
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**INFORMATION ITEM: Proposed Revision Of ABOR Policy: 2-203,
 “Academic Program Planning and Implementation
 Authorization” (First Reading)**

ISSUE: The Board is asked to consider the proposed revision of ABOR Policy 2-203 related to the planning and implementation process for new degree programs.

BACKGROUND

- In February 1984, the Regents originally passed policy 2-203, which requires the Board to approve the two-step process for planning and implementation of all new degree programs. There have been several subsequent revisions to this policy. Under the current structure:
 - Prior to coming to the Board, a request to plan or implement a program has first been approved at several levels within the university and has been reviewed by the Chief Academic Officers (CAOs) and appropriate faculty at the other two universities.
 - Universities must request approval from the Board to plan any new academic program.
 - Following approval of planning authorization, a university has 3 years to develop the implementation plan and return to the Board for implementation approval.
- As part of the Board’s Focused Governance initiative and in light of the Changing Directions and University Redesign initiatives, the policy has been reviewed by the CAO’s in order to bring it in line with current practices and the needs of the universities to be more responsive to student and community needs.

DISCUSSION

Streamlining the Program Planning Process

- A policy revision is being requested for ABOR Policy 2-203 to both streamline the academic planning approval process and to more clearly differentiate between the program planning authority and the program implementation approval processes.
- Currently, much of the information requested in the planning authorization proposal is identical to the information requested for implementation approval. This overlap results in redundancy and lack of clarity for the need of a two-step process.
- This proposed simplification of the planning approval process would allow universities to move their planning proposals through more readily and focus more heavily on the implementation issues.

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- Some criteria in the request for planning are more appropriate to the implementation proposal. Defining learning outcomes and defining assessments, required for planning approval, typically occur later in the process and should be included in the implementation proposal. Therefore, it is recommended that the section on learning outcomes be moved to the section on requests for implementing new programs.
- The criteria for planning proposals are more clearly outlined in the proposed language than in the existing policy.

The Program Implementation Review Process

To strengthen and codify the criteria the universities address when preparing the program implementation requests, it is recommended that the criteria be specifically prescribed in the policy. The criteria include:

- Purpose Of The Program
- Relation To University Mission And Strategic Direction
- Defined Learning Outcomes And A Description Of How Those Outcomes Will Be Addressed
- The State's Need For The Program, Including Student Demand
- Analysis Of Similar Programs Offered In The State And Region
- Expected Faculty And Resource Requirements
- Financing And 3-Year Budget

Review of Duplicative Programs

- Both the planning process and the implementation process require additional information for a proposed academic program that duplicates one that is already being offered at another ABOR institution.
- An initial justification for offering a duplicative program is required in the request for planning approval and is reconfirmed in the implementation request.
- This policy revision recommends a modification to the duplicative program review which more accurately reflects a university's considerations when initiating new programs and would be consistent with the differentiated missions of the universities.
- Addressing options for collaborating with another university offering the duplicative program has been moved from the planning process to implementation.

AFFECTED POLICY:

2-203 Academic Degree Program Planning and Implementation

The establishment of any Academic Degree Program requires approval by the Board prior to announcement and implementation.

A. The Academic Degree Program Inventory

1. The Academic Degree Program Inventory includes all academic degree programs which have been approved for planning or for implementation at the respective universities.
2. Requests must be submitted to the Board for approval to plan or to implement new programs. Any program that is going to be reflected in the budget process should be proposed early enough to allow time to evaluate the budgetary impact.
3. Changes to the Academic Degree Program Inventory occur in two stages: first, authorization for planning; and then authorization for implementation. The universities may request an exception to the two-stage process after a collective review by the Chief Academic Officers.

B. Planning Authorization

1. The Board will also review and update the list of programs approved for planning. The state's need for a proposed program and the appropriateness of the university making the request as the best provider of the proposed program are the primary criteria that will be considered in granting approval to plan a new academic degree program. ~~The proposed program information will include defined learning outcomes and an indication of how those outcomes will be assessed.~~ Planning authority granted by the Board will expire three years from the date of initial approval unless extended by the Board.
2. All requests to plan programs SHALL INCLUDE:
 - a. A DESCRIPTION OF THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM AND ITS PLACE WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY'S STRATEGIC GOALS
 - b. THE STATE'S NEED FOR THE PROGRAM
 - c. PROJECTED STUDENT DEMANDS FOR THE PROGRAM
 - d. A DESCRIPTION OF THE STEPS WHICH HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO COMMUNICATE ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE PROGRAM WITH ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP AT THE SISTER UNIVERSITIES, INCLUDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION
 - e. ANTICIPATED NEW RESOURCES NEEDED FOR THE PROGRAM ~~which duplicate existing programs must be supported by analysis of projections for new programs and of data on existing programs, and shall meet the criteria for~~

~~justification of duplicated programs as described in the sections 3(a) through 3(g) below. These requests shall include the number of students served, the need for the program, the relationship to the university mission statements and strategic directions statements, the budget~~

~~and sources of funds, and the faculty and other positions needed to staff the program.~~

3. ~~However,~~ The Board expects substantial justification for all requests for authorization to begin planning a new program that duplicates a program offered by another Arizona public university. The Board will consider the following criteria in reviewing a request for planning authorization for a new degree program that duplicates a degree program offered by another public university in Arizona. ~~It is not necessary for a degree program to meet all of the criteria.~~
 - a. The PROPOSED program is CONSISTENT WITH THE LONG-TERM MISSION AND GOALS OF THE UNIVERSITY PROPOSING THE PROGRAM ~~a basic academic subject normally taught in most universities.~~
 - b. THE PROGRAM INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT AND DELIVERY MODE RESPOND TO THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND GEOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENT DEMAND (E.G., UNMET NEEDS, SPECIAL STUDENT POPULATIONS, DISTANCE LEARNING OPTIONS, ETC.) ~~There is a long-term student demand for the program that cannot be met satisfactorily by the existing program or programs.~~
 - c. ~~The program would attract a large number of nontraditional, older, or part-time students who are place-bound and who are unable to travel to a location where the program is already offered, and the program is unavailable by alternative delivery methods.~~
 - d. ~~Alternative delivery systems have been fully considered and it is determined that this program cannot be delivered off-campus by the university 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 which make up the program cannot be delivered at a level of quality comparable to that of the on-campus program, as required by ABOR Policy 2-205(A)(1).~~

- ~~e. 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.~~
- ~~f. The establishment of the program will not adversely affect the existing program.~~
- ~~g. The resources necessary for the program such as courses, faculty, equipment, and library resources are already available as part of an existing program and the incremental costs for implementing the program are negligible.~~

C. Implementation

1. A university may request, after collective review by the Chief Academic Officers, authorization from the Board to implement any degree program approved for planning. The quality and cost of the proposed program and the university's readiness and ability to support the program are the primary criteria that will be considered.
2. THE IMPLEMENTATION PROPOSAL SHALL ADDRESS THE CRITERIA PROVIDED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION FOR NEW ACADEMIC DEGREES PROGRAMS", PROVIDED ON THE ABOVE WEBSITE ([www. azregents/faculty](http://www.azregents/faculty)), INCLUDING:
 - a. PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM
 - b. RELATION TO THE UNIVERSITY MISSION AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION
 - c. DEFINED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THOSE OUTCOMES WILL BE ADDRESSED
 - d. THE STATE'S NEED FOR THE PROGRAM, INCLUDING STUDENT DEMAND
 - e. ANALYSIS OF SIMILAR PROGRAMS OFFERED IN THE STATE AND REGION
 - f. EXPECTED FACULTY AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS
 - g. FINANCING AND 3-YEAR BUDGET
3. DUPLICATIVE PROGRAMS
 - a. A review of the justification as described in section B.23. above, under which the duplicated program was approved for planning, must show that the rationale continues to be pertinent.

b. THE PROPOSAL SHOULD ADDRESS OPTIONS FOR COURSE/PROGRAM COLLABORATION WITH THE SISTER INSTITUTION(S) OFFERING THE PROGRAM

24. The Board will not consider any university's request for authorization to begin a new degree program which was not previously approved for planning except under circumstances of clearly demonstrated urgency.
45. A university may not admit students to a new program approved for implementation by the Board until substantially all of the funds, as identified in the projected budget approved by the Board, are currently available from existing resources or firmly assured by legislative appropriations or other sources and are committed by the President for the support of the program.
56. All changes to the Board-approved multi-year program budget that, at implementation, exceed ten percent (10%) must be submitted to the Board for approval.

D. Academic Degree Programs Offered by Branch Campuses

1. All academic degree programs authorized by the Board for the main campus may be offered by a branch campus subject to review by the Chief Academic Officers and approval by the Executive Director prior to implementation. Requests must be submitted to the Board for approval to plan or to implement new programs. Any program that is going to be reflected in the budget process should be proposed early enough to allow time to evaluate the budgetary impact. The Executive Director shall report to the Board all academic degree programs approved for branch campuses.
2. Academic degree programs authorized by the Board for a main campus may be requested for implementation by a branch of that main campus without having received prior planning authorization as required by subsection B of this Policy.
3. Academic degree programs requested by a branch campus that are not authorized for the main campus must meet the requirements of subsections B and C of this Policy.

RECOMMENDATION

The proposed changes are submitted for a first reading.