Program Moratorium/Reinstatement and Closure Policy

Applies to: All University offices, faculty, staff and students.   Policy #: **ACAD-104**

Policy Statement

Decisions to close a program either temporarily or permanently are made based on defined criteria and careful consideration of the data and existing circumstances of the program as well as the potential future of the program. This policy applies to normal University operating circumstances, and does not apply to programs to be closed, or considered for closure, due to financial exigency as defined by the Faculty Handbook in force.

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the process for temporary or permanent discontinuation of an academic program at Alliant.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Program Closure	Program is permanently discontinued, and all students are supported to complete their programs.
Program Moratorium	Program moratorium is a temporary suspension of a program in order to review and strengthen the program. During the moratorium period new students are not accepted to nor matriculated into the program but the teaching of current students continues
Academic Program	"Program" is defined using the definition from the WASC Glossary: "A systematic, usually sequential, grouping of courses, forming a considerable part, or all, of the requirements for a degree in a major or professional field."
Program Return to Active Status	A program that is returned to active status is a program that was previously in moratorium status that has satisfactorily completed its improvement plan and has successfully addressed issues; the program returns to all normal activity, including active recruitment and enrollment of new students.

Policy Details

I. Shared Commitment to Quality and Collaboration

    A. This policy is written in the context of University values and other policy statements and documents including:

        1. The University's value of accountability.

        2. The Commitment of the University to the Faculty as described in the Faculty Handbook.

        3. An ongoing institutional Program Review process which helps identify program challenges and provides data to programs on a variety of core indicators important to the University.

II. Non-Active Program Statuses

    A. The University defines two changes to the statuses of an active program: 1) program moratorium and 2) program closure.

        1. Moratorium: New enrollment to program is temporarily suspended in order to undergo review, examination, and possible modification. The goal of the moratorium is to strengthen the program in one or more ways. The initial moratorium period is for one year but may be extended to a maximum of three years. Enrolled students continue in their programs.

        2. Closure: Program is discontinued, and all enrolled students are supported to complete their programs during

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a reasonable timeframe.

III. Program Moratorium

A. Reason for Moratorium: A program is placed on moratorium status when there is significant evidence that it is not achieving its goals, the Schools' goals or fully serving students, yet the causes for concern appear to be remediable within one year with focused effort and a reasonable amount of support.

B. Issues Contributing to Consideration of Moratorium Status: A program may be placed on moratorium status for one or more of the following issues:

1. Sanctions, or other unsatisfactory results, from program reviews (internal or external);

2. Inability of the program to enroll qualified students or to cover its direct expenses and direct overhead;

3. High attrition rates/low graduation rates;

4. Lack of qualified faculty or program leadership at the University;

5. Ongoing credible concerns about academic quality;

6. Unsatisfactory student learning outcome achievement levels or inability to demonstrate achievement of student learning outcomes;

7. Inability of the program to meet established standards or achieve established goals of specialty accreditation; and/or

8. Change in University or School mission or areas of emphasis that have been developed in a collaborative process with faculty following University guidelines and that occurred with the review and advice of the Faculty Senate.

C. Responsibility: Regardless of the initiator of the process, it is the Dean's responsibility to manage the proposal and consultation process.

D. Timeline: The timeline for proposal review and decision allows for the consultation and discussion with faculty, students, and affected staff including the scheduling of at least two meetings with both groups after the proposal is made.

E. Process Documentation: Meetings and discussions should be documented and maintained in the Dean's Office.

F. Withdrawal of Proposal: At any point in the process, the Dean may withdraw the proposal for program moratorium and notify the Provost/VPAA in writing of the reason for withdrawal.

G. Period of Moratorium: The moratorium period is initially set for one year, during which time a plan to address reasons for the moratorium and improve the program is developed, including a plan timeline, and implementation is initiated.

1. The improvement plan should be prioritized so that it is completed no later than 3 months after the moratorium begins. The plan must be accepted by the Dean and the Provost. The program must seek input on the plan from program faculty and the Faculty Senate.

2. The program begins the improvements once the plan is approved.

3. It is the responsibility of the Dean and the Program Director to monitor progress on the plan and adjust the activities as necessary to meet the plan's goals during the program's moratorium year.

4. At the end of the first year, report on progress is incorporated into the program annual report.

5. If there is evidence that the plan is on track but not completed, the Dean may approve one or two 1-year extensions to the moratorium for a maximum of three years in this status.

6. At the end of the moratorium period the program is reinstated to active status as long as changes have been successfully made.

7. If the plan is not developed, is unsuccessful, if sufficient progress is not being made at any time during the moratorium period, or if the plan is not resolving the challenges of the program, the dean may initiate program closure.

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H. Ongoing Authorization and University Publications: The program remains authorized to be offered at the University during the moratorium. It remains on the list of programs offered by the University in the catalog or other publications, although it should be noted that it is not accepting students during that period.

I. Admission: New students are not recruited, admitted into or transferred into programs in moratorium status until the program has been reinstated to active status.

J. Currently Enrolled Students: Students enrolled in the program at the time the moratorium is approved will continue to receive all courses and academic support needed to complete their programs in a timely manner.

K. Program Return to Active Status after Moratorium: Programs that have successfully completed the moratorium improvement plan and are demonstrating that issues have been successfully addressed are returned to active status using the Curriculum Action process.

IV. Program Return to Active Status

A. Process and Approval: Return to active status requires initiation by the program director or school Dean when the improvement plan is completed. The Program Director submits evidence of plan completion to the Dean and the Provost/VPAA on the Curriculum Action Form accompanied by all supporting documentation of the accomplishment of the plan. The Dean reviews the documentation, and if the plan has been accomplished, approves the return to active status. The Provost/VPAA also reviews and must approve return to active status.

B. Admission: Students are actively recruited and enrolled into the program; students may transfer into the program from other programs through the standard transfer processes.

V. Program Closure

A. Reason for Closure: A program is proposed for closure when there is significant evidence it will be unable to achieve its goals or remain viable, when there are significant changes in the environment which make it difficult for the program to continue to operate effectively, or when the plan to improve the program that was attempted during the moratorium was unsuccessful.

B. Issues that May Contribute to Consideration of Program Closure: A program may be considered for closure for one or more of the following issues:

1. Failure of improvement plan developed under moratorium status.

2. Changes in the student recruitment/employment market which have reduced or limited the program's ability to recruit students or remain viable in the short or at medium term;

3. Changes in the accreditation or higher education environment which affect the program's ability to operate effectively or provide the education originally intended;

4. Changes in the cost structure (amounts and types of fixed and variable costs) which limit the school or University's ability to effectively resource the program (e.g., faculty, facilities, or marketing resources required; partnership revenue sharing agreements);

5. Sanctions, or other unsatisfactory results from program reviews (internal or external) that the program is unable to address even with a reasonable level of resources;

6. Strategic re-prioritization of resources within the School or University based on strategic planning processes resulting in the need to close programs;

7. Failure to graduate students at an appropriate level;

8. Serious, persistent and/or unresolved credible concerns about academic quality;

9. Unsatisfactory student learning outcome achievement levels or inability to demonstrate achievement of student learning outcomes;

10. Inability of the program to meet established standards or achieve established goals of specialty accreditation; and/or

11. Change in University or School mission or areas of emphasis that have been developed in a collaborative

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process with faculty following university guidelines and that occurred with the review and advice of the Faculty Senate.

C. Responsibility: Regardless of the initiator of the process, it is the Dean's responsibility to manage the proposal and consultation process.

D. Timeline: The timeline for proposal review and decision allows for the consultation and discussion including the scheduling of at two meetings with faculty and one with students after the proposal is made.

E. Process Documentation: Meetings and discussions should be documented and maintained in the Dean's Office.

F. Withdrawal of Proposal: At any point in the process, the Dean may withdraw the proposal for program closure and notify the Provost/VPAA in writing of the reason for withdrawal.

G. Appeals: Appeals of the decision by the Provost/VPAA to close a program may be made by the program faculty to the University President on the basis of process or content concerns. The Appeal must be filed within 2 weeks of the closure decision. The President has three weeks to respond to the Appeal. The decision of the President is final.

H. Implementation of Program Closure/Teach-out: If a program has been approved for closure, a detailed closure plan based on the timetable outlined in the Curriculum Action Form will be developed by the relevant Program Director, the Dean, and other relevant administrators and staff as quickly as possible, and no later than 60 calendar days of the final closure approval date.

   1. This plan will take into account contracts and agreements in place and other University employment policies. The plan will address issues of affected faculty, students, and staff.

I. Current students and any incoming students will be notified of program closure as quickly as possible and as soon as the options for them have been determined. Students will be taught out as per prior agreements or MOUs, or, if no such agreements exist, then for a reasonable amount of time relative to the original program length. Students will work with an advisor to review their options, which, in addition to finishing their program at Alliant, may include transfer into a similar program, transfer to the same program at another location, or transfer to another institution.

J. Interaction with Other Policies in Force: This policy is not intended to contradict in any way the Collective Bargaining Agreement or any faculty contract, or any other University policies currently in force.

VI. Re-Opening a Closed Program

A. Process and Approval: Reinstatement of a closed program requires re-approval of the program using the New Program Curriculum Action Process in force at the time at Alliant, including all approvals.

Procedure

I. Moratorium Decision Process: Marking a decision to place a program on Moratorium status takes place through the standard University Curriculum Action process.

A. Step 1: Proposal: If the program appears to meet the criteria to initiate moratorium, a program faculty member, program academic administrator, or the relevant Dean have the option to propose program moratorium. This proposal takes place in a letter to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA).

   1. Proposal Data and Materials: The Moratorium status proposal should be undertaken using recent data since the program's initial activation or the prior three-year period, whichever is less, including program Annual Reports and any accreditation information and salient external environmental factors.

   2. Documents forming the basis of program moratorium proposal must be circulated to program faculty prior to the consultation meetings.

B. Step 2: Consultation and Discussion: At least two meeting with at least 1-week notice must be scheduled with faculty to discuss the reasons for the proposed moratorium. Faculty in the program should be notified of the

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proposal for moratorium within two calendar weeks after the notice to the Provost so consultation and discussion may begin.

C. Step 3: Faculty Senate Review: Proposal for Moratorium status for a program must be reviewed by the Faculty Senate which may make recommendations on the proposed moratorium.

D. Step 4: Summary Materials/Curriculum Action Form: Results of discussions with program constituents should be incorporated in the review process and a brief summary, including minutes of meetings held, must be attached to the Curriculum Action Form.

E. Step 5: Dean Decision: After the discussions have taken place and the materials reviewed, the Dean will make a final decision on the proposal. Final approval must be provided by the Provost/VPAA.

F. Step 6: Provost Decision; The Curriculum Action Form with all materials goes to the Provost/VPAA for final decision. The Provost's approval is required for moratorium, consistent with all curriculum actions.

II. Closure Decision Process: Making a decision to close a program takes place through the standard University Curriculum Action Process. The steps are as follows:

A. Step 1: Proposal for Consideration of Closure: If the program appears to meet the criteria to propose closure, either the Program Director, the program faculty, or the relevant Dean have the option to propose consideration of program closure. This proposal is a letter to the Provost/VPAA.

1. After Moratorium (if applicable): the program may have been placed on moratorium status requiring an improvement plan. If this has occurred and the plan is not completed or implemented, closure will be initiated by the Dean.

2. No Moratorium: The Program Director, faculty or Dean may initiate the process.

3. Proposal Data and Materials: The closure status proposal should be undertaken using recent data since the program's initial activation or the prior three year period, whichever is less, including program Annual Reports, results from any moratorium process if such a process took place within the past five years, and any accreditation information and salient external environmental factors.

4. Documents: documents forming the basis of program closure proposal must be circulated to program faculty prior to the consultation meetings.

B. Step 2: Initial Consultation with Program Faculty and Faculty Senate:

1. Faculty in the program should be notified of the proposal for closure as soon as possible after the consideration of closure notice to the Provost so consultation and discussion may begin.

2. If the program faculty did not propose the consideration of program closure in Step 1 above, the Dean will hold at least one scheduled consultation meeting with a 2-week notice with the program faculty regarding the factors that led to the proposal of program closure. The factors will be one or more of the issues in Section V.B. of the Policy Details above.

3. The Faculty Senate must also be consulted.

   a. Documents and/or information that form the basis for the closure proposal should be provided to the Senate.

   b. If it so chooses, the Senate may take a formal vote of Senate members to represent the Senate's position on the proposed closure.

   c. A report of results should include the number of Senators who chose to vote; at least 50% of those who voted will be senators who do not have a conflict of interest in the vote.

   d. This consultation and the Senate's position in vote, if it chooses to take a formal action, will inform the final decision whether to move forward with program closure and be incorporated in all the materials if the proposal moves forward The parties have three weeks in which to provide their feedback and input.

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C. Step 3: Decision: The Dean will review all input and make a determination whether to continue the process to determine closure, or whether to discontinue the process and withdraw the program from closure consideration.

D. Step 4: Formal Notification of Proposed Closure and Formal Comment Period:

1. If a decision is made to go forward with the formal closure process, the Dean must provide a written notice to the program faculty and program director outlining the timeframe for when the program is proposed to be closed, the timetable and reasons for closure.

2. Data and the rationale for the closure will be part of a Curriculum Action Form used to process the program closure. Concerns raised during the consultation process should be identified and addressed in the documents.

3. A four-week comment period for program faculty and students and the Program Director opens at the time of formal notification. During this time, comments regarding the closure may be made directly to the Dean.

4. The Dean will hold no fewer than two scheduled consultation meetings with a 2-week notice, one with faculty and one with students regarding the factors that led to the proposal of program closure.

5. The Dean must provide a copy of the Curriculum Action Form and all supporting documentation to the Program Director and program faculty following review of these materials by the Provost/VPAA.

6. Faculty Handbook and CBA: The timing of the notification must conform to required notifications, if any, specified in the Faculty Handbook and/or Collective Bargaining Agreement. Those initiating or approving the closure action should refer to those documents prior to determining the appropriate timetable for closure.

E. Step 5: Summary of Issues/Curriculum Action Form: The Dean will incorporate a summary of issues submitted in the comments into the Curriculum Action form for the closure decision process. The Curriculum Action form must also incorporate relevant program data and information (e.g., enrollments, outcomes, financial information) and is forwarded with all comments and rebuttal information to all reviewing parties as outlined below in Step 6.

F. Step 6: Formal Notification to Faculty Senate and Faculty Assembly/Assemblies: The Curriculum Action form with all supporting information is forwarded to the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Assembly (or Assemblies) of which the program faculty are members for information and for preparation of any further action in the process.

G. Step 7: Dean Decision: The Dean will make a determination to close the program or withdraw the proposal.

1. If the proposal is withdrawn, the program remains active.

2. If the Dean decides to move forward with closure, the materials are forwarded to the Academic Council.

H. Step 8: Academic Council Review and Recommendation: The Curriculum Action Form with any additional information from the Faculty Senate and Faculty Assemblies will be brought to the Academic Council for review. Written copies of the CAF and all supporting information including all comments and rebuttal information and the input of the Faculty Senate and Faculty Assembly/Assemblies will be shared with the Academic Council which can review and comment on the proposal and make recommendations to the Provost/VPAA.

I. Step 9: Provost/VPAA Decision: The Provost/VPAA will review all materials including the recommendation of the Academic Council and make the decision on program closure. The Provost's approval is required for closure, consistent with all curriculum actions.

J. Step 10: Program closure is brought to Board of Trustees for final approval.

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Responsibilities

Position or Office	Responsibilities
Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs	Maintain curriculum action documentation Make final decision on program moratorium and closure Jointly, with dean, accept moratorium plan Approve return to active status
Deans	Manage the moratorium or closure process Maintain record of process documentation Approve moratorium Jointly, with Provost, approve, accept moratorium plan Review and approve return to active status post-moratorium Provide written notification to program faculty and program director regarding program proposal comment period Provide curriculum action form with relevant information on program closure to Faculty Senate and Appropriate Faculty Assembly
Program Directors	May initiate program moratorium or closure
Academic Council	Review closure curriculum action and recommend decision on closure to Provost/SVPAA
Program Faculty	May initiate program closure Review and provide consultation on proposed program closure
President	Hear appeals to program closure
Faculty Assemblies	Review and Consult on proposal for program closure
Faculty Senate	Review and make recommendations on program moratorium Review and consult on proposal for program closure
Board of Trustees	Approve Program closures

Resources

Appendix A – Comparison of Moratorium and Closure

Contacts

Subject	Office
Questions about the Policy	Provost/Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs

Responsible Office   Academic Affairs/Provost Office

History

Issued: 04/25/2004
Revision: 05/27/14 by Steering Committee
Revision: 01/08/2021

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APPENDIX A

Proposal	For Moratorium	For Closure
Reasons for	-Evidence that the program is not achieving goals or fully serving students -Some indicators the program can be successful with focus and plan involving changes to the program or program operations with reasonable level of support	-Significant evidence the program will be unable to achieve goals or remain viable -Moratorium plan failed
Issues Contributing to Consideration	-sanctions, accreditation issues -poor program results or quality -change in School or University mission	-failure of moratorium plan -changes in markets that will not return -changes in accreditation landscape -changes in cost structure -strategic reprioritization of School of University -sanctions, accreditation issues -poor program results or quality -change in School of University mission
Responsibility to manage process	Dean	Dean
Process Documentation	-Meetings and discussions should be documented -Requires evidence and data	-Meetings and discussions should be documented -Requires evidence and data
Proposal Process	-6-Step Process -Initiated with written notice to Provost -Consultation with faculty -Review by Faculty Senate -Summary of Issues and Materials -Dean Decision -Provost Decision	-10-Step Process -Initiated with written notice to Provost -Initial consultation with faculty and Faculty Senate -Decision after initial consultation -Formal Notification of proposed closure and Formal Comment Period -Summary of issues/Curriculum Action Form -Formal Notification Faculty Senate and Faculty Assemblies -Dean Decision -Academic Council Review and Recommendation -Provost Decision -Board Approval
Withdrawal of Proposal	Anytime in the process	Anytime in the process
Appeal by Faculty	No	Yes, to President