

**Report of the CGS Special Committee  
Spring 2017**

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In attendance :

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## DEAN'S CHARGE

**Dean's Charge 1:** Recommend a set of guidelines and processes to identify 1) criteria by which we can assess the long-term viability of programs, both existing and proposed, 2) opportunities for new approaches that are both mission-focused and revenue positive, and 3) strategies to invest new sources of revenue in the strengthening of doctoral programs, particularly ones that are committed to academic excellence, diversity, and accountability to student outcomes.

**Dean's Charge 2:** Recommend a set of guidelines and processes to assess and prioritize new program proposals in the College, taking into consideration each program's relationship to mission, student and/or employer demand, resource requirements (current and future), and revenue potential.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

We give the main recommendations of our panel below. In the following pages, we discuss these recommendations in detail along with the committee's rationale.

### Charge 1:

- I. The Committee recommends the formation of a standing working group that will design, supervise the implementation of, and assess the process that is used to evaluate current programs and identify new potential programs. This working group should be transparent, nimble, sustained by administrative support, data-driven and supported by faculty governance.

### Charge 2:

- I. The Committee recommends that criteria used by CGS should be broadly transparent.
- II. The Committee recommends that a central repository of useful resources and previous new program applications be made available by the College Office of Graduate Affairs.
- III. The Committee recommends an additional field on the CIM proposal document addressing how the new program will increase diversity.
- IV. The Committee recommends that new programs be evaluated on predictions of graduate placement, demand for the program and plans for maintaining and generating demand. To the extent that program proposals are evaluated based on these data, the college should provide guidance to the department.

## DISCUSSION

### Overview

The CGS Special Committee convened to recommend improvements to the procedures by which new and existing programs are evaluated and strengthened. Overall, the recommendations of the committee have been guided by a strong opinion that programs should be evaluated based on their strength of contribution to the broader mission of the University (<https://www.ku.edu/about/mission>). Furthermore, all new procedures should be broadly transparent. Though the committee is aware of budgetary challenges, the committee felt strongly that programs should be primarily evaluated based on their impact on the academic mission of the University. A summary of discussion, especially as it pertains to the second charge, is available at the end of this document in **Table 1**.

## Charge 1 Recommendation

- I. The Committee recommends the formation of a standing working group that will design, supervise the implementation of, and assess the process that is used to evaluate current programs and identify new potential programs. This working group should be transparent, nimble, sustained by administrative support, data-driven and supported by faculty governance.

## Principles of Recommendation

Overall, the Committee agreed that any mechanism to evaluate or strengthen existing programs or build new ones must be *transparent, nimble, sustained by administrative support, data-driven and supported by faculty governance*. The Special Committee recommends that an ongoing working group of invested faculty members (hereafter referred to as the “Working Group”) be selected within or by CGS, and thus within the mechanisms of current governance. Details of these guiding principles are provided below:

### *I. Direct Communication.*

The Working Group should function as a direct communication liaison between the Dean and other administration and the faculty. To facilitate this, we suggest that the Working Group identify and implement mechanisms to broaden discussion across vested parties that include students, staff and faculty. There was broad agreement that multiple mechanisms should be available for gathering input. Several ideas were proposed. These include:

- Organized brainstorming sessions for identifying new opportunities for program development (modeled on Red Hot Research, or even perhaps within the context of Red Hot Research).
- Organized presentations on program development procedures led by faculty/staff/students providing examples of how demand was identified and programs were developed.
- Town Hall meetings that provide information about how program financial health is assessed and give an opportunity for discussion about this assessment.

### *II. Transparency.*

There should be transparency in how the Working Group functions. In particular, an explicit communication flow chart of how the Working Group works within the University should be provided by the Dean.

### *III. Data-Driven.*

It is important that considerations by the Working Group be data-driven. However, faculty often have little knowledge of how to collect relevant data that would be essential for program assessment or development. Sufficient administrative support for data collection should be provided by the College Office of Graduate Affairs.

### *IV. Incentives.*

There should be incentives for the development of new, innovative programs that meet demand and strengthen the mission of the University. There may be such incentives right now, but this has not been made clear. A task for the Working Group will be to facilitate the development of these incentives.

### *V. Longevity.*

The Special Committee agreed that the Working Group will be most effective if it is sustained. It will be important for faculty in the Working Group to be involved in *implementation* of the recommendation, and not just *making* recommendations. This will ensure ongoing improvement and feedback. Without this integrated process, the committee believed such a mechanism would not be effective.

## **Charge 2 Detailed Recommendations**

- I. Criteria used by the CGS to evaluate programs should be made transparent to both the CGS and those submitting new proposals.
- II. The committee recommends that a central repository of useful resources and previous new program applications be made available by the College Office of Graduate Affairs. These resources will illustrate possible (and perhaps ideal) ways the recommended criteria are addressed. This resource should be publicized
- III. An additional field on the Curriculum Inventory Management (CIM) proposal document should be added that addresses how the new program, in disciplines with a history of low diversity, will make efforts to increase representation of underrepresented groups. Assessment of historical diversity of the discipline should be provided, with reasonable citations of the sources.
- IV. The following additional specific criteria should be considered by the CGS in the evaluation of proposals.
  - Predictions on graduate career placement
  - Data on demand for program
  - Plan for maintaining and generating demand for program

To the extent that program proposals are expected to provide data on likelihood for improving diversity, career placement and program, the College should provide guidance to the department. This will hopefully remove some of the guess work in providing these data in program proposals. Specific information from sources such as the Education Advisory Board should be provided to faculty and departments seeking to build new programs.

## **Principles of Recommendations**

Currently, new program proposals are evaluated by the Committee for Graduate Studies (CGS). CGS evaluation is based on responses to a range of questions about the design and potential impact of new programs. These include, but are not limited to statements on:

- Program Description
- Demand/Need for Program
- Comparative/Locational Advantage
- Degree Requirements
- Faculty Profile

Anticipated Enrollment  
Academic Support  
Costs and Financing  
Source of New Funding

However, there are two key limitations to the existing proposal process for new programs. First, new proposals address these questions without specific guidance as to the format and exactly how much or what information should be included. For example, no specific procedure is provided by which anticipated enrollment is to be estimated. Specific information in criteria such as Anticipated Enrollment, Academic Support, Costs and Financing and Sources of New Funding are frequently obtained through guess work by those that write up the proposal. Second, the committee reviewing proposals does not have specific criteria by which to judge the quality of the response or the program design plan. For example, what constitutes a thorough response to the question about Demand/Need for the program? This Special Committee of CGS has been tasked with making recommendations for improving this process.

The Special Committee outlined a variety of program features that should be included as criteria in evaluation. These are classified into several general categories.

*I. Diversity enhancement.*

New programs should make specific measures to enhance diversity. Proposals that provide clear examples of how the new program will increase representation of underrepresented groups, among both students and faculty, should be prioritized.

*II. Impacts on current and future students.*

New program proposals should outline specific benefits to students. Such benefits may include program flexibility, low costs, reasonable time to completion, improved career placement opportunities and professional development. Proposals that are likely to enhance student success in placement in enriching careers should be prioritized.

*III. Impacts on staff and faculty.*

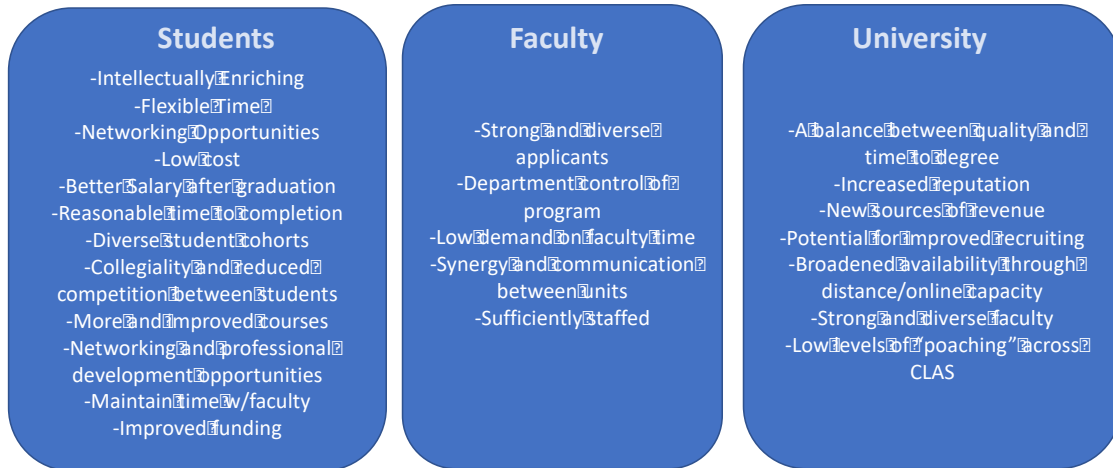
New program proposals should provide an honest assessment of new staff requirements and current faculty demands. Efforts to identify shared interests across disciplines without increasing administrative burden are encouraged in new program proposals.

*IV. Benefits to the broader community of the college and state.*

New proposals should justify additional resources and expenditures to support the establishment of new programs. Justification of expenditures should jointly consider increased reputation of the University, state-wide needs for expertise among graduates and the potential for programs to become self-sustaining. Investment in new programs that have potential to serve many needs and demands may be very worthwhile even if such programs do not become a source of revenue.

**Table 1.** Discussion Summary of CGS Special Committee

### Brainstorm: Values of Program Stakeholders



### Criteria to Evaluate New Programs

