coursework portion of the MA degree can be offered at no cost beyond the BA degree. However, Sociology has the assistance of 4 outreach instructors who offer online courses and some of the undergraduate curriculum. Their assistance easily enables the 4 FTE faculty to provide the necessary coursework and research experience for their graduate students to obtain their MA degrees in a timely manner.

An external review of the Department last year described the department in very favorable terms and noted that the unit had tremendous potential. Sociology is a high quality program at UW and its graduates often are placed in positions within the State.

The Department believes that about 8 to 10 graduate students in the program at any one time is the minimum critical mass for graduate student interactions both within and outside of the classroom. Past and current enrollments exceed this minimum.

Based on the criterion for low enrollment supposedly used to target “under-performing” programs, the MA degree program in Sociology should not have been identified. Its 19 graduates in the past 5 years exceeds the identified minimum of 15.

The Department has explored a couple of ideas for increasing student recruitment into their MA program. First, they have tried splitting their 4 State Funded Assistantships into partial assistantships to reach more than 4 students. Although this provides the ability to potentially recruit more students, it can result in problems competing for students with other institutions. The Department has considered supplementing its assistantships with monies from its Chet Meeks Memorial Fund. Second, given their outreach involvement, it would be possible to use some of the money returned from their outreach endeavors to supplement their assistantships in size and number. This is still a work in progress since the University has not finalized its policy on the distribution of outreach monies to responsible units as of this date. Third, the Department has developed a Plan B option for the MA degree, recommended in their External Review as a possible means of increasing enrollment, and is currently waiting for approval.

As with many of the smaller departments in the College of Arts and Sciences, the Department of Sociology has been targeted to merge with one or more other units. At this time, the other unit or units is unknown, but it would seem highly logical and immensely reasonable for Sociology to consider merging with such units as Criminal Justice with precedent nationally and with a connected history at UW. As a note, two of the faculty in Criminal Justice have PhD degrees in Sociology.

Recommendation: It appears that the Department of Sociology has adequate resources and a plan to be able to continue to offer its successful MA program in addition to its BA program. In addition, its MA program could prove to be a useful and desirable supplement to any prospective merger. It is logical

that all of Sociology's degree programs would be reviewed for relevance, quality, and sufficiency of resources along with all the other degree programs contained in a future merger. As such, it is our recommendation that the MA program in Sociology be retained.

## 11. MA Degree Program in Philosophy

From the information provided to the Academic Planning Committee in regard to the proposed elimination of the MA degree in Philosophy, the following observations and recommendation are presented.

The Department currently has 4 FTE faculty (Dr. Colter, Dr. Goodin, Dr. Griesmaier, and Dr. Sherline) with full time appointments in Philosophy and 1.35 FTE (Dr. Hix (.75 FTE) and Dr. Lockwood (.60 FTE)) with partial appointments in other academic units. From records of the last three years, it appears that the regular philosophy faculty members have been able to provide all of the necessary coursework for the BA degree and for the MA degree with only modest supplementary productivity from their two part-time faculty. This is probably attributable to the fact that the majority of the courses in the MA program are dual listed with corresponding courses in the BA program (4000/5000). Hence, the majority of the coursework portion of the MA degree can be offered at no cost beyond the BA degree. It would seem that the 5.35 FTE are more than sufficient to continue to offer both the BA and MA degrees. Should the department somehow lose the services of their two part-time faculty, it would appear that the MA degree could still be offered based on past performance.

The Department believes that about 5 to 6 graduate students in the program at any one time is the minimum critical mass for graduate student interactions both within and outside of the classroom. Past and current enrollments are marginal, but exceed this minimum. The Department's plan to implement a 3+2 master's degree has potential, but will probably add only a handful of majors to a program that has been and most likely will continue to be small. However, it appears that even a modest gain from the 3+2 program would enable the Department to continuously have more than its minimum critical mass of graduate students. In addition, only a very minor increase in the number of graduate students would be needed for the MA in Philosophy to meet the 3 graduates per year threshold. Currently they are at 2.5 per year.

It has been noted several times that the offering of an MA program primarily through dual listed (4000/5000) courses calls into question the legitimacy of the MA program as being separate and above the BA program. According to University regulations, students enrolled at the 5000 level in a dual listed course are supposed to have greater requirements and expectations than the students enrolled at the 4000 level. As Philosophy points out, it is a common misconception to think that the courses for the graduate students are "dumbed down" in order to accommodate the undergraduate students. In Philosophy the situation is often in the reverse. The undergraduate students are placed in an environment which pushes the undergraduate limit to a near or even graduate level. The courses are in effect "smarted up." In addition, undergraduate students often take upon themselves the additional work and requirements assigned to the graduate students in order to get a richer and more intellectual experience. The existence of the dual listed courses and the required interaction within them with graduate students, greatly enhances the educational experience of the undergraduate students and consequently improves the BA degree. Hence, the loss of the MA degree, the loss of the graduate students, and the loss of the dual listed courses would result in a serious degradation of the BA degree.

Recommendation: The MA Degree program in Philosophy is small and most likely will remain small. However, it appears that the Department of Philosophy currently has adequate resources to be able to continue to offer its successful MA program in addition to its BA program. At this point it is impossible to tell how successful its proposed 3+2 MA will be and whether it will be able to consistently rely on the

supplemental services of its part-time faculty. We believe that it would be ill-advised to eliminate an important MA program on the eve of a new beginning for itself and the University, especially when it apparently has sufficient current resources. We recommend that the decision to eliminate the MA program in Philosophy be delayed for three years.

## 12. PhD Degree Program in Statistics

From the information provided to the Academic Planning Committee in regard to the proposed elimination of the PhD degree in Statistics, the following observations and recommendation are presented.

As with many doctoral programs at UW, the program in Statistics is small in productivity. This has been true for many years. Individuals holding graduate degrees in statistics are highly employable. Most doctoral graduates either are in faculty positions or are in major consulting firms and businesses.

Currently the department has 6 FTE faculty supporting the BS, MS, and PhD degrees along with a substantial service teaching commitment.

Initially it appears that the PhD program in Statistics was proposed for elimination by the Department of Statistics. [See the Dean's letter] This is consistent with the proposal which does not include a reason for the elimination of the PhD degree. As such, this program should have received an expedited review according to Section 5 of UW Regulation 6-43. However, the department head of Statistics indicates in his letter that his "stance on eliminating the Statistics Ph.D. program is that I would accept it, based on budgetary contractions, despite that I would rather leave it on the books and currently in hiatus."

The elimination of any program can have unintended consequences. Perhaps this may be true of this degree.

The Department of Statistics is among the most interdisciplinary departments at the University of Wyoming. This is manifested in a number of ways, but for this assessment, it is most visible in the service nature of its courses at all levels, even including the courses in the doctoral program. Often there are as many students from the College of Engineering in some of the doctoral level courses as there are Statistics students. Given that the University is on the verge of establishing a data analytics program, the doctoral courses in statistics could even gain in popularity. This results in a conundrum. In general, statistics classes at all levels are taken by more non-statistics majors than statistics majors. Hence, if the PhD program in Statistics is eliminated, would the Department of Statistics still be expected to teach these courses?

The Dean's recommendation letter includes the following statement, "... with ongoing discussion of a departmental merger with Math." At the time the program eliminations were first being considered, this issue was not before the Department of Statistics and appears to be the reason for the Department Head's conclusion "that I would rather leave it on the books and currently in hiatus." It would seem that the merger between statistics and mathematics could provide the stimulation necessary to revitalize and even refocus both the PhD degree in statistics and the PhD degree in mathematics beyond their current levels.

Recommendation: The merger between statistics and mathematics will provide new direction and a new environment and possibly a new direction for statistics at UW. At this point, the impact and the effect of the merger between mathematics and statistics is unknown and as a consequence, we believe the elimination of the PhD degree in Statistics is premature at this time. We recommend that the decision to eliminate the PhD program in Statistics be delayed for three years.