



Policy Chapter: Chapter 6 Faculty Affairs

Policy Number and Title: 06.029 Academic Program Review and Discontinuation

I. Policy Statement

The purpose of an academic program review is to improve and maintain robust, high quality academic programs and concentrations that are closely aligned with the UNT mission and strategic goals. Such improvement should occur through a review of departmental activities, identification of effective and ineffective activities, and identification of strategies for improvement of departmental outcomes. The Office of the Provost uses review results to guide university planning, determine program directions, establish objectives, shape institutional goals, and promote institutional effectiveness.

II. Application of Policy

Academic Affairs

III. Policy Definitions

A. *Business Day*

“Business day,” in this policy, means Monday through Friday during regular university business hours (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.), when university offices are open.

B. *Faculty Member*

“Faculty Member,” in this policy, means a person who is employed by UNT in a faculty appointment, whose duties include teaching, research, and/or administration, including professional librarianship.

C. *Professional Faculty Appointment*

“Non-tenure track appointment,” in this policy, means an appointment of a fixed duration, in which the individual is part of the faculty of a unit. Such an appointment is not eligible for tenure and may be for a partial semester, a semester, an academic year, or for multiple years as fits the needs of the institution. Professional faculty appointment titles are defined in [UNT Policy, 06.002 Academic Appointments and Titles](#).

D. *Tenure-Track Appointment*

“Tenure-track appointment,” in this policy, means an appointment that includes a period of probationary employment preceding determination of tenure status. Appointment may be made to the rank of assistant professor.

E. *Tenured Appointment*

“Tenured appointment,” in this policy, means an appointment awarded to faculty members after successful completion of the probationary period during which stated criteria are met. Appointment may be made to the rank of associate professor or professor.

F. Unit

“Unit,” in this policy, means a school, department, division, area, program, concentration, or other entity smaller than a college and overseen by an administrator with decision-making responsibilities for reviews and evaluations.

G. Unit Administrator

“Unit administrator,” in this policy, means the person responsible for the academic unit.

IV. Policy Responsibilities

A. Review Responsibilities, Composition & Procedures

1. Reviews of each degree-granting program will be administered by the Office of University Accreditation, with supportive services by other units where appropriate. Reviews will include graduate and undergraduate programs. UNT will conduct academic program reviews at a minimum of every ten (10) years. A review may be conducted outside the standard ten-year review cycle, triggered by a request from the provost or the unit administrator with the support of the provost. When another national accreditation process or federal program review occurs, the results of that evaluation may be used to inform UNT’s academic program review addressed by this policy.
2. The review shall include a qualitative and quantitative examination of unit achievements in teaching effectiveness, scholarly productivity, professional development, service, and other program objectives. All examination results shall be accompanied by recommendations for improvement.
3. Program reviews may result in a determination of continuation, probation, or discontinuation. Educational considerations that could result in the discontinuance of an academic program may include, but are not limited to: a substantial decrease in program enrollment or the number of degrees awarded, the need to shift substantial resources to other programs, a substantial modification or redirection of a unit’s or UNT’s mission, and/or financial exigency.
4. UNT System Board of [Regents Rule 06.1300](#) and [UNT Policy 06.019, Financial Exigency](#) address such discontinuation. The procedures for assisting students enrolled in discontinued academic programs are set forth in section I.C.3.d. of this policy.

B. Conducting and Reporting Academic Program Reviews

1. Departmental Self-Study

A departmental self-study is the essence of the review process. Following the Academic Program Review Template, the self-study will constitute an in-depth self-appraisal of the department's activities by both faculty and students based on continuing strategic planning, goal formulation, assessment, and decision-making based upon assessment outcomes. The Office of University Accreditation, relying on the Office of Data,

Analytics, and Institutional Research, will provide updated, multi-year data for the self-study. The completed self-study will be transmitted to the unit administrator who will share the self-study results with the dean, the provost and Office of University Accreditation.

2. Academic Program Review Committee (APRC)

An APRC shall consist of at least one UNT faculty member and at least two off-campus, nationally-recognized experts in the department discipline under review. Off-campus committee members will be selected from outside the state of Texas, and from universities considered to be aspirational academic peers. Review committee members will not have close personal or close professional ties to department faculty members. The college and the unit under review will recommend review committee members to the Office of University Accreditation. Final responsibility for selection of all APRC members will reside with the Office of the Provost or designee. The Office of University Accreditation will provide a copy of the self-study to the review committee.

3. Results of Academic Program Review

Academic program review results fall into one (1) of three (3) categories:

a. Program Continuation

If it is determined that a program or concentration remains viable, is aligned with UNT mission and goals, the recommendations for program improvement are documented and the program is continued. The department and the college shall use the results of the review to improve programs. Within 18 months of receiving the APRC's report, the department will provide a follow up report with evidence of the progress made by the unit toward implementation of the APRC's recommendations.

b. Program Probation

If it is determined that a program or concentration requires extensive improvements and an additional review is warranted, the Office of University Accreditation will follow-up on the progress on the APRC's recommended improvements. Within 18 months of receiving the APRC's report, the unit administrator will present a report to the provost with evidence of the progress made by the unit and the university toward implementation of the APRC's recommendations. If the provost determines that progress has not been made, then the program is subject to discontinuation.

c. Program Discontinuation

The provost receives the recommendation of the APRC that the academic program or concentration be discontinued. The provost will then inform the dean, the unit administrator, and program director/coordinator of the committee's recommendation. The unit administrator, program director/coordinator and the

dean will have 30 days to respond, in writing, to the committee's recommendation. These responses shall be considered by the provost in making a recommendation of either acceptance or rejection of the committee's recommendation. The dean, the unit administrator, and program director/coordinator's response(s) and the provost's recommendation shall be included in the file transmitted to the president. If the president concurs with the APRC's program discontinuation recommendation, the provost shall:

- i. Direct the appropriate unit administrator, along with the Offices of the Registrar and Admissions to impose a moratorium on the admission of new students into the program.
- ii. Notify the chair of the Faculty Senate, as well as the administration, faculty, and students of the affected program. In accordance with [Regents Rule 06.1309](#), the faculty will have the ability to make recommendations to the president regarding the discontinuance of academic programs. Recommendations will be part of the Academic Program Discontinuation Review Committee (APDRC) process outlined in I.C.3.c.
- iii. Consult with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, and appoint an APDRC composed of faculty and administrative personnel to determine the most appropriate course of action to safeguard faculty rights and interests. The APDRC will be composed of at least half faculty members. Faculty in a program under consideration for discontinuation, or faculty in academic positions under consideration for termination, will be notified and afforded an opportunity to contribute to the review process; including a hearing before the APDRC, as specified in [Regents Rule 06.1309](#). The APDRC will submit their recommendations to the provost and president for consideration. Any faculty member whose termination is recommended due to elimination of occupied academic positions has the right to appeal through the university faculty grievance committee. Faculty that are notified that their position will be terminated due to the elimination of an academic program have the right to grieve the elimination decision. [UNT Policy 06.051](#) outlines university faculty grievance processes. The president will submit a final recommendation for the Board of Regents approval.
- iv. Follow Reporting Substantive Change policy 06.053 for closing an academic program. Direct appropriate academic leaders to ensure that students who are currently admitted to the program and in good standing have the opportunity to complete the program within a reasonable timeframe or transfer to another program in a way that minimizes hardship for the student.
- v. Ensure that procedures for faculty termination within the discontinued academic program follows the provisions outlined in Regents Rules [06.1210](#), [Termination and Revocation of Tenure, 06.1309](#), and [06.1310](#). Procedures include:

- a) Presenting university recommendations to terminate a tenured faculty member due to discontinuance of an academic program to the Board of Regents for approval. After the Board of Regents formally approves the termination of a program and the program discontinuation plan, the president shall provide termination notices to the faculty identified in the discontinuation plan.
- b) Ensuring that a reasonable and timely notice of the intent to terminate a faculty appointment because of discontinuance of the academic program is given. Following formal approval of program discontinuation by the president, one year's formal notice will be provided to tenure-system faculty whose appointments are to be terminated. The year's notice will commence at the beginning of the academic year following formal approval by the Board of Regents. Non-tenure system faculty terminated for reasons of program discontinuation will be given notification and timing for phasing out programs and displacing faculty members will be based on institutional needs.
- c) Allowing any faculty member to appeal the termination to the Faculty Grievance Committee convened to review the decision. The faculty member must submit an appeal to any negative recommendation to the president, in writing, no later than 10 business days after written receipt of the recommendation.
- d) Starting an exhaustive search for opportunities for tenure-system faculty members to be appointed to open positions in other institutional departments in which the faculty members are qualified to teach.
- e) Ensuring that every effort to transfer non-tenured faculty affected by discontinuation to a comparable assignment in the university is made.
- f) Ensuring that tenure-track faculty members assigned to different academic programs as a result of discontinuance will be eligible to apply for tenure. Any changes to the normal probation window will require provost approval.

V. References and Cross-References

[UNT System Board of Regent Rules 06.1201, Termination and Revocation of Tenure](#)

[UNT System Board of Regent Rules 06.1300, Financial Exigency and Discontinuance of Academic Programs](#)

[UNT Policy 06.002 Academic Appointments and Titles](#)

[UNT Policy 06.019 Financial Exigency](#)

[UNT Policy 06.051 Faculty Grievance](#)

[UNT Policy 06.053 Reporting Substantive Change](#)

VI. Revision History

Policy Contact:	Policy Director, Office of the Provost and VP for Academic Affairs
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