

Advocacy Checklist for College and University Programs

If you have learned that your program is to be discontinued or reduced:

1. Familiarize yourself with your institution's discontinuance policies:

- What are those policies?
- Where are you in the process--at the beginning? somewhere in the middle?
- What is the next step in that process and how should your program respond?

2. Determine whether decisions on reduction or discontinuance have been made within the guidelines:

- Have all the procedures been followed?
- Have all the parties been consulted as per procedure?
- Are tenured faculty positions involved? if so, have all procedures been followed?
- Is there a faculty union to be consulted, if faculty positions are to be lost?

3. Determine who the decision-makers are:

- Dean, Provost, Chancellor, President?
- Faculty Senate or other part of internal governance?
- Board of Directors or Trustees?
- State board of governors?

4. Determine your strategy:

- What is required by existing guidelines for program discontinuance or reduction?
- What time frame are you working with?
- What reasons are being given for reducing or discontinuing the program?
- What kinds of arguments will be most effective at countering those reasons?
 - financial (expense of program vs. revenue it generates)
 - philosophical (fit with mission of institution)
 - student-oriented (demand for your program and its connections such as study abroad)
 - economic (participation in local/state economy; jobs...)
 - institutional connections (plugged into General Education, international education, business/engineering/health care/arts programs...)
- To whom should you make the arguments?

- Who can support you? (see #6 below)
- What format should arguments (yours and supporters') take?

5. Determine a communication plan:

- How will you contact those who can provide support, information, etc., for your program?
- Who are the decision-makers and influencers who will need to receive communication giving your point of view?
- Who should communicate with these different individuals and groups, and how? Examples: the French program chair contacts Dean, Provost, Board, President, or someone else? Alumni contact Dean, Provost, Board, President, or someone else?
- How can you align your campaign with your strategic priorities (will you argue for support based primarily on financial cost, and/or philosophical reasons, etc., as determined in your strategy in #4 above)?
- How should you publicize your situation beyond the campus?
 - Online petition
 - Contact news media
 - Letters to the editor
 - Social media and other electronic media

6. Line up support to send e-mails/letters to Dean, Provost, Chancellor/President, Board:

- Internal: students, colleagues/departments/colleges/schools/Faculty Senate/internal governance structure in your institution
- External: AATF, other colleges/universities (French programs and other programs), local business or cultural community, influential community members or politicians
- Alumni and Donors

7. Be sure you know all the information that is needed to influence the decision:

- Program costs vs. revenue
- Number of majors/minors/general education enrollment
- Enrollment trends
- Assessment results and actions in response to assessment
- Your relation to institutional mission
- Your links with other parts of the institution (general education, other departments/programs/colleges/majors)
- Your links with community: businesses, service organizations, arts organizations, etc.
- Student and graduate achievements

- Faculty qualifications, expertise, scholarly and other output, involvement with othe university programs, involvement with community
- How to contact alumni