



WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY

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TO: Wendy Christensen
Chair, Faculty Senate

FROM: Joshua Powers
Provost & Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

DATE: February 16, 2024

RE: Update on Program Vitality

As promised, I am providing this update to my April 24, 2023 report on program vitality (original report found under meeting packets for Faculty Senate meeting of [4/25/23](#)). This report update is organized into three parts. First, I provide an update on the programs I placed on probation or hiatus in April 2023, including planned recommendations to President Helldobler on the specific programs that I will be recommending for closure, as well as minors for closure. Second, I list three additional programs that I will be recommending for closure for modality reasons – we now deploy a specific program online as our vehicle of delivery and simply need to close the on-campus offering. Third, there is also a set of 9 minors for recommended closure that are no longer able to be offered and/or have had no or nearly no students enrolled in them for some time. My recommendations to him are planned for March 29, closure effective Fall 2024. Fourth, I provide a list of additional programs I will be placing on probation (majors and minors). Finally, I provide one departmental merger I am considering that has been recommended to me by the Dean of the College of Science & Health and for which I will also provide my recommendation to the President by March 29.

Informing this report is updated program vitality data as of Fall 2023 and that is posted to the Provost's Office website [at this link](#) under Reports. Recall that we had produced one last Spring effective Fall 2022. Also on the website are the complete set of EAB 360 Reports that have been completed to date on specific programs.

I look forward to discussing this with you and if you would wish to engage it a next Faculty Senate Meeting. Note that in all cases, Deans have engaged departments referenced and are aware of these plans. Furthermore, some departments have already been engaged in the work of how to rethink their programs as noted in places in the prose that follows.

I. Planned Recommendations to the President on Programs Currently on Probation or Hiatus

Urban Science & Society (BA) – Whereas there have been some updates proposed to the program, those updates do not sufficiently reposition the program as is needed to emphasize urban planning, the orientation that has opportunity and for which the EAB provided a useful report that informs on undergraduate opportunities. I will be recommending to the President closure of this program effective at the close of AY23-24, and direct a teach out plan for the one student enrolled. If the department wishes to revisit Urban Planning, they should consult with their Dean and Jonathan Lincoln in the Provost's Office as the Administration continues to believe there is possibility in this area.

Philosophy (BA) – I will be recommending closure of this program effective at the close of AY23-24, and direct a teach out plan for the five students currently enrolled. As noted in the April 2023 report, ethics is potentially better as an offering, a subject I will return to in the next section.

BFA Concentrations – I will be recommending closure of the *Photography Concentration* (3 students enrolled) and the *Painting, Drawing & Printmaking Concentration* (3 students enrolled), consolidating them into the substantially more popular BFA Interdisciplinary Arts concentration. I will also be recommending closure of the *Art, Sculpture, & 3D Design Concentration* (no students enrolled) and consolidating it into the BFA Interdisciplinary major. This will enable opportunity to support department desires to focus energies where demand is strongest - students desire to experiment and practice a wider variety of fine art and media, including in these areas, and ones for which courses are also available to non-majors. The two remaining concentrations will remain.

Professional Communication (MA) – Department has done good work to streamline and re-vision program as Integrated Marketing Communication and that is distinct from Creative and Professional Writing. The program will no longer be on probation going forward, subject to its internal program revision governance reviews and approvals, and close monitoring in the next few years by way of impact assessment.

Creative & Professional Writing (MA) – Department has done good work to streamline and re-vision the program, and as noted above, is distinct from what will be a newly positioned Integrated Marketing Communication Program. The program will no longer be on probation going forward, subject to its internal program revision governance reviews and approvals, and close monitoring in the next few years by way of impact assessment.

Professional Sales (BS) – Efforts by the department and college to build high school interest, and in turn enrollment, seems to be starting to take root. The University also just received a large gift from the Russ Berrie Foundation in support of student scholarships. Given the interest in the minor, and an anticipated certificate coming, the program will no longer be on probation going forward, but we will continue to closely monitor progress.

Financial Planning (BS) – Efforts by the department and college to build high school interest, including via dual enrollment, have been underway, but have not had as much time as professional sales to evidence impact. Furthermore, new certifications in this general area have not yet launched and have potential for building interest. Hence, the program will remain on probation through at least mid-Fall 2024 once Fall enrollments are clear and a better assessment of progress is possible.

Earth Science (BS) – Department realized some growth in enrollment Fall 23, but not enough to justify the continuation of three distinct degrees as I noted as a concern in my April 2023 report. EAB research indicates substantial competition in our region for degree offerings in this area, and a tight job market. This research also indicates that there is opportunity to integrate a project management component in a degree in this area and be unique in the state for which the demand would be stronger. The department has indicated interest in pursuing this opportunity. Hence, I am recommending to President Helldobler that the number of degrees be collapsed from 3 to 1 and a new, singular degree be the outcome of that work, with a project management component. The launch of this new degree would coincide with the closing of the three former programs, and a teach out plan or shift to the new degree deployed for currently enrolled students (anticipated launch of new program: Fall 25; closure of the 3 existing programs effective end of AY24-25). Note that the environmental science concentration as part of the Integrated Math & Science degree would be revised to include courses regularly delivered within the new program. Furthermore, coursework that may be required by education majors in earth science would continue, but the state does not require a major for that purpose, just the coursework.

Actuarial Science (BS) – Enrollment in this program continues to be weak and not sustainable. Whereas it was launched with good intentions Fall 2018, it has not delivered on reasonable enrollments, with all or most of the few admitted not choosing to enroll at WP. I will be recommending closure of this program effective at the close of AY23-24, and direct a teach out plan for the six students enrolled.

Additional Planned Recommended Program Closures to President Helldobler:

RN-BSN Main Campus – WP’s RN-BSN program is online. There is a need to formally close the on-campus program that still exists on the books. The two students who still show enrolled will be provided a teach out plan or allowed to shift to the online program.

M.Ed. School Nursing – WP’s school nurse program is now delivered through the MSN School Nurse Program. When the M.Ed. option was developed, this program was not available as an MSN. Students are choosing to pursue this program as an MSN or certificate, not the M.Ed. There is a need to formally close the on-campus M.Ed. program that still exists on the books. The three students who still show enrolled will be provided a teach out plan or allowed to shift to the online program.

Nurse Educator Main Campus (MSN) – In contrast with the ANGP and FNP on-campus MSN programs, the Main Campus Nurse Educator Program continues to be very under-enrolled (under 10 since 2020 and currently enrolls 3 and had no new admits this past fall). The main campus program needs to be closed. The three students who still show enrolled will be provided a teach out plan or allowed to shift to the online program.

Additional Planned Recommended Minor Closures to President Helldobler:

The following minors have no, or very consistently low, enrollment (typically 0 or 1, very infrequently 2, in a year at least for the past 3 years) and/or with required courses that can no longer be delivered:

International Cinema	Spanish for the Professions	Theater & Comedy
Interpersonal Communication	Italian & Italian Am Studies	Urban Studies
Religious Studies	World Literature	Physics

II. Additional Programs Being Placed on Probation

Informed by the Fall 2023 data, as well as trend data, the following programs are being placed on probation through at least mid-Fall 2024 (an update to Faculty Senate to be provided when Fall enrollment data is available):

Applied Sociology Track (BA) – In contrast with the General Sociology Track, enrollments are very small, and consistently so over its 3 years since launch (4 students currently enrolled & 1 new student enrolled). Hence, attention is needed to assess what can be done to re-vision or energize the program.

Ethics (BA) – Since its launch in 2021, there has been only 1 student enrolled. This is not sustainable. However, we all recognize the importance of ethics like never before and this program needs immediate attention either for re-visioning, particularly with respect to how career development might be embedded in the curriculum, or consideration as a certificate, perhaps in collaboration with another department or college, or as an important component of the new UCC. Recommend EAB assessment and market analysis.

Public Policy (MA) – Whereas their reinvention Spring 2022 has really not had sufficient time to reasonably assess impact, enrollments are limited to date. Invite department and college to reflect on what might be done to stimulate interest, for example, shifting to online and/or enabling guaranteed internships as is common at some other institutions.

Materials Chemistry (MS) – For past few years, enrollment has been low. Few courses are taught with undergraduates also in them (such as is true for a program like MS - Biotechnology) and thus need to commonly run low enrolled courses. Invite the department and college to engage with industry advisories to explore ways to build pipeline of employer-sponsored students, as well as with Enrollment Management to explore attractiveness to international enrollment. Recommend EAB assessment and market analysis.

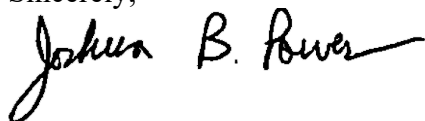
Applied Mathematics (MS) – Since its launch in 2020, program has seen some struggle to scale. Concerned for enrollments that have been under 10. Concept is in principle a good one but may need more focus to program objectives that are easily communicated to potential enrollees and employers, for example in the data analytics arena. Invite the department and college to engage with industry advisories to explore ways to build pipeline of employer-sponsored students, as well as with Enrollment Management to explore attractiveness to international enrollment. Recommend EAB assessment and market analysis.

III. Departmental Merger Consideration

The Dean of the College of Science & Health has recommended the merger of the Department of Environmental Science with the Department of Biology, effective July 1, 2024. His rationale is that Environmental Science cannot be reasonably sustained as a stand alone department from a resource stewardship perspective and that there is synergy between these two departments that have the potential of benefiting both programs.

To the extent that SEPP and/or the Faculty Senate wishes to offer counsel on any of these matters, I invite you to do so prior to March 29.

Sincerely,



Dr. Joshua Powers
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs