APR at UNCG: Securing our future. Preserving our history.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why did UNCG conduct the Academic Program Review (APR)?

The purpose of academic program review was to position UNCG to be as strong academically as possible while maintaining a sound and balanced educational program that is consistent with its mission, strategic plan, and its functions and responsibilities as an institution of higher education.

Q. How is APR connected to the budget process?

While we hope we have taken the largest budget cut that we will have to take, budgetary challenges will continue. The purpose of academic program review is to:

- define areas of strength
- identify the needs of North Carolina and the extent to which our academic programs are addressing those needs
- identify programs that have the potential for real distinction nationally and internationally
- provide guidance to deans, department heads, the provost and chancellor that will enable them to invest limited resources in ways that support those strengths.

The academic program review is critically important to helping us define the future of the university.

Q. What was the APR process?

A total of 254 undergraduate and graduate programs were reviewed during the process. “Program” was defined as a subcategory (or an area of study) of an undergraduate major or field of graduate study in a degree offered at a particular level.

Because the structure of the promotion and tenure process has been carefully considered by the faculty over the years, the program review process was designed to mimic it as closely as possible, including the bottom-up flow of review, the independence of levels of review, and the involvement of faculty at the department, unit (college, schools) and university levels. Also similar to the promotion and tenure process, the university-level committee made recommendations to the provost for cases to consider further, and the provost then considered all available evidence before making recommendations to the chancellor.
Q. Why weren’t all academic programs reviewed?

Programs established within two years from the start of the process did not have sufficient data for evaluation based on the criteria used.

Q. Who and how many individuals were involved in the process?

A total of 111 individuals were actively involved in committee work. Faculty comprised the majority of each program review committee; 73 were involved in the process through committee service, and many more responded to department and program surveys. Because the outcome of program review has an effect on staff and students as well as on faculty, one difference between this process and the promotion and tenure process was the involvement of staff, administrators and students. Twelve staff members, 10 administrators and 16 students were formally involved on committees in the process.

UNCG’s process of APR has been as inclusive as possible with regard to faculty, staff, and student engagement.

Q. What criteria were used?

A wide range of criteria was considered as part of the process at all levels of review. The criteria were reviewed and supplemented by departments with programs under review, by the unit-level committees, and by the University Program Review Committee (UPRC). The criteria included 19 measures of quality (nine quantitative and 10 qualitative) and 12 measures of functions and demand (seven quantitative and five qualitative).

At the beginning of the process, program leadership was given the opportunity to interpret and correct the centrally-provided quantitative data, to provide peer data, to explain how criteria were related to each other (e.g., graduation rate and SAT scores need to be examined together), and to provide additional qualitative information. Unit-level committees worked with the deans of academic units to develop weights for the criteria to guide their review of programs. The UPRC honored the integrity of these processes and made recommendations for further review of only those programs that the units themselves had rated as relatively low on quality and function/demand.

Q. What are the results of APR?

The process resulted in the identification of 47 programs (14 undergraduate, 21 master’s, and 12 doctoral) as exceptionally strong in quality and/or function and demand to be considered for possible future investment.

Seventeen programs (7 undergraduate, 9 master’s, 1 doctoral) were identified as having challenges in quality and/or function/demand but should be retained due to their importance to UNCG’s vision and mission. For these programs, specific interventions for
strengthening were recommended for consideration by deans and department heads/chairs.

Forty-one programs (25 undergraduate, 7 post-baccalaureate or post-master's certificate, 7 master's, and 2 doctoral) were recommended for discontinuation based on recommendations coming forward largely (although not exclusively) from the academic units.

Q. Would academic programs being recommended for discontinuation end immediately or be phased out?

All programs being discontinued will be phased out according to a timeline unique to that program.

Q. What happens to students enrolled in programs being eliminated?

Undergraduate and Graduate Admissions will notify prospective students about the possibility their area of interest might be eliminated. Department heads and advisors will work with current students to ensure their program of studies is not interrupted.

Q. What is the process to discontinue an academic program?

When the decision is made to close an educational program, the institution (UNCG) must make a good faith effort to assist affected students, faculty, administrative and support staff so they experience a minimal amount of disruption in the pursuit of their course of study or professional careers. This process is referred to a Teach-Out.

In all cases, individuals will be notified of the decision to close a program as soon as possible so they can make appropriate plans. Guidelines established by UNCG's accrediting agency, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCON), will be followed. Students who have not completed their programs should be advised by faculty or professional counselors regarding suitable options including transfer to comparable programs, ideally within UNCG.

In the rate situation in which students cannot complete their major at UNCG, a teach-out agreement to accommodate them will be established with another institution and approved by SACSCON.

Q. What does this mean?

If a student is enrolled in a program that is discontinued, UNCG is committed to helping the student finish and graduate with that major or with an appropriate alternative major.
Q. **What if a student is in a 2+ program?**

If a student is in a 2+ program that is discontinued, UNCG will attempt to contact the student via his or her UNCG email address and permanent home mailing address to inform the student of this decision and work with him or her to develop a program completion plan tailored to their specific needs.

Additionally, UNCG will communicate this decision to participating North Carolina community colleges and ask the institutions to notify current students in the majors affected by this discontinuation. These students have 30 days after notification by the community college to declare their interest in writing to UNCG, if they wish to continue toward a baccalaureate at UNCG under the articulation agreement.

Q. **How long will it take for a student in a discontinued program to graduate?**

Each student’s needs are different. UNCG is committed to helping every student complete an academic program with a minimal amount of disruption.

Q. **How many people will lose their jobs?**

No tenured or tenure-track faculty will lose their jobs. Work assignments for tenured or tenure-track faculty may be adjusted based on discussions with their department heads/chairs or program directors. It is too early in the process to determine if any adjunct professors or staff will lose their positions.

Q. **How much money will be saved by the elimination of programs?**

The discussion about APR began due to the severity of recent budget cuts. The chancellor and provost recognized that, even when the economy improves, the university would not receive the same level of state funding as in the past. Therefore, the university decided to identify strengths and areas for potential growth to guide how its limited resources should be allocated in the future. Any savings will be realized through more strategic allocation of future cuts and allocation/reallocation of existing and new resources.

Q. **Who approves the APR plan?**

The chancellor shared her decisions with the UNCG Board of Trustees, and they passed a resolution prepared by the BOT Academic/Student Affairs Committee endorsing the process of Academic Program Review at UNCG. Chancellor Brady’s recommendations will be forwarded to the UNC General Administration and the UNC Board of Governors for approval. It is anticipated this will occur in the fall. After SACSCOC has been notified regarding programs to be discontinued and has approved any teach-out agreements, the decisions will be final.