DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 231 984 CE 036 410

AUTHOR	Long, James P.; And C ·rs
TITLE	How to Phase Out a Program. Special Publication Series No. 42.
INSTITUTION	Ohio State Univ., Columbus. National Center for Research in Vocational Education.
SPONS AGENCY	National Postsecondary Alliance, Columbus, OH.
PUB DATE	83
NOTE	46p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Center Publications, Box F, National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1′ ′0 Kenny Road, Columbus, OH 43210 (Order No. SN42--$4.95).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Educational Planning; Guidelines; Postsecondary Education; Program Evaluation; *Retrenchment; *Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	*Program Discontinuance

ABSTRACT

Intended for two-year college presidents, deans, or other administrators, faculty, and board members, this publication provides an outline for guidelines for program phase-out. The decision to phase out a program is first considered, as are ways to analyze the reasons for three typical situations that form the basis for phasing out a program--insufficient enrollment, insufficient funding, and unsatisfactory job placement of graduates. Alternatives to phase-out are listed. Next, the development of the phase-out plan is discussed. Responsibilities of the study/review group that may be established are described, including: (1) preparation, (2) research, (3) evaluation, and (4) identification of resources needed. Obtaining approvals and support from the board of trustees, state agencies, accreditation groups, students and parents, faculty, the community, and employers is then addressed. Checklists of information that should be given to each group who must give approval are provided. Finally, implementation of the phase-out is considered. Procedures to ease the phase-out for students, faculty, and staff are recommended, and facilities, equipment, budget, and public relations considerations are pointed out. Appendixes, making up approximately one-half of the document, include model retrenchment plans, a model plan for lateral transfer, and references to related readings. (YLB)

ED231984

SPECIAL PUBLICATION SERIES NO. 42

HOW TO PHASE OUT A PROGRAM

by

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Columbus, Ohio 43210

1983

CE 036 410

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FUNDING INFORMATION

Project Title:	National Postsecondary Alliance Program Phase-Out Mini-Project
Project Number:	504A
Source of Contract:	The National Postsecondary Alliance
Contractor:	The National Center for Research in Vocational Education
Executive Director:	Robert E. Taylor
Disclaimer:	The material in this publication was prepared for members of the National Postsecondary Alliance. The contractor is encouraged to express freely its judgment in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Alliance position or policy.
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FOREWORD

Community colleges and technical institutes play a very important role in educating persons for immediate employment in technical or paraprofessional jobs. These jobs are, of course, changing rapidly in our age of high technology. Two-year institutions must, therefore, change correspondingly.

One type of change—phasing out programs no longer needed—must be done with great caution, because of its potential effects on the lives of people: students, faculty, parents, employers, and others. College administrators need assistance in the form of suggested guidelines and procedures for phasing out programs graciously. This publication provides an outline for such guidelines.

Appreciation is expressed to the member institutions of the National Postsecondary Alliance, who have funded this project and provided guidance to its director. Dr. James P. Long, Alliance Director, conceived the idea for this guidebook and wrote it with help from Dr. Carol J. Minugh of the National Center staff and Dr. Robert A. Gordon, Consultant. Its contents were finalized under the supervision of Harry N. Drier, Associate Director, Special Projects Division. Dr. Kenneth Minnaert, President of Olympia Technical Community College in Olympia, Washington, and Dr. Margaret Lee, Dean of Instruction at Kalamazoo Valley Community College in Kalamazoo, Michigan, served as reviewers and provided valuable suggestions for improvement. Two National Center staff members, Dr. Morgan Lewis and Catharine Warmbrod, provided similar assistance as internal reviewers. The typing and other clerical support were provided by Margaret Barbee of the National Center staff, and editing was provided by Constance Faddis of the Field Services area of the National Center.

It is hoped that the leaders of the nation's postsecondary institutions will find this work valuable as they face enrollment, funding, and placement problems in these times of rapid change in high technology.

Robert E. Taylor
Executive Director
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in Vocational Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Two-year colleges enjoy a well-deserved reputation for responsiveness to community needs. To be truly responsive, a community college or technical institute must be able to phase out programs when they are no longer needed and to divert the resources saved in this process to other programs that are needed. Phasing out programs is not as easy as it sounds.

First, care must be taken to ensure that phase-out is the best solution to enrollment, funding, or projected job market problems. Alternatives must first be considered, but careful evaluation and research will often lead to a tentative conclusion on the part of college administrators that phase-out is the appropriate response to the problem.

Next, a wide range of approvals must be sought by the college leadership before phase-out actions can be initiated. Typically, the board of trustees makes the ultimate phase-out decision only after having been assured that the views, interests, needs, and expertise of faculty, students, parents, employers, and others have been appropriately considered and protected. At times, other bodies and agencies are also involved in the final decision to phase out a program.

Finally comes the implementation stage of a phase-out process. In this stage the college must fulfill its promises to many different constituencies and simultaneously begin the process of shifting available resources to other uses.

The entire phase-out process is facilitated from the very start when institutions have existing, approved plans for retrenchment and/or lateral transfer of personnel. Models for such plans and procedures are provided in the appendices of this work.

INTRODUCTION

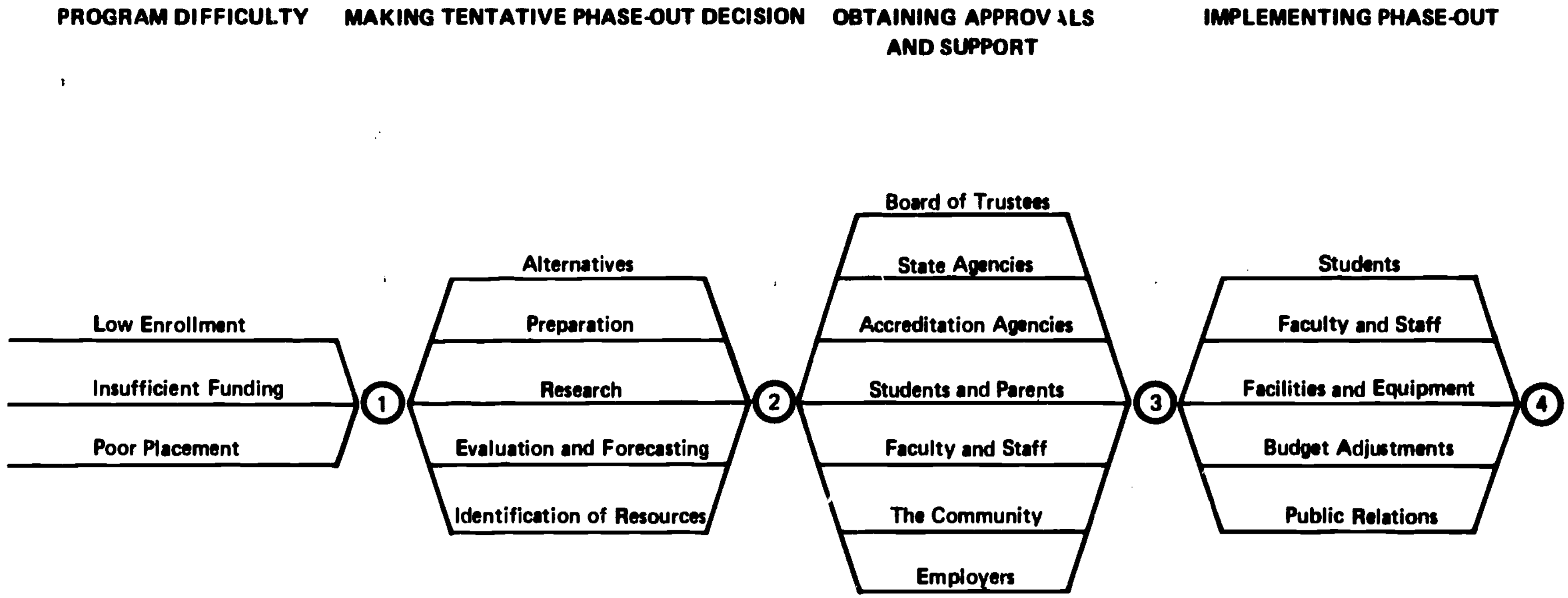
During the sixties and seventies, most community colleges and technical institutes grew steadily, and rapid program expansion was a common experience. Times have changed, however. Decreases in the youth population as well as declining resources have resulted in no growth or even negative growth situations. Furthermore, job market needs are changing more quickly than ever. Two-year colleges, supposedly more flexible than other institutions of higher learning, experience shifting enrollments as they attempt to respond to labor force requirements. All of these factors produce a need to modify, redirect, and/or delete programs.

Some community colleges and technical institutes have carefully designed, board-approved retrenchment plans (two examples of which appear in appendix A as models). The information offered in this publication may seem obvious to institutions that have retrenchment policies and plans in place, although it may complement those policies. For the many institutions with neither a policy nor a plan, this publication provides the help needed to develop them. Where a policy is not wanted, or when there is insufficient time to develop one, the model presented herein may serve in its place. These guidelines are intended to be used by presidents, deans, or other administrators, faculty, board members, and anyone else concerned with program phase-out.

The model retrenchment plans found in appendix A as well as the model plan for lateral transfer in appendix B were developed by a number of two-year college administrators, who prefer to remain anonymous and who desire that their institutions not be identified, either. These plans are typical of those currently in force at postsecondary institutions around the nation. They may be better than some, and perhaps not as good as others, but they are presented here as examples of carefully thought out policy statements. The authors' expectations are that the plans will be imitated, but not adopted verbatim, by other institutions.

Obviously, every institution is unique, and no set of guidelines can meet all needs for all schools. Administrators should be thoroughly familiar with and understand all implications of the laws, policies, procedures, and negotiated contractual agreement that apply in a particular local situation before undertaking program phase-out. Such care can help avoid errors in procedure. The information herein is offered as a general, practical, user guide. (Any consideration of program discontinuation is very complex, so college legal counsel should always be consulted.) This monograph attempts to encompass the major areas and discuss the human, physical, and financial resources involved. An overview of the program phase-out process is provided in figure 1.

A scarcity of publications focused on this topic and designed to guide the process of postsecondary vocational or technical program phase-out became apparent when a careful search of the literature was undertaken. Only a few documents resulted from a computerized ERIC search, and none of them addressed the issue directly. Manual searches for library books or periodical holdings were equally unproductive. Appendix C contains sixteen references to readings that are in some way related to the topic of postsecondary vocational or technical program phase-out. These are recommended for persons in need of the broadest possible view of the issue.



KEY:

1. Problem Program Clearly Identified
2. Administrative Decision Made to Phase-Out Program
3. Board of Trustees Decision Made to Phase-Out Program
4. Program Totally Phased-Out

Figure 1. Overview of Program Phase-Out Process

The information in this monograph is not, therefore, a synthesis of practices found in the literature. Rather, it is a synthesis of the ideas and practices identified by the authors through their own personal experiences or through discussions with others who have had first-hand experience in phasing out programs. These ideas and practices were validated by the assembled representatives of all member institutions of the National Postsecondary Alliance, who twice validated the authors' outline and general direction. In September of 1982, at a meeting of the National Postsecondary Alliance in Columbus, Ohio, the table of contents was revised and approved by Alliance members. In March of 1983, at an Alliance meeting in Carson City, Nevada, a first draft of the document was revised and approved. In a sense, then, this work represents the best experience and procedures of the member institutions of the National Postsecondary Alliance.

The process of program phase-out is never easy or pleasant and should be undertaken only after careful consideration of all factors, particularly those that impinge directly on people's lives. A careful, well-planned effort goes a long way toward alleviating negative and sometimes unnecessary side effects. It is worth repeating that legal counsel should always be consulted when dealing with personnel reductions. This publication encourages the objectivity, fairness, and openness required to phase out a program as graciously as possible.

CHAPTER I

WHY PHASE OUT?

Community colleges and technical institutes are founded on the premise that many of the educational and training needs of a community can best be met through a local (community) institution. The "ivory tower" complaint made about other institutions of higher education is seldom made about community colleges or technical institutes. Being responsive to the changing education and training needs of a unique community is an important part of the mission of most of these institutions. Success in juggling community needs, budget, facilities, staff, and time in response to changing needs requires careful planning. However, even with careful planning, situations arise that demand difficult decisions about phasing out programs or incorporating them into other programs. Often the choice is whether to dilute or weaken all programs by reducing staff, services, supplies, and/or equipment purchases, or to phase out one "weak" program.

Three typical situations form the basis for phasing out a program: (1) insufficient enrollment, (2) insufficient funding, and (3) unsatisfactory job placement of graduates. Each situation can occur for a variety of reasons. The decision to phase out a program should be made only after careful examination of each situation and after serious consideration of the alternative of improving the program to make it more responsive to community needs. If this or another alternative is not feasible, then cause exists to phase out the program.

Each of these three typical areas of difficulty (i.e., enrollment, funding, placement) may occur for a number of different reasons. Most administrators will carefully analyze these reasons before raising the spectre of program phase-out. The sections that follow suggest how such analyses may operate.

Insufficient Enrollment

Insufficient enrollment may occur for a variety of reasons. For example, employers may be hiring unskilled workers for entry-level positions in the particular occupations, or students may not be sufficiently aware of the occupations that can be accessed through the program. Perhaps another competing institution provides similar training, or the program has a reputation of being substandard, or the career field itself is not attractive to prospective students.

When employers find that entry-level workers can be trained on the job, or when students discover that employers pay the same wages to untrained entry-level workers as they pay to trained entry-level workers, program enrollments inevitably suffer. Rather than phasing out the program, the institution may be able to educate employers about the advantages of good preservice training and the reasons why trained persons are worth higher pay. This task is frequently the function of the college public relations office, and most college public relations officers utilize an abundance of successful approaches to this task.

If students are not sufficiently aware of the careers that can be entered through the program, feeder-school counseling offices may need to be strengthened. The counseling office in a high school is often staffed by professionals whose noneducational work-related background and experiences are limited. Expanding their awareness of vocational and technical careers is a continual inservice need of school counselors. Helping the counseling staff become better informed of careers in vocational and technical program areas may make a substantial difference in enrollments. Most college admissions offices employ a wide range of strategies to assist high school guidance counselors in becoming well informed.

When institutions in the same community offer competing training programs, there must be sufficient employment to require continuing programs at both institutions. If one institution's program seems to be suffering, it may be time to recommend that interested students enroll at the other institution, thereby freeing up resources to build quality programs for other occupations. There is no need to maintain an underenrolled program when valuable resources could be reallocated and other programs improved.

Programs that do not have good reputations with students or employers should be examined very carefully to determine where their weaknesses lie. A thorough evaluation of faculty, equipment, curriculum, facilities, advisory committee, and related services should bring some of the problems to light. Most institutions routinely evaluate these items on a regular basis.

This monograph addresses phase-out and does not attempt to provide extensive guidance for program evaluation. One element of any such evaluation process needs special emphasis, however. Local employers, especially advisory committee members, should be contacted and asked to express their opinions about the source of the problem. After such an analysis has been completed, a decision can be made to improve the program or its image or to phase out the program.

Insufficient Funding

Insufficient funding may be the result of statewide allocation reductions, failure of a tax levy, increases in the cost of a program without a corresponding increase in revenue, or the need to implement other programs to meet a new labor market demand. Vocational and technical training is a cost-effective method of getting people into the work force, but it is expensive when compared to an academic program. Equipment, maintenance, safety measures, student services, career counseling, job awareness counseling, and job placement services are all expensive, yet are critical in preparing people for work. When funding is short, vocational programs are often cut, particularly related student services. Equipment may be allowed to become outdated rather than kept up to date, in order to reduce expenses. In all such cases, it may be advisable to phase out a program or to incorporate portions of the curriculum into another program, rather than to allow all programs to become weak or to allow the quality of training to decline in that program. When budget cuts must be made, quality is more important than quantity in the long run.

Unsatisfactory or Insufficient Placement

An institution may provide the best possible training, but if no employment is available for the graduate, that training is wasted, for most practical purposes. Technology has changed drastically in several industries that were once major employers of technicians, paraprofessionals, and other skilled workers. Many of these jobs are now being performed by computer-operated machines, thereby reducing the number of workers needed. An over-supply of workers in the field that results from industry relocation or closure is another possible cause of low placement.

A low placement rate may also be evidence of insufficient interaction between an institution and the local employers. Employers need to know what kind of training the students are receiving. They should be given opportunities to advise institutions about ways to improve these programs. If graduates are still not placed in the particular occupation (or in related occupations), the time has come to consider phasing out the program.

A smooth, orderly phase-out plan that involves all constituencies affected and that carefully evaluates all alternatives will greatly improve administrators' ability to make changes. Administrators of any institution, while trying to keep their fingers on the pulse of the community, will encounter situations where adapting, integrating, or phasing out a program is necessary.

Alternatives to Phase-Out

Even when a careful and thorough review indicates the advisability of program phase-out, there may be reasons to search for alternative approaches. For example, a program may have a significant public service value despite its high cost and low enrollment. It may serve a special sector of the community and thus warrant continuation regardless of cost inefficiencies. The mission statement of the institution may carry a direct or implied mandate for such a program. Certain programs are also uniquely tied to geographic settings. Finally, legal counsel may advise against phasing out a specific program at a certain time.

The following list suggests some ways by which institutions have been able to maintain programs or parts of programs that were slated for phase-out:

- Find alternative funding (e.g., from the business or industry served by the training the program provides).
- Incorporate portions of the program into another related program.
- Conduct classes at the business or industry site.
- Schedule evening classes, particularly for beginners and those needing upgrading.
- Develop a cooperative agreement with another institution to meet the needs of students in the program and to avoid duplication.
- Redesign curricular offerings to make them more attractive to students.
- Revise the program to reduce its cost (e.g., offer courses less frequently, or increase class size).
- Reorganize the program so as to provide greater services at the same or a reduced cost.
- Be sure that nonessentials (e.g., recreational facilities or conference centers) are not being supported while occupational training programs are considered for phase-out.

CHAPTER II

MAKING THE TENTATIVE DECISION TO PHASE OUT A PROGRAM

After identifying and analyzing the need to phase out a program, the next step is to present the situation, the alternatives, and make the decision at the administrative level. In order to facilitate the decision-making process, an administrator should be prepared to provide a plan for accomplishing the phase-out. The development of this plan should include the following:

- Preparation
- Evaluation
- Research
- Resources

Preparation

There are several questions to be answered before making a commitment to proceed in phasing out a program. Does the institution have a policy for retrenchment or for phasing out programs? If not, is it possible or desirable to establish one at this time? According to present administrative policy, who is ultimately responsible for making the decision? This is the time to consult legal counsel. If the institution does not have a policy or procedure, the following suggestions may be helpful.

A study/review group may be established. This group will be responsible for collecting and reporting data on the program or programs being considered for phase-out. At the same time similar data should be gathered on all the college's programs, both to provide a basis for comparison and to avoid criticism from persons affected that their program was unfairly singled out for study based on a prejudiced decision to phase it out. The study/review group should also be responsible for developing a plan or establishing a process. This plan should include the following:

- Identification of data needed for decision making
- Development of a database
- Definition of circumstances necessary for phase-out
- Consideration of alternatives to phase-out
- Establishment of policies on participation (e.g., Who will receive what information? Who will review? Who will make final decisions?)
- Review of program purpose within the mission statement of the institution
- Review of legal standards and procedures as well as local negotiated agreements

- Identification and consideration of political concerns

- Distribution of findings and solicitation of comments

The responsibilities of the study/review group should include careful coordination with the person within the institution who is responsible for evaluation, research, and program planning. The group members may include administrators, faculty, professional and support staff members, students, alumni, advisors, and perhaps even board members. If the faculty is unionized, this fact must be taken into account in selecting members of the review group. The governance tradition of the institution should be a primary consideration when finalizing the membership of this group.

Research

Database

One of the specific charges of the study/review group should be to develop a database, which may include information on the following:

- Student retention, completion, and transfer data

- Enrollments—current and projected, by level and program

- Instructional activities by program

- Costs of programs

- Costs of support services

- Costs of facilities

- Placements

- Occupational outlook

- Related programs in home institution

- Parallel programs in similar institutions

The responsibility of the study/review group will be to assign these data collection activities and provide the support necessary to accomplish them. Released time may be necessary if all members of the group are to participate fully.

Legal Procedures

The review group should consider institutional policies and their relationship to various legal standards and issues, in consultation with an attorney. Where policies are not in conformity with the law, the committee should suggest revisions, and where no policies exist, they should be developed. Careful scrutiny should be given to policies related to the following:

- Tenure or personnel policies must address the issue of confidentiality.
- Since negative tenure decisions may diminish future employability of faculty members, they should be made on objective criteria only.
- Due process should be followed in the identification of faculty for layoff.
- The institution must show that the need is clear, the selection process fair, and the policies public.
- Legal counsel should be consulted.

Evaluation and Forecasting

The study/review group will have the responsibility of evaluating the information (data) gathered and also of developing some future projections. This process will provide information that can help in making decisions about how faculty, facilities, and costs can be distributed in order to make the best use of them, whether for the institution or for some outside group. The process should include consideration of the following:

- Faculty/Staff
  1. future needs by program area
  2. attrition patterns
  3. age patterns by discipline, retirement dates
  4. consideration of other work options at the institution
  5. possibilities for retraining for other work at the institution
  6. recommendations for layoff or temporary leave for advanced training or for work experience
  7. impact of layoffs on other departments
- Finances
  1. identification of alternative funding sources
  2. impact of cutbacks on budgets
- Facilities/Equipment
  1. rental of facilities
  2. sale of equipment

Identification of Resources Needed

In order to accomplish the phase-out plan, a careful examination of what it will cost in time and money should be carried out. Specific areas to be considered are as follows:

- What are the expenses of keeping a facility and/or equipment that will not be utilized?
- Can revenues be derived from the equipment or facilities?
- What will the cost be in severance pay? Unemployment compensation?
- Will there be savings in salary and fringe benefit costs?
- What expenses will the study/review group incur during the phase-out process?
- What will be the costs of legal counsel and administrative time needed to accomplish the phase-out?

The study/review group, after planning, researching, evaluating, and identifying resources needed for the phase-out, should then be ready to submit the information to the chief executive officer of the institution. That officer will make the administrative decision regarding phase-out and will prepare a presentation of the plan for the board of trustees.

CHAPTER III

OBTAINING APPROVALS AND SUPPORT

Carefully developed recommendations based on sound research and evaluation will smooth the way for cooperation, support, and approval of a phase-out plan. The study/review group will be a positive asset when seeking the necessary approvals. This group should provide leadership as well as support to those who must carry out the plan.

Approvals should be obtained from the following groups:

- Board of trustees
- Appropriate state agencies
- Accreditation groups

It is also advisable to gain the support and cooperation of the following groups:

- Students and parents
- Faculty
- The community
- Employers
- Advisory committees

Board of Trustees

The board of trustees should be kept abreast of all developments during the period when the possible need for a phase-out is identified, the tentative plan is developed, and the decision to phase out the particular program is made. The chief administrator of the institution should be aware of particular interest groups the board members represent and of how the decision could affect those groups. The board is usually a political body and, as such, is answerable to the citizens who elected its membership. The participation of a member of the board in the study/review group will alleviate many of these problems. Presenting a carefully designed plan, with sound documentation for phasing out the particular program, should also produce understanding and support.

The following is a checklist of information the board should be given:

- Reasons to phase out the program
- Probable effect on students currently enrolled in the program

- Projected use of facilities and equipment currently in use
- Complete data and projections for faculty and staff employment
- Similar programs available at other institutions
- Changes in revenues
- Changes in the institution's budget
- Draft of plan for phasing out the program
- Costs of the phase-out itself
- Timeline for phasing out the program
- Relevant legal issues
- Political issues and implications

Presented with such information that is backed by research and evaluation data, the board will be equipped to approve a phase-out plan. The college legal counsel should attend all board meetings at which phase-outs involving personnel reductions are discussed and decided.

There is one possible exception to this suggested phase of board of trustees involvement. Some boards may prefer not to be involved in the early stages of such decisions, since boards have responsibilities in the appeal process, if any, after the administrative decisions have been made. Local practice provides insight into such cases.

State Agencies

The next step is to seek the approval of any state agency responsible for finance and accreditation of the program and institution. Presenting the following information in a clear, concise manner will greatly enhance the likelihood of that approval:

- Effects on overall program offerings throughout the state
- Effects on the labor force in the state
- Projected use of equipment and facilities on the campus
- Some alternatives for students seeking education in the field

The overall plan developed by the study/review group should provide the state agencies with the back-up information necessary to answer any additional questions the agencies may have.

Accreditation Agencies

In addition to state agencies, there are often other certifying groups that should be contacted for support. These include regional accreditation agencies, as well as academic and professional organizations concerned with specific disciplines. Such groups will benefit from the same information provided to the board of trustees and state agencies, and they may also request additional information specific to their fields.

Students and Parents

The cooperation of the institution's clients is most important. As students and their parents begin making such educational decisions as choice of a college and choice of a program, they need to know what the college is planning. In addition, students who are already enrolled in a program need to know what alternatives they have to meet their career training objectives. The following checklist provides a guide for phase-out information that parents and students need in order for the institution to ensure their cooperation:

- Why is the program being phased out?
- What alternatives do the students have if they want training in this area?
- Will students currently enrolled in the program be able to complete their certificate or degree requirements?
- Is there a related training program at the same institution in which the students can enroll without losing credits toward a degree?
- When will the program be phased out?
- Will other institutions accept the credits already earned in the program if the students should transfer? What are the differences in cost?

Faculty and Staff

Obtaining cooperation from the institution's faculty and staff involves faculty participation in the study/review group and may also involve negotiating with a union. Providing options for faculty and staff members who will be affected by the phase-out is crucial. Maintaining an atmosphere that avoids unwarranted fear requires careful planning and systematic release of information. Reports should not only present the negative news, but should also present both negative and positive aspects honestly and in a timely fashion. Some activities that may help bring about this cooperation are as follows:

- Where there is a union, meet with representatives at the earliest possible time to discuss ways to implement the provisions of collective bargaining agreements concerning layoffs and benefits. This will make displacements as painless as possible.
- Determine labor/management contract provisions and/or the institution's policy regarding severance pay, vacation pay, retirement and early retirement, continuance of health/hospitalization insurance, life insurance, and other benefits provided for faculty and staff.
- Consider allowing faculty and staff to accept other employment prior to layoff without the loss of severance pay, so that benefits do not become barriers to reemployment.

- Transfer faculty and staff to other positions within the institution for which they are qualified or need only minimal training.

- Provide counseling and placement assistance to faculty and staff who are affected by the layoff.

- Provide retraining opportunities for faculty whose skill area is obsolete or overcrowded.

- Explain all alternatives considered. Present reasons for those rejected.

These measures should produce confidence that the institution is interested in individuals and the adjustments they must make. Even with the best planning, this cooperation may be hard to achieve. It is crucial that research and evaluation data support the decision and that careful documentation of all activities related to the employment of faculty and staff be maintained.

The Community

The support of the community may be equally elusive, since many segments of the community do not become involved unless directly affected. The following are ways by which the institution can increase its chances of obtaining community support:

- Keeping the media informed of important happenings and decisions while observing discretion with regard to personnel being considered for layoff

- Inviting the public to any open meeting and providing an opportunity for concerns to be voiced

- Providing sufficient documentation to help the public recognize the depth of study that went into the decision

- Making sure that information released is consistent and not conflicting with other institutional reports

Employers

The support of employers is crucial, particularly in the business or industry for which the phased-out program provided trained workers. Working with the program advisory group will be a critical element in the phase-out plan. Make available to the advisory group and to employers the following information:

- Background information on the decision

- A timetable for program phase out

- Information about similar or related training opportunities in another program

- Information about other institutions in the area that provide equivalent training

- Any plans for an evening or weekend program

- Projections concerning intended use of facilities and equipment
- Possibilities for the business or industry to request special classes in this area if needed in the future

When the employers and the advisory committee are involved and informed, the institution will be more likely to obtain their support, or at least to avoid their opposition.

CHAPTER IV

IMPLEMENTING THE PHASE-OUT

After the board of trustees and any appropriate state agencies have made the decision to phase out a program, and after other various constituencies have given at least some indication of approval, the phase-out plan is put into effect. The implementation of a plan to phase-out a program requires strict attention to the long-range and short-range effects of discontinuation on the following:

- Students
- Faculty and staff
- Facilities and equipment
- Budget

In addition, the public relations effort related to each of the above categories should be handled carefully.

Students

The welfare of students currently enrolled in the program or of those who plan to enroll in the near future must be carefully considered, and every effort must be made to guarantee the students a quality program. Some procedures to protect student interests include the following:

- Stopping admissions to any program being considered for discontinuation.
- Allowing time for students who are currently in the program to finish their studies.
- Providing quality instruction during the phase-out period.
- Facilitating the transfer of credits to another program in the institution.
- Providing information on programs at other institutions to which students may transfer. Include information on any loss of credits, as well as on cost differences.
- Informing students of comparable available evening or weekend programs.
- Giving students advice and help in transferring to another program or school.
- Considering other services to students during the phase-out period, such as increased career counseling or transportation to necessary classes at other institutions.
- Informing high school counselors of the decision to phase out the program.
- Encouraging student participation in the decision process.

Faculty and Staff

Faculty and staff affected by the phase-out should be given as much information and as many options as possible, at the earliest date. Some critical issues and recommendations should include the following:

- Informing faculty of any responsibilities they will have in helping students affected by the program phase-out.
- Enlightening faculty about any options for lateral transfer.
- Observing any necessary collective bargaining considerations.
- Addressing any related legal issues.
- Considering any minority issues.
- Providing information on such benefits as severance pay, vacation pay, insurance, retirement, and early retirement.
- Establishing incentives for obtaining a new position prior to the layoff, such as guaranteed severance pay.
- Assisting faculty and staff in their job searches. This may include support services as well as career counseling.
- Providing opportunities for retraining.
- Involving faculty and staff in the planning for future use of facilities, equipment, and supplies.
- If feasible, providing opportunities for part-time work.
- Informing other faculty and staff who have had partial responsibility for the program of how the phase-out will affect their work loads.
- Explaining the procedure and effects of phase-out to all faculty.

Facilities and Equipment

When a program is phased out, careful planning for the use of facilities and equipment is a must. Issues to consider include the following:

- How will the vacant facilities be used? What factors determine usage? Who will make these decisions?
- Possible use of the facilities and equipment in another program.
- Sale of equipment and supplies.

- Disposal of equipment too outdated to sell.
- Can facilities or equipment be rented to produce revenue?

Budget Adjustments

When implementing a plan to phase out a program, administrators may find that the institution's budget may be taxed for a short period of time in order to achieve long-range goals. In the long run, however, a savings is likely to occur. Some budget considerations are as follows:

- Expenses or losses in revenue
  1. loss in tuition and state enrollment-based support
  2. expenses of severance pay and other benefits to faculty
  3. costs of counseling and retraining for faculty
  4. increases in the budget of other programs
  5. costs of any other special services to students during the phase-out period only
- Savings or increases in revenue
  1. savings in faculty and staff salaries and benefits
  2. savings on expenses of maintenance of facilities and equipment
  3. revenues from rental of facilities
  4. revenues from sale of equipment or supplies
  5. additional revenue in other program from incorporation of this program

Public Relations

The public relations aspect of the phase-out must be carefully orchestrated in order to diffuse negative reactions to the phase-out of a program as much as possible. Some suggested considerations are as follows:

- Determine what information should be made available and establish who has the final control over its release.
- Designate a key person to coordinate public information and to serve as a public relations liaison for the phase-out.
- Identify all audiences who have an interest in the phase-out, including students, faculty, staff, employers, and advisory committee members. Early in the phase-out process develop a plan that covers *how* and *when* information will be communicated to them. Use the media (i.e., newspapers, television, radio) in this communication.

- Be honest with the public.
- Evaluate the impact of your communications about the phase-out, and use the audience feedback in present and future decision-making.
- Provide a public hearing to ensure that no alternative avenue has been overlooked by the study/review group. This also serves a goodwill function.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Phasing out programs in order to divert scarce resources to other programs that are more in line with community needs can be a risky business. College administrators have been known to lose their jobs as a result of phase-out miscalculations. It is hoped that those who study this monograph will make fewer mistakes as a result of the ideas and suggestions it contains.

Top administrators are encouraged to consult attorneys and use the ideas in this monograph to prepare advance plans for retrenchment, phase-out, or staff transfer. If general approval of these procedures can be obtained from all interested constituencies in advance of any need to retrench, the likelihood is greatly improved that subsequent phase-outs and transfers can be accomplished with a minimum of disruption and opposition. Some models for consideration are contained in the appendices of this work. Additional readings are suggested, as well.

A word of warning: no model, no monograph, can be expected to suit all needs under all circumstances. Readers should, therefore, use this publication as a general outline to assist them in designing policies and procedures that best suit local needs and circumstances. The idea is to reduce the risk in an inherently risky business—that of phasing out programs.

APPENDIX A

RETRENCHMENT PLAN MODELS

EXHIBIT 1

REDUCTION IN FORCE

I. Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to outline the procedures to be followed when employees of (institution) are being affected by a reduction in force (RIF). This directive applies to all employees of (institution).

II. Policy

The policy of this institution is to minimize, to the greatest extent possible, the adverse effects of reduction in force through planning and management of resources. To attain this objective—

- vacancies will not be filled during periods of declining enrollment and revenue unless deemed absolutely essential by the president;
- vacant positions will be filled by persons affected by reductions in force, where possible, to minimize separations;
- positive placement efforts will be made for all employees who are to be separated;
- reduction in force will be administered without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, political affiliations, or any other nonmerit or discriminatory factor.

III. Definitions

- Classified Employee—an employee filling a position classified and approved by the state budget and control board under the Classification and Compensation Plan.
- Office of Responsibility—president of the institution.
- Part-Time Employee—one who devotes less than a full work week to the job during the period of employment. Temporary part-time employees are hired for a period not to exceed six months.
- Permanent Employee—an individual filling a permanent classified or unclassified position authorized by the state.
- Reduction in Force—termination of employment based upon a determination of staff reduction as set forth in Section IV.
- Seniority—length of an employee's service with the state (or institution), beginning as of the last date hired.
- Unclassified Employee—consists of three categories of employees, as follows: (1) teaching faculty, (2) nonteaching faculty who are employed and compensated in accordance with the compensation plan for faculty personnel, and (3) institutional officers.

IV. General

Essentially, reduction in force resulting in the termination of permanent faculty and staff will occur when funds available are insufficient to meet salaries of the full-time work force or when the full-time work force includes more than enough personnel to perform all required work. These conditions may occur for any one of the following reasons:

- The institution is faced with a justifiable lack of work.
- The institution or a particular curricular service or support program area has experienced declining enrollment in two consecutive fall terms or the equivalent thereof.
- The general assembly, budget and control board, and/or state board for education fails to appropriate funds at or above the previous year's allocation.
- The supporting counties, individually or in total, fail to support their fair share of the annual levy for funding.
- Any justifiable change occurs in the institution or in the faculty/staff employees' curricular, service, or support program area.

In the event that a reduction in force is a possible consideration based upon a funding or enrollment circumstance of the preceding paragraph, action will be taken by the president, in concert with the institutional officers and deans, to curtail nonpersonnel expenditures where possible.

When curtailment of nonpersonnel costs is insufficient to balance the budget without deficit financing, departmental units and functions will be reviewed for possible consolidation or elimination, as appropriate. Personnel made excess by such realignment will be considered for termination. Further, necessary reductions may be achieved through termination of marginal programs weighed in terms of costs, student enrollments, and/or community need. Beyond this, it may be necessary to transfer or terminate employees in various programs and support areas to achieve the necessary reduction in expenditure levels.

When a reduction in force surfaces as the feasible alternative to necessary reduction in expenditures, the president will seek the approval of the area commission through proposal of a comprehensive reduction plan. The approval of the area commission is necessary for the implementation of reduction-in-force procedures.

Only the president can terminate employees. In every instance, she or he will provide the employee with a written statement outlining the reason for dismissal or failure to renew a contract.

If a reduction in force becomes necessary, the reduction will be restricted to the faculty department or staff function identified as redundant, based upon the merger/consolidation review previously mentioned or the results of the program review described in Section V. The order of layoff will be as follows:

1. Part-time contractual personnel

2. Permanent personnel governed by—

- academic qualifications
- quality of performance
- length of service with the state (or institution)

V. **Procedures**

Development of plan. If enrollment declines and/or austere financial conditions necessitate the need for consideration of termination of employees, the president will convene a meeting of the institutional officers to develop a reduction plan. The first order of business will be to review prior actions to reaffirm that all feasible retrenchment actions, short of layoff, were considered. As a second step, the necessary dollar reduction will be established. A plan, identifying positions to be vacated or job classifications to be reduced, will be developed to meet the dollar reduction required. The plan will identify the curricula, program or staff area, and the number of positions to be reduced. Responsibilities for the plan are as follows:

- Development officer—

  1. will review past and projected enrollment data and prepare a priority listing of programs with declining student participation;

  2. will coordinate with local industry to determine projections for program areas;

  3. will forward listing of programs to academic officer.

- Academic officer—

  1. will review the program data furnished by the development officer and, in concert with the council of deans, affirm or revise the program priority based upon insight from the faculty organization. Programs with declining enrollment should be viewed on the basis of enrollment trends. It is possible that a program experiencing a decline is still above standard in terms of numbers of students and has a potential for profit in terms of program costs versus FTE generations. Other factors influencing programs will include program relationship with other programs, relations with future federal and state requirements, accreditation requirements, facilities, and student considerations.

  2. will recommend to the president the programs and number of positions within the program area that will be considered for reduction. This information will be in priority sequence.

- Business officer—

  1. will furnish detailed financial data to the institutional officers. These data will include the current financial position of the institution and the projected shortfall after maximum feasible nonpersonnel costs are curtailed but with retention of all permanent faculty and staff employees. Based on an analysis of projected revenue and expenditures, the business officer will establish a maximum dollar figure for personnel services and a resultant dollar reduction figure.

2. will complete the personnel costs associated with the programs identified by the academic officer.

3. will complete the personnel costs associated with the curtailment of programs.

4. will develop a listing, in priority order, of classified support positions subject to reduction because of either direct or indirect relationship to proposed program reductions, and will develop a listing of the associated costs.

- The president—

1. will review the input from the institutional officers, review the financial status again, and assess the need for continued progression towards a reduction plan. As soon as it becomes apparent to the president that there is likely to be a reduction in force of contractual personnel, she or he will immediately notify the contractual personnel of the institution of the possibility. Following this, the president or designee will estimate the number of reductions that can be accommodated through normal attrition. Additionally, part-time personnel in the curricular and support program areas affected shall be reduced prior to reduction of full-time contractual personnel.

2. will, when needed staff reduction cannot be satisfied by the above, finalize a reduction-in-force proposal to the area commission. This proposal shall include the financial analysis necessitating the retrenchment action, the program and number of positions within the program to be reduced, and the effective data of the reduction.

3. will, upon approval of the reduction plan by the area commission, convene a meeting of the institution personnel to review the proposed action and the impact on the institution and its personnel.

4. will provide each employee affected by the reduction in force with a written notice outlining the method of selection of nonrenewals of contracts.

Selection of surplus personnel. With the identification of the programs and/or staff functions to be reduced, the department head, in concert with the institutional officer and dean, will prepare a listing of the individuals to be released. This listing will be in priority sequence of dismissal, based on established criteria (i.e., first person to be dismissed listed first, and so on). The criteria to be used for release will be on a point system that is based upon educational qualifications, efficiency in performance, and seniority with the state (or institution), as follows:

- Educational Qualifications—as judged by academic credentials, teaching experience, nonteaching-related experience, and professional growth, a rating of 1-5 points will be applied to this area.

- Efficiency of Performance—as determined by written annual performance evaluations in personnel files, 0-4 points will be assigned to each of the last three annual performance evaluations, based on the assignment of 0 points for unsatisfactory and marginal service, 1 point for satisfactory, 2 points for average, 3 points for superior, and 4 points for outstanding. A maximum score of 12 is possible in this category.

- Seniority—as determined by service with the state (or institution), 1-8 points will be assigned for each year of service. A maximum of 8 points can be achieved in this category. Notice will be given to the individuals with the least number of points in the departments/programs/staff areas identified for reduction, based upon the reduction plan.

Notice

1. Time of Notice. Notice of termination shall be given as early as practical but no later than February 15 of the contract year in which it is necessary for such reductions in force to take effect, except when the reduction in force is attributed solely to the failure of the general assembly to appropriate at or above the previous year's full-time payroll equivalent. In this case, the institution will provide personnel with a minimum of sixty day's notice.

2. Form of Notice. Notice shall be given in writing and shall be given to the individual in person or else sent by registered mail to the address as shown on personnel records of the institution.

3. Contents of Notice. The notice shall explain the reason for nonrenewal/reduction and provide information relative to employee benefits. It shall be signed by the president.

Employee Rights

1. Personnel affected by a reduction in force will be given the opportunity to move into other areas in the institution where there may be vacancies for which they are qualified. If the president or designee determines that a reasonable opportunity exists, personnel may be given the opportunity to retrain themselves to meet the qualifications required to move into areas where there are vacancies.

2. Following termination of employment by reason of this directive, when hiring commences in the institution, those positions for which the reduced personnel are qualified, as determined by the president or designee, will be offered first to those personnel whose contracts were cancelled last, and will continue to be offered through the list of those whose contracts were cancelled first. All personnel must keep the personnel office informed of their current mailing address in order to be contacted for reemployment as specified in this paragraph.

3. Personnel rehired under the provisions of this directive will have all of the benefits of longevity, salary, and fringe benefits reinstated. All earlier accumulated sick leave will be restored.

4. Personnel returning shall be employed at their former salaries if funds permit. In no instance shall an employee be paid less than the minimum salary required of the job classification and/or compensation plan.

5. Reemployment rights will be retained for a period of one year from the date of separation.

6. Grievance procedures detailed in the state education personnel manual will be in effect during implementation of a reduction in force.

EXHIBIT 2

PERSONNEL RETRENCHMENT
(Reduction in Force)

Pursuant to the direction of the board of trustees, in its personnel retrenchment policy adopted on (date), the following constitutes administrative procedures for the determination of financial exigency and guidelines for implementation of personnel retrenchment.

Administrative Procedures and Guidelines

I. Retrenchment Committee Composition

A. There is hereby established the (institution) Personnel Retrenchment Committee, consisting of the president, as chairperson, and the following members:

Cabinet members
Department chairpersons and directors
Speaker of the faculty
Assistant speaker of the faculty
Chairperson, Faculty Personnel Committee
Elected representative(s) of the classified staff (3)
President of the student senate

II. Retrenchment Committee Function

A. Whenever, in the judgment of the president, financial exigency and/or lack of program enrollment involving personnel retrenchment (reduction in force) are reasonably forecast (except as provided in paragraph VII-B), she or he will convene the Personnel Retrenchment Committee and brief its members on the conditions warranting consultation.

B. The president will, thereafter, announce the times and places of committee meetings to the institution community, and will present information, views, and inquiries to be considered by the committee. The meetings will be announced and the institution community will be invited to attend. The president will outline existing or anticipated financial exigencies and the programs likely to be affected.

C. Upon determination by the president that sufficient opportunity has been provided to the institution community to respond to the request for information, views, and inquiries, the president will convene the committee to analyze and evaluate all pertinent data and documentation.

D. Following the committee's review, should the president determine the need to recommend program reduction to the board of trustees, she or he will present to the board of trustees a written report of the existence or imminence of financial exigency or lack of program enrollment, accompanied by his or her proposed recommendations for program reduction.

E. Copies of the president's report and recommendations will be published and made available to the entire institution community and will be sent directly to those employees who may be adversely affected by the adoption of the proposed recommendations.

III. Formal Hearings (Board of Trustees)

A. The president's report will contain notification of the time and place at which all interested parties may be heard in support or opposition to the report and recommendations. Written comments on the report may be submitted no later than five days in advance of the meeting to the board of trustees by any member of the institution community.

B. The board of trustees will meet in an open special session to conduct a hearing on the report and recommendations. At the hearing, the board will consider all relevant information, including oral presentation by any members of the institution community and/or by employees who request in writing to be included.

C. Following a presentation of all relevant information, the board will deliberate and will reject or adopt, with or without modification, the president's report and recommendations.

IV. Notification

A. When the board's action involves release of employees, the president will notify affected employees. Any released employee may appeal the president's notice of decision to the board of trustees.

B. The appeal, directed to the president, will be forwarded through normal channels without delay. As appropriate, rights provided in the institutional grievance procedures are reserved.

V. Procedures for Reduction in Force

A. Reduction in force (release) shall, whenever possible, be treated as a layoff—temporary in nature—not as a termination. A released employee's job will not be filled by replacement for a period of one year from date of release of employment, unless the released employee has been offered reappointment and allowed fifteen days in which to accept or decline. If the employee accepts reappointment, she or he will be compensated at not less than the salary appropriate to the position accepted at the time of release, unless there has been an overall reduction in salary.

VI. Order of Release

The following objective criteria will be considered in determining the order in which members are to be released, in the event of a necessary reduction in force:

A. Faculty

1. Except in special circumstances in which it is determined that a temporary or part-time faculty member possesses expertise unique within the institution, temporary or part-time faculty members within the affected program will be released before any full-time faculty.

2. Within any academic department or directorate, release will proceed in inverse order to seniority in academic rank, and then in inverse order to seniority of full-time service at (institution).

3. In compelling circumstances, as where a junior faculty member is the only member of a department of directorate competent to teach and perform required duties, the seniority principle may be disregarded. In any such case, the affected faculty member may appeal the president's decision to the board of trustees.

B. Classified Staff

1. Review job descriptions (skills inventory of individuals).

2. Release will be in inverse order to seniority of full-time service, but only after a determination that there are no other classified positions within the institution for which the adversely affected member possesses the necessary skills.

VII. **Rights and Benefits of Employees Released Because of Financial Exigency**

A. Before being released from the institution, each affected employee will have the right, in accordance with institutional policy, to fill any existing vacancy for which he or she is qualified.

B. Whenever, due to program termination or to lack of program enrollment not involving financial exigency or reduction in force, the president determines to notify an employee of nonrenewal of contract or release, she or he need not convene the Personnel Retrenchment Committee and implement the formal procedures here set out. However, any employee so affected will have the rights and privileges set forth in sections IV thru VII.

APPENDIX B

MODEL PLAN FOR LATERAL TRANSFER

LATERAL TRANSFER POLICY FOR CERTIFICATED POSITIONS

The instructional staff of (institution) endorses the principle of lateral transfer. It is the intent of this policy to maintain the high quality of instruction for which this institution is known, while providing the flexibility required in the faculty to meet the changing needs and demands of students. It is further the intent of this policy to enable experienced staff of the institution to continue in their service of these needs and demands during periods of declining enrollment and/or financial constraints.

1. Definition of Lateral Transfer

Lateral transfer under this policy is defined as the procedure whereby (1) a certificated employee transfers from the department or instructional area for which he or she was originally credentialed to another department or instructional area for which another credential is required, or (2) a classified employee transfers from the position for which he or she was originally employed to a position for which a credential is required for the purpose of teaching one or more classes. A lateral transfer may be experimental or temporary or permanent in nature. It may be effected to fill a permanent vacancy, a leave of absence or sabbatical leave, or to provide for a staff increase in an expanding program.

Requests for a lateral transfer may be initiated in any of the following ways:

A. A regular (permanent) certificated employee whose position may be or is to be reduced by reason of declining student interest or budgetary constraints shall be granted the option of becoming fully qualified for lateral transfer to an available position.

B. A contract (probationary) certificated employee whose position is to be reduced by reason of declining student interest or budgetary constraints may be granted the option of becoming fully qualified for lateral transfer to an available position.

C. One department or instructional area of the institution may request the lateral transfer of a certificated employee from another department or instructional area for the purpose of adding that individual's particular expertise to its instructional program.

D. A certificated employee in one department or instructional area of the institution may request a lateral transfer to fill a vacancy in another department or instructional area to satisfy a new or growing interest in that subject area.

E. A classified employee may request and may be granted the option of becoming fully qualified for lateral transfer to an available position for which certification is required.

For the purposes of this policy, the terms "candidate(s) for lateral transfer" and "candidate(s)" refer to instructors, counselors, librarians, other certificated support personnel, and classified personnel presently employed by the institution.

2. Qualifications for Lateral Transfer

All candidates for lateral transfer must have a major or a minor in and possess or be eligible for a credential to teach in the subject area to which they wish to transfer. All candidates must, in addition, fulfill the requirements set forth by the institution for the position to be filled. Only the best qualified of all candidates for transfer to any position declared open may be selected. If no candidate is deemed to be fully qualified, the position may be declared open to qualified applicants from outside the institution. The rules of affirmative action shall apply.

3. Evaluation and Retention

Evaluation of instruction pursuant to a lateral transfer shall be conducted at least annually for the first two years in the manner prescribed by the institution for all first- and second-year instructors. If one or both of the evaluations are unsatisfactory, one of the following courses of action may be taken:

A. The instructor may be dismissed from the new position in accordance with institutional policy (or state codes).

B. If the lateral transfer was effected under the conditions of A or B of paragraph 1, the instructor shall continue to have preferred rights according to seniority to reappointment to the first available position for which he or she was originally qualified, for the remainder of the thirty-nine months or twenty-four months, respectively, or for as long thereafter as determined reasonable by the institution.

C. If the lateral transfer was effected under the conditions of C, D, or E of paragraph 1, the institution may grant preferred rights according to seniority to reappointment to the first available position for which the instructor was originally qualified, for up to thirty-nine months for permanent staff and twenty-four months for probationary staff, beginning with the effective date of the transfer, or for as long thereafter as determined reasonable by the institution.

By law, approval for instruction in the minor field must be renewed annually by the governing board.

All action taken under A, B, or C of this paragraph shall be forwarded to the instructor in writing no later than March 15 prior to the date of termination.

4. Limitations of the Policy

Lateral transfers shall necessarily be limited to subject areas in which existing hourly personnel could be replaced, retirements or resignations are anticipated, sabbatical leaves or leaves of absence are planned, or program expansion is anticipated. Lateral transfers may be assigned by the superintendent/president in consultation with the dean of instruction, the appropriate division dean(s), and the department(s) or program(s) involved.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to require that the institution make positions available for lateral transfer.

APPENDIX C

RELATED READINGS

RELATED READINGS

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APPENDIX D

NATIONAL POSTSECONDARY ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP LIST FOR 1982-83

NATIONAL POSTSECONDARY ALLIANCE
MEMBERSHIP LIST FOR 1982-83

1. University of Alaska, Division of Community Colleges, Anchorage, Alaska
2. Anchorage Community College, Anchorage, Alaska
3. Bergen Community College, Paramus, New Jersey
4. Brevard Community College, Cocoa, Florida
5. Butler County Community College, El Dorado, Kansas
6. Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute, Hudson, North Carolina
7. City Colleges of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois
8. Cuyahoga Community College District, Cleveland, Ohio
9. Dallas County Community College District, Dallas, Texas
10. Durham Technical Institute, Durham, North Carolina
11. Eastern Iowa Community College District, Davenport, Iowa
12. Guilford Technical Institute, Jamestown, North Carolina
13. Hocking Technical College, Nelsonville, Ohio
14. Jefferson Technical College, Steubenville, Ohio
15. Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Kalamazoo, Michigan
16. Lakeland Community College, Mentor, Ohio
17. Lewis-Clark State College, Lewiston, Idaho
18. Midlands Technical College, Columbia, South Carolina
19. Mississippi Gulf Coast Junior College, Perkinston, Mississippi
20. Mt. Hood Community College District, Gresham, Oregon
21. Oklahoma State Tech, Okmulgee, Oklahoma
22. Olympia Technical Community College, Olympia, Washington
23. Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College, Orangeburg, South Carolina
24. Owens Technical College, Toledo, Ohio
25. St. Louis Community College, St. Louis, Missouri
26. Triton College, River Grove, Illinois
27. Utah Technical College at Provo, Provo, Utah
28. Walla Walla Community College, Walla Walla, Washington
29. Washington State Community College District 17, Spokane, Washington
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31. Westark Community College, Fort Smith, Arkansas
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