

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
FACULTY SENATE

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
2006-07-2
December 1, 2006

ABOLITION OF PROGRAMS LEGISLATION
SUSPENSION OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

As amended by the Faculty Senate on December 14, 2006

BACKGROUND

In 1981, after a few academic programs were recommended by College Deans for elimination, the Faculty Senate approved formal legislation on the Abolition of Programs. The purpose of the legislation was to ensure a fair and open process that provided adequate protection for students and an orderly method for incorporating the abolished program's courses, remaining faculty and other resources into related programs within the University. This legislation has not been implemented in twenty-five years. Yet during this period, admissions were suspended to a number of academic programs. The majority of these programs were subsequently eliminated, often years after the initial suspension of admissions, either at the request of the affected department or through procedures outlined by the R.I. Board of Governors for Higher Education.

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee agrees that the suspension of admissions to an academic program is tantamount to a recommendation to abolish that program and therefore properly invoking University Manual procedures for abolition. This is supported by Board of Governors policy,* which states the following:

d. Abolition of an Academic Program

In general, any existing program that would require approval by the RIBGHE to be established must have the RIBGHE's approval to be abolished.

Note: Programs that have had admissions suspended following notice of change to the RIBGHE (see Section I.B.3) are not to continue in suspended status indefinitely. Undergraduate programs should remain in suspended status no longer than 150 percent of the normal time for program completion (e.g., six years for a bachelor's program). Graduate programs should remain in suspended status no longer than the time limit specified for program completion by the institution (e.g., five years for a master's program). If admission to a suspended program is not reopened during the specified time, the RIBGHE must

* Rhode Island Board of Governors Board of Governors' Regulations Governing Academic Changes in Rhode Island Public Institutions of Higher Education (March 6, 2006)

be asked to approve the abolition of the program or be notified of the reason for continued suspension. The request for the elimination of the program will “teach out” or other completion arrangements for any students still enrolled in the program.

The following is the official University of Rhode Island procedure for the elimination of academic programs:

8.87.10 Abolition of Programs. When a recommendation for abolition of an existing program is initiated by an appropriate college or university committee or administrative official, the recommendation shall be reviewed by the appropriate college dean, college curricular committee, and college faculty if the program is housed in a college; and in any case by the appropriate Faculty Senate Committee(s) (Curricular Affairs Committee and/or Council for Research) or Graduate Council, the Faculty Senate and the President. Review of the proposal for abolition by college or Senate committees below the level of the Faculty Senate shall result in a Statement of Opinion that shall be attached to the proposal as it proceeds through subsequent review steps, but shall not result in denial or approval of the recommendation, nor stop the proposal from proceeding to the Faculty Senate. The originator of the recommendation may, however, withdraw the proposal if convinced by review at any level that the recommendation should be withdrawn. Curricular committees and college faculties shall address budgetary issues as well as academic issues in their review. The Graduate Council shall be included for review of graduate programs according to its established procedures. The originator shall present the recommendations to the Faculty Senate for its deliberation. Committees that have reviewed the proposal and have attached Statements of Opinion shall present the findings of their review to the Faculty Senate. Approval of the recommendation for abolition shall require the approval of the Faculty Senate and the President in the same manner as other legislative actions, as provided for in sections 10.2 to 10.6 of the Faculty Senate By-Laws.

8.87.11 Any program recommended for elimination shall be maintained until currently enrolled students (including University College students who have indicated preference for the program in writing prior to the President's signature of the recommendation for elimination) have completed the program, except that in no case shall this period of maintenance exceed the normal period of transit through the program by more than one year. Notification to students contemplating enrollment in the program shall be made at the time the President authorizes elimination of the program, but not sooner. For the purpose of providing adequate notice to prospective

first-year students, elimination must be authorized prior to June 1 of the year previous to the final entering class.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive Committee recommends that the Faculty Senate add the following new section **8.87.12** to the UNIVERSITY MANUAL.

8.87.12 A decision to suspend admissions to a program shall be considered a recommendation to abolish that program.