



To: Provost Passerini

From: SHU AAUP Advocacy Chapter

RE: Senate Resolution on APSA Date:

Date: March 3, 2021

The members of the SHU Advocacy Chapter of AAUP strongly support the attached APSA resolution passed by the Faculty Senate, which is consistent with AAUP principles. We affirm AAUP principles of shared governance, including the faculty's primacy in academic matters, the crucial role of a meaningful faculty voice in every phase of any program review, and the necessity for transparency with faculty about processes.

The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process.¹

The Chapter supports a radical shift in the administration's methods of communication with faculty and students regarding curricular decisions. The SHU Advocacy Chapter of AAUP looks forward to new opportunities for transparent collaborations with the Faculty Senate and the administration on future academic matters.

¹ American Association of University Professors. (1966). *Statement on government of colleges and universities*. American Association of University Professors.

Resolution of the Faculty Senate
February 26, 2021

The Faculty Senate is concerned about the recently undertaken Accelerated Program Sustainability Assessment (APSA) of selected academic programs.

The Senate recognizes the need for periodic evaluations of programs within the normal structures of shared governance and understands that special circumstances may require some assessments to take place outside the regular Program Review cycle. At the same time, we acknowledge the validity of criticisms directed toward the APSA process with regard to its rushed timeframe and lack of transparency.

Of particular concern to the Senate is the fact that the APSA process has taken place outside of established structures and procedures of shared governance. Faculty Guide 12.2 grants the faculty of the University primary responsibility for recommending academic policy to the Board of Regents and specifically includes within this responsibility “Review and approval of all University Degree Programs, existing and proposed.” (12.2.f)

While the Senate recognizes that APSA was initiated under financial exigency, in adherence to 12.2.f, we request that the APSA decisions and all supporting data be shared with the Academic Policy Committee and that the Committee be given an opportunity to weigh in on the decisions, their impact to the University’s portfolio, and the future of affected programs in relation to the University’s Strategic Plan and Academic Mission.

The Senate notes that increased transparency throughout this process and all other University operations would improve the working relationship between the faculty and administration and alleviate mutual suspicions and anxieties.

The Senate requests that assessments of sustainability in the future be carried out through existing college and senate governance structures taking into consideration the following principles:

- **Cutting programs is no virtue; saving programs is no vice.** Fewer programs are not inherently better for the University. Whether a program deserves to continue should be determined in accordance with the strategic needs of departments and colleges.
- **Our goal should be for programs to succeed.** By bringing a program into existence, the University is making an implicit commitment to provide the resources necessary for the program to survive.
- **Suspending and closing programs should be a last resort.** If a program is struggling, the first response should be to facilitate recovery. Programs should be given the opportunity to develop and implement plans for improvement with sufficient time to put them into effect and assess the outcomes. Only after such an effort has been undertaken and failed to meet expectations, should suspension or closure be considered.
- **It is normal and appropriate for cross subsidization to take place** within departments and colleges whereby profitable programs make up for strategically important but less lucrative programs. Profit and loss within individual programs should not be the sole criteria by which their viability is determined. Which programs are to be considered strategically important should be determined through broad discussions within the colleges.

- **Accounting models are not neutral arbiters.** There are multiple methods for determining profit and loss and all of them have built-in assumptions and biases. Accounting models should not be accepted without question. Actual costs of running (or not running) a program ought to be considered as well as the accounting of profit and loss. Benchmarks should be established and agreed upon in advance, accounting methodologies must be clearly explained, and guiding assumptions brought into the open.
- **Decisions regarding programs need to be informed by faculty-driven assessment** of the program's academic viability using methods and techniques accepted by major professional organizations and accrediting bodies. Such assessments take time to undertake, and the process should not be rushed.
- **Assessment of programs should be open and transparent.** Data relevant to the targeting of programs should be made available to all concerned parties. All steps in the review process should be common knowledge, and the outcome of reviews should be announced to the University community.