Methodology for Identifying Low Productive and Duplicative Programs

Stage 1: Identify Low Productive Programs

Step 1 Identify Programs with Degree Production below Thresholds

Undergraduate

Institutions will review degree information for each academic program for the most recent three years for which degrees-awarded data are available.

- Academic programs at main campuses awarding twenty-four or more degrees over the three-year period and programs at non-main campuses awarding fifteen or more degrees are excluded from further consideration.
- Degrees with differing titles (e.g., B.A., B.S., etc.) for a given major will be combined for purposes of the threshold analysis if there exists a substantial overlap of course work among the different degrees.
- Degrees granted to students with dual majors are counted with each major.
- The review of undergraduate programs excludes interdisciplinary programs.

Graduate

For programs granting degrees at the masters or doctoral level, institutions will review the number of degrees granted in the most recent three years for which degrees-awarded data are available. Academic programs at main campuses granting nine or more masters degrees over the three-year period and programs at non-main campuses awarding six or more degrees are excluded from further consideration, as are programs granting six or more doctoral degrees. In those cases where a program offers both masters and doctoral degrees, if the number of doctoral degrees awarded is above the threshold, the masters program need not meet or exceed the threshold for masters degree programs. The review of graduate programs excludes interdisciplinary programs.

Step 2 Identify Valid Reasons for Low Degree Production

Institutions will review academic degree programs identified in Step 1 and remove those which satisfy one or more of the following conditions:

- The program no longer accepts students and is in the process of being phased out.
- The program was recently approved by the Board of Regents and recently implemented by the institution. Approved academic programs at the baccalaureate and doctoral levels that were implemented more recently than six years prior to the first year for which data are examined will be excluded; those implemented three years prior will be excluded at the masters level. If, however, a campus only offers upper-division courses, a program at the baccalaureate level will be excluded only if it was implemented more recently than four years prior to the first year for which data are examined.
In general, the Board effective approval date, as determined from Board records, will be used as the implementation date. If, however, the Board effective approval date differs from the date on which, according to university records, the program was actually offered, then the date the program was first offered in the campus catalog will be used as the date of implementation.

In the case of programs offered outside of the main campuses, the following determines what implementation date will be used:

- Programs that were approved for a main campus and subsequently moved (in their entirety) to a non-main campus site carry their implementation date with them.
- Programs that were never requested and approved for the main campus but that were requested and approved for the non-main-campus site will use the date of implementation for the non-main campus program as the official date of date of implementation for that program.
- Programs that were approved for the main campus but that also are offered on non-main campuses will be reviewed separately for the main and non-main campuses. The implementation date for the non-main campus program will be the date that program was first offered at that site according to a catalog. Programs for which 50% or more of the courses are offered through information technology are not defined as non-main campus programs, and graduates from these programs will be considered to be graduates from the main campus program. In the case of a collaborative program offered using information technology, unless a single university is responsible for 50% or more of the courses offered through information technology, the program will be classified and reviewed separately as a joint program.

**Step 3  Identify Programs Considered "Basic Academic Subjects"**

For each program failing to satisfy the conditions in Steps 1 and 2, institutions will identify and remove those academic programs considered basic academic subjects. A program is considered a basic academic subject if a majority (twelve or more) of peer institutions grant degrees in the subject. The source of degree data is the most recent IPEDS Degree Completion report. Program matches are on the basis of CIP code and degree level in conjunction with peer program catalog review. Information about these programs will be reported to the board, as described in Stage 3, Step 2, below.

**Stage 2: Provide Expanded Information**

Universities with degree programs not meeting the minimum thresholds identified in Stage 1 will be asked to provide additional information about each program that is not recommended for elimination or consolidation. Information will include the number of degrees awarded during the period under review and assessments of each of the following:

- **Program quality:** Quality may be demonstrated by student, faculty, or overall program quality. Examples of measures include evidence of instructional effectiveness (e.g., student satisfaction), student performance (e.g., scores on national examinations), employer satisfaction, student placement, research/scholarship/creative/artistic excellence, external funding, external recognition (e.g., national rankings, awards), and accreditation.

- **Contribution to university mission:** Universities have complex missions with multiple goals. A program's contribution to the university mission is evidenced by identifying the university goal that the program fulfills.
(e.g., the university goal of providing educational services to an underserved population might be met by a degree that is targeted to a community).

**Contribution to other programs in the university:**

Universities have responsibilities to provide students access to courses and programs of study that support both broad educational goals (such as general education) and specific student needs (such as certificate programs). Evidence of a program’s contribution to other programs in the university includes the number of student credit hours (or full-time equivalent students -- FTE) taught, courses taught that meet general education requirements, students completing minors, students completing certificates, courses required by other majors (e.g., mathematics courses required by engineering), and non-majors in courses required of majors.

**Program uniqueness:**

A program may be important to Arizona by virtue of its unique educational contribution. Uniqueness is evidenced by a distinctive program focus (such as community partnerships, internships, interdisciplinarity, or subject area), differentiation between the program and other programs in the state, and being unique to the university’s service area.

**Program size:**

The program size is indicated by the number of majors enrolled in the three previous years.

**Program costs:**

In units that devote all (or nearly all) of their effort to the program, the fixed cost of the program will be the faculty salaries and the variable costs will be operations and travel.

Units that have program cost accounting systems already in place and that offer multiple programs and/or contribute to other programs in the university should report fixed and variable costs assignable to the program. Units with multiple programs or contributing to other programs in the university without program cost accounting systems should identify the incremental costs associated with the degree program. To estimate the incremental cost, units should identify the additional services provided to students in the program and additional costs associated with those services (e.g., the costs of offering a course open only to majors).

**Accessibility**

A program is more accessible when it is opened to students who, for geographic or other reasons, would not be able to participate in other programs. The measure of access will be the number of students enrolled in the program from rural or otherwise under represented populations.

**Other**
Additional Criteria for Duplicative Programs

Programs failing to satisfy the conditions in Steps 1, 2, and 3 are reviewed for duplication both within each university and between universities. If a low productivity program is duplicative, departments should also provide information related to which of the following criteria are met or, where the criteria are not met, a workplan for meeting the criteria should be provided:

X Alternative delivery systems
Alternative delivery systems have been fully considered and it is determined that this program cannot be delivered off-campus by the universities currently offering the program because of limited resources, because of the need for specialized equipment or library resources, or because for some other reason, the courses that make up the program cannot be delivered at a level of quality comparable to that of the on-campus program.

X Efforts to collaborate
Efforts have been made to collaborate between the universities to offer this program (e.g., joint degrees, shared courses, and team teaching of courses), and to minimize the duplication of programs and courses.

X Other

Stage 3: Recommendations

Step 1: Recommendations for programs not meeting Stage 1, Steps 1 & 2 conditions
Based on the information provided in Stage 2, institutions will provide a recommendation for each program failing to satisfy the conditions in Steps 1 and 2 of Stage 1 about whether it should be retained, eliminated, or in some way modified.

Step 2: Basic Academic Programs
Programs that fail to meet the conditions in Steps 1 & 2 of Stage 1 but that are, following Step 3, classified as basic academic programs, shall be listed, along with the number of degrees awarded, the number of peers offering the program, and the student credit hours generated by the courses required for the program in each of the past three years (which can be compared to the total university student credit hours).

** The Board staff will provide each institution a list of duplicate programs offered by the three Arizona universities.