

# Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Summer Research Committee on Academic Program Examination / Reorganization, Summer 2020 – Report

9/14/2020

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## Executive summary

PSU faces a significant budget shortfall. When cuts in academic units become necessary, the faculty and administration must collaboratively approach such reductions systematically and transparently, using a clear set of priorities and principles. Decisions about reorganizing or eliminating programs should be data-informed and principle-driven, with meaningful and formative faculty participation.

The Senate should work closely with PSU-AAUP if the administration moves forward to eliminate positions, and no elimination of positions should take place without the university declaring exigency and invoking contractual protections in Articles 22 and 23 of the PSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement.

All financial and curricular changes must be scrutinized to understand how they affect stakeholders across a range of statuses and identities, with the goal of eliminating systematic racism and discrimination in our institution and curriculum. Careful consideration should also address how decisions affect adjuncts and other faculty and staff in situations of precarious employment. We must also prioritize our access mission and maintain affordability for our students.

This committee suggests options for how the Faculty Senate could engage with budget cuts that affect the curriculum:

- Current situation: Faculty Senate currently has procedures in place regarding program moratoriums and elimination. (These procedures will remain in place even if the Senate chooses to adopt Options 1 or 2.) Faculty participation is reactive and after-the-fact.
- Option 1: Recommend principles and priorities to OAA to guide decision-making; share information through University-wide town hall meetings and solicit input from faculty; engage in discussions with Deans about budget cuts choices at the level of Colleges and Schools.
- Option 2: Implement a full-scale academic program array review, with rubrics and criteria for cuts. Given the challenges faced by the Academic Program Prioritization effort in 2013, we advise against Option 2.

We recommend implementing a formative, inclusive, participatory process such as that outlined in Option 1.

Communication regarding reorganization and elimination should be frequent and transparent, and should precede and inform decision-making. Faculty conversations and participation should take place at multiple levels. This committee suggests that Senate and OAA consider holding professionally mediated interactions of the following types:

- University-level townhall meetings about budgeting and the allocation of cuts among Colleges and Schools

- College- and School-level interactions about budgeting and allocation of cuts between Departments and units. These conversations could focus on constructing college-level strategic plans with goals and measurable outcomes in situations where these do not already exist.

In order to plan for the future despite current financial austerity, this committee recommends that Senate consider the following initiatives:

- Discuss in Graduate Council the initiative to standardize, strengthen, and better publicize the “affiliate faculty” status for mentoring graduate students in different programs, or establish a graduate faculty in the Graduate School, with the ultimate objective of enabling faculty who are active in research, scholarship, and creative activities to mentor and supervise graduate students, even if they have no graduate program in their unit, or if their unit’s graduate program is eliminated.
- In the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, or in an ad hoc committee, review and revise undergraduate BA/BS requirements (perhaps with future consideration for General Education requirements) for streamlining and efficiency.
- Form a committee to support existing interdisciplinary degrees and investigate the creation of new ones at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Interdisciplinary degrees can attract new students, increase faculty collaboration, and create efficiencies.

These initiatives will move Portland State toward the future of higher education and will foster student success.

## I. Introduction

### Committee Members

- FS Committee Chairs or representatives: Alexander Sager (EPC), Mitchell Cruzan (BC), Peter Chaille (UCC), Paul Loikith (GC), Shirley Jackson (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion advocate), Michele Gamburd, Chair (SC)
- Faculty members chosen by the Committee on Committees from among nominations and self-nominations by faculty: Leopoldo Rodriguez, Karin Magaldi, Veronica Hotton, Wayne Wakeland
- Administration members proposed by the Provost: Kathi Ketcheson (OIRP), Brian Sandlin (OAA), Linda George (UNST), Rossitza Wooster (Graduate School), Anna Law (Advising), Andreen Morris (OAA).

### Charge and process

Portland State University anticipates budget cuts due to declining enrollment and economic woes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. With the Provost’s encouragement and support, during spring 2020, the Faculty Senate authorized a committee to work during the summer to plan how to respond to the budget situation in a way to maximize shared governance and faculty participation. Through the committee selection process, we strove to provide a wide range of governance experience, expertise, and representation from various colleges, categories of faculty, and disciplinary backgrounds. The committee was tasked with doing research, gathering data, and making suggestions for consideration by the Faculty Senate in fall 2020. The committee charge is quoted in full below:

- *Envision* and recommend a framing set of guidelines based on PSU's values and mission, with an emphasis on applying a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens
- *Envision* and recommend models of communication and collaboration among relevant constituents and groups (faculty, administration, staff, students, union, board) to ensure transparency, representation, and participation at all the different institutional levels (from

- faculty senate to units)
- *Explore* theoretical and practical models for reorganization of academic programs, including models put in place by comparator institutions.
- *Gather* evidence and data (quantitative and qualitative) about PSU's Academic Programs with the help of OIRP and other relevant PSU administrative offices.

## Challenges

Portland State University's budget and its academic offerings depend upon each other. PSU faces budget shortfalls due to enrollment declines and state budget cuts. An ongoing hiring freeze and other financial decisions made by the administration are affecting the curriculum in ways that require faculty oversight.

Outright elimination or moratoria of programs is governed by Faculty Senate processes, and elimination of faculty positions is covered by contractual protections in Articles 22 and 23 of the PSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement. No elimination of positions should take place without the University declaring exigency and invoking these protections.

The Faculty Senate is also concerned, however, with budget reductions *within* programs. Faculty losses in departments and units due to retirements and resignations may undermine the ability to offer graduate degrees and undergraduate majors, minors, and certificates to students. Students may encounter delays in accessing needed courses, and the thinning of instruction may undermine the ability of students to achieve learning goals within their degrees. In addition, at the undergraduate level, departments and units suffering cuts may not be able to offer courses for BA/BS requirements as frequently as before. Similarly, cuts to University Studies (UNST) and the Honors College may hamper access to courses that undergraduate students need for their General Education (GenEd) requirements.

The hiring freeze is saving money, but the resulting cuts are not at all strategic. If further cuts in academic units become necessary, the faculty and administration will need to approach reductions collaboratively, systematically, and transparently, using a clear set of priorities and principles.

## Participation vs. The "Circular Firing Squad"

The summer committee noted two conflicting priorities. On the one hand, people should participate in the decisions that affect them; this ideal underlies the principle of shared governance. On the other hand, it is difficult for a group of people collectively to decide which of them may experience the loss of treasured programs, colleagues, and jobs. Such discussions (not to mention actual cuts) threaten people's sense of self-worth, undermining the value of their discipline and the importance of their career's goals and achievements.

Leaving the choices about reductions and cuts solely to the Provost and Deans is an abdication of faculty responsibility for the curriculum. Chairs will engage department faculty in decisions about their unit, but such decisions are at a local level. On the other hand, large-scale meetings could devolve into angry free-for-alls. Although faculty might agree on abstract principles and priorities, implementing tough decisions will be challenging in practice. Faculty participation is desired and required, but it is difficult (if not impossible) to achieve consensus within a diverse faculty regarding which elements of the University and its curriculum are core, strong, or essential and which are peripheral, weak, or expendable.

Portland State has already experienced the challenges related to elimination of programs. In the early 1990s, following implementation of a State property tax limitation measure, the university eliminated or

reorganized academic units through a process that included administrators and faculty. A description of this process and the discussions can be found in the [Faculty Senate archives](#) and in the [data files affiliated with this report](#).

In 2013, PSU undertook an [Academic Program Prioritization \(APP\) process](#). After two years, the process concluded with no prioritization or changes to programs or units. Accompanying documents and recent interviews with participants outline the initiation and eventual abandonment of the initiative.

Participants interviewed recently generally agreed that the following factors affected the result:

- No immediate need: there was no budget or enrollment crisis at that time.
- Key decision makers were not involved: decisions in academic units normally involve deans, but none were included.
- A strategic plan was not in place to guide the process, so identification of priorities was difficult.
- Disagreement on why or how to engage in the process.
- No culture of review at University level: The program review process was not functioning at that time.
- No clear action plan for results.

The APP experience reminded people of a “circular firing squad” in which discussions quickly led to defensive posturing and the marshalling of all types and sources of data to defend existing positions.

In light of the current need for a collaborative process around reductions and cuts, we recommend that Senate not repeat the failed experiment of APP but craft a different approach instead. This report identifies elements that may contribute to a workable plan while recognizing the inherent difficulty of the project.

### Revisions to Holistic Requirements

In order to plan for cuts, we must know where we wish to go in the future. Budgetary reductions and curricular revisions should not stand in the way of our progress. This committee emphasizes the importance of taking a holistic view of the graduate and undergraduate curriculum in order to plan for needed revisions.

Practical and procedural difficulties arise in assessing and revising elements of curriculum that span the university and thus fall outside departmental and school purview. PSU has well-developed and frequently practiced processes for adding and changing some curricular elements. New courses, new programs, and changes to existing courses and programs regularly flow through the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and Graduate Council. Departmental internal yearly assessment activities and activities related to external Academic Program Review prompt the faculty to engage in periodic evaluation of their majors, minors, and certificates. Our accrediting body (the NWCCU) and accrediting bodies of various professional schools provide some external scrutiny, but faculty do not systematically or regularly look at our shared general curriculum from the inside.

PSU has not taken part in a large-scale review of other elements of our undergraduate curriculum (BA/BS requirements and general education requirements) since the early 1990s, when a faculty committee worked for several years to plan what is now our University Studies / General Education curriculum. Since that time, a number of motions (proposed by the Academic Requirements Committee and approved by the Faculty Senate) have created ad hoc alterations to the curriculum. Similarly, graduate education receives faculty attention at the departmental and program level, but faculty rarely review the aggregate policies.

This committee recommends that the Faculty Senate consider systematizing and streamlining both graduate and undergraduate requirements. This initiative will provide students with more “legible” (clearer and more accessible) paths to degrees while clarifying core curricular areas to protect from cuts. This committee also recommends steps to create interdisciplinary degrees at the graduate and undergraduate level and enhance faculty supervision of existing interdisciplinary degrees.

## II. Principles

In the face of budget cuts, the committee recommends that future Faculty Senate committees consider adopting a set of principles such as those suggested below. (For a full list of the summer committee’s principles, see Appendix A.)

1. Preserve the value that people should participate in making the decisions that affect them.
2. Create a transparent, participatory process for respectful, data-informed interactions about how best to fulfill PSU’s academic mission as we contemplate and implement changes.
3. Preserve and enhance university links to the community through recruitment of local students, community-based learning, research, service, and outreach opportunities, as embodied in PSU’s long-standing motto “Let knowledge serve the city.”
4. Preserve the core academic mission of offering students a high-quality and well-rounded liberal education focusing on critical thinking, literacy and numeracy, equity and social justice, and civic and ethical responsibility.
5. Preserve access and affordability for students, especially first-generation college students and minority students.
6. Invest in faculty and understand their work as an integrated engagement in teaching, service, outreach, research, scholarship, and other creative activities.
7. Recruit and retain BIPOC faculty, staff, administrators, and students to realize PSU’s goals in diversity, equity, and inclusion.
8. Assure a campus climate in which all members feel safe, appreciated, and welcome.
9. Create an academic structure that enhances ongoing financial stability while preserving University areas with potential for future growth.

## III. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The committee held a discussion of diversity, equity, and inclusion early in the summer and carefully considered how each proposed change or process could affect stakeholders across a range of statuses and identities. We are sensitive to the long history and continuing legacy of racial and ethnic oppression in the United States as played out on the west coast, in the Pacific Northwest, and in Portland in particular. We urge the Faculty Senate, and Portland State as a whole, to engage actively in widespread changes to address systemic racism in our institution and its curriculum.

As a guiding principle for the work facing Faculty Senate in the upcoming academic year, we recommend that leaders preserve the value that people should participate in making the decisions that affect them. In addition, all proposed changes to academic structures should be assessed with regard to how they affect a variety of campus communities, particularly individuals from racial and ethnic minorities. We also recommend special consideration for how proposed changes may affect first-generation college students, as well as adjuncts, other faculty, and staff in situations of precarious employment.

Considering PSU's access mission, special care should be taken to preserve affordability for students in terms of tuition, affordable textbooks, and other needed equipment and supplies. In addition, providing affordable childcare will facilitate enrollment for students who have children.

During the 2020-2021 academic year, we should create opportunities for initiatives around equity, diversity, and inclusion and work to assure that our campus climate feels welcoming to all members of our community. The recent decision to disarm campus public security officers is a welcome step in this direction.

Finally, we must recognize our university's leadership role in Portland and consider PSU's long-standing motto "Let knowledge serve the city" when evaluating changes to academic structures. We should strive to preserve and enhance University links to all parts of the Portland community through community-based learning, research, service, and outreach opportunities.

#### IV. Program Restructuration, Elimination, and Suspension

Responding to the challenge of budget cuts and their potential impact on the restructuring and elimination of programs, the committee considered how to accomplish the needed conversations under a spirit of collaboration and shared governance between administrators and faculty. We believe that early and formative faculty participation will lead to better decisions and open up possibilities for innovation and for strengthening our programs and institutions in the long run.

We present the current procedures and two further options regarding the Senate's role in program restructuring and elimination:

- **Current situation:**
  - With respect to cuts and moratoria: In the existing Faculty Senate process, the faculty as a whole does not take a formative role in the restructuring and/or elimination of programs. Initiative rests with the Provost, Deans, Department Chairs, and people directly involved in programs. The Senate has established procedures for program moratoria and elimination (See Appendix B and [affiliated files](#)). Senate Committees weigh in after programs have been identified as candidates for restructuring or elimination. In a budget reduction scenario, this committee feels that in the faculty needs to have earlier and more formative input into decisions.
  - With respect to program review and strategic planning: PSU currently engages in a variety of assessment and planning processes and gathers data on a number of indicators. Key elements of these processes are summarized below as references and resources. This committee recommends incorporating existing practices and priorities when planning for restructuring or elimination.
- **Option 1:** Recommend principles and priorities to OAA to guide decision-making; set up meetings to share information and surveys to solicit input from faculty; create formal opportunities for conversations and participation in decisions at the level of Colleges and Schools.
- **Option 2:** Propose a process for reviewing programs across campus to guide decision-making; coordinate with existing review processes. This process could either focus on programs that the Provost and Deans have selected for restructuring, moratorium, or elimination or could be conceived more broadly. Given the difficulties encountered in 2013 with the Academic Program Prioritization process, this committee does not put much faith in Option 2.

Regarding participatory interactions, the committee recommends that the Faculty Senate consider a menu of options (discussed in Section V, below), including surveying the faculty and organizing sessions to convey information and listen to feedback. Keeping the lines of communication open will enhance transparency. In addition, the committee recommends that the Faculty Senate, in partnership with OAA, organize opportunities at the level of the College and School for faculty to discuss and proposed cuts, moratoria, or eliminations with their Dean and other faculty in their division. *Early and frequent interactions will amplify the sharing of information and ideas and enhance the sense of participation and ownership faculty will have over the process.*

### Existing Procedures and Regulatory Requirements for Program Moratoria and Elimination

Current shared governance procedures impose significant constraints on how programs can be suspended or eliminated. These practices will remain in place unless the Senate chooses to put them in abeyance while implementing more stringent and pro-active initiatives.

#### Program Moratorium (Suspension of Admission)

A program moratorium suspends admission into a program while it remains active, and can lead to the program's eventual elimination. Historically, the Faculty Senate was not involved in reviewing the requests to put a program on moratorium, but in May 2020, Faculty Senate approved a [resolution](#) about the program moratorium process to:

1. Clarify expectations should the request originate at the Dean's level;
2. Incorporate Faculty Senate Committees in the review process (the Educational Policy Committee, Budget Committee, and either the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee or Graduate Council), though the Provost retains final decision-making authority; and
3. Articulate that programs on moratorium will need to submit an annual report/check-in and should not expect to remain on moratorium for longer than three years without additional review.

#### Academic Units

The May 2020 Faculty Senate [resolution](#) also updated the procedure for creation, alternation, or elimination of an academic unit. The three processes now have distinct forms (rather than all being submitted with the same form) and documented conversations with faculty are now required as part of the submission. All forms continue to route through the Educational Policy Committee, and the Budget Committee if a major alteration, for review.

#### Academic Program Eliminations

The process for fully eliminating an academic program is formally initiated through a program elimination form in the online curriculum management system (OCMS), and it will route through the standard curricular review process. Once the Senate approves an elimination, PSU also notifies the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) as per their requirements.

#### Budgetary Decisions and Shared Governance Procedures

It became clear during the 2019-2020 academic year that there are budgetary decisions that in the past may not have been submitted through the procedures outlined above, but should have been, or at least should have been initiated earlier. Although there will continue to be ambiguity in this realm, collaborative discussions between faculty and administration must occur to ensure the University moves forward strategically, particularly in difficult financial times.



### Intersection with Regulatory Obligations

PSU is responsible for ensuring that we continue to offer programs students can complete as advertised. NWCCU requires us to have a [teach-out plan](#) when phasing out a program that shows how we are holding the students harmless. (Programs with no currently-enrolled students do not require a teach-out.) The earlier we begin collaborative discussions about potentially phasing out a program, the better we are able to come together collaboratively to meet this goal.

### Existing Program Review Practices and Strategic Plans

As the Faculty Senate considers crafting priorities and principles, and if it opts to conduct a comprehensive or partial program array review, this committee recommends seeking efficiencies by tying in with current practices of assessment, program review, and strategic planning. We summarize some of the key areas in which faculty and administration have already invested time and thought in organizing processes and priorities.

### Academic Program Review (APR)

The APR process at Portland State is a seven-year cycle that begins with an extensive self-study. The [PSU Academic Program Review Guidelines](#) request information in the following areas:

- Section I. Centrality to the PSU mission
- Section II. Quality of Instruction and Curriculum
- Section III. Quality of Scholarly and Creative Work
- Section IV. Student Success
- Section V. Assessment of Student Achievement
- Section VI. Cost Effectiveness, Program Productivity, and Level of Institutional Support
- Section VII. Graduate Programs

The self-study is followed by an external review by at least two reviewers, who write a report. The program and Dean discuss the findings of the self-study and agree upon a set of goals and objectives and record them on an action plan. The program and Dean submit these three items (the self-study, external review, and action plan) to OAA for review by the Provost and Vice Provosts. The Provost is to have regular follow ups with the Dean to discuss progress on the APR action plans. The APR is, in theory, a tool for the program and administration to agree on goals and work to attain them.

Several impediments stand in the way of using APR reviews to guide resource allocation process. First, the APR process has been suspended for the 2020-2021 academic year due to lack of administrative staff to follow up on the reports and a mismatch between the report structure and current NWCCU guidelines. In addition, the seven-year cycle in the review process does not provide adequate information about the current status of programs. Nonetheless, past reports provide historical context, and existing processes could help set priorities and principles.

### Learning Goals and Internal Assessment Processes

Any decisions affecting graduate and undergraduate programs should be informed by a comprehensive study of the curricular success of particular courses and programs. Instruction at PSU works to achieve Campus-wide Learning Outcomes and University Studies Goals (see Appendix C). In addition, individual programs develop learning outcomes, regularly assess student work against these outcomes, and make improvements to the program as a result. For example, the University Studies (UNST) program has had a long and outstanding record of [assessment](#) and focus on its learning goals. These campus-wide and

programmatic outcomes, and assessment thereof, should figure into any large review of campus programs.

### Strategic Plan and Lists of Criteria

In evaluating potential areas for reduction, consideration should be given to the goals of the [PSU Strategic Plan](#): (1) elevate student success, 2) advance excellence in teaching and research, 3) extend our leadership in community engagement, 4) expand our commitment to equity, and 5) innovate for long-term stability. Each of these goals has associated initiatives and should be used as part of any rubric designed and implemented to evaluate success. Criteria used by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee for the evaluation of new course and program proposals may also be useful. (A draft rubric is available in the supplemental materials, should the Senate choose to move forward with Option 2.)

### Data from the Office of Institutional Research and Planning (OIRP)

PSU's Office of Institutional Research and Planning gathers and analyzes a vast array of data regarding academic programs and student enrollment. A list of applicable reports is provided in the [supplemental material associated with this report](#) (also see Appendix D).

### Models from other institutions

We also recommend that the Faculty Senate look closely at how other institutions have approached program prioritization. Sarah Carrigan at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro provides a useful [Academic Program Prioritization Literature Summary](#). In addition, the associated data file includes materials from Southern Connecticut State University regarding their comprehensive review of graduate programs.

### Recommendations

This committee recommends that decisions about restructuring, eliminating, and prioritizing programs should not be based on narrow metrics that consider only Student Credit Hours (SCH), enrollment, and/or revenue. Portland State University's [Mission](#) affirms that our institution promotes access, inclusion, and equity as pillars of excellence and that we are committed to curiosity, collaboration, stewardship, and sustainability. It also affirms that considerations of equity should not be siloed; rather, they should be at the core of decision-making and the responsibility and focus of everyone involved. Decisions about program cuts and eliminations should explicitly address how they affect our ability as an institution to achieve these learning outcomes. A campus-wide effort to determine curricular areas for reduction and elimination must bear in mind that specific programs and courses can play important and critical roles in the retention and graduation of our students. Others may be particularly important in providing students relevant experience in their fields through community-based learning and internships. For all these reasons, justification for retaining or eliminating programs should not be made solely on the basis of revenue or expense.

### Option 1: Principles, Priorities, Participation

In addition to relying on existing procedures, this committee recommends that the Senate consider adopting additional plans. One option for the Faculty Senate is to recommend principles and priorities to OAA to guide decision-making, to set up meetings to share information and surveys to solicit input from faculty, and to create formal opportunities for conversations and participation in decisions at the level of Colleges and Schools. We have provided a draft set of principles (see Section I, above). Faculty Senate may wish to modify or elaborate on this list. We also have suggested a menu of possible forums for interaction and discussion (see Section V, below.)

### Option 2: Full-Scale Program Array Review

A second option is to organize a comprehensive review of programs across campus to guide decision-making about budget cuts. Reviews might cover all programs on campus or could focus solely on programs that have been identified by the Deans and Provost, in conversation with the faculty, as candidates for restructuring or elimination. Past experience with the APP process in 2013 indicates that a full-scale review of all programs is a contentious and difficult process, therefore this committee recommends against trying that approach again.

Regardless of which approach the Faculty Senate chooses to take, the committee recommends that future actions include the following considerations:

- The process should rely on overarching principles to guide decisions.
- Top leadership must state a clear purpose and identify clear outcomes and partner with the Faculty Senate on both the process and the outcome.
- Deans, Chairs, or department heads responsible for implementation must be involved and their knowledge sought out at the outset. Allow academic units to identify programs in need of attention.
- The process should avoid collecting complex information on all programs. Data sources should include those used in existing program review or accreditation/quality assurance processes.
- Faculty should be engaged in identifying and assessing quality practices and indicators.
- The Faculty Senate should provide a series of forums for faculty participation in and discussion about restructuring or elimination and solicit faculty input periodically throughout the process through surveys or listening sessions.

## V. Communication, Participation, Transparency

Decision-making related to budget issues currently flows through administrative structures separate from Faculty Senate. The Provost and Deans work closely together to discuss budget allocations between Schools and Colleges. Within the Schools and Colleges, Deans work with Chairs and program directors (sometimes as a group, sometimes individually) to identify budget items that could be cut. Chairs and program directors, in turn, communicate with faculty. The Faculty Senate Budget Committee communicates with FADM and with the Deans, but does not offer suggestions related to curricular cuts.

The committee recognizes that the people who are most familiar with their programs and budgets should manage reductions and reorganization. The responsibility rests with the Deans of each School and College, with significant input from Chairs and faculty. At the same time, the Faculty Senate holds oversight over the curriculum as a whole and faculty participation in discussions about cuts that affect instruction needs to take place earlier and higher in the system, not merely at the departmental level or College/School level. To meet the challenges that face us this fall, we need to broaden the conversation regarding cuts to include more faculty input at all levels of the decision-making process.

Clear and frequent communication and consultation regarding budget cuts and associated changes to academic curriculum promote participation; enhance transparency; and help reduce stress, anxiety, and anger. The committee recommends that the Faculty Senate and OAA collaborate in crafting a plan for engaging faculty in conversations about cuts. Possible venues for sharing information and ideas include budget forums and town hall meetings at the University level, as well as meetings at the College/ School level for faculty and staff in those divisions. The University-wide and College/ School meetings should take place early and often, and they should be interactive and participatory in nature. Faculty input and

ideas should be formative in the planning process; the meetings should move beyond simply informing faculty of decisions that leadership has already taken.

In light of the need to communicate clearly and with faculty, solicit their input on all decisions that affect the curriculum, and include people in decisions that affect them, we suggest a menu of options for faculty participation in discussions about cuts and curricular changes resulting from budgetary reductions:

1. Professionally-mediated, campus-wide Zoom townhall meetings
  - a. Budget forums (Joint – FADM and Faculty Senate Budget Committee)
  - b. Consultation about program cuts / elimination (Joint – OAA, PSU-AAUP, and Senate). Senate should work closely with PSU-AAUP if the administration moves forward to eliminate positions, and no elimination of positions should take place without the University declaring exigency and invoking contractual protections in Articles 22 and 23 of the PSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement.
2. Campus-wide emails on a regular schedule, including channels for feedback
3. Professionally-mediated meetings of Colleges and Schools
  - a. College strategic planning, drawing on substantive feedback from faculty, with measurable indicators and goals that are integrated with PSU's values and mission to guide decisions (if plans do not already exist)
  - b. Participatory process to consider potential cuts
4. Deans visit Senate and/or campus-wide meetings to discuss plans
5. Surveys to solicit faculty input, feedback, and participation
6. Meetings, emails, and/or surveys to solicit input from graduate and undergraduate students, adjuncts, and staff

## VI. Graduate School – Interdisciplinary Degrees and Creation of a Graduate Faculty

Even (perhaps especially) during a time of financial austerity, PSU needs to think toward the future. We need to plan where we want to be as an institution in three-to-five years, so that any cuts made now do not hinder our ability to reach those future goals. Opportunities may exist for consolidation of graduate programs in a way that elevates the impact of graduate education and training at PSU and serves to achieve regional and national recognition.

We propose that the Graduate Council consider the creation of a Graduate Faculty through the Graduate School. A Graduate Faculty is defined as those members of the general faculty approved to conduct graduate education. Having a Graduate Faculty would facilitate offering interdisciplinary degrees and would allow faculty who are active in research, scholarship, and creative activities to train and mentor graduate students, even if their own departments or units do not have graduate programs. In addition, the establishment of a Graduate Faculty at PSU could provide an essential infrastructure for the development of high-impact multidisciplinary graduate programs.

Below are some reasons to consider the establishment of a Graduate Faculty, followed by examples of how this works at other institutions, and finally, the committee's recommendations for next steps in fall 2020.

## Graduate Faculty

Graduate education at PSU has grown organically and there are a wide range of practices related to advising and mentoring of graduate students. One key function of a Graduate Faculty would be to create a common set of standards for high quality advising and mentoring of graduate students that is consistent across programs. Such standards should be developed with an equity lens and reflect the university's mission to support student success, diversity, inclusion and racial justice. Additionally, such standards should be designed to optimize student success while providing sufficient flexibility to be applied across the full range and diversity of graduate programs.

If a graduate program is eliminated, then the faculty associated with that program lose the ability to serve as primary supervisors for graduate students. Having a Graduate Faculty could expand the opportunity for faculty to continue to work with graduate students even if the department in which they reside no longer has a graduate program. In addition, graduate students could be advised by members of the Graduate Faculty even if their department does not have a graduate program. This is an important measure to put into place to ensure equity for both students and faculty in the event a program is eliminated.

With the increased interest and emphasis on multidisciplinary programs and research, establishing a Graduate Faculty will allow scholars (both students and faculty) more easily to identify collaborators and advisors by field of expertise across the university. The Graduate Faculty could also identify and propose multidisciplinary degrees as well as recommend areas for strategic investment or program elimination. Such degrees can offer the opportunity to reorganize graduate training allowing students and faculty to continue to engage in graduate training while simultaneously consolidating rather than eliminating such training.

Other considerations in favor of the formation of a graduate faculty include the following:

1. In the event faculty who are supervising graduate students leave the institution, a replacement could be identified from the list of Graduate Faculty by students and other committee members.
2. Identifying faculty who could serve on graduate committees across the university as "Graduate Faculty" would remove the burden from students to manage their graduate dissertation committees. Training faculty to be part of the Graduate Faculty would improve the quality of advising and mentoring.
3. If faculty in one unit are overburdened by supervising multiple theses or dissertations, Graduate Faculty with the relevant expertise could be brought in from other units to serve on these committees.
4. In some instances, a student's research interests are better served by a faculty in a program that is different from the one in which they are receiving their degree. With the Graduate Faculty, a student could get a degree in one program, but be advised by a faculty member in a different unit if this scenario would better serve the student's graduate education goals.

## Examples of Graduate Faculty and Multidisciplinary Graduate Degrees from Other Institutions

Research on how a Graduate Faculty works at other institutions reveals that there are different models. Wayne State University is the closest comparator institution to PSU and their model is the clearest in its criteria, purpose and procedures. Several others are also listed below.

- Wayne State University: [Purpose, procedures and criteria](#)

- Oregon State University: [Graduate Faculty Membership](#)
- Wright State University: [Graduate Faculty Nomination Process](#)
- Arizona State University: [Graduate Faculty](#) and [Graduate Faculty Guidelines](#)

Below are examples of how multidisciplinary graduate degrees are administered by Graduate Schools at other universities:

- University of Arizona: [Graduate Interdisciplinary Programs](#)
- UC Berkeley: [Interdisciplinary Doctoral Programs](#)
- University of Washington: [Graduate School Interdisciplinary Programs](#)

## Recommendations

1. We recommend that the Graduate Council (GC), with participation from OAA, RGS and the Graduate School,
  - a. Explore the formation of a Graduate Faculty and determining what model may best work at PSU based on examples of how the Graduate Faculty model works elsewhere.
  - b. Explore how to set up a common set of uniform standards to assure high-quality advising and mentoring in graduate training across the University and offer examples of how this works elsewhere.
  - c. Standardize, strengthen, and better publicize the “affiliate faculty” status for mentoring graduate students in different programs, with the ultimate objective of enabling faculty who are active in research, scholarship, and creative activities to mentor and supervise graduate students, even if they have no graduate program in their unit, or if their unit’s graduate program is eliminated.
  - d. Explore the best model of how to form new interdisciplinary graduate degree programs (and retrofit existing ones, if needed). For example, such new programs may need bylaws, an executive committee, a director, and a handbook.

## VII. Seek Curricular Efficiencies, Streamline Requirements, and Expand Multidisciplinary Majors in the Undergraduate Curriculum

In light of potentially imminent budget contractions, PSU must assure that its undergraduate programming is financially sustainable while retaining a commitment to quality public education. This challenge presents an opportunity to assess the strengths and weaknesses of our undergraduate curriculum and to improve our programming for better student outcomes.

This committee recommends that the Faculty Senate seek curricular efficiencies and consider streamlining undergraduate BA/BS and General Education requirements. We also recommend exploring ways to encourage more cross-listed courses. We encourage the expansion of multidisciplinary majors, minors, and certificates.

### Seek curricular efficiency

We suggest that the Faculty Senate develop a process to engage faculty and Senate committees in identifying ways our curriculum could be more effective. For example, writing requirements for transfer students may unnecessarily require students to take lower-division writing courses. In addition, as discussed below, BA/BS and General Education requirements should be reviewed and streamlined. Another option for consideration is to increase and enhance the “4+1” degrees that PSU offers. These accelerated pathway opportunities link BA/BS degrees with graduate degrees. Several of these

pathways already exist, and they provide an excellent way for students to decrease costs and for PSU to increase retention and recruit students for graduate programs.

Striving to maximize the Student Credit Hours (SCH) may lead departments and units inadvertently to engage in perverse and inefficient academic behavior. For example, departments may convert major courses into UNST cluster courses to generate SCH and maximize enrollments, which results in a bloated cluster curriculum. Departments are often reluctant to cross-list classes or include courses from other departments in degree programs so they can maximize their own SCH production. Turf-wars over curricular offerings play out in UCC and GC. These attitudes enhance the siloing of departments, lead to duplication of expertise between departments, and decrease opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and cooperation, particularly between Schools and Colleges. If the pursuit of SCH were not such a big priority, departments might find ways to reduce the number of courses required for degrees, thus streamlining the curriculum for students. This committee recommends that the Faculty Senate work with OAA to re-envision how we weigh efficiency vs. SCH and enrollment figures.

Another area of possible streamlining relates to advances in advising practices for faculty and advisors using data and dashboards. Improving advising would allow all students to graduate more efficiently. For example, analytics could examine complexity in completing majors and suggest remedies. Identifying “double” and “triple” dip courses could reduce time to degree. Studying patterns of course exceptions in majors (and minors) could facilitate DARS updates to automate these approvals. Better use of advising tools, such as Navigate notetaking, can provide continuity between appointments for faculty and advisors alike and to enhance the partnership/communication between all staff members. For our transfer students, increased course articulation between community college feeder schools and PSU would create stronger transfer modules and practices. Incorporating advisors in the curriculum review process, ideally at the department or school/college review level, could help to streamline our programs from a student perspective.

### Streamline Undergraduate BA/BS and General Education Requirements

The 180 credits of a PSU undergraduate degree consist of three main segments: 1) the credits covered by the major, minor, and certificates a student chooses; 2) the credits covered by the General Education component (through University Studies FRINQ, SINQ, Cluster, and Capstone courses or Honors College courses); and 3) the credits covered by the BA/BS requirements.

Through regular assessment activities, departments scrutinize their own majors, minors, and certificates. In addition, the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee regularly reviews proposals for new courses, new programs, and program changes. But the faculty rarely take an overarching look at the BA/BS requirements and the General Education and Honors College curricula. Revisions to the latter two areas of degree requirements have been made piecemeal, resulting in a sometimes-confusing aggregate of requirements. By reviewing and revising these areas, Senate could make BA/BS and GenEd requirements more “legible” to students, leading to greater student satisfaction and swifter completion of degrees. This committee recommends that a review of undergraduate degree requirements should take place before (or in tandem with) discussion of cuts, so that PSU faculty and administration have a clear vision of what we want to preserve moving forward.

### Create Opportunities for Interdisciplinary Degrees at Graduate and Undergraduate Levels

Current disincentives for collaboration across colleges, schools, departments, and units hampers faculty ability to create truly interdisciplinary academic programs. Fostering interdisciplinary studies across

majors could strengthen our offerings as we look toward the future. Identifying themes best tackled by interdisciplinary approaches, where we already enjoy faculty expertise, could be very useful in improving curricular efficiency; migration, global health, climate change, and food systems come to mind. The themes could be built into certificates, or perhaps even degrees. By reallocating resources toward high quality interdisciplinary programs, PSU could provide programs unique in our region and attract students who would otherwise not come.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) offers three [Interdisciplinary Studies BA/BS degrees](#) (Arts and Letters, Science, and Social Science) that attract many students. Data could be gathered regarding what attracts students to these degrees and how, in practice, students receive mentoring and guidance in choosing courses for their majors. Similarly, insights could be gathered from graduate-level interdisciplinary programs (such as those offered in the School of Gender, Race, and Nation and in the School of the Environment, as well as the new CUPA program in Emergency Management and Community Resilience). (For examples of how other institutions administer their interdisciplinary degrees at the graduate level, see section VI, above.)

## Recommendations

1. We recommend that the Faculty Senate perform a comprehensive review of the BA/BS requirements. The initiative could also consider how the BA/BS requirements overlap with requirements General Education requirements in University Studies and Urban Honors.
  - a. The work could be housed in several locations:
    - i. Option 1: The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) examines the undergraduate BA/BS and General Education requirements as part of its usual functioning, consulting with OAA, Advising, ARC, the UNST Council, and Urban Honors.
    - ii. Option 2: Faculty Senate creates an Ad Hoc committee, with members appointed by the Committee on Committees and with consultants drawn from the Advising, OAA, UNST Council, and Urban Honors, as well as ex officio members from UCC and ARC.
  - b. We recommend that the Senate charge the committee with
    - i. Evaluating the BA/BS requirements for curricular inefficiencies and recommend ways to streamline them
    - ii. [Optional] Evaluate the General Education requirements for areas in which they could be streamlined, tightened up, and made more user-friendly, especially for transfer students
2. We recommend that the Faculty Senate examine the possibility of expanding our interdisciplinary degrees at the undergraduate and graduate levels
  - a. The work could be housed in several locations.
    - i. Option 1: The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) and Graduate Council (GC) examine the interdisciplinary degrees as part of their usual functioning, consulting with each other, as well as with OAA, advising, and ARC.
    - ii. Option 2: Faculty Senate creates an Ad Hoc committee, with members appointed by the Committee on Committees and with consultants drawn from the Advising and OAA, as well as ex officio members from UCC, GC, and ARC.
  - b. We recommend that the Senate charge the committee with
    - i. Evaluating existing interdisciplinary certificates and degrees



- ii. Identifying themes best tackled by interdisciplinary approaches, where PSU already enjoy faculty expertise. The themes could be built into certificates, or perhaps even degrees.
- iii. Proposing a structure for implementing and supervising new and existing degrees of this sort.

## VIII. Data and Background Materials

Data files that committee members have brought into discussion are gathered in the associated [Google Drive Data Folder](#) and include the following items:

- Information about the APP process in 1991
- Information about the APP process in 2013-14
- Examples of APP processes at other institutions
- List of data reports available from PSU-OIRP
- PSU Faculty Senate Budget Committee Principles
- EPC policies on moratoria and program elimination
- Draft rubric for program prioritization

## Appendix A: Principles that Guided the Summer Ad Hoc Research Committee

The Summer Ad Hoc Research Committee crafted principles to guide our progress at the beginning of our work.

1. Liberal education ideals
  - a. Preserve the core academic mission of offering students a high-quality and well-rounded education focusing on critical thinking, literacy and numeracy, diversity, and civic and ethical responsibility
  - b. Any changes made to the curriculum will be based on the academic judgment of the faculty in consultation with the administration.
  - c. Recognize that all academic segments of the University bear responsibility for providing a liberal education.
  - d. Reduce barriers to interdisciplinarity
  - e. Enhance student access to high-impact practices and hands-on experiences such as internships, community-based activities, and research.
2. Access
  - a. Preserve affordability for students, especially first-generation college students and minority students.
  - b. Enhance access by providing affordable childcare for students who have children
  - c. Improve access by providing affordable textbooks and other needed equipment and supplies
  - d. Assure a campus climate that feels safe to all members of our community
  - e. Create easily navigable, “legible” degree programs for students
3. Faculty and Faculty Work
  - a. View faculty as an investment and an asset rather than as an expense
  - b. Invest in recruiting and retaining BIPOC faculty to realize PSU’s goals in diversity, equity, and inclusion
  - c. Value faculty engagement in research, scholarship, and creative activities, including but not limited to their grant activity

4. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
  - a. Preserve the value that people should participate in making the decisions that affect them.
  - b. Enhance the role of the curriculum in creating opportunities for conversations around equity, diversity, and inclusion
  - c. Assess all proposed changes to academic structures to consider their effects on students, especially first-generation college students and minority students.
  - d. Assess all proposed changes to academic structures to consider their effects on faculty, especially adjuncts and other faculty in precarious employment.
  - e. Assess all proposed changes to academic structures to consider their effects on academic professionals and staff.
  - f. Understand the needs of professional schools, particularly those dictated by accreditation requirements
5. Community
  - a. Consider PSU's long-standing motto "Let knowledge serve the city" when evaluating changes to academic structures.
  - b. Preserve and enhance university links to the community through community-based learning, research, service, and outreach opportunities
6. Transparency and participation
  - a. Create a transparent process for a respectful, data-informed conversation about how best to fulfill PSU's academic mission during current changes
  - b. Solicit input and feedback from the campus community early and often
  - c. Any proposed changes will be based on data that are shared with the University community
  - d. Create a review process that is simple, participatory, and effective
  - e. Develop a communication strategy to keep the University community informed of process and progress
  - f. Communicate proposals to key stakeholders before decisions are finalized
7. Sustainability
  - a. Create an academic structure that enhances financial stability
  - b. Preserve University areas with potential for future growth
  - c. Recognize that some segments of the University subsidize others and will continue to do so; holistic interdependence is a foundation of PSU's educational mission.
  - d. Evaluate the trends and shifts in the composition of the faculty (i.e., hiring of adjunct, fixed-term, non-tenure-track, and tenure-related faculty) for effects on academic quality, equity, and labor precarity
  - e. Emphasize approaches that increase efficiency/effectiveness of instruction
  - f. Promote interdepartmental collaboration by removing budgetary disincentives
  - g. Cuts to academics will take place in tandem with cuts elsewhere in the University
8. Due Process
  - a. Proposals for putting programs on moratorium will run through the process proposed by EPC and approved by the Faculty Senate in June 2020.
  - b. Proposals for eliminating academic units will run through the process proposed by EPC and approved by the Faculty Senate in June 2020. Proposals for eliminating academic programs will run through the standard curricular review process (forms available in the Online Curriculum Management System).

- c. Before eliminating departments or laying off permanent faculty, PSU will declare exigency. Reductions or eliminations will go through a faculty hearing as outlined in the PSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement (articles 22 and 23).

## Appendix B: Policies on Program Moratoriums and Elimination of Academic Units and Programs

Faculty Senate materials related to the EPC policies on Program Moratoriums and Elimination are available in the [Google Drive Data Folder](#).

Links to Current Forms:

- [\*\*\*Program Moratorium \(Suspension of Admission\)\*\*\*](#)
  - Routes to EPC
  - Routes to UCC or GC
- [\*\*\*Elimination of an Academic Unit\*\*\*](#)
  - Routes to EPC and BC
- [\*\*\*Elimination of an Academic Program\*\*\*](#)
  - Routes to EPC and BC
  - Routes to UCC or GC

## Appendix C: Campus-Wide Learning Outcomes and University Studies Goals

### [Campus-wide Learning Outcomes](#)

- **Disciplinary and/or Professional Expertise:** Students will gain mastery at a baccalaureate level in a defined body of knowledge through attainment of their program’s objectives and completion of their major.
- **Creative and Critical Thinking:** Students will develop the disposition and skills to strategize, gather, organize, create, refine, analyze, and evaluate the credibility of relevant information and ideas.
- **Communication:** Students will communicate effectively in a range of social, academic, and professional contexts using a variety of means, including written, oral, numeric/quantitative, graphic, and visual modes of communication using appropriate technologies.
- **Diversity:** Students will recognize and understand the rich and complex ways that group and individual inequalities and interactions impact self and society.
- **Ethics and Social Responsibility:** Students will develop ethical and social responsibility to others, will understand issues from a variety of cultural perspectives, will collaborate with others to address ethical and social issues in a sustainable manner, and will increase self-awareness.
- **Internationalization:** Students will understand the richness and challenge of world cultures and the effects of globalization, and will develop the skills and attitudes to function as “global citizens.”
- **Engagement:** Students will engage in learning that is based on reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationships, and through this engagement will apply theory and skills in diverse venues, linking the conceptual to the practical.
- **Sustainability:** Students will identify, act on, and evaluate their professional and personal actions with the knowledge and appreciation of interconnections among economic, environmental, and social perspectives in order to create a more sustainable future.

### University Studies Goals

- **Inquiry & Critical Thinking:** Students will learn various modes of inquiry through interdisciplinary curricula—problem-posing, investigating, conceptualizing—in order to become active, self-motivated, and empowered learners.
- **Communication:** Students will enhance their capacity to communicate in various ways—writing, graphics, numeracy, and other visual and oral means—to collaborate effectively with others in group work, and to be competent in appropriate communication technologies.
- **Diversity, Equity, & Social Justice:** Students will explore and analyze identity, power relationships, and social justice in historical contexts and contemporary settings from multiple perspectives.
- **Ethics, Agency, & Community:** Students will examine values, theories and practices that inform their actions, and reflect on how personal choices and group decisions impact local and global communities.

### Appendix D: List of Data Master reports

- Fact Book – Student Profile Dashboard  
This report displays student headcounts at a departmental or major level for a given term, and can optionally be filtered by a number of academic and demographic characteristics including student level, ethnicity, full-time or part-time status, legal sex, residency, and race/ethnicity.
- Fall Headcount Trends – IR0013  
This report provides 10-year trends for a selected student population and can be run for school/college, department, major or program. It can also be used to filter for new students, continuing students, class level, legal sex, race/ethnicity, residency and student type. It only displays data from Fall Terms.
- Degrees Granted  
This report displays all degrees or certificates awarded by a school, department, or program from 2008-09 to the present.
- Minors Granted  
This report is similar to the Degrees Granted report, but displays the minors of graduating students instead of their majors.
- Academic Program Portfolio Assessment  
This report collects five-year trends in student headcount, degrees granted, course enrollment, and student credit hour production for the selected department.
- Course Grade and Withdrawal Rates - S0059  
This report lists courses together with the number of students registered and grade distributions. The report groups this information into multiple tabs by CRN, subject and course, or course and instructional method. Outputting this report to Excel will provide detailed data for use in pivot tables and charts.
- Department Course Capacity – IR0012  
This report shows fill rates for courses over the last three years. It can be run by department and/or course level.
- Online Courses Dashboard  
This report provides summary statistics at the University, instructional unit, or departmental level for fully online, hybrid, and in-person course offerings. It includes trends for sections offered, unique courses, credit hours generated, and enrollment.
- Graduate Program Completion Rates

This report displays completion rates for cohorts in graduate programs.

- Time to Degree – Comparison Over Years – GR – S0108

This report shows the average time students in graduate level programs take to earn a degree, both in terms of the number of years and the number of terms they attended.