

August 10, 2023

Dear Dean Donahue and Dr. Sven Verlinden,

As part of the ongoing Academic Transformation initiative, the Provost's Office has completed its [Board of Governors Rule 2.2](#) Program Review process for the identified program(s) in the Division of Plant and Soil Sciences.

Possible Recommendations

Under WVU Board of Governors Rule 2.2., there are four possible recommendations for programs, and they are defined as follows:

1. Continue at the current level of activity (i.e., no recommended changes for the program)
2. Continue at the current level of activity with specific action (i.e., the program will continue to exist, but there are recommended changes for the program, including reduction of faculty positions)
3. Development of a cooperative program (i.e., potentially merging one or more programs together to create a new program / curriculum)
4. Discontinue the program (i.e., program will no longer exist after a teach out is completed)

Preliminary Recommendations

After considering the data previously released, the information contained within your unit's Self-Study Review Form, and consulting with the unit's dean's office, the Provost's Office Preliminary Recommendation is as follows:

- BS Environmental, Soil, and Water Sciences: Continue at the Current Level of Activity with Specific Action
 - Reduce the number of faculty positions associated with this program.
- BS Environmental Microbiology: Development of a Cooperative Program
 - Reduce the number of faculty positions associated with this program.
 - This program will be discontinued and delivered as an Area of Emphasis within Environmental, Soil, and Water Science. Work with the Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Design's Dean's Office to submit the program changes by **January 31, 2024**.
- BSAGR Horticulture: Development of a Cooperative Program
 - Reduce the number of faculty positions associated with this program.
 - This program will be merged with the BSAGR in Sustainable Food and Farming resulting in a single new program and major. Work with the Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Design's Dean's Office to submit an Intent to Plan for the new program by **January 31, 2024**.
- BSAGR Sustainable Food and Farming: Development of a Cooperative Program
 - Reduce the number of faculty positions associated with this program.

- This program will be merged with the BSAGR in Horticulture resulting in a single new program and major. Work with the Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Design's Dean's Office to submit an Intent to Plan for the new program by **January 31, 2024**.
- PhD Genetics and Developmental Biology: Continue at the Current Level of Activity
- PhD Plant and Soil Sciences: Continue at the Current Level of Activity

Additionally, if the unit is working "toward a 2-2 course load for "some faculty" as claimed in the self-study, then the unit must revisit its workload requirements and submit those to Associate Provost for Faculty Development and Culture Melissa Latimer by **October 31, 2023**.

The key components that led to the Provost's Office Preliminary Recommendations include the following:

- The department was placed under review due to programs being small, an increase in faculty, a low ratio of majors to faculty, an increase in expenses, and expenses exceeding revenues annually for the years of analysis.
- The plan presented by the unit in its self-study mainly focused on potential to increase revenue without any direct plan to reduce cost. The self-study did propose to merge its four undergraduate programs into two new programs. There was limited engagement with the unit's data in the self-study and meaningful context was not provided; most of the self-study's explanation was a defense of the status quo relying on their increased undergraduate enrollment accompanied by an increase in FTE in a unit with low student-to-FTE ratio.
- All master's-level majors in Plant and Soil Sciences are being merged into a single new major through academic transformation.

Next Steps for Discontinuance or Development of Cooperative Program

For programs that have been recommended for **development of a cooperative program**, and assuming approval by the Board of Governors, the department chair or school/division director should contact Associate Provost for Curriculum and Assessment Lou Slimak by **October 31, 2023**, to develop a timeline to accomplish the proposal of the new program as well as the discontinuation of the merged programs.

Faculty Reduction Recommendations

Through this process, the Provost's Office has determined that the number of faculty positions in the unit should be reduced from its current number to 10. If this recommendation is approved by the Board of Governors on September 15, the Provost's Office, in consultation with the dean's office and the chair (where applicable), will develop the Reduction in Force Plan. This plan will determine the specific faculty members in the unit who will be retained or subject to a reduction in force / non-renewals. Additionally, that process will include discussion of which faculty positions can be reduced as of May 9, 2024, and which positions may be offered an extension beyond May 9, 2024, for teach-out programming. Finally, please note that in many units, voluntary attrition by faculty members (i.e., leaving the University for another opportunity or retiring from the University after July 1, 2023, and by or before June 30, 2024) may be considered as part of the faculty positions that are counted for elimination. However, the individual voluntarily leaving the University must provide the University notification of their

resignation or retirement by September 30, 2023 if it is to be considered as part of the reduction numbers.

Notifying Your Faculty and Staff

The chair or school/division director must notify the faculty and appropriate staff within this unit of the Provost Office's Preliminary Recommendations by forwarding this email and CCing Associate Provost for Curriculum and Assessment Lou Slimak (Louis.slimak@mail.wvu.edu) and the college dean. This notification should occur **within 24 hours of receiving this letter**.

Program Review Appeal Process

If a chair, school/division director, or faculty member opts to appeal any part of the Provost's Office Preliminary Recommendation, they must submit a [Notice of Intent to Appeal](#) by **August 18, 2023**.

Any chair, school/division director, or faculty member who files a Notice of Intent to Appeal will receive notification at least three business days in advance of when the Program Review Appeal Committee hearing for their program will be scheduled. Most hearings will occur between **August 21 – September 5, 2023**.

To ensure a broad-based representation, the Provost's Office will establish a Program Review Appeal Committee specific for each unit. Members will include the vice provost, an associate provost (undergraduate or graduate), the program review officer, a representative from the dean's office of the unit's home college, two representatives from dean's offices outside of the unit's home college, and the Faculty Senate chair or designee.

The chair, school/division director, or faculty member who filed the Notice of Intent to Appeal must submit the [Program Review Appeal Form](#), which contains any additional information or data they wish the Program Review Appeal Committee to consider, at least two business days in advance of the hearing. For units appealing the number of faculty to be reduced, it is strongly recommended that the unit present a staffing plan that demonstrates what number of faculty are needed to deliver the unit's curricular requirements, including the number and size of its section offerings.

During the appeal hearing, the unit's representative is given 30 minutes to present the substance of their appeal and 15 minutes to address questions from the Program Review Appeal Committee.

The Program Review Appeal Committee will then deliberate and vote to accept or change the Provost's Office Preliminary Recommendation. The program review officer tallies the votes, informs the Program Review Appeal Committee of the results, and communicates the results to the dean's office and chair or school/division director within three business days following the hearing.

If the appeal is denied, the original recommendation will be presented to the Board of Governors for a vote on September 15. If the appeal is granted, the Program Review Appeal Committee may provide a new recommendation to the dean and chair or school/division director. This new recommendation would also go to the Board of Governors for a vote. All decisions made by the Program Review Appeal Committee are final.

Additional Resources

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

Sincerely,

WVU Office of the Provost