

**BLUEFIELD STATE COLLEGE  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
POLICY NO. 5**

**TITLE: PROGRAM REVIEW**

**SECTION 1. GENERAL**

- 1.1 Scope: This rule establishes the policy on review of academic programs.
- 1.2 Authority: West Virginia Code § 18B-1-6, 18B-2A-4
- 1.3 Repeal of Former Rule - Revises and replaces Series 11 effective October 22, 1988, with effective date of October 20, 1993 and filing date of September 20, 1993.
- 1.4 Replaces Title 131, Procedural Rule, Series 11
- 1.5 Effective: March 21, 2002

**SECTION 2. BASIS OF PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS**

- 2.1 Chapter 18B-2A-4 of the West Virginia Code requires that the Bluefield State College Board of Governors "review, at least every five years, all academic programs offered at Bluefield State College." The purpose of this document is to delineate the framework and steps in the program review process.
- 2.2 For the purpose of this document, a "program" is defined as a curriculum or course of study in a discipline specialty that leads to a certificate or degree. Each major within a program (but not each track or optional subfield) is considered a separate program.

**SECTION 3. ASSUMPTIONS USED IN DEVELOPING THE REVIEW PROCESS**

- 3.1 Program review is most effective when it is conducted on a regular cycle, and when some indicators are examined on an annual basis.
- 3.2 Program review is a collaborative process which includes the Board of Governors and institutional personnel at every stage.
- 3.3 A rational and comprehensive program review process requires differentiation among levels of degrees. The process, criteria, and standards for associate degree programs will differ significantly from those applied to baccalaureate programs.
- 3.4 The review process should be independent of any accreditation procedure, but may build upon accreditation self-studies and evaluations when they are illuminating.

- 3.5 The program review process must be accomplished within the limits of available staff and resources.
- 3.6 A continuous auditing process allowing for early identification of programs that need particular scrutiny is required to permit changes to be anticipated, appropriate intervention to take place, and corrective action to be accomplished within normal institutional efforts.
- 3.7 A readily accessible computerized database should be available to support the program review process.

#### **SECTION 4. PROGRAM REVIEW LEVELS**

- 4.1 The program review process will provide for a review and evaluation of all programs leading to a certificate or degree at Bluefield State College. The process will consist of three levels of activity: an annual audit, program review by the Bluefield State College Board of Governors (in accordance with a five-year cycle), and special program reviews. The purposes, process, criteria, and possible outcomes of each of these review levels are presented in the following sections and subsections.

4.1.1 Annual Audit - The purpose of the annual audit by the staff will be to analyze the data collected on all programs of Bluefield State College by using institutional reports. Programs will be reviewed in terms of productivity in credit hours, course enrollments, numbers of majors, numbers of degrees awarded, cost and related information. The results of the annual audit will provide a continuous monitoring mechanism and will serve to alert both the president and the board that specific programs may require further review.

4.1.2 Program Review by the board - The purpose of the board's review, conducted on a regular five-year cycle, will be to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the viability of, adequacy of, necessity for each academic program, consistent with the mission of Bluefield State College. This review process will build on the data of the annual audits and will include additional information about each program. Comprehensive institutional self-studies conducted in compliance with accreditation or institutional processes and completed within the previous twenty-four months may be used to provide the base-line data for the review, with any necessary updating of factual information.

4.1.3 Institutional personnel, external consultants, and the Board of Governors may be involved in establishing the criteria, standards, and process of evaluation, and in interpreting the information resulting from the review. To ensure that each program is reviewed at least once every five years, consistent with statutory requirements, the president will select approximately twenty percent of all

programs for review each year. For each program identified for review, the institution will develop a self-study statement addressing the following items:

4.1.3.1 Viability - Viability is tested by an analysis of unit cost factors, sustaining a critical mass, and relative productivity. Based upon past trends in enrollment, patterns of graduates, and the best predictive data available, the institution shall assess the program's past ability and future prospects to attract students and sustain a viable, cost-effective program.

4.1.3.2 Adequacy - The institution shall assess the quality of the program. A valuable (but not the sole) criterion for determining the program's adequacy is accreditation by a specialized accrediting or approving agency recognized by the Federal Government or the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation. The institution shall evaluate the preparation and performance of faculty and students, and the adequacy of facilities. The curriculum should be offered in a sequence and frequency that will allow timely progress toward graduation. An objective analysis of the program's curricular strengths and quality should be presented, and plans to correct deficiencies should be described. When describing a program's adequacy, the institution shall indicate the measures used to assess student performance and program quality. The institution is expected in its self-study to indicate the ways it evaluates the effectiveness of the program and how those results are used to plan for improvements of the program and effect curricular change. The self-study shall include information on studies of graduates and their employers to determine placement patterns and effectiveness of the educational experience.

4.1.3.3 Necessity - The dimensions of necessity include whether the program is necessary for the institution's service region, and whether the program is needed by society (as indicated by current employment opportunities, evidence of future need, rate of placement of the program's graduates).

4.1.3.4 Consistency With Mission - The program shall be a component of, and appropriately contribute to, the fulfillment of the institutional mission. The review should indicate the centrality of the program to the institution, explain how the program complements other programs offered, and state how the program draws upon or supports other programs. The effects (positive or negative) that discontinuance of the program might have upon the institution's ability to accomplish its mission should be stated.

4.1.4 Special program review - The board may request at any time that special program reviews be conducted for a given purpose. Formal strategies for conducting such reviews will be developed, consistent with the purpose of the review.

## **SECTION 5. CRITERIA AND STANDARDS FOR EVALUATION**

- 5.1 The criteria, standards, and indicators of viability, adequacy, and necessity will vary among fields and among levels of degree programs. The same criteria and standards obviously do not apply to associate degree programs, baccalaureate degree programs, and graduate programs. To assist the board in developing the criteria and standards for evaluation and to assist the board in the review process, the President will appoint the members of the program review.
- 5.2 Because approximately twenty percent of all programs must be evaluated each year and specific disciplines will be selected for review each year, the review committee may be augmented by the appointment of specialists in appropriate fields. Such specialists may be external consultants or faculty when specific standards or criteria are developed, appropriate advisory councils and committees should be consulted and invited to comment prior to application of the measures.

## **SECTION 6. POSSIBLE OUTCOMES**

- 6.1 Recommendation - The board's five-year cycle of program review will result in a recommendation by the committee for action relative to each program under review. The committee is clearly obligated to recommend continuation or discontinuation for each program reviewed. If recommending continuation, the committee should state what it intends:
  - 6.1.1 Continuation of the program at the current level of activity, with or without specific action;
  - 6.1.2 Continuation of the program at a reduced level of activity (e.g., reducing the range of optional tracks) or other corrective action;
  - 6.1.3 Identification of the program for further development;
  - 6.1.4 Development of a cooperative program with another institution, or sharing of courses, facilities, faculty, and the like; or
  - 6.1.5 Identification of the program as a program of excellence.
- 6.2 If the committee recommends discontinuance of the program, then the Bluefield State College Board of Governors will act as final arbiter in the matter.
- 6.3 For each program, the appropriate administrator will provide a brief rationale for the observations, evaluation, and recommendation. These should include concerns and achievements of the program. The administrator may also recommend this as a program of excellence and provide a narrative. The administrator will also make all supporting documentation available to the board upon request.

6.4 Committee Recommendation - The BSC Board of Governors, will review the recommendation from the committee and will render a decision on the continuation or discontinuance of the program.

6.4.1 The Committee may make recommendations that go beyond those above. The Committee may request additional information and may recommend continuance on a provisional basis and request progress reports.