

2.14 Academic Program Reduction, Impaction, Merger, and Closure

2.14.1 Overview

The implementation of the Board policy on “Academic Program Reduction, Impaction, Merger, and Closure” requires a process consistent with the faculty’s leadership role in the curriculum. This policy is focused on making changes in some parts of the academic program with a reallocation of resources to other parts of the academic program with the overall result of enhancing learning and sustaining more effectively the Coordinate Academic Mission. The consultative process involves distinct steps and specific forms of review of evidence prior to the president’s/s’ making a recommendation to the Board/s regarding change in the academic program offered by Saint John’s University and the College of Saint Benedict.

This policy establishes the procedures, criteria and data sources to be used in any “major academic changes,” within the meaning of 2.13.5.1.1.

2.14.2 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following terms are defined as follows:

- a. “Academic program” refers to a coherent sequence of courses and/or educational activities which offers a student an in-depth study of a field, discipline, or interdisciplinary focus.
- b. “Program reduction” refers to the elimination of part of an academic program; a “part” may be a sequence of courses, a track, a concentration, or a minor in a major field or program of studies offered to students in the catalog.
- c. “Program impaction” refers to a very significant restriction of program investment beyond typical administrative management practice to minimize extraordinary negative programmatic investment/expenditure impacts on other academic programs and/or the faculty more generally.
- d. “Program merger” refers to the combination, through administrative action, of the faculty of two or more academic programs and/or departments; one consequence of program merger could be program reduction.
- e. “Program closure” refers to the elimination of an academic program (usually a major or concentration) offered to students in the catalog.

2.14.3 Process

The process leading to the reduction, impaction, merger or closure of academic programs may originate in either of the following ways:

- a. Within the faculty committee system, Academic Budget and Planning Committee (ABPC) and Academic Policies, Standards, and Assessment Committee (APSAC) may bring motions to the Joint Faculty Assembly to recommend the reduction, impaction, merger or closure of an academic program(s).
- b. Through the provost for Academic Affairs

2.14.4 The Process When Policy Is initiated by the Provost for Academic Affairs

Implementation of this policy shall be initiated by the provost and must, before any recommended reduction, impaction, merger or closure is implemented, follow the following distinct steps: 1) Declaration of intent to activate the policy; 2) Announcement of specific recommendations; 3) Committee deliberation and action; 4) Joint Faculty Assembly deliberation and action; 5) Final action by presidents; 6) Final action by Boards.

2.14.4.1 Declaration

- a. Declaration and Consultation

The chair and vice-chair of the Joint Faculty Assembly and the Faculty Governance Coordinating Committee are informed of the administrative intent to activate the policy through the provost who will consult with the president/s, deans and finance officers about the appropriateness and necessity of implementing the policy in any given year. Any administrative declaration which seeks implementation during an academic year must be made on or before the first working day in September of that academic year. The declaration by the provost will specifically identify the program/s under review for potential policy action during the academic year.

The academic administration is limited to using the procedures of this policy in unusual circumstances and in accordance with Board policy for the sake of academic quality and responsible investment in the range and depth of academic program and majors offered.

The provost will consult with the Academic Policies, Standards, and Assessment Committee and the Academic Budget and Planning Committee. No *ad hoc*

committees will be formed except as subcommittees or task forces from those committees at the action of the committee chairs or the leadership of the Joint Faculty Assembly.

The provost is obligated to consult as defined by the review process with the academic deans and departmental or program chairs of academic units to be affected by the policy as applied to any specific academic program. Enrollment Management will be required to provide a specific limited enrollment impact comment on any programs or departments that would be affected by any proposed policy action.

- b. Providing Evidence and Information Supporting Declaration
At the time of the declaration, and to the extent feasible, the provost will provide to the faculty information on academic programs under review, with comparisons to other College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University academic programs, including:
 1. An analysis of "program centrality" to the academic mission, including
 - a. History of the program at these institutions;
 - b. Program's place within the coordinate and institutional mission statements;
 - c. Program's place within the current strategic plan;
 - d. Relationship to the Catholic, Benedictine and liberal arts traditions of the institutions;
 - e. Other aspects pertinent to the program's fit within the academic mission.
 2. The following data on academic programs:
 - a. Number of majors awarded;
 - b. Number of majors per FTE faculty member;
 - c. Student credit hours per FTE faculty member;
 - d. Faculty compensation program costs per student credit hour;
 - e. Departmental non-compensation and support and administrative compensation costs per student credit hour;
 - f. Capital or extraordinary program costs per student credit hour.
 3. This data may be presented in a variety of ways chosen by the provost; however, they also must be presented as three-year moving averages. If implemented in September 2003, the data will be provided for the previous five academic years.

With September 2004 and in subsequent years, the data will be provided for the previous six academic years.

4. The provost may also provide other data pertinent to the program to assess its institutional contribution.

2.14.4.2 Announcement of Specific Recommendations

The completion of the process from declaration of intent to activate this policy to the announcement of the provost's specific recommendations on program reduction, impaction, merger, and closure shall be not less than 20 working days (with "working days" defined by Section 4.1.2). At the time of the announcement of the provost's recommendations, the provost shall provide a written statement explaining which of the following reasons support the recommendation:

- a. An academic program or major can be found to be not as central to the achievement of the coordinate academic mission, as other academic programs or majors because resources need to be reallocated to other higher priority academic programs and majors.
- b. The level of academic quality expected of the liberal arts character of the institutions is not being consistently met by the program or major.
- c. The academic set of programs and majors as a whole are beyond long-term institutional fiscal resources to support them all appropriately.
- d. Student demand for the program or major has reached an unviable status in terms of cost of student learning.
- e. Necessary investments to achieve or sustain acceptable levels of academic quality for the program or major cannot be supported.

2.14.4.3 Committee Deliberation and Action

Following the announcement of the provost's recommendations, the Academic Policies, Standards and Assessment Committee and Academic Budget and Planning Committee will formulate resolutions regarding the provost's recommendations, during a period of time not to exceed 20 working days. During this time, faculty in affected programs are obligated to present whatever perspectives and evidence they may have, regarding the provost's recommendations, to the committees. Within this time period, faculty committees in the consultative process are required to make recommendations to the Joint Faculty Assembly for proposed actions for each specific programmatic recommendation.

2.14.4.4 Joint Faculty Assembly Deliberation and Action

- a. The Joint Faculty Assembly will receive and evaluate recommendations regarding the provost's recommendations from the Academic Policies, Standards and Assessment Committee and the Academic Budget and Planning Committee for Joint Faculty Assembly action.
- b. Resolutions may be proposed, amended and voted on by the Joint Faculty Assembly in accordance with its usual procedures. Following the vote of the Joint Faculty Assembly, the Academic Policies, Standards, and Assessment Committee will prepare a written report, to be delivered to the presidents, summarizing the faculty discussion and the reasons for the vote. The presidents shall consider such written report prior to making their recommendations to the Boards.
- c. Joint Faculty Assembly action will occur in a timely manner, within 20 working days of the completion of the committee action phase.
- d. Data to be used in review process by all parties:
 1. Trend data, particularly over the past 10 years (to the extent feasible) will be extensively used.
 2. Data for the review may come from many sources of information, including but not limited to:
 - a. Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)
 - b. Program reviews,
 - c. Academic assessment plans,
 - d. Departmental annual reports,
 - e. Registrar's Office statistics,
 - f. General education contribution information,
 - g. Student and alumni achievement data,
 - h. Accreditation reports where they are relevant,
 - i. Board of Trustees/ Regents approved Strategic Plan,
 - j. Enrollment Management statistics.

- e. Criteria to be used in assessing any recommended program action are:
 - 1. Centrality of program to academic mission
 - 2. Quality
 - 3. Cost
 - 4. Potential for growth and quality

2.14.4.5 Final Action by Presidents and Boards

Presidents will make a final recommendation to the Boards for their approval. The final results of Joint Faculty Assembly actions will be forwarded for full consideration by the Academic Affairs Committee of the Boards through the provost and the faculty representative to that committee. The recommendations of the provost and the recommendations of the presidents will also be forwarded to the Academic Affairs Committee at that time. Presentation of faculty actions and deliberations will take place at the meeting or meetings scheduled for final committee recommendation and action to the Boards. As the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board and the full Boards deliberate on programmatic recommendations under the Board policy, they will consider, among a number of other things, any written faculty votes, resolutions and reports. Opportunities will be provided in the meeting agenda of the Academic Affairs Committee and the Boards, at which final action on a proposed academic program reduction, impaction, merger or closure is scheduled to be taken, for the chair and vice-chair of the Joint Faculty Assembly to address the committee and the Boards prior to final determinative action.

The faculty's advisory role is to be honored to the largest extent feasible given its leadership role in curriculum development and quality assurance relative to all academic programs and departments. The Board's/s' role is determinative related to its exercise of its governance responsibilities.

If any decision results in the involuntary layoff of any faculty member, all requirements of *Faculty Handbook* Section 2.13 will be followed.

In implementing this policy, all requirements of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, that students admitted to a program be permitted to finish that program before it is eliminated, will be followed.