



# Rightsizing the Program Portfolio

Part II: Addressing Curricular and Cost  
Challenges of Underperforming Programs

Business Affairs Forum

# Rightsizing the Program Portfolio

## Executive Imperatives for Balancing Revitalization and Discontinuance

*Part I Available Now*

*Today's Focus*

1

**Assemble the Right Data for Regular Program Health and Performance Conversations**



- Evaluate programs annually to assess health, reward progress, and identify areas of concern
- Balance ease of collection, faculty receptiveness, and institutional priorities to determine the "right" program performance metrics

2

**Provide Watch-List Programs Structured Guidance and a Set Period of Time to Improve**



- Guide program leaders to design improvement opportunities with the right data and expertise
- Establish up-front expectations for future program performance over a set period of time

3

**Increase Resource Flexibility in Parallel to Program Redesign Efforts**



- Deploy appropriate retirement incentives
- Clear the emotional hurdles that often hinder retirement
- Ensure disciplined position control over vacated faculty lines
- Use retirement as a forcing function for larger planning efforts

4

**Ensure Program Discontinuance Minimizes Stakeholder Disruption and Maximizes Cost Savings**

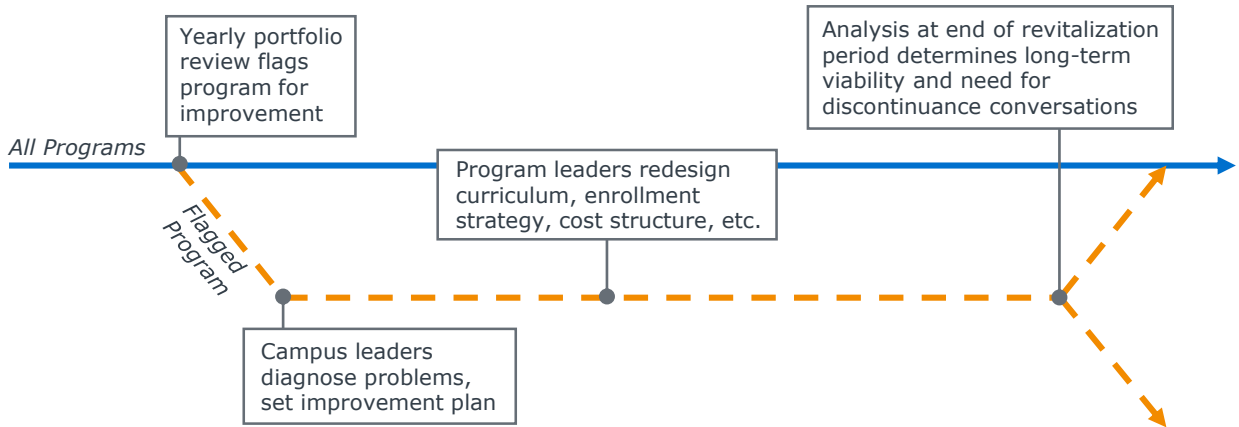


- Review institutional policies to ensure common faculty and student issues are appropriately addressed
- Refine talking points to explain the context and reason for discontinuance in light of larger institutional objectives

# The Right Tool for the Job

Foster a Continuous Improvement Mindset With a Regular Review Cadence

## Illustrative Process for Annual Program Review



## Four Advantages of Annual Reviews

- 1 Intervene while there's still time
- 2 Improvements might fix the problem
- 3 Socialize the need for change
- 4 Buy time to loosen fixed costs



# Provide Watch-List Programs Structured Guidance and a Set Period of Time to Improve

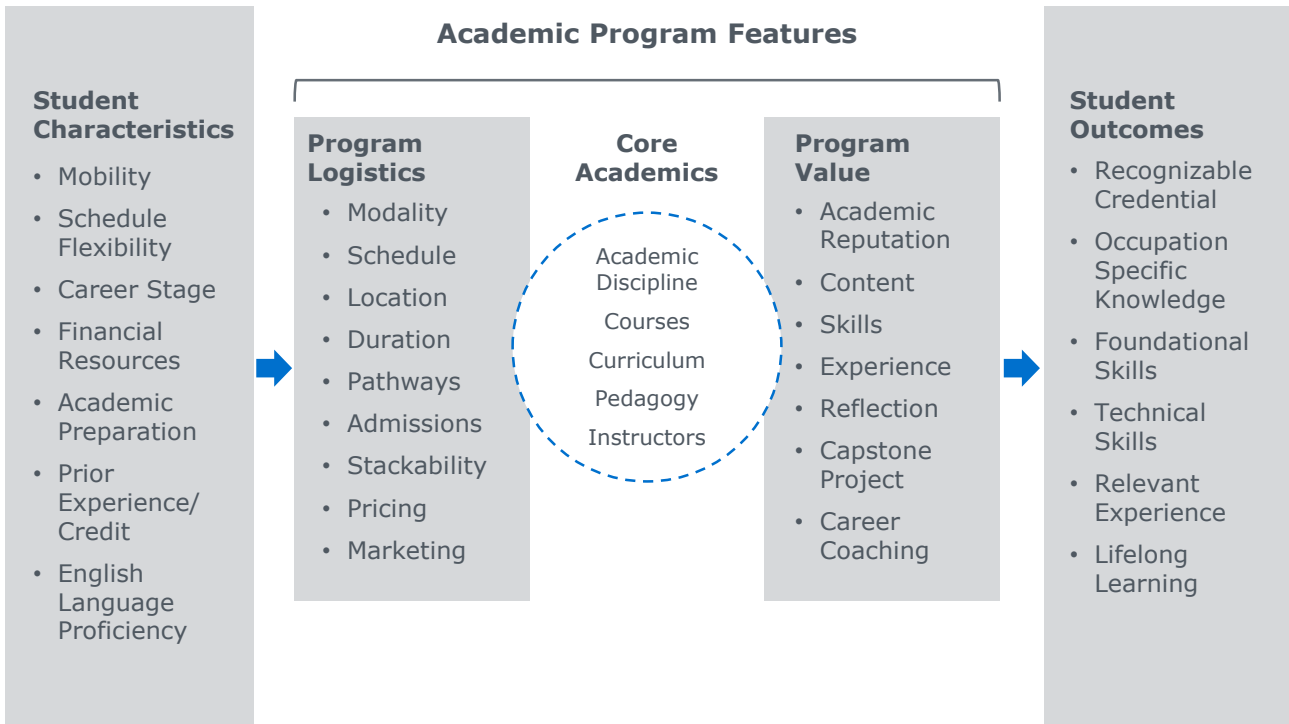
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# Revitalizing Programs Easier Said Than Done

## No Single Playbook for Fixing Watch-List Programs

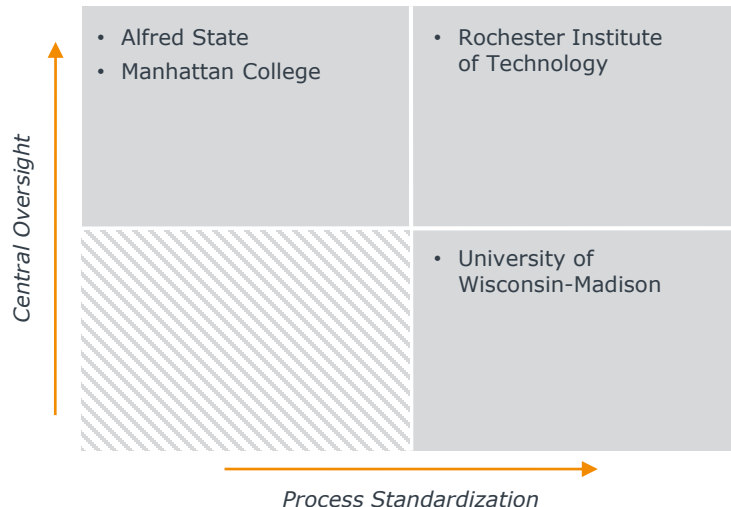


# Methodologies for Peeking Under the Hood

## Balancing Central Oversight with Departmental Ownership

### Methods for Diagnosing and Addressing Program Issues

Effective revitalization requires either central oversight or process standardization that guides program leaders to develop meaningful improvement plans.



### What Improvement Opportunities Accomplish

- ▶ **The improvements might work**, eliminating the need for more drastic intervention
- ▶ **Effective change management** necessitates giving faculty a chance to turn things around—and admit change is necessary
- ▶ **Buys time for long-term planning** as the likelihood of improvement becomes clear
- ▶ **Some solutions may be scalable** and possible to replicate for other under-performing programs



# Program Revitalization SWAT Teams

## Low Enrollment Triggers Deeper Dive from Cross-Functional Experts



### Enrollment Management Advisory Team



### Program Viability Review Team

**Participants** Provost, CBO, Enrollment Manager, program heads, deans, and representatives from marketing, enrollment, financial aid, and other campus services as needed

**Data** Program enrollment trends, pipeline data, financial performance, student interest, employer/market demand

**Mandate** Maximize resource allocation across under-enrolled programs to determine where additional investments (e.g., marketing, faculty lines) may be successful in turning a program around—or when discontinuance is the better scenario

### Success Stories

**Rebranding:** Enrollment low in Information Security, despite demand for skills; adopting “Cyber Security” nomenclature bumped new enrollment from 13 to 48

**New technology:** Struggling surveying program revitalized by introducing GPS technology

**Teaching overhaul:** Decline in one program’s enrollment explained by change in instructional requirements; once fixed, enrollment rebounded

**Sunset, sunrise:** Health sciences program phased out due to changes in labor market in favor of a degree in health administration and public health

# Nudged into Action

## Improvement Mechanics Left to Faculty but Prompted by Central Policies



### Low-Award Review Triggers

- Undergraduate: <25 degrees in 5 years
- Graduate: <5 degrees in 5 years
- Certificates: <10 awarded in 5 years

### Empowering the Low-Award Review

- 1 Adopted as part of the official shared governance policy
- 2 Program launches, faculty lines on hold until review completed
- 3 Noisome burden for program leaders and deans

Review UW-Madison's low-award policy [here](#).

### Prompts for Low-Award Reviews

- What is the demonstrated student need, even at a low level, for graduates with this specific credential?
- Does the program fill a specific academic niche unique to UW-Madison or in some way necessary for the University's identity, or for the fulfillment of the mission of the program, school/college, or university?
- What is the cost of the program?
- Is faculty time/effort best invested in this program?
- What are the compelling reasons why no other options (discontinuing the program or merging this major into a larger major) are viable alternatives?
- Does the program have a stable academic home, usually a department?

Post-Review End State	Prevalence
Successful revitalization or merger	25%
Discontinuation	65%
No change	10%





# Trigger Warning

## Rochester Institute of Technology Guides Programs Through Tiered Review

### Tier 1 Analysis: Main-Campus Undergraduate Programs

R·I·T

Enrollment	Revenue/Expense	Learning Outcomes	Student Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First-time freshman enrollment</li> <li>• Transfer enrollment</li> <li>• Internal transfers to program</li> <li>• Overall enrollment change over 3 years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program net surplus/deficit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program learning outcomes assessment results</li> <li>• Program improvement results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First-year retention</li> <li>• Graduation rate</li> <li>• Career outcomes (6 months after graduation)</li> </ul>

#### Enrollment Triggers

- Low three-year headcount average
- >10% decline in three-year overall enrollment



### Tier 2 & 3 Analysis

#### Enrollment

- Applicant pipeline: applied/admitted/enrolled
- Were enrollment projections met? Were quality students turned away?
- Percent receiving financial aid
- Average GPA of entering students
- Overall GPA of graduates
- Time to degree of graduates
- Number of students transferring in/out of program to/from another at RIT
- Percentage minority and female students

Download RIT's tiered review plan [here](#).

# A Deeper Look: RIT's Three Tiers

Resources and Attention Focused on Areas of Greatest Need

## Overview of RIT's Annual Program Review Process

# R·I·T

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
<b>Program Reviewed</b>	Every program	Programs flagged by triggers in Tier 1	Programs with concerning trends in Tier 1 and 2 metrics
<b>Metrics</b>	Select enrollment, financial, and student success metrics	Expanded set of enrollment, financial, and student success metrics	Tier 2 expanded metrics
<b>Action Steps</b>	None, unless triggered	Program completes self-study and drafts action plan for dean's review and feedback	Program completes comprehensive review (self-study and external review)
<b>Others Involved</b>	Institutional Research and Finance produce yearly reports for programs	Enrollment management consulted to assess market, competition, future recruitment	Review and action plan approval elevated for Provost approval

## Implementation Advice



Different metrics needed for undergrad, MA, and PhD programs



Faculty quality metrics tracked separately given program differences



Initial expectation of one-year turnaround too ambitious

# Guidance for the Messy Details

## EAB Resources Valuable for Both Program Launch and Revitalization Efforts

### Select Program Performance Tools to Help Prompt the Right Questions

#### 1 Market Demand Validation Checklist

**Market Demand Validation Checklist**

Summary of Common Demand Data Sources and Limitations

Across the next several pages, please answer questions related to the three main categories of market demand data: labor market demand, student demand, and competitor. Note, the table below details where these three data types typically originate and their respective limitations. The limitations are not meant to discourage the use of these sources but to suggest where discounting or engineering data will be useful.

All of these sources are valuable and worth considering when evaluating market demand. However, it is important to recognize their limitations and evaluate multiple sources to get a complete picture of demand.

Type of Data	Source	Limitations
Labor Market Demand	National and State or Provincial Government Databases (e.g., Bureau of Labor Statistics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Database updated infrequently (i.e., every 2-3 years), so not all new and emerging fields (e.g., data science) are included.</li> <li>National and state/provincial labor trends do not always apply to local context.</li> </ul>
	Industry Associations (e.g., American Nurses Association)	Industry-sourced growth projections often over-optimistic.
	Real-Time Employer Demand Analytics (e.g., EMS2)	Labor market demand does not always translate into student demand.
Student Demand	National and State or Provincial Government Databases (e.g., National Center for Education Statistics)	National and state/provincial student trends do not always apply to local context.
	Institutional Surveys	Indicated interest from representative students

#### 2 Program Design Checklist

**Program Design Checklist**

Section 1: Credential-Related Decisions

The following questions relate to the proposed program's type (e.g., BS, MA, certificate), name, and accreditation potential.

Valuable questions to ask about credential decisions include the following:

Question	Guidance	Answer
<b>I. Program Development</b>		
Were internal experts consulted when developing the program?	Employment management and marketing leaders can provide valuable feedback on market needs. Consulting them early in the new program development process helps ensure program design reflects target market's preferences.	
When offering the program, will you name the program?		
<b>II. Credential</b>		
Does the target student market seek the credential?	Different student markets seek different types of credentials (e.g., certificate, bachelor's degree, master's degree) to meet their career goals and financial needs. Consult student surveys, frontline enrollment management staff, and competitor program data to understand what types of credentials the target market seeks.	


#### 3 Marketing Investment Rules of Thumb

**Marketing Investment Rules of Thumb**

Guidelines for Optimally Allocating Limited Marketing Resources

As competition for prospective students' attention grows, marketing academic programs increasingly requires more sophisticated and expensive strategies. Yet, institutions have limited resources to invest in marketing. To best position programs for enrollment success, academic and finance leaders must optimize marketing dollars across the academic portfolio.

While there is no hard-and-fast formula for setting marketing budgets, four rules of thumb should guide program marketing investment.

1  New programs often require larger annual marketing budgets than legacy programs. Typical new program marketing investment is 10-20% of overall program operating budget.

- Marketing budgets for certain types of new programs typically fall in the higher end of the 10-20% range.
  - Programs in emerging disciplines (e.g., cyber-physical systems), for which marketing campaigns need to educate the target market on both the discipline and the program itself.
  - Programs in new geographic markets, modalities, or disciplines, which cannot rely on brand or reputation to attract students.
  - Programs in saturated markets (e.g., public health), where demand for ad space is high.

## Resource in Brief: New Program Launch Guidebook

- Tools and templates to support business officers and their teams through major program planning activities
- Faculty-friendly interface to bolster program planning and encourage partnership
- Download this resource—useful for program launch and revitalization—[here](#)



# The Clock Starts Now

## 2-3 Years of Revitalization Efforts Enough to Signal Future Directions

### Lessons for Program Revitalization Timeframes



#### **Realistic timeframes require 2-3 years**

Many improvement efforts require some time to manifest themselves in enrollment growth and other success metrics



#### **Different modalities need different expectations**

Certain programs—continuing, professional, and online, for example—should respond quicker than undergrad offerings



#### **No rigid stopwatch actually in use**

Additional time to prove value is perfectly acceptable when early indicators of improvements appear



#### **Perpetual watch lists without action are useless**

Keeping programs, resources, and faculty languishing in limbo does your institution and students no favors

# Snapshots of Revitalized Program Performance



## Addressing Common Program Pathologies Leads to Scalable Solutions



### Refresh Programs with New Tracks

Popular English Department minor in Publishing and Editing converted to major and boosted by experiential learning and alumni connections in the field, driving up department enrollments by 80% in two years.



### Overhaul Program Curriculum

Law School faculty restructured curriculum, boosting practical learning and decreasing time to degree from 3 to 2.5 years. Promise of real world experience and a quicker path to employment led to a 70% application increase and 27% enrollment bump.



### Leverage Interdisciplinary Energy

CS+X majors link computer science and select liberal arts and sciences programs, responding to growing demand for data analysis. Linguistics has grown from 58 to 152 students in four years (69 in CS+Linguistics).



### Update Website, Marketing Material

Program websites audited to ensure student-centric content (e.g., career outcomes and value stories) and clear call-to-action to enroll. School of Liberal Arts boosted applications by 25% following its website overhaul—without making any program changes.

# Not an Either/Or Scenario

## Revitalization Can Lead to Different Organizational End-States

End-State	Description	Example
<b>Restructure</b>	Rearrange programs to spark creativity and foster synergies across resources	<b>Rochester Institute of Technology</b> moved struggling programs to another college to create greater alignment with similar disciplines.
<b>Merger</b>	Combine programs into one to leverage scale	<b>University of Wisconsin-Madison</b> merged seven under-enrolled programs into tracks of a single master's degree.
<b>Intra-campus Program</b>	Share costs and distribute specialties across campuses	<b>Bowling Green State University</b> and <b>University of Toledo</b> combined unique foreign language specializations into a joint program.
<b>Service Program</b>	Retain minimum faculty contingent for electives and general ed requirements	<b>Southern Oregon University</b> kept faculty to teach art history courses as service courses after phasing out the major.
<b>Sunset</b>	Teach out all students; reassign or terminate faculty	<b>Thompson Rivers University</b> eliminated graphic design program; most faculty retired, and one moved into another department.



# Increase Resource Flexibility in Parallel to Program Redesign Efforts

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# Faculty Lines in Motion Tend to Stay in Motion

## Approaching the Third Rail of Personnel Investments

“

Ask yourself, do you really need to hire a Milton scholar? Because once you do, the department will expect a Milton scholar for the next century.

Provost,  
Public Research University

”

“

Filling a faculty line is like putting up a building on campus. The commitment is decades-long, and the costs can really add up across 30 or 40 years.

Chief Finance Officer,  
Private Research University






”







# Greatest Program Costs Remain Fixed

Savings Rarely Captured in Program Closure Without Faculty Attrition

## Savings from a Typical Approach to Program Closure

-  Admin support salary and benefits
  -  Adjunct salaries
  -  Course release for program coordinator
  -  Program supplies, resources, infrastructure
- 
-  **Minimal savings realized**

## Savings Left Behind When Closure Not Aligned with Faculty Departures

-  Faculty salaries
  -  Faculty benefits
  -  Office, classroom, and lab space
- +
- 
-  **Savings potential**

# Thinking Ahead

## Fixed Costs Can Be Loosened, But Takes Time

### Faculty and Administrators Pursuing Simultaneous Opportunities During Revitalization Efforts

#### Program Flagged

Regular review flags program for improvement

Program leaders redesign curriculum, enrollment strategy, cost structure, etc.

2-3 years

Administrators set the stage for resource reallocation through:

- Faculty buyouts
- Retirement pathways
- Vacated line control

#### Program Go-No-Go

Review short-term goals, assess long-term viability

Program meets targets

Program misses targets



#### Mainstream

- Program taken off of "watch list," reverts to regular review cadence
- Vacated faculty lines reinvested in revitalized research and teaching opportunities



#### Sunset

- Academic leadership discontinues funding, begins teach-out
- Possibility of cost savings now unlocked

# Buyouts a Go-To Solution

But Common Failure Paths Suggest They're Not the Right Tool for This Job

## Selected Retirement Incentive Plan Components

College	Eligibility Requirement	Payout	Health Benefits
A	Minimum age of 55; at least 10 years of service	One week's salary for every year of service, up to 26 years	Three years of employer-provided benefits
B	Minimum age of 55 and 15 years of service, or age of 62 and 10 years of service	Four weeks' salary for every year of service, up to 13 years	May remain on university benefits plan up to 18 months at own expense
C	Sum of age and years of employment at institution must equal at least 75	One-time cash payment equal to 75% of annual salary	One year of health insurance covered at 50%
D	Minimum age of 60 and at least 15 years of full-time service	Two-times annual base salary	Lump sum in Health Reimbursement Account

### Buyout Beware: Why Large-Scale Offers Often Fail to Solicit the "Right" Faculty Response

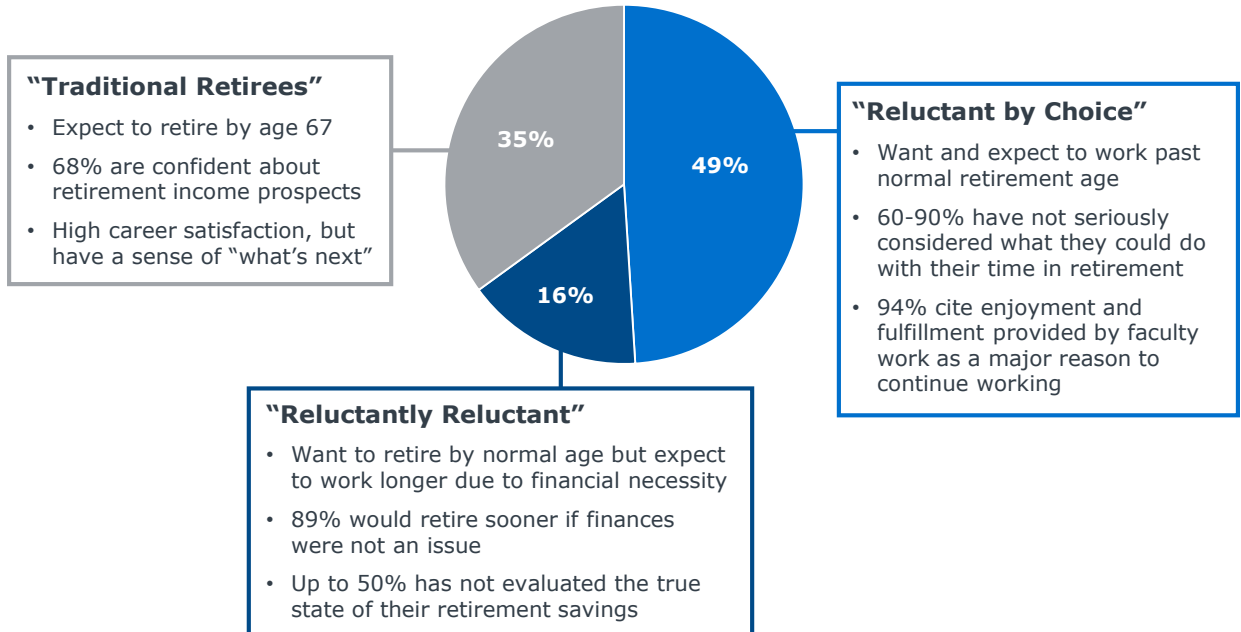
- ▶ Infrequent buyouts don't pair well with continuous review
- ▶ Blunt force ill-suited for targeted changes
- ▶ Wrong incentive for some faculty

# For Most Retirees, Money Is the Wrong Carrot

## Clearing Emotional Barriers Key to Retirement Transition

### Reluctant Retirees Abound in Higher Education—and Require New Approaches

*TIAA-CREF survey of 770 tenured faculty (age 50+) of retirement prospects*




# Avoiding Separation Anxiety

## A Plan for Ongoing Engagement Eases Fears of Lost Identity

### Resources to Make Retirement Less Frightening for Current Faculty

Tool or Resource	Institution
Professional coaching for designing life in retirement	George Mason University
Retirement workshops on financial, health care, and personal identity topics	<a href="#">University of California, Los Angeles</a>
Capstone grants to support scholarly or creative projects in the transition to retirement	<a href="#">Mount Holyoke College</a>
Retirement calculator to assess potential income across retirement plans	<a href="#">San Jose State University</a>
Reimbursement for Certified Financial Planner consultations upon starting phased retirement	University of Southern California

### Post-Retirement Perks That Reinforce Institutional Ties

- 
- Less Cost to the Institution*
- **Continued email access**
  - **Library privileges**
  - Parking privileges
  - **“Research Professor” designation**
  - **Option to teach as adjunct**
  - Fitness Center access
  - Technology support
  - Office packing and moving support
  - **Dedicated space on campus**
  - **Emeritus programming**
  - Short-term research grants
  - Conference travel support
  - Health care options
- More Cost to the Institution*

**Bold** = higher value to faculty

# Dipping a Toe into the Retirement Waters

## Baby Boomers Ready to Ease into Retirement—But on Their Own Terms

### Phased Retirement on the Rise— and Increasingly Customized

**65%** of faculty retiring in the California State University System between 2008 and 2013 opted for phased retirement

#### Spotlight on Flexibility: Bentley University

Phased options boosts retirements:

- 1-year plan: full benefits, with negotiated teaching/research/service responsibilities (e.g., legacy project, curricular innovation)
- 2-year plan: half-time work for full pay; often frontload teaching in one semester to focus on research in the other
- 3-year plan: two-thirds time for full salary or one-third time for two-thirds salary

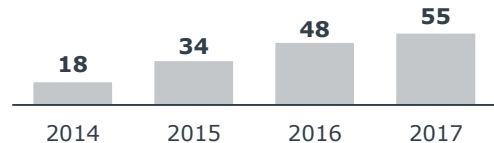
Read FAQs for Bentley University's plan [here](#).

### UCLA Pathways Program Allows Faculty Flexibility

#### Pathways to Retirement Details

- Agreement between faculty member and department chair two years before retiring; must be approved by Provost
- Targeted at 300+ faculty at retirement age with financial security to retire
- Negotiated perks: reduced teaching load; deferral of post-tenure review; continued support for research in retirement; recall for teaching; Research Professor designation to continue grant applications; office space

#### Participants in the Pathways Program



Download UCLA's Pathways documentation [here](#).

# Meet Your Guide to Retirement

## Faculty Look to Fellow Traveler for Advice and Advocacy

### Core Responsibilities of Retirement Liaisons



Hold confidential meetings with faculty interested in discussing retirement



Provide context for how other faculty members have transitioned to retirement



Help faculty set individual retirement plans with academic leadership



Create and maintain “peer to peer” retirement website



Develop seminars and other events to spread the retirement gospel



### Doug Chalmers, Retirement Liaison



- Professor of Political Science Emeritus
- Retired from Columbia University after 38 years of teaching
- **250+ retirement consultations** since the position was created in 2013



My definition of a good retirement is that you stop doing what you don't like and you keep doing what you do like, or find something new you want to do.

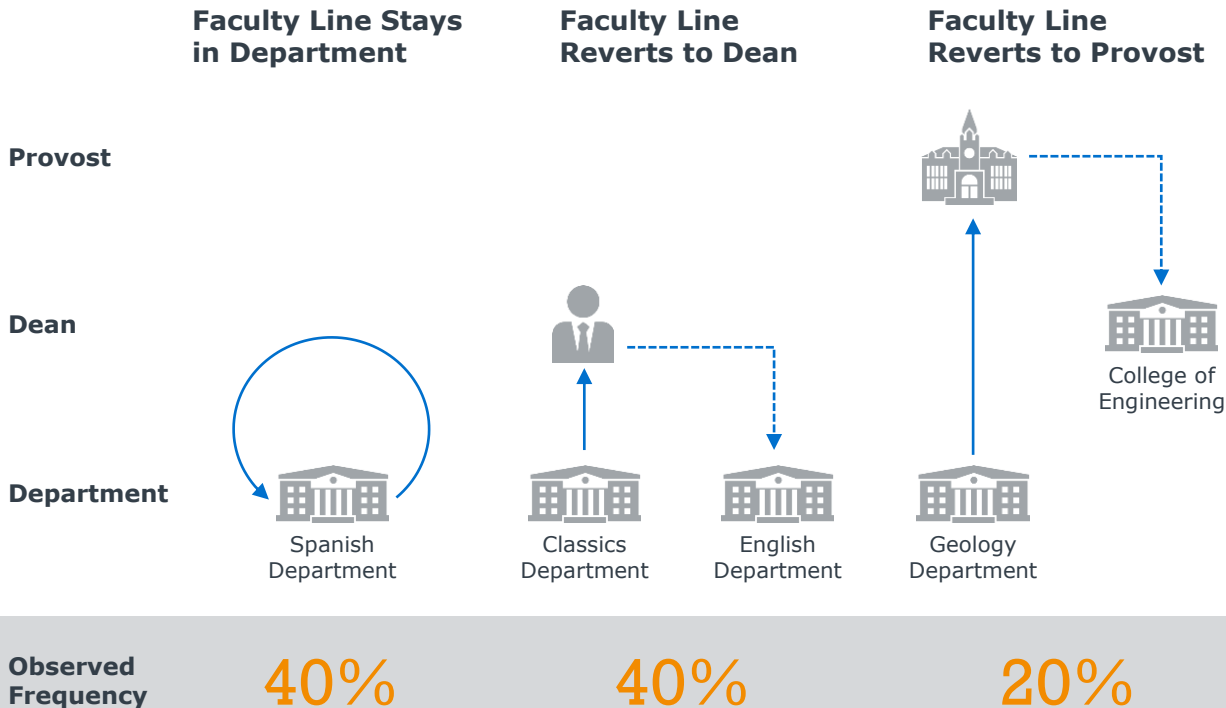
Doug Chalmers



Download one of Doug's faculty emails [here](#).  
Visit the Office of Faculty Retirement website [here](#).

# A University's Most Valuable Resource

Position Control Absolutely Critical to Securing Benefits of Vacated Lines





# Turning the Keys Together

## Collaborative Decision-Making Eases the Pain of Shifting Authority

### Common Occasions for Centralizing Line Control



Departing  
Provost



Tightening  
budgets



Presidential  
directive



Attempt to avoid  
prioritization



Strategic hiring  
initiative

### Collaborative Teams Review Proposals, Make Recommendations Aligned with Institutional Priorities for Provost Approval

**MOUNT**HOLYOKE

#### Academic Priorities Committee

- Committee made up of 5 elected faculty across disciplines, dean of faculty, dean of students, 2 student representatives, registrar (ex officio)
- Ranks faculty line requests to align with long-term curriculum plans



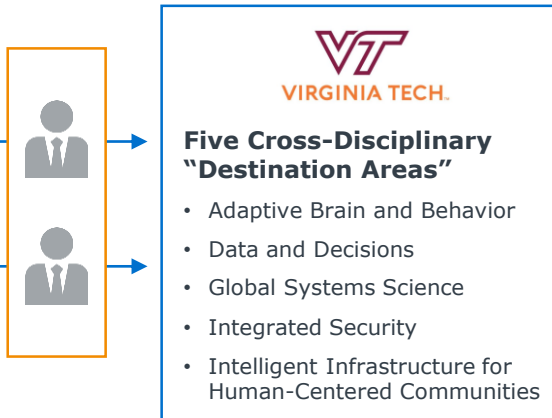
#### Deans Council

- Provost provides deans a set number of positions to fill in yearly hiring plan
- Deans submit to Provost a collaborative proposal for reallocating lines
- Provost maintains final approval

# You Invest, We'll Invest

## Virginia Tech Incentivizes Deans' Strategic Allocation with Matching Lines

**1 Dean designates existing faculty vacancy to participate in Destination Area**



**2 Provost provides Dean with a faculty line also to allocate to Destination Area**

### Centrally-Funded Matches

- Initial round of 129 match lines to be created by 2023
- Matches fully funded by Provost for three years, then funding decreases by 10% for the next seven years
- "Recycling" of funds allows for subsequent funding of even more lines
- Initial funding came from enrollment growth, lag in filling existing vacancies

### Hiring for Virginia Tech's Destination Areas, 2016-18

**82**

College-funded positions

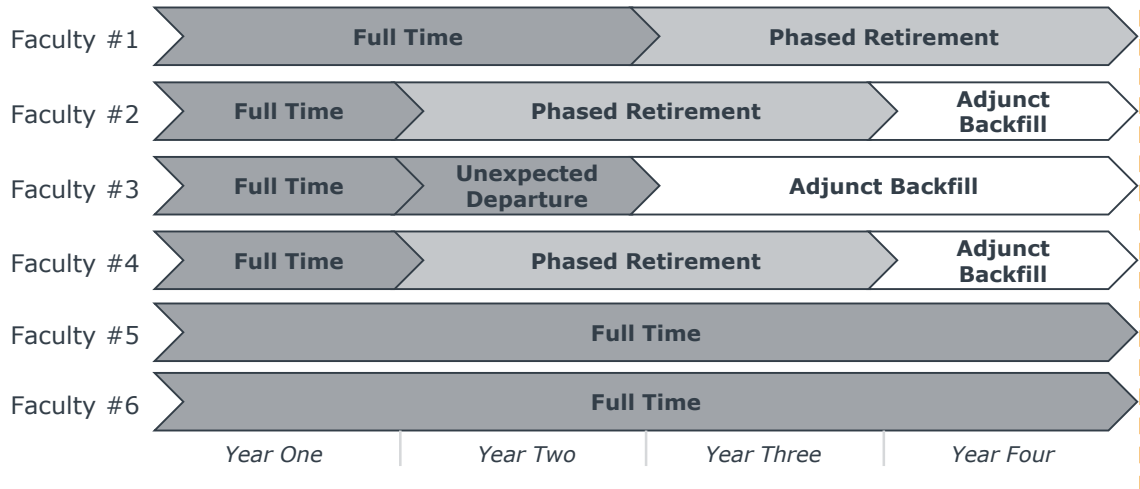
**55**

Centrally-funded matches

# When 1+1 Equals More Than 2

Capturing Visibility into Multiple Vacancies More Than Just Happenstance

## Four-Year Horizon for Representative Academic Department Signals Redesign Opportunity



- Awareness of multiple departures in advance alerts campus leaders to an inflection point
- Provost instructs program to modernize the curriculum before approving new hires

# Stackable Opportunities



Combine Position Control and Retirement Incentives for Maximum Benefit



## Three Strategic Planning Levers at Southern Oregon University



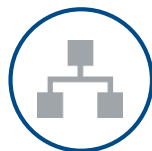
### Incentive for Retirement Notice

- 6% increase in base salary to relinquish tenure and retire within three years
- Eligible to relinquish tenure at age 55; can opt out for full medical coverage for up to 7 years or 25% of cash value of medical coverage



### Adjunct Backfill Policy

- Union CBA allows Provost to backfill full-time faculty with adjuncts on one-year contracts for up to four years
- Allows curriculum to be maintained while considering the future of the program



### Provostial Ownership of Faculty Lines

- Control shifted to Provost in wake of retrenchment, budget cuts, enrollment dip
- Ensures strategic conversation about backfilling
- Many lines revert back to the original program, but no guarantee



### Every Line a Strategic Investment

- Early notice of vacancy gives time to plan and make a case for change
- Line allocation can be withheld from a program, pending curricular overhaul or a strategic hiring plan



# Ensure Program Discontinuance Minimizes Stakeholder Disruption and Maximizes Cost Savings

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# Seeing the Process to the End

## Buttress Upfront Change Management Tactics with Clear Sunsetting Policies

### 80% of the Work Is an Upfront Investment...

- Assemble good data to identify areas of opportunity and make the case for change
- Provide faculty with time and resources to pursue revitalization
- Address common cost drivers such as excess capacity to improve cost efficiency



### Distribution of Effort Across the Sunsetting Process

### ...But You Can't Skip the Last 20%

- Follow updated policies and procedures for communicating change
- Determine next steps for program faculty
- Facilitate student teach-outs



"We spent all our time getting everyone on board with prioritizing and analyzing our programs but kept pushing to the end any decisions about where students and faculty would land—we had no real process in place to guide our decisions."

*Provost, Private Master's University*

# Creating a Paper Trail

## Program Closure, Teach-Out Policies Ripe for an Audit

### Clearly Articulated Policies Provide Implementation Guidance and Insulate the Institution From Legal Challenges

Policy	Key Points to Address	Examples
Program Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under what circumstances academic programs may be discontinued (e.g., educational reasons, strategic realignment, resource allocation, budgetary constraints, declining demand, quality concerns)</li> <li>• What action initiates the discontinuance process (often a formal written request to the Provost or President)</li> <li>• What data should be included in any formal request for discontinuance (e.g., financial analysis of cost savings/losses from program elimination; enrollment, retention, job placement, and other performance data; student reviews; market demand; mission centrality)</li> <li>• Role of Faculty Senate or other governance bodies in the process</li> <li>• Final authority for academic program discontinuance decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Goodwin College</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">University of Colorado Boulder</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">College of New Jersey</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">University of Wisconsin-Madison</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Iowa State University</a></li> </ul>
Program Teach-out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible parties for notifying stakeholders (students, faculty, staff, college community, accreditors, state bodies) about the closure</li> <li>• Information necessary to include in any notification of closure and teach-out plan</li> <li>• Available resources for students to complete their programs of study with minimal disruption or additional expense</li> <li>• Plan for faculty and staff associated with discontinued program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Florida A&amp;M University</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Florida State University</a></li> </ul>

Source: College of New Jersey, Ewing Township, NJ; Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, FL; Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL; Goodwin College, East Hartford, CT; Iowa State University, Ames, IA; University of Colorado Boulder, Boulder, CO; University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI; EAB interviews and analysis.

# The (Tenured) Elephant in the Room

When Retrenchment May—or May Not—Be Worth It



## Reasons to Consider Faculty Retrenchment

- ▶ Need for tangible savings
- ▶ Indirect motivators to depart have proven ineffective
- ▶ Unable to retrain faculty for other positions
- ▶ Existing institutional policies allow retrenchment in situations other than financial exigency

### Evolving Policy Considerations at a Handful of Institutions

- Tenure tied to program/department
- Faculty retrenchment linked to circumstances beyond financial exigency: shifting enrollment or demographic patterns; reduced state funding; program discontinuance or modification



## Reasons to Avoid Faculty Retrenchment

- ▶ Significant political upheaval
- ▶ Conflates decisions about individual programs with the academy's "values and traditions"
- ▶ Invites external commentators into internal personnel decisions
- ▶ Faculty may eventually leave on their own without robust program

### Faculty Roles After Program Closure

- Student advising
- New course/program development
- Service course instruction
- Transfer to another department or interdisciplinary center
- Greater research focus



# Helping Students Find an Exit

## Ensuring Student Success Requires Cross-Campus Collaboration

### Questions to Consider in Crafting a Teach-Out Plan

- How long will the teach-out last (1, 2, or 4 years)?
- What is the cutoff for inclusion in the teach-out?
- What alternative majors should students below the cutoff consider?
- Will any residency requirement remain in effect?
- What happens if a student receives an unsatisfactory grade in a required course not offered again?
- When will all marketing and recruitment end? What message should prospects receive?
- What should the enrollment office communicate to admitted students?
- What alternatives will be developed for coursework needed for other degree programs?

### Sample Timeline for Teach-Out Development

Time Period	Action
Dec. 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Trustees approves the termination of a program</li> </ul>
February-March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department advises students with &lt;60 credit hours into other majors</li> </ul>
February-April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair and Dean devise teach-out plan</li> <li>• Chair informs affected students about teach-out of terminated program</li> <li>• List of students eligible for teach-out given to academic advisors</li> </ul>
March-April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dean develops monitoring process to track progress of students in teach-out</li> </ul>
April-May 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual academic maps developed</li> <li>• Students sign acknowledgements</li> <li>• Dean informs national accrediting bodies of teach-out plan</li> </ul>
June 2019-End of Teach-Out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final sequence of courses begins</li> <li>• Chair and Dean update monitoring reports of students in teach-out</li> </ul>

# Evolution of Program Portfolio Management

## From Opportunistic Cuts to Principled and Collaborative Decision-Making

### The Way Closure Has Been...

“Cost, quality, and centrality are not the key indicators on which decision-makers identify programs for termination. Instead, [they] close programs that have novice or ineffective leaders, have weak links to other programs, are not central to the mission, have low numbers of students and faculty, and have few influential off-campus champions.”

*Peter Eckel, Changing Course (2003)*

### ...And What It Could (and Should) Be

“From the Finance office, we can make decisions quickly. But academics need a confluence of quantitative data and qualitative insights. I’m trying to show to faculty they’re draining resources from their own priorities—and that I want is to help them redirect their resources to the places they want to invest in.”

*Chief Financial Officer  
Private Research University*

# Ready to Continue the Conversation?



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