## METHOD FOR IDENTIFYING LOW PRODUCTIVITY PROGRAMS

As part of the Academic Program Review (every seven years) and at other times deemed necessary by the University, degree programs will be reviewed for degree productivity using the methodology outlined below.

### Identify Programs with Degree Production below Thresholds

Undergraduate

Institutions will review degree information for each academic program for the most recent three years for which degrees-awarded data are available. Each degree and each major earned by a given student will count as a degree for this purpose (following IPEDS).

- Academic programs are expected to award twenty-four (24) or more undergraduate degrees over the three-year period.

- Degrees with differing titles (e.g., B.A., B.S., etc.) for a given major will be combined for purposes of the threshold analysis if substantial overlap of course work exists among the different degrees.

- Degrees granted to students with dual majors are counted with each major.

- The review of undergraduate programs excludes interdisciplinary programs.

Graduate

For programs granting degrees at the masters or doctoral level, institutions will review the number of degrees granted in the most recent three years for which degrees-awarded data are available.

- Academic programs are expected to grant nine (9) or more master's degrees and six (6) or more doctoral degrees over the three-year period.

- In programs that offer both master's and doctoral degrees, the doctoral degree numbers will be used to identify productivity of the program (i.e., if the number of doctoral degrees awarded is above the threshold, the master's program need not meet or exceed the threshold for master's degree programs.

- Degrees with differing titles (e.g., M.A., M.S., etc.) for a given major will be combined for purposes of the threshold analysis if substantial overlap of course work exists among the different degrees.

- Dual degrees granted to a student are counted separately.

- The review of graduate programs excludes interdisciplinary programs.

Low degree production may occur because:

- The program no longer accepts students and is in the process of being phased out

or has temporarily suspended admissions to undergo restructuring.

- The program was approved by the Arizona Board of Regents and implemented by the institution within the last six years. (Central office staff will provide each university with the year of ABOR approval).

- The program is offered at an off-campus location or at an alternate campus that offers unique degree programs or is an on-line program that is unique from other programs offered at the University. Degrees from university programs that are offered at other sites are counted with the majors and degrees offered on campus.

Programs with low degree productivity should be reviewed for viability. If a low productivity degree is duplicative, a plan should be developed to assess its viability relative to other similar programs at Arizona's state universities and implement steps to modify or eliminate the program. Justifications for the low degree production and a plan for improvements must be provided.

**Review Programs that Are Below the Low Degree Production Threshold for Criteria that Might Support Retention**

A program might be recommended for retention if one of a variety of institutional priorities is met. These might include:

- **Basic academic subject:**
  The program is considered a basic academic subject offered by a majority (8 or more) of our peer institutions. The most recent IPEDS Degree Completion report should be used to compare CIP code and degree levels at the peer institutions.

- **Program quality:**
  Quality may be demonstrated by student, faculty, or overall program quality. Examples of measures include evidence of instructional effectiveness (such as student performance and outcomes), employer satisfaction, student placement, research/scholarship/creative/artistic excellence, external funding, external recognition and national rankings, and accreditation.

- **Centrality to university mission:**
  Universities have complex missions with multiple goals. A program's contribution to the university mission is evidenced by identifying the university goal that the program fulfills.

- **Contribution to other programs in the university:**
  Universities have responsibilities to provide students access to courses and programs of study that support both broad educational goals (such as general education) and specific student needs (such as certificate programs). Evidence of a program's contribution to other programs in the university includes the number of student credit hours (or full-time equivalent students -- FTE) taught, courses taught that meet general education requirements, students completing minors, students

completing certificates, courses required by other majors, and non-majors in courses required of majors.

- **Contributions to workforce development:**
  The program prepares graduates that are valuable and needed by industry, business, and other stakeholders in Arizona.

- **Program uniqueness:**
  The program is important to Arizona by virtue of its unique educational contribution. Uniqueness is evidenced by a distinctive program focus (such as community partnerships, internships, interdisciplinary, or unique intellectual focus).

- **Program growth:**
  The program has recently been modified and there has been a significant increase in the number of students entering this major such that the number of degrees is expected to meet threshold within the next six years.

- **Program/unit revenue:**
  The unit housing the program generates significant revenue that can be used to support the program.

- **Access:**
  The program provides opportunities to earn degrees to students that, for geographic or other reasons, would not be able to participate in other programs. The measure of access will be the number of students enrolled in the program from rural or otherwise under-represented populations.

- **Other**

## Recommendations for programs not meeting any of the above conditions

As part of the Academic Program Review process, or at other times deemed necessary by the University, and based on the information from the reviews outlined above, institutions will provide a recommendation for each program that does not produce enough degrees to meet threshold. Recommendations may include that the program should be retained, eliminated, merged, or in some way modified. Changes requiring ABOR approval include program disestablishment, merger, renaming, and material revisions.