



HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 13, 2009

To: Academic Senate Executive Committee

From: Integrated Curriculum Committee

Re: Discontinuance of Physical Science Major Program

The Program Prioritization process resulted in a number of programs being placed in Category I, Enhance, and Category IV, Restructure or Eliminate. On 23 March 2009 Interim Provost Snyder released his recommendations regarding the future of all of the programs in Category IV and some of those in Category I. These programs were requested by the temporary Academic Planning Committee (APC) to submit a Report responding to the prioritization categorization and the Provost's recommendations to the newly formed Integrated Curriculum Committee (ICC) by 14 Sept. 2009.

This fall, the ICC assumed responsibility for completing the Post-prioritization process. The committee followed the process outlined by last year's ad hoc APC (links to pertinent documents can be found at the end of this memo). The ICC's Academic Master Planning Subcommittee (AMP) was assigned to complete an in-depth review of the program proposals and responses, and make a recommendation to the ICC for programs in Prioritization Category 4 using a university-wide perspective. To accomplish this, the AMP reviewed the recommendations of the prioritization task force, deans, and the provost; program responses to the prioritization report; program proposals requested by the APC and all pertinent documents submitted; and met with a program representative to discuss the proposals and recommendations. The AMP recommendation was then developed and referred to the ICC for discussion.

The AMP/ICC used the following guidelines when formulating the recommendation provided below.

- Begin with the Prioritization Task Force recommendation as the starting point.
- Review Prioritization criteria: alignment with HSU mission and vision, program quality, cost effectiveness, and program demand
- Determine whether the program response provides a compelling case for overriding the recommendations of Prioritization Task Force, Deans, and Provost.
- Consider the ramifications for other programs of overriding Category 4 recommendations, given the original goal of prioritization to change the campus program mix, combined with the current budget crisis and the need to reduce Academic Affairs' base budget.

The Program Prioritization Task Force characterized the Physical Science major as an “Escape Valve” that provides an avenue for students to graduate when they do not satisfy other science degree requirements, and questioned whether such programs are “appropriate for a high-quality academic institution like HSU.” The Dean recommended that the program be eliminated, and the Provost recommended that it be suspended.

In this context, the Department of Physics and Astronomy requests that, if the major in Physical Science is not continued, that the Physical Science major and minor (*i.e.*, the complete Program in Physical Science) be eliminated rather than suspended.

Given these factors, the Integrated Curriculum Committee recommends to the Senate that the major and the minor in Physical Science – the complete Program in Physical Science – be discontinued.

Links to relevant documents:

Post-prioritization process:

<http://www.humboldt.edu/~aavp/Prioritization/Resolution12-08-09-EPAAttachmentPASSEDApproved.pdf>

The Dean’s and Provost’s Recommendations can be found on the Prioritization web site:

<http://www.humboldt.edu/~aavp/Prioritization.html>

The Physical Science Program Report (PR-008) can be found on the ICC Sharepoint Site at <https://its-sharepoint.humboldt.edu/sites/dold/icc/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx>. To log in use your HSU login and password. The report is located in the General Resources folder in the Post Prioritization Reports folder.

Appendix: The relevant sections of the Prioritization, Dean’s, and Provost’s reports (cut and pasted from the documents referenced above):

Prioritization Report: This program does not seem justified given the BS and BA options in Physics. However, elimination of major would not result in cost savings.

Dean: It appears the only justification for this program is as a “bail out” for those few students who can’t finish another physical science degree. **I recommend elimination.**

Provost: The Task Force notes that classes for the degree do not require additional recourses, because they are required for other programs, but questions whether or not the degree is justified given the options in Physics. The Dean recommends elimination. The Department argues that it allows students who do not satisfy other science degrees an avenue to graduate and that it is well suited for students seeking a single-subject credential for science teachers. While there are credentials at the secondary teaching level for both physics and chemistry, this degree program does not meet the standards necessary for admittance into those credential programs. My understanding is that the program would require significant restructuring in order to meet those requirements. I recommend that the program be suspended. The APC should set up a committee to evaluate this recommendation.