

September 1, 2023

Dear Dean Dunaway and Dr. Lindsay Morris-Neuberger:

In accordance with the provisions of [Board of Governors Rule 2.2](#), the Program Review Appeal Hearing for the Department of Communication Studies was held on August 31, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.

The Appeal was of the following Preliminary Recommendation(s):

- Reduce the number of faculty positions in the unit from the current number to 11.

The members of the Program Review Appeal Committee for this unit were:

- Paul Kreider, Vice Provost
- Lou Slimak, Associate Provost for Curriculum and Assessment
- Evan Widders, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education
- Sean Bulger, Associate Dean, CAHS
- Brad Humphreys, Associate Dean, Chambers College
- Valerie Lastinger, Associate Dean, Eberly College
- Diana Davis, Faculty Senate representative

The following individual participated in the presentation of the Appeal for the unit: Lindsay Morris-Neuberger. This individual and/or unit submitted additional documentation and information in advance of the Hearing.

Result of the Program Review Appeal

Taking the information presented into consideration, the Committee has made the following determinations:

- Deny the appeal of the reduction of the number of faculty positions in the unit from the current number to 11 by a vote of 4 to 3.

The key components that led to the Committee's determination(s) include the following:

- Sustained decrease in enrollment in the unit's majors;
- Decrease in student credit hour production;
- Unit relies on tenure-track/tenured faculty to deliver its online program; and
- Unit offers a large number of elective courses for non-majors.

Review by the WVU Board of Governors

As a result of the [Board of Governors Rule 2.2](#), the Program Review Process and Appeal Hearing, the following Provost's Office Final Recommendation(s) will be placed on the Public Agenda for the September 15, 2023, Board of Governors meeting for a vote by the Board.

- Reduce the number of faculty positions in the unit from the current number to 11.

The following recommendations were not appealed and will also be presented to the Board of Governors as they are listed below:

- BA Communication Studies: Continue at the Current Level of Activity with Specific Action
 - Work with the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences' Dean's Office to revise the program's curriculum. By **January 31, 2024**, submit (in CIM) a meaningful revision of curriculum that will be more efficient and reduces the number of AOE's to three at maximum.
- MA Communication Studies: Continue at the Current Level of Activity with Specific Action
 - Review the online curriculum to optimize course offerings with student interest and demand.
 - Discontinue offering the in-person version of this program.
- PhD Communication Studies: Continue at the Current Level of Activity with Specific Action
 - Work with the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences' Dean's Office to revise the program's curriculum such that the program can begin to admit students directly into the PhD. By **January 31, 2024**, submit (in CIM) a meaningful revision of curriculum that accomplishes this goal.

Reduction of Faculty Positions

Through this process and as a result of the Appeal decision(s), the Provost's Office has determined that the number of faculty positions in the unit should be reduced from its current number to 11.

If this recommendation is approved by the Board of Governors, the Provost's Office, in consultation with the dean's office and the chair (where applicable), will develop the Reduction in Force Plan, which will determine the specific faculty members who will be retained or subject to a reduction in force / non-renewals for this unit. Additionally, that process will include discussion of which faculty positions can be eliminated as of May 9, 2024, and which positions may be needed for one or two years beyond May 9, 2024, for teach-out programming. Faculty will learn on or around October 16, 2023, whether their positions will be eliminated or retained, or if they will be asked to stay on for a longer period of time to complete teach-out programming.

Providing Comments to WVU Board of Governors

Individuals have two opportunities to provide comments to the Board of Governors in advance of the September 15 vote. First, they can provide a written comment about a Provost's Office Final Recommendation or about WVU Transformation generally by completing this [comment form](#). To ensure that the Board members have appropriate time to review any comments received, we ask that they please submit comments at least two days in advance of September 14.

Second, if they wish to sign up to speak at a Board meeting, they may do so by completing [this form](#). If possible, individuals should try to submit their request to speak at least two days in advance of September 14. However, they will still be able to sign up in-person in advance of the start of the September 14 meeting. Depending on the number of individuals that sign up to speak, the Board may limit the number of speakers who may address a particular topic. The time that each speaker can speak will also be limited based upon the number of speakers.

Notifying Your Faculty and Staff

You must notify the faculty and appropriate staff within this unit of the Provost Office's Final Recommendations by forwarding this email and CCing Associate Provost for Curriculum and Assessment Lou Slimak (Louis.slimak@mail.wvu.edu). This notification should occur **immediately after receiving this letter**.

Additional Resources

The Provost's Office is currently working toward securing services with a career outplacement organization to assist faculty and staff who are affected by the current non-renewal or reduction in force processes. Specific details about this service and how to participate will be forthcoming.

Additionally, the WVU Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (FSAP) is a free, confidential resource for all active and retired faculty, staff and their dependents (i.e., spouse or child). It is a safe place where employees can talk about any struggles or concerns they are facing and determine the best way to address them. To utilize FSAP, call their office at [304-293-5590](tel:304-293-5590) or email fsap@hsc.wvu.edu to schedule a free appointment with a counselor.

Finally, information on the process and timeline is available at: <https://transformation.wvu.edu/resources>.

Sincerely,

WVU Office of the Provost