Armstrong Atlantic State University
Faculty Senate Resolution FSR-2014-01-27-03
Preservation of Degree Programs

The attached Resolution is provided to the University President for informational purposes.

Delivered:

Signature: _______________________________ Date: 1/30/14

Please see attached.

Received:

Signature: _______________________________ Date: 2/4/14
Dr. Linda M. Bleicken, President
Armstrong Atlantic State University
Faculty Senate Resolution: Preservation of Degree Programs

WHEREAS the Chief Academic Officer of the University System of Georgia (USG) has instituted a review of all "low-producing" degree programs (defined for the Bachelor's degree as graduating fewer than 10 students per year) with instructions to then look "...below the surface to uncover information that truly speaks to the overall health of the program's enrollments and its contributions to advancing our educational goals", and;

WHEREAS some 14 programs at AASU were so identified (AAS in Criminal Justice, BA in Gender and Women's Studies, BA in Law and Society, BA in Chemistry, BA in Arts, BA in Music, Bachelor's of Music Education, BS in Communication Sciences and Disorders, BS in Art Education, BS in Chemistry, BS in Applied Physics – see attached Appendix, BSE in Special Education, BS in IT, and BS in Nursing RN to BSN), and;

WHEREAS the fixed number of 10 graduates ignores both the vast range in enrollment across USG institutions (from 34000 at UGA to 2600 at South Georgia State College) and the even larger discrepancy between the most popular and least popular fields of study (i.e., approximately one Bachelor's degree out of every four awarded nationally is in Business, while only 36 out of 10,000 are in physics), and;

WHEREAS the USG does seem to understand that differences in institutional size and discipline taught are important for the purposes of formula funding (http://www.usg.edu/fiscal_affairs/documents/Consolidated_Formula_Presentation_--November_Board--Final.pdf refers to both enrollment and subject matter on slides 8-10);

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Faculty Senate of Armstrong Atlantic State University strongly opposes the application of this ill-considered "one-size-fits-all" approach across all fields of study, as well as across such a diverse group of institutions as are found within the USG. Be it further resolved that the Faculty Senate urges the President to both support existing programs with students matriculating through them and have enrollments consistent with peer institutions, and decline to implement this policy and all similar directives from the USG until additional empirical study occurs regarding what constitutes "the health of a program" relative to institutional size.
FSR-2014-01-27-03 Preservation of Degree Programs

The resolution references "some 14 programs" as being identified as low-producing. This was the number in the original listing forwarded by the University System of Georgia (USG) early in Fall 2013, but a revised list was issued in November that reduced the number of Armstrong programs to 10 (seven undergraduate and three graduate).

The resolution objects to the "fixed number" of 10 graduates per year. It is important to note that this number has been set by the USG. Although the specific threshold numbers vary, the practice of setting similar definitions for low-producing programs is common. Below are examples from other states that have undertaken such reviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Review Year</th>
<th>Threshold for Bachelor's Level</th>
<th>Threshold for Master's Level</th>
<th>Threshold for Doctoral Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>At least 5 degrees per year average</td>
<td>At least 5 degrees per year average</td>
<td>At least 5 degrees per year average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>At least 5 degrees per year average</td>
<td>At least 3 degrees per year average</td>
<td>At least 2 degrees per year average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>At least 5 degrees per year average</td>
<td>At least 5 degrees per year average</td>
<td>At least 5 degrees per year average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>At least 10 degrees per year average</td>
<td>At least 5 degrees per year average</td>
<td>At least 3 degrees per year average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>At least 20 degrees in last 2 years, At least 26 upper division enrollment in current year, 11 degrees in most recent year</td>
<td>At least 16 degrees in last 2 years, At least 23 enrolled in most recent year, 10 degrees in most recent year</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>At least 5 degrees per year average</td>
<td>At least 2 degrees per year average</td>
<td>At least 1 degree per year average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>At least 5 degrees per year average</td>
<td>At least 3 degrees per year average</td>
<td>At least 1 degree per year average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The resolution quotes from an email sent from Executive Vice Chancellor Davis to USG Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs. The paragraph from which the quote is taken reads, in its entirety:

I am the first to acknowledge that a simple count of graduates from a program should not be a final or primary point of evidence of the health of a program, of the worth of the program to institutional mission, or of the future prospects for the program. It is however a good place to start a conversation about overall productivity and the use of scarce resources. The next set of questions that we collectively pose should be digging below the surface to uncover information that truly speaks to the overall health of the program's enrollments and its contributions to advancing our educational goals.
While Executive Vice Chancellor Davis did indicate that programs identified as low-producing by the established thresholds would be "subject to a more detailed review for continuance," there is no specific policy or directive that, in the words of the resolution, the university might "decline to implement."

Unless and until the university receives a directive to eliminate certain programs, the review of low-producing programs is a campus activity and any decisions regarding those programs are campus decisions. Also, matriculating students can be supported even as their degree program is deactivated and moved toward deletion.

Although the appendix accompanying this resolution referred only to Physics, the resolution is concerned with all programs that might be identified as low-producing. In keeping with the instructions we have received, all of these programs are being subjected to more detailed review.

In a pre-Senate meeting held on February 12, 2014, with Drs. Baird, Howells, and Johnson, concerns expressed in this resolution were discussed. It was explained that a process of review and prioritization of academic programs and services is currently being developed. This process will begin at the individual department level. Details of the process will be shared with both academic and administrative units prior to the end of spring semester. The process that Armstrong will use will help us to further clarify our purpose as an institution and to prioritize the programs and services required to achieve that purpose.

Linda M. Bleicker
February 14, 2014