



WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY

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TO: Wendy Christensen
Chair, Faculty Senate

FROM: Joshua Powers
Provost & Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

DATE: April 24, 2023

RE: Annual Report on Academic Program Vitality

As you will recall from last year, I indicated to the Faculty Senate that on an annual basis I would be providing a report on program vitality. Informing this report would be enrollment and graduation data as described in a [February 4, 2021](#) correspondence with the Faculty Senate in which I had invited the Senate to offer up to three additional data points. The Faculty Senate opted to decline this invitation. This past year, I indicated that we would be integrating important external data linked to *labor market demand* (i.e., current and future job opportunity) and *competitive opportunity* (i.e., how many other institutions in our region also offered a particular program), a report that I provided in a [May 5, 2022](#) document.

To be posted to the [Provost's Office website](#) by end of day on 4/26 under Current News & Events are reports by college on all of our academic programs - undergraduate and graduate - and inclusive of majors, minors, and certifications. In addition to the data referenced above, new enrollments and admissions yield data are included, two additional data points we will be including in this annual report. Also found on the website will be a document that describes these metrics in detail and that I have also included with this letter.

As part of this communication to you, I wanted to follow-up on my letter to the Faculty Senate Chair on [April 20, 2022](#) in which I had discussed a set of six programs that had been in probation or hiatus status but returned to normal status, two programs placed into probation status (*Urban Science & Society* and *Theater & Comedy*), and a set of additional programs where attention was needed. Comment on each of these programs or program sets is provided below, and also informed by the data from the reports referenced above.

Urban Science & Society (BA) – Progress was made this year, but more is needed or the program will be closed at the end AY23-24. External data indicates that an urban planning focus can be potentially attractive and thus far, it has not achieved this refocus. Enrollments remain small and no new students enrolled Fall22. Program on probation for AY23-24.

Theater & Comedy (BA) – As of Spring 2023, no faculty in the program. Enrollments had been steadily declining and continued this year. Department and college recommended closure and program will be closed. Teach out plan deployed.

Professional Communication (MA) – Program engaged in some re-visioning, but more is needed. Whereas there is some distinction between this program and Creative & Professional

Writing (below), overlap in learning outcomes needs to be addressed, either through merging programs or sharing courses/curriculum that serves both programs. Program on probation AY23-24.

Creative & Professional Writing (MFA) – Program engaged in some re-visioning, but more is needed. Whereas there is some distinction between this program and Professional Communication (above), overlap in learning outcomes needs to be addressed, either through merging programs or sharing courses/curriculum that serves both programs. Program on probation AY23-24.

Journalism, Broadcast Journalism, & Media Production (BA) – Department did very good work to re-vision stand alone majors rather than tracks within the broader communication major. Just approved new certificates potentially attractive externally and internally.

Professional Sales (BS) – Promising initiatives launched in AY22-23 involving high schools, sales competitions, enhanced visibility in classes, and certificate proposal moving through governance. Russell Berrie Foundation financial support for the program also remains solid. Opportunity to assess impact of initiatives, and other initiatives to further counter soft enrollments are needed. Program on probation for AY23-24.

Financial Planning (BS) – Visits to campus by high school students, the Financial Planning Academy, and changing degree name to Financial Planning & Wealth Management deployed this past year. We are one of the few programs in the region and thus potential for growth. Opportunity to assess impact of initiatives, and other initiatives to counter soft enrollments are needed. Program on probation for AY23-24.

Earth Science (BA) – Program continues to have under enrolled sections and the lowest new enrolled students. Department is pursuing an EAB 360 analysis now which is promising for how it might inform where to focus energies, and whether the support of three majors in the department is optimal. Program on probation for AY23-24.

Actuarial Science (BS) - Program continues to have strong market potential, and although enrollments commonly low, they've been generally consistent. This needs to be the year to decide if it can be sustained. International enrollments may be an opportunity and an EAB 360 study is needed. Program on probation for AY23-24.

M.Ed Programs and Select Certificates – Specific programs shifting to WP Online modality for accessibility and growth potential. Continued attention to certificates as feeders to degree would be valuable. No change in status.

In addition to the above, the following program viability discussions have occurred in departments and with the Dean. These include:

Philosophy (BA) – Enrollments have substantially declined and there were no new enrollments Fall22, and none to date for this fall. As of Fall22, there were 6 majors. Potential distinctiveness opportunity with new Ethics major, well aligned with student needs. Potential certificate opportunities may also exist. Program on hiatus through Fall 2023, with decision if to be closed in January 2024 (effective Fall 2024) following continued review internally in the college and recommendation to the Provost.

Photography (BFA concentration) – Quite low enrollments in this concentration in recent years; 3 total enrollments Fall22. Interdisciplinary Arts Concentration has been a point of strength for the department and opportunities within that area, and the others, to have photography opportunity. Department also working on a potentially exciting game design related certificate. Concentration on hiatus through Fall 2023, with decision if to be closed in January 2024 (effective Fall 2024) following continued review internally in the college and recommendation to the Provost.

Painting, Drawing, and Printmaking (BFA concentration) – Quite low enrollments in this concentration in recent years; 3 total enrollments Fall22. Interdisciplinary Arts has been a point of strength for the department, and thus within that area and the other concentrations, to have painting, drawing, and printmaking opportunity. Department also working on a potentially exciting game design related certificate as noted above. Concentration on hiatus through Fall 2023, with decision if to be closed in January 2024 (effective Fall 2024) following continued review internally in the college and recommendation to the Provost.

Beyond there, this coming year I am inviting departments to take a close look at their array of minors offered, and as informed by the data reports. As a campus, minors have grown substantially over the past decade or more, but a number have had few, or no, enrollments in recent years. Whereas minors represent potentially valuable opportunities for currently enrolled students, certificates are commonly attractive to both current students and external persons who desire to come just for that purpose, and then might chose to continue their studies.

Note that this annual exercise focuses on our program array, ensuring its health and focusing energy where we think we can grow or need to contract. In one of the most expensive and competitive regions in the country for marketing, our future vitality and brand identity depends on it. It is not an exercise linked to staffing, and in some cases closing a program has modest financial impact when course offerings may not necessarily be impacted. But every program, whether a major, a minor, or a certificate, does take energy and effort. Furthermore, the state of New Jersey right now is taking a hard look at the proliferation of programs at public institutions in the state, and leadership by William Paterson in this arena will be seen positively in our effort to seek expanded resource assistance.

I welcome the opportunity to speak to this content at an upcoming Faculty Senate Meeting and to have both Jonathan Lincoln and the Deans present to answer questions.

cc Richard Helldobler
 Jonathan Lincoln
 Anthony Bowrin
 Wartyna Davis
 Amy Ginsberg
 Venkat Sharma