

IV.07 REORGANIZATION, ELIMINATION AND MERGER (REM) OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

There is a recognition that higher education is undergoing significant change and that there are circumstances that may make it prudent to consider and, perhaps, to reorganize, eliminate, or merge academic units or to substantially modify or eliminate academic programs. Circumstances, including financial opportunities or constraints, may also necessitate a reallocation of financial resources, the reassignment of faculty members, including librarians, and staff to new academic homes, or the elimination of positions.

REM proposals should be used to enhance the ability and capacity of Linfield University to fulfill its mission. Because Linfield University is committed to the teaching of students in an atmosphere of academic freedom that fosters intellectual rigor, creativity, and a sense of personal and social responsibility, the policies and procedures articulated below are designed to enable Linfield University to protect academic freedom, respect tenure, and to ensure academic due process.

The principles implicit in these policies/procedures are for the benefit of all who are involved with or are affected by the policies and programs of the institution.

Policy Applicability

Consistent with the Bylaws of Linfield University and Linfield's commitment to shared governance, as defined and approved by the Board of Trustees, the following principles shall govern such processes of REM, including substantial modification or elimination of programs.

This policy applies to Linfield University employees and units developing, offering, and engaging in academic programs, courses, and activities.

Definitions for the Purpose of this Policy

- "Faculty" refers to all tenured faculty, tenure-track faculty, non-tenure track faculty, professors of practice, visiting professors, adjunct professors, librarians, and anyone with teaching responsibilities
- "Academic Unit" refers to the administrative entities such as Departments, Schools, and Colleges, including all the faculty and staff assigned to that area.
- "Academic Program" refers to curricular entities such as majors, minors, and certificate programs.
- "Significant financial distress" refers to chronic university-wide structural budgetary issues that adversely impact the university's long-term financial sustainability.
- "Financial exigency" is a demonstrably bona-fide situation in which the university faces an imminent financial crisis which threatens the survival of the institution as a whole and which cannot reasonably be alleviated by less drastic means.

Policy/Procedures

As stated above, REM proposals should be used to enhance the ability and capacity of Linfield University to fulfill its mission. It may become

necessary to modify or reduce academic programs that also require a reduction in faculty and/or staff.

- As a preferred way, the decision to formally reorganize, eliminate, or merge an academic unit or program will be determined by the academic units. The academic units shall apprise the Dean, Provost/VP for Academic Affairs and the Faculty Senate if a REM proposal has been initiated through the standard governance structure of each unit.
- There may be occasions where a REM proposal may be initiated by university leadership in collaboration with the academic units. In this case, the Faculty Senate and deans of the affected units will be apprised as early as possible in the REM process of deliberation so that faculty's informed input may play a prominent and effective role in planning for change.
- If significant financial distress or financial exigency is the justification for REM, the President or designee will present the rationale for this decision to the Board of Trustees. The faculty representatives on the University Budget Committee, in collaboration with any relevant school/college-specific faculty budget committee or school/college faculty member in a leadership role, will have opportunity to render an assessment in writing of the institution's financial condition within 60 days of notification of financial distress or financial exigency. In order to make informed recommendations about the financial impact of program closures, these representatives will have access to detailed program, department, and administrative-unit budgets. As this information is sensitive/confidential, only relevant faculty and faculty leaders named above shall have access to these budgets, and the review shall not be outsourced to any third parties.
- Deliberations shall include the Provost/VP for Academic Affairs, the Dean of the affected unit(s), Faculty Senate, the curriculum committee(s) of the affected program(s), and faculty and/or staff in the unit(s) who would be affected by the REM proposal under consideration. A reasonable time (60 days, unless there are extenuating circumstances) for questions or alternatives will be provided.
- If the proposal affects the curriculum of only one unit, the dean of that unit will present the REM proposal to the Provost/VP for Academic Affairs and will notify the Faculty Senate that a REM proposal has been sent to the Provost/VP for Academic Affairs.
- If the REM proposal affects the curriculum of more than one unit, the chairs of the affected curriculum committees will inform the deans of the affected units and the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate will review the proposal and make recommendation(s) to the deans and the Provost/VP for Academic Affairs.
- The Provost/VP for Academic Affairs shall notify the Academic Council that the deliberation phase has been initiated. After the deliberation phase, the Provost/VP for Academic Affairs, Deans, or curricular committee chairs will present to the Academic Council the REM proposal for consideration.
- The Academic Council will consider issues, including but not limited to, the following: impact on faculty, staff, and students in effected units, the impact of curricular changes that affect units across campus, and program organization of multiple units.
- After deliberations on the REM proposal (60 days, unless there are extenuating circumstances), the Provost/VP for Academic Affairs will make a recommendation(s) regarding the proposed REM proposal to the University Cabinet. If approved by the University Cabinet, the President will present recommendations for substantial changes to the Board of Trustees.

Reassignment to New Academic Home

Faculty members and staff whose academic home unit is merged, reduced, eliminated, or in some other fundamental way reorganized may be reassigned to a new academic home. Every effort shall be made to find a new home that is agreeable both to the affected faculty or staff member and to faculty members in the receiving unit, with the understanding that in some instances it may be impossible to find an arrangement that fully satisfies all parties. In the event a faculty member whose position is to be eliminated under the approved REM proposal is qualified to teach in another unit of the university, their right to such a position shall be determined by the following:

- A review of student enrollment and program needs of the department or program to which the faculty might be transferred. The Provost/VP of Academic Affairs, dean, and other faculty leadership, depending on the unit, and the affected faculty member(s) will be involved in this review.
- A review of the qualifications of the faculty member who is to be reassigned. This review will include the expertise represented in the faculty member's terminal degree, teaching, scholarship, service, and performance evaluations as well as the curricular needs of the academic unit to which the faculty member might be transferred.

The Provost/VP of Academic Affairs, the deans of the affected units, department chairs to which the faculty member is to be reassigned, and the affected faculty member(s) will complete this review, as well as a review of possible additional training or certification. Faculty whose qualifications have been determined to meet the expertise and curricular needs for a full-time position in a different academic unit shall not have their base pay reduced due to the reorganization of academic units and/or reduction in programs. They will also continue to be eligible for other compensation benefits.

Reduction or Reallocation of Faculty Positions

If individual faculty members affected by an approved REM decision are not qualified to perform the duties, functions, and responsibilities of other academic units where there is adequate enrollment, those individuals will be terminated from the faculty. For faculty where a decision has been made to not renew the appointment of a tenure, tenure track, non-tenured faculty member, that faculty member:

- Must receive written notice no later than March 1 of the first academic year of service if the appointment expires at the end of the academic year; at least three months in advance of the expiration of the appointment.
- Must receive written notice no later than September 30 for those faculty who are in their second year or who have been at Linfield longer than two years.

Faculty members whose services are no longer required under an approved REM decision will receive either receive six months full salary and medical benefits from the date of termination or a one-year terminal contract at the mutual discretion of the university, individual department and affected faculty.

If the university terminates appointments under an approved REM decision, it may not make new faculty appointments in that program until sufficient student enrollment has been determined to exist by the department chair, dean, and the administration. Additionally, the position or substantially similar position of the faculty member concerned (assuming a record of satisfactory performance) will not be filled by a replacement within a period of three years, unless the released faculty

member has been offered reinstatement and at least 30 days in which to accept or decline it.

Grievances

A faculty member who contests for cause a proposed relocation or termination resulting from the reorganization, elimination, or merger of an academic unit or program has a right to a full hearing before a faculty committee formed by Faculty Senate leadership and the Human Resources Director. The committee will include representation from each of the Schools/College(s). The chair of the hearing committee will then submit the findings of the hearing to the Faculty Senate who will discuss and make a recommendation to the President. If the initial decision is upheld, then the decision becomes final. In the event the initial decision is modified or overturned, the Faculty Senate will send the report on to the President for a final decision.

Continuity of Degree Programs

In accordance with Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) requirements, every effort shall be made to enable students enrolled in degree programs at the time of reorganization to complete the requirements for those degrees by including arrangements for completion of degree programs in the event of a REM.

Policy Compliance

The Reorganization, Elimination and Merger of Academic Units and/or Programs policies and procedures will be conducted in accordance with the accreditation criteria of the NWCCU, specifically Standard Two, "Governance, Resources, and Capacity."