I. Introduction

The opening of a program is a significant event in the life of an academic institution and should be undertaken only after careful deliberation by the faculty and administration. A clear set of criteria, affirmed by the university community, must be available that will guide the various judgments required. These judgments include not only a decision as to whether any such program ought to exist but also a decision as to whether the proposed form of the program offers the best achievable combination of wise use of university resources and maximum benefit to the students, the faculty, the overall academic program, and the overarching mission and values of the university. Similarly, the closing of a program is also a significant event in the life of an academic institution that should be undertaken only after careful deliberation by the faculty and administration. A clear set of criteria, affirmed by the university community, must be available that will guide the various judgments required.

II. Definition:

For the purposes of this document, the phrase “program or department of instruction” would include (a) a degree program, major, minor, or other integrated curricular component, or (b) a college, school, department, or separate site that houses such programs or curricular components. (The word “program” will be used in place of “program or department of instruction” hereafter in the presentation of criteria)

III. Criteria for Opening Programs:

Level of Conformity with the Mission(s): A new program should strategically align with the University’s academic mission, stated values, long-term planning, and emerging identity, as well as those of any college, school, or academic department within which it is housed and its own stated mission.

Impact on Current Students and Student Recruitment: A central concern in assessing any new program is its ability to help the University attract, retain, and enhance the quality of, our students.
Impact on General Education or Interdisciplinary Programs: Opening a new program may be appropriate if it significantly enhances the institution’s ability to offer courses required for general education or courses that are a significant part of an existing interdisciplinary or other program.

Impact on Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty: When opening a new program, the number of new tenured and/or tenure-track positions that will be required for effective implementation should be a significant consideration.

Degree of Efficiency: In evaluating a proposal for a new program, it is proper to take into consideration the degree to which a program constitutes an effective and efficient use of institutional resources. A proposal for a new program should include a detailed plan, including a proposed budget with any possible external sources of revenue stated, the potential for recruiting new students, the impact on existing students, faculty and staff, facility requirements and media needs.

Quality of the Program: In considering opening a new program, it is proper to take into consideration the anticipated quality of the program. A new program proposal should address how the program could create opportunities for faculty and students through publications, performance or presentation, and how it would enhance the University’s reputation and potential for bringing external recognition to the university.

Ramifications Regarding External Constituents: The decision to open a program should take into consideration the likely effect on key off-campus stakeholders—for example, the Board of Trustees, alumni, alumni boards, and significant contributors—and on their relationship to the institution.

Special Attributes of the Program: It is proper to consider other factors, such as the level of innovation, timeliness, and anticipated future relevance of the program under consideration; its connection to the historical identity of the institution; the ease or difficulty with which the program could be discontinued in the future should that become necessary; and its potential for contributing in a distinctive fashion to the institution’s academic mission and reputation.

Role of the Program in Campus Life: It is proper to take into consideration the likely role of the program in campus and community life, including its likely contribution through service learning, public performances, connections with extracurricular programs, outreach to ALANA students, and so forth.

Changes in External Accreditation or Credentialing Requirements: Finally, if external accreditation or credentialing requirements have recently changed, a particular new program may have become more desirable or even essential.

IV. Criteria for Closing Programs
**Level of Conformity with the Mission(s):** A program may be closed if it is no longer strategically aligns with the University’s academic mission, stated values, long-term planning, and emerging identity, or that of any college, school, or academic department within which it is housed as well as its own stated mission.

**Impact on Current Students and Student Recruitment:** A central consideration is the effect a program’s closure would have on current students in the program and on recruitment of new students to the university.

**Impact on General Education or Interdisciplinary Programs:** It is important to consider whether closure of the program would significantly undermine the ability of the institution to offer courses that meet its general education requirements or to offer courses that are a significant part of an existing interdisciplinary or other program.

**Impact on Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty:** When considering program closure, a significant consideration should be the number of tenured and/or tenure track positions that will be affected and the nature of that effect. Protection of faculty members affected should be a high priority. This could mean transfer of faculty to another program or department, or to an administrative position. Termination of employment for tenured and tenure-track faculty would occur as a last resort only and would need to be in accord with institutional guidelines for such termination, including meeting the appropriate deadlines for notification.

**Degree of Efficiency:** In evaluating a program for closure, it is proper to take into consideration the degree to which the program constitutes an effective use of institutional resources. Important points of consideration would include evaluating the number of majors and minors, the number of students enrolled in the program’s courses within the recent past, how much the program costs compared to how much income it generates, and what impact the closure would have on faculty and staff.

**Quality of the Program:** In considering closing a program, consideration of program quality is important. Determining quality requires consideration of the productivity of faculty, the success of the program in placing students in distinguished graduate programs, the level of engagement of faculty in extra-departmental activities or roles that support the broader educational mission of the university, and the impact that such a closure might have on the regional and national reputation of the university and its distinct excellences in particular areas.

**Ramifications Regarding External Constituents:** The decision to close a program should take into consideration the likely effect on key off-campus stakeholders—
for example, the Board of Trustees, alumni, alumni boards, and significant contributors—and on their relationship to the institution.

**Special Attributes of the Program:** It is proper to consider other factors, such as the level of innovation, timeliness, and anticipated future relevance of the program under consideration; its connection to the historical identity of the institution; the ease or difficulty with which the program could be discontinued at some future point should that become necessary; and its demonstrated potential for contributing in a distinctive fashion to the institution's academic mission and reputation.

**Role of the Program in Campus Life:** It is proper to take into consideration the role of the program in campus and community life, including its contribution through service learning, public performances, connections with extracurricular programs, outreach to ALANA students, and so forth.

**Changes in External Accreditation or Credentialing Requirements:** Finally, should external accreditation or credentialing requirements change, the specific need for a current program may be reduced or eliminated.

**Addenda**

Addendum 1—Questions to address when assessing Degree of Efficiency under “Criteria for Opening Programs”:

- By the end of five years, how many students might be enrolled in this program? If applicable, how many students are expected to have received a degree, major, minor, certification, or other academic designation from this program by the end of five years? How many students are likely to take courses offered in the program, whether or not for a degree or other academic designation?
- How many full-time faculty would teach full-time in this program? How many full-time faculty would teach part-time in this program? How many of these faculty would be tenured or tenure-track? How many part-time or adjunct faculty would teach in it?
- Over, for example, the first five years of the new program, how many class hours might be devoted to teaching in it?
- How many support staff, either full-time or part-time, might be associated with this program (administrative assistants, secretaries, lab assistants, etc.)?
- What additional needs for classroom, computer, or lab space would arise if the program were opened?
- What additional needs for library or media resources would arise if the program were opened?
What proportion of the resources for the proposed program would be supplied or funded externally? How long is that support expected to last, and what internal resources will be required at that point?

Addendum 2—Questions to address when assessing Quality of Program under “Criteria for Opening Programs”:

- What would be the likely productivity of its faculty in terms of publications, performances, paper presentations, and so forth?
- How successful would the program likely be in placing its students in distinguished graduate programs?
- What forms of external recognition or awards would likely be forthcoming from professional organizations, accrediting agencies, and other reputable sources?
- What is the anticipated level of engagement of the program’s faculty in extra-departmental activities or roles that would support the broader educational mission of the university?
- For current faculty members who would be participating in the program, what is the demonstrated level of their teaching effectiveness, including the general trend of their student course evaluations in recent years? For any new positions, can we attract and retain faculty members who will be effective and committed teachers?
- To what degree would the program enhance Stetson’s reputation in the state, region, and nation?
- To what degree would the program contribute a distinctive excellence to the university?
- To what degree would the program as proposed be able to meet its educational goals for its students?

Addendum 3—Questions to address when assessing Degree of Efficiency under “Criteria for Closing Programs”:

- How many students are enrolled in this program currently? Over the past five years, how many students have been enrolled? If applicable, how many have received a degree, major, minor, certification, or other academic designation from this program over the past five years? How many students are likely to take courses offered in the program, whether or not for a degree or other academic designation, in the coming five years?
- How many full-time faculty have been teaching in this program? How many full-time faculty have been teaching part-time in this program? How many of these faculty are tenured or tenure-track? How many part-time or adjunct faculty have been teaching in the program?
● Over, for example, the past five years, how many class hours have been devoted to teaching in the program?
● How many support staff, either full-time or part-time, have been associated with this program (administrative assistants, secretaries, lab assistants, etc.)?
● What needs for classroom, computer, or lab space would be reduced or eliminated if this program were closed?
● What needs for library or media resources would be reduced or eliminated if this program were closed?
● What proportion of the resources for this program have been supplied or funded externally rather than internally? Do we anticipate changes in the level of that support? If the program is closed, can we expect to redirect that support toward other programs?

Addendum 4—Questions to address when assessing Quality of Program under “Criteria for Closing Programs”:

● What has been the productivity of the program’s faculty in terms of publications, performances, paper presentations, and so forth?
● If applicable, how successful has the program been in placing its students in distinguished graduate programs or career positions?
● If applicable, what forms of external recognition or awards have been received by program faculty from professional organizations, accrediting agencies, and other reputable sources?
● What has been the level of engagement of the program’s faculty in extra-departmental activities or roles that support the broader educational mission of the university?
● For the faculty members participating in the program, what is the demonstrated level of their teaching effectiveness, including the general trend of their student course evaluations in recent years?
● To what degree has the program enhanced Stetson’s reputation in the state, region, and nation?
● To what degree has the program contributed a distinctive excellence to the university?
● To what degree has the program been able to meet its educational goals for its students?
● Finally, with respect to all of the above questions, does the future look essentially similar to the past, or is there good reason to believe that the answers five years from now will be substantially different? For example, for any vacancies that exist or may arise in the program, will we be able to attract and retain faculty members who are effective, productive, and committed?