

December 9, 2021

To: Provost Barbara Bichelmeyer

From: Hossein Saiedian, University Senate President, and Rémy Lequesne, Faculty Senate President

Re: Program Discontinuance Recommendations, Fall 2021

This letter conveys the University Senate's recommendations regarding the proposed discontinuance of 42 academic programs. Rationales for the University Senate recommendations are provided for each program. As required by University Senate Rules and Regulations¹ (USRR) Section 8.2.5, and in agreement with AAUP Recommended Institutional Regulations (Regulation 4d²), these recommendations are based on whether (1) discontinuance is in the best academic interests of the University, and (2) the proposal makes adequate provisions for affected students and faculty.

Process Used to Arrive at the University Senate's Recommendations

In August and September of 2021, The University of Kansas (KU) Governance Office received requests from the Provost's Office for discontinuance of 42 academic programs. The list of programs recommended for discontinuance included inactive and active programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The requests contained the administration's rationale for discontinuance of each program. Pursuant to USRR Article VIII Section 2, the Academic Procedures and Policies (AP&P) committee then solicited input on the recommended discontinuances from the KU community and conducted open hearings in September and October 2021. All faculty were notified of the hearings, including those associated with the programs that had been recommended for discontinuance. Information gathered from the community in advance of the hearings and from the hearings themselves was considered in conjunction with the justifications for discontinuance submitted to the Governance Office.

AP&P issued recommendations for or against discontinuance, along with detailed statements of their rationale, to Provost Bichelmeyer, the faculty involved in affected programs, and the University Senate. The recommendations and supporting files, including those submitted by the Provost's Office to the Governance Office, were posted online³ and made available to all KU faculty.

The University Senate met on December 2, 2021 to discuss and vote on each of the AP&P recommendations. As described below, the University Senate concurred with all of AP&P's recommendations.

¹ <https://policy.ku.edu/governance/USRR#ArticleVIII>

² <https://www.aaup.org/report/recommended-institutional-regulations-academic-freedom-and-tenure>, Regulation 4d(1)

³ <https://governance.ku.edu/academic-policies-and-procedures-recommendations-fall-2021-hearings>

This process of careful review and incorporation of faculty perspectives was necessary and appropriate. AAUP recommends that a decision to discontinue an active academic program in cases not involving financial exigency⁴ be based “essentially upon educational considerations, as determined primarily by the faculty as a whole or an appropriate committee thereof”⁵. As University Senate President, I appreciate the extensive time commitment and careful evaluation provided by AP&P committee members during the hearings and deliberations.

Summary of University Senate Recommendations for Discontinuance

On December 2, 2021, the University Senate voted to concur with the administration and AP&P to discontinue the programs listed below. Programs were voted upon in groups, so the vote tally is reported for each group of programs. The rationale for discontinuance is briefly summarized for each group of programs, with further justification provided in the AP&P memos available via hyperlink.

(1) The University Senate voted unanimously to discontinue the following:

- Elder Law Certificate Program
- BA and MFA in Design
- BSE in Sport Science
- Graduate Certificate in Sports Management and Media
- Undergraduate Certificate in World Literature
- Dual-title Ph.D. in Gerontology and Communication Studies

Rationales: These programs are inactive and thus not supporting the educational mission of KU. Furthermore, no faculty or students are adversely affected by their discontinuance. [Full AP&P recommendations can be found here.](#)

(2) The University Senate voted unanimously to discontinue the following:

- Research Experience Program: Undergraduate Certificate
- Science management Graduate Certificate (Edwards Campus)
- Foundations for Graduate Study in US Institutions Graduate Certificate
- Graduate Certificate in Pillars of Business
- Graduate Certificate in Marketing
- Graduate Certificate in Finance
- Graduate Certificate in Human Resource Management
- Graduate Certificate in Management and Leadership
- Graduate Certificate in Foundations of Business

Rationales: Each of these certificates was developed to serve a perceived need, but, in the judgment of the faculty associated with the certificates, did not function as intended. In each case, the perceived need is being served in a different manner and these certificates are no longer necessary. Furthermore, AP&P found that adequate provisions had been made for affected faculty and students. [Full AP&P recommendations can be found here.](#)

⁴ <https://policy.ku.edu/governance/USRR#ArticleVII>

⁵ <https://www.aaup.org/report/recommended-institutional-regulations-academic-freedom-and-tenure>, Regulation 4d(1)

- (3) The University Senate voted with 33 in favor and 3 opposed to *discontinue* the following:

BS in Biology

Rationales: This program has been replaced by alternative academic programs that better serve students and the academic mission of KU. Furthermore, no faculty or students are adversely affected by its discontinuance. [Full AP&P recommendations can be found here.](#)

- (4) The University Senate voted with 34 in favor and 2 opposed to *discontinue* the following:

BA/BGS in Classical Antiquity

BA/BGS in Classical Languages

Minor in Classics

Rationales: These programs have been replaced by alternative academic programs that better serve students and the academic mission of KU. Furthermore, no faculty or students are adversely affected by their discontinuance. [Full AP&P recommendations can be found here.](#)

- (5) The University Senate voted with 34 in favor and 3 opposed to *discontinue* the following:

Co-Major in Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies

MA in Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies

BA in Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies

Graduate Certificate in Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies

Rationales: These programs have been incorporated into academic programs within Slavic and Eurasian Languages and Literatures to better serve students and the academic mission of KU. Furthermore, no faculty or students are adversely affected by their discontinuance. [Full AP&P recommendations can be found here.](#)

- (6) The University Senate voted with 35 in favor and 1 opposed to *discontinue* the following:

Co-Major in European Studies

Rationales: This program has been incorporated into an academic program within Global and International Studies to better serve students and the academic mission of KU. Furthermore, no faculty or students are adversely affected by its discontinuance. [Full AP&P recommendations can be found here.](#)

- (7) The University Senate voted with 32 in favor and 1 opposed to *discontinue* the following:

BA in German Studies

MA in German Studies - inactive

PhD in German Languages and Literatures - inactive

World Business Culture UG Certificate

Rationales: These programs are either inactive or have been incorporated into academic programs within Slavic and Eurasian Languages and Literatures to better serve students and the academic mission of KU. Furthermore, no faculty or students are adversely affected by their discontinuance. [Full AP&P recommendations can be found here.](#)

Summary of University Senate Recommendations Against Discontinuance

On December 2, 2021, the University Senate voted to concur with AP&P to reject the recommendation by the Provost's Office to discontinue the programs listed below. Programs were voted upon in groups, so the vote tally is reported for each group of programs. The rationale for retaining each of these programs is briefly summarized, with further justification provided in the AP&P memos available via hyperlink.

(8) The University Senate voted with 34 in favor and 1 opposed to continue the following:

Ph.D. in Gerontology
Dual-title Ph.D. in Gerontology and Sociology
Dual-title Ph.D. in Gerontology and Psychology

Rationales:

- The justification for discontinuance provided neither evidence of financial benefits nor an assertion of benefits to the academic mission of the institution.
- AP&P found these programs contribute meaningfully to KU's academic mission. Although small, these programs have a direct connection to KU's strategic mission of "building healthy communities". Loss of these programs would impact graduate students seeking the added interdisciplinary credentials in Gerontology and impact their potential for employment. Loss of these programs could also hinder recruitment of Ph.D. candidates who wish to study the aging population.

[Full AP&P recommendations can be found here.](#)

(9) The University Senate voted unanimously with 34 in favor to continue the following:

MA in East Asian Studies

Rationales:

- Discontinuing this program is not in the academic interest of the university, as required in USRR Article VIII⁶ for discontinuance. Discontinuing this program will diminish KU's ability to serve the needs of our students and the country. This program serves the needs of the State Department and U.S. military, which at times requires officers to earn civilian MA degrees in topics of growing geopolitical importance.
- The recommendation for discontinuance described integrating this program into Global and International Studies (GIST). However, these plans are not finalized, so adequate provisions have not been provided for affected students and faculty, as required in USRR Article VIII for discontinuance.
- The information provided to AP&P indicated that discontinuance is more likely to cost KU grant dollars than save money. The program review submitted to KBOR reports that this unit is cost-effective and, through external grants, funds instructional and GTA support in other departments, research, travel, and student tuition.

[Full AP&P recommendations can be found here.](#)

⁶ <https://policy.ku.edu/governance/USRR#ArticleVIII>

(10) The University Senate voted with 32 in favor and 1 opposed to continue the following:

BA in Humanities
Minor in Humanities
Minor in Peace and Conflict Studies
Graduate Certificate in Peace and Conflict Studies

Rationales:

- Discontinuance of these programs is not in the best academic interests of the University, as required in USRR Article VIII⁷ for discontinuance.
 - In its review of the program, the College found that the faculty are highly productive and recognized for their research, highly effective teachers, and that the program’s impacts reach units across campus thanks to efforts of the faculty to build ties with and support other academic units.
 - Furthermore, this Department, which has fewer than 10 faculty, has recently had a 5-year annual student credit hour (SCH) average over 5000. This is a considerable teaching load that serves students and units across campus. It is larger SCH production than many programs not being considered for discontinuance.
 - Discontinuance on the basis of low-enrollments alone, which was the basis articulated by the KU administration, is inconsistent with KBOR’s request to “review low-enrollment programs ... to assess viability”⁸. Reliance on this basis for discontinuance also violates USRR Article VIII, which requires a “bona fide academic and educational reason”⁹, and AAUP guidance on program discontinuance, which states that acceptable “[e]ducational considerations do not include cyclical or temporary variations in enrollment”¹⁰.
- Adequate provisions for faculty and students have not been articulated, as required in USRR Article VIII for discontinuance. Some affiliated faculty still have not been made aware of plans for reassignment in the event the program is discontinued.
- The lack of clear criteria or justification for discontinuance, the lack of explanation of why this program cannot continue or merge with another unit, and the lack of a clear plan for transition also do not meet the standards necessary for program discontinuance.

[Full AP&P recommendations can be found here.](#)

(11) The University Senate voted unanimously with 34 in favor to continue the following:

BA in Latin American and Caribbean Studies
BSG in Latin American and Caribbean Studies
MA in Latin American and Caribbean Studies
Graduate Certificate in Latin American and Caribbean Studies

⁷ <https://policy.ku.edu/governance/USRR#ArticleVIII>

⁸ https://www.kansasregents.org/resources/PDF/About/Board_Meetings/FY_2021/KU-Low_Enrollment_Programs_to_KBOR_-_1.6.21_FINAL.pdf

⁹ <https://policy.ku.edu/governance/USRR#ArticleVIII>

¹⁰ <https://www.aaup.org/report/recommended-institutional-regulations-academic-freedom-and-tenure>, Regulation 4d(1)

Rationales:

- The administration's recommendation for discontinuance described integrating these programs into Global and International Studies (GIST). However, these plans are not finalized, so adequate provisions have not been provided for affected students and faculty, as required in USRR Article VIII¹¹ for discontinuance.
- A merger with GIST (or worse, the unclear transition to GIST) diminishes the competitiveness of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS) as it seeks continued Title VI funding, which supports students and faculty and contributes to KU's AAU standing.
- Furthermore, discontinuing these programs diminishes CLACS and therefore undercuts KU's efforts to "prepare students for lives of learning ... in an increasingly complex and diverse global community" and foster "a multicultural, inclusive environment"¹².
- The information provided to AP&P indicated that discontinuance is more likely to cost KU grant dollars than save money. The program review submitted to KBOR reports that this unit is cost-effective and, through external grants, funds instructional and GTA support in other departments, research, travel and student tuition.

[Full AP&P recommendations can be found here.](#)

(12) The University Senate voted unanimously with 34 in favor to continue the following:

Bachelor of Art Education in Visual Art Education
Master of Arts in Visual Art Education

Rationales:

- Discontinuance of Visual Arts Education (VAE) is not in the academic interests of students or KU, as required in USRR Article VIII¹³ for discontinuance. The Kansas State Department of Education review describes a highly effective academic program with a 98% job placement rate and graduates who consistently meet or exceed expectations for content and pedagogical knowledge and licensure.
- KU must not jeopardize our overall visual arts programs and expertise by discontinuing VAE. Discontinuance of VAE risks harming the Department of Visual Art, because:
 - VAE has the largest enrollment of any area within Visual Arts and VAE students account for approximately 500 student credit hours (SCH) within the Department of Visual Art. Loss of VAE will hurt department enrollments.
 - VAE graduates train future KU students in the arts, thus linking KU to prospective students throughout the state.
- Moving VAE to another school outside the Department of Visual Art is also not in the best academic interests of students or KU. Not only does removal of VAE from the Department of Visual Art risk doing harm to the department, but it would diminish the education of visual arts teachers for pedagogical reasons:
 - Visual art, like other complex subject areas, is an ill-structured or ill-defined domain. The best environment to experience and learn the nuances and contradictions in art making, learning, and thinking, and thus the best environment in which to study to become an art teacher, is within an art

¹¹ <https://policy.ku.edu/governance/USRR#ArticleVIII>

¹² <https://chancellor.ku.edu/mission>

¹³ <https://policy.ku.edu/governance/USRR#ArticleVIII>

department. Moving VAE would reduce exposure to all aspects of art and thus diminish the preparation of students for the workforce.

- The nature of art is constantly changing as artists produce new work, as historians and critics interpret and judge art, and as the public reacts to art. Art teachers must therefore be prepared for life-long learning and engagement with art, which is best achieved by a visual arts-centric educational foundation that exposes students to artists, art history, and the art community.
- Textbooks are not generally used in art teaching, so arts teachers must have a deep understanding of art and pedagogy to adapt and grow as the arts evolve. This deep understanding is best obtained in an art-centric curriculum.
- Discontinuance is incompatible with KU’s mission, which states that the “university provides service to the State of Kansas... KU's academic programs, arts facilities, and public programs provide cultural enrichment opportunities for the larger community.”¹⁴
 - As the largest VAE program in Kansas and the only art-education focused graduate program in the state, KU’s VAE programs are essential to sustaining a workforce of qualified visual arts educators for K-12 schools across the state.
 - Current enrollments are appropriate for a state of the size of Kansas, as the number of graduates meets the demands of the job market. Discontinuance would be to the detriment of K-12 students throughout Kansas and would send a signal that KU leaders do not value service to Kansans or, more broadly, the arts.
 - Particularly in light of learning and mental health challenges that students of all ages are facing due to the pandemic, it is essential that the students in the state have access to quality art education. As part of our institutional service mission, KU has played an important role that it must maintain in training art teachers for the state of Kansas.
- The information provided to AP&P indicates that discontinuance is likely to be a net financial loss for KU. VAE students average approximately 500 student credit hours (SCH) annually within the Department of Visual Art, and also account for SCH in other programs across campus. If the program is discontinued, these students will go to other universities to study art education, representing a loss of tuition revenue that easily exceeds the cost of VAE, which has a low budget relative to other Visual Arts programs.
- The Chair of the Department of Visual Arts and the VAE faculty have plans to address staffing concerns and increase VAE enrollments. Given the important service VAE provides to Kansans and the potential loss of revenue associated with discontinuance, VAE faculty should be given the opportunity to increase the viability of VAE.

[Full AP&P recommendations can be found here.](#)

Closing

The University Senate requests that the Provost uphold the recommendations of AP&P and the University Senate. Except for cases of financial exigency, program discontinuance may only be enacted on the basis of “bona fide academic and educational reasons”¹⁵, “as determined primarily by the faculty as a whole or an appropriate committee thereof”¹⁶.

¹⁴ <https://chancellor.ku.edu/mission>

¹⁵ <https://policy.ku.edu/governance/USRR#ArticleVIII>

¹⁶ <https://www.aaup.org/report/recommended-institutional-regulations-academic-freedom-and-tenure>

In cases where the Provost preliminarily does not concur with AP&P and University Senate recommendations, we request that the Provost meet and speak with Governance leaders prior to finalizing determinations. This meeting is requested to ensure that we share a common understanding of the underlying facts and reasons involved in these decisions, even if we ultimately arrive at different conclusions and decisions on the basis of those facts.

Respectfully,

Hossein Saiedian
University Senate President 2021-2022

Rémy Lequesne
Faculty Senate President 2021-2022

c: AP&P Committee
University Senate