

**Academic Assembly (AcA) Report  
on the Academic Program Portfolio Review (APPR) Working Group Documents**

The APPR Working Group was charged with recommending changes to SU's academic portfolio by the Board of Trustees (BOT). The schools/colleges proposals were reviewed by the APPR working group for either approval or non-approval. APPR reviewed all college/school proposals and finalized its recommendations to AcA. This report summarizes AcA feedback on APPR recommendations and college/school reports that have broad agreement among AcA membership. Prior to discussion during a regularly scheduled AcA meeting on April 12, 2021, AcA members reviewed the following two documents:

- (1) "APPR School and College Proposals" - proposals from respective colleges and schools, and
- (2) "APPR Recommendations" - recommendation by APPR.

Special attention was paid to the prompt that "the report is accurate to the process and the people involved" and "the report is the product of shared governance that involved faculty input meaningfully" in the respective college and schools. The following are inputs and feedbacks shared by AcA membership on these documents:

**ALBERS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS**

**No. 1** - Increase course cap on UCOR 2910 – APPR did not approve this recommendation.

*No AcA comments.*

**No. 2** - Eliminate International Economic Development Specialization/Minor and Global Business Concentration – APPR approved this recommendation.

*AcA Feedback: AcA members raised the issue that as a general principle the AcA/APPR may need to request timelines or plans for these closures as follow-up. Some AcA members also felt that timelines for implementation should be left to the Schools/Colleges. It was suggested that AcA could set up a communication between the university administration and schools/colleges about the timelines.*

*AcA Feedback: Question was raised that given globalization and all the changes in the world today, this recommendation does not seem prudent. AcA reps from ASB indicated that this was mostly an enrollment-based decision. This program has had very poor enrollment over the last few years. Some AcA members feel that cross school/college programmatic tweaking would have been a better solution. For example, it was expressed that this Minor could be beneficial to the international studies program in CAS which is well enrolled.*

**No. 3** - Eliminate BUAD 1000 course requirement in undergraduate business core – APPR approved this recommendation.

*No AcA comments.*

**No. 4** - Eliminate the Graduate Leadership Formation Certificate – APPR approved this recommendation.

*No AcA comments.*

**No. 5** - Eliminate GBUS 3200/ECON 3130 requirements in undergrad business core – APPR approved this recommendation.

*No AcA comments.*

**No. 6** - Raise the enrollment cap on MKTG 3500 – APPR did not approve this recommendation, on the grounds that it was not APPR related. The APPR recommended referring changes like these back into the budget process as they are not related to the APPR process specifically.

*No AcA comments.*

**No. 7** - Eliminate Master of Professional Accounting degree program – APPR did not approve this recommendation.

The APPR did not feel that this proposal made budgetary or programmatic sense. There are 60 students in the program currently. However, Albers recommended this program elimination to reach their target goal of budget reduction. Question was further raised by AcA members that *if a school does not reach their budget cut goals with their proposed recommendations, will they be asked to submit additional proposals?* APPR responded, not at this time, but this is an ongoing process.

*No AcA comments that responded to ASB No. 7. directly.*

### **COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**

**No. 1 (A)** – Phase out of the Bachelor of Music String Performance with integration of strings into the existing Interdisciplinary Arts Major with specialization in Music – APPR approved this recommendation.

*No AcA comments.*

**No. 2 (B)** – Phase out the Italian Minor – APPR approved this recommendation.

*No AcA comments.*

**No. 3 (C)** – Phase out via merging of the Anthropology and Sociology majors into a single interdisciplinary major – APPR approved this recommendation.

Program leader does not feel that this is a “phase out” of either program, but instead sees this as a retention of both disciplines, streamlined into one major. Program leader also raised that Sociology has not struggled with enrollments according to the program data; however, Anthropology has struggled. CAS proposed this to the Dean with the understanding that this is an ongoing process. Faculty would like to come to an agreement on a program that CAS can be proud of and that can be redesigned not only as a cost saving endeavor but as a successful, thriving program. Faculty have not committed 100% to making this happen, because the faculty would need to vote and approve a revised and yet to be developed curriculum first.

Program leadership would like to suggest a rewording of the last bullet point on the APPR report concerning this proposal: “We encourage the school/college to support the faculty in the affected department in any way that they can in order to move this process forward in a timely and efficient manner.”

It was reported by the program leadership that the department has an agreement with the CAS Dean that the curriculum would be developed in a calendar year and be ready for implementation in April 2022. The department is working to schedule a vote on a curricular plan with the department faculty. It was pointed out by AcA members that delaying the changes may reduce the potential cost savings.

Concerns were raised about the timeline of implementation. Few other details on the future timeline and their feasibility were raised by AcA CAS members.

**No. 4 (D)** – Phasing out via merging of the Visual Art and Art History Majors into a single Visual Arts and Culture major – APPR approved this recommendation.

Some AcA CAS members expressed concerns about the timelines (similar to those raised in No. 3 (C)). It was suggested that there should be some oversight to ensure that these proposals aren’t taking too long and therefore undoing any potential cost savings. Other AcA CAS members cautioned against unilaterally imposing uniform timelines, which could result in rushed and poor curricular redesigns.

**No. 5 (E)** – Phase out of the Arabic Minor – APPR did not approve this recommendation.

AcA members are pleased to see that non-western language education is being retained.

## **COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

**No. 1** – More efficient delivery of the curriculum in Teacher Education – APPR approved this recommendation.

This programmatic change would involve lowering the number of sections and not relying on as many adjunct faculty members.

Question was raised on what this proposal means. COE AcA members clarified that there are currently two cohorts that would be combined into one single group so as to not having to teach as many sections. The program is hopeful that enrollment numbers will increase, but it is difficult to attract students during COVID-19 and SU is in a hugely competitive market for this kind of education. Impact to COE on the potential shift to the semester-based instructional calendar was also cited.

**No. 2** – Suspension of the Masters in Educating Non-Native English Speakers – APPR approved this recommendation.

*No AcA comments.*

**No. 3** – Suspension of the Master's Degree in Special Education – APPR approved this proposal.

*No AcA comments.*

**No. 4** – Move the Educational Administration Program from the Teaching, Learning and Social Justice Department to the Leadership and Professional Studies – APPR approved this proposal.

*Inquiry was made: Can a COE faculty member speak to the financial savings of this move and if this would negatively affect Teaching, Learning and Social Justice? Because the COE only has two departments, this move is more about efficiency rather than content. This would result in some collapsing of curriculum and courses, which will result in cost savings. The program has had small enrollment for many years.*

## **COLLEGE OF NURSING**

**No. 1** – Eliminate the Bachelor of Science in Diagnostic Ultrasound Program – APPR did not approve this recommendation.

*Nursing (CON) put forward one proposal that has been turned down by the APPR. Some AcA members from other schools/colleges raised issue of "fairness." However, as the teaching load in CON (some CON class sizes are greater than 90) were communicated, AcA members from other schools/colleges developed greater understanding and appreciation. The Office of the Provost has returned to CON to continue conversations about where they could make additional cost savings moves. It was shared that some class sizes in CON are high, on the order of 2x or 3x of what was deemed large in other schools/colleges. APPR members further shared that CON seems to be making budget considerations well ahead of what other colleges/schools are doing.*

## **COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING**

**No. 1** – Permanently reduce the direct cost of instruction in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Mechanical Engineering by increasing maximum section sizes – APPR did not approve this recommendation on the grounds that this is not an APPR related action.

*No AcA comments.*

**No. 2** – Elimination/Sunset of M.S. and Structural Engineering (MSST) – APPR approved this recommendation.

*Question was raised on the main reason for sunseting this program but not the Mechanical Engineering M.S.? Structural Engineering has had lower enrollment rates, historically. Recent changes had been made to the program to improve enrollment, but these were unsuccessful. The structural engineering market has less room for growth, while the M.S. in Mechanical Engineering is a new program that has not had a chance to get off the ground yet. There is an unhired position in MSST, and technically does not negatively, or minimally, affect the faculty.*

*Question by AcA members: These recommendations are based not only on projections but also on poor enrollment numbers, correct? There were projections about future revenue generated between the two programs, but it is hard to see where the breakdown is between the cost of direct instruction of the programs, which makes it hard to see why one program was chosen over another. Furthermore, it did not appear MSST was given time to see their new cost improvement initiative take effect.*

**No. 3** – Elimination/Sunset of Master of Mechanical Engineering – APPR did not approve this recommendation.

*No AcA comments.*

## **General Discussion and Comments**

These are feedback from AcA members. They are not listed in any order.

- a.** The faculty would highly recommend that there is more conversation, like the ones taking place with CON, to demonstrate to other university stakeholders that everyone is trying to help the university financially. Nursing faculty would be happy to share additional information to assist with the perspective of what their programs look like and to assist in full transparency.
- b.** It was a main goal of the APPR to advance this project in the spirit of a university initiative, a community driven project, rather than individually by school/college.

**c.** Faculty strongly feel that new programs need to be evaluated regularly so that it can be made aware if they are hitting their benchmarks. The university should communicate with the new program leadership directly on their performance so that the program faculty and leadership know if they are holding up to university standards.

**d.** *How does all of this work ensure that commitments made to LIFT SU will be met and how will this work incorporate an antiracist curriculum back into the portfolio? Do the APPR reports involve any suggestions for antiracist curriculum or pedagogy?* Programs will need ample time to implement changes like these in a mindful and intentional manner.

**e.** Faculty expressed caution about building too much of a financial commitment into the APPR process. There may be good reasons to have programs that must be subsidized. Some AcA members expressed not wanting to see every program (such as philosophy) being required to maintain an undue financial standard.

**f.** *Should the AcA call for a greater visibility and transparency regarding the data that informed these decisions?*

**g.** Moving forward, part of the report should include some information on how the schools/colleges and university communicate the elimination of programs to students, especially programs where students are still being admitted.

**h.** *If after receiving the report a school/college did not meet its intended financial cut goal, how will the BOT respond? What will happen?* This is only the first stage of this work and moving forward there will be different distributions of change across different schools/colleges.

**i.** Some AcA members wondered if APPR achieved its stated goal of 3 percent. That was unclear as that aspect of data was not shared. Not every AcA member is familiar with data that was not shared.

**j.** It was expressed that program review works for some colleges and schools need further strengthening.

**k.** It was observed by some AcA members that having more students in fewer classes is a much better way to save cost. Though it will still need some redesign of curriculums and be thoughtfully communicated.

**l.** Some AcA members expressed the need to highlight and claim goals and values for the APPR process; for example, fostering inclusivity in the campus community.

**m.** It was unclear if some of the school/college meetings were just an event to announce decided actions or if suggestions of budget-reduction proposals can be made. Further, there has not been decision made in these all-college meetings, so it was unknown that any changes to the prioritized list were even possible.

**n.** It does not appear the curriculum committees of some schools and colleges, which are charged with degree program elimination decisions in the school/college level governance, were engaged as part of the APPR process. This was an issue raised by stakeholders of the program.

**p.** AcA is looking forward to APPR reports on lessons learned and on how things can be done better in the future that would be more helpful to the institution.

**q.** The direction of decision making is unclear in some schools and colleges. There was confusion over process and the function of college/school meetings (announcement of plan or solicitation of input/proposal). In some college/schools, APPR proposal appeared to be very much a dean-led initiative.

**r.** AcA members expressed the following: our commitment to inclusivity and social justice is central to our mission and we want to reiterate that this is central to our future and ongoing evaluations.

**s.** The need for greater transparency on an ongoing basis about number of majors and enrollments across all departments and programs would help support a greater sense of transparency and trust.

**t.** Publicizing scatter graphs of faculty and admin salaries (without identifying small programs or individuals) would also help support a culture of greater transparency.

**u.** Our need to reposition our curriculum for the 21st century, thinking interdisciplinarily, and developing new connections across colleges and schools should be a regular and ongoing part of our university-wide process going forward.