University Policy AC-09.02-05/16

Policy Title: New Academic Degree Program Approval Policy

Originator: Dr. George Ellenberg, Vice Provost

Responsible Office: Office of the Provost

I. Reason for Policy/Purpose:

To ensure that new academic degree programs implemented by the University of West Florida are of the highest quality, align with the missions of UWF and the Florida Board of Governors, meet the needs of the citizens of Florida, and conform with Florida Board of Governors Regulations, the University establishes the following criteria and guidelines for new academic degree program authorization.

Information concerning minors, concentrations, areas of emphasis, tracks, college credit certificate programs, and non-college credit certificates which was previously included in this policy is now set forth in AC-13.02-04/14 Addition, Modification, and Deletion of Specializations, Minors, and Certificates.

II. Who Does this Govern and Who Needs to Know this Policy?

This policy is applicable to all UWF employees at all sites and in all modalities.

III. Definition of Terms: (UWF Definitions)

Degree Program: An organized curriculum leading to a degree in an area of study recognized as an academic discipline by the higher education community, as demonstrated by assignment of a National Center for Educational Statistics Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code or as demonstrated by the existence of similar degree programs at other colleges and universities, and having designated faculty effort and instructional resources. Each degree program will be assigned a CIP code by the Florida Board of Governors Office of Academic and Student Affairs and included in the State University System Academic Degree Program Inventory.

IV. Policy Statement:

A. Criteria for New Degree Program Approval – A proposal for a new degree program must be approved by the University of West Florida Board of Trustees (and the Board of Governors for a doctoral program) prior to implementation. New programs must meet the following criteria:
(1) Institutional and State Level Accountability.

(a) The program is consistent with the Board of Governors and State University System Strategic Plan as well as UWF's Mission, Strategic Plan, and University Work Plan. The proposal must demonstrate that the goals of the program are aligned with UWF's Mission, relate to specific institutional strengths, and be consistent with the current State University System (SUS) Strategic Planning Goals as demonstrated by an explanation of the goals which the program will directly advance. The program must be consistent with the program list in the University’s Work Plan (required also by Board of Governor's Regulation 2.002).

(b) The program demonstrates a need for program graduates, research, and/or service. The proposal must demonstrate a need for more individuals to be educated in this program at the level proposed, contain an estimate of the headcount and FTE for students who will major in the program, and indicate steps to be taken to achieve a diverse student body. If an argument is made for the program based upon research or service, then specific information supporting the argument must be provided.

(c) The Program does not unnecessarily duplicate existing State University System Degree programs. If the program duplicates another degree program at a state university in Florida which has a substantially similar curriculum, evidence must be provided that UWF has investigated the potential impact on that program, has discussed opportunities for collaboration with the affected university, and can substantiate a need for duplication. If the proposed program curriculum substantially duplicates an existing program at a historically black university in the State University System, an analysis must be conducted to determine whether the proposed program may adversely affect that university’s ability to achieve or maintain student diversity in its existing program.

(d) Financial planning and resources are sufficient for implementation. The proposal must provide a complete budget for the program which is comparable in cost to similar existing programs, reflects the purpose of the proposal, and provides evidence that, in the event resources within UWF are redirected to support the new program, such a redirection will not have an unjustified negative impact on other programs.

(e) There is a sufficient projected benefit of the program to UWF, local community, and state. The proposal must provide a statement that describes the projected benefit to UWF, the local community, and the State if the program is implemented. The statement should demonstrate efficient use of resources and
justification for the investment. The projected benefit can be both quantitative (data driven) and qualitative in nature, but there should be a clear distinction between the two in the proposal.

(f) *Access and articulation are maintained for all programs and the proposal must demonstrate that:*

(i) In a proposal for a baccalaureate program, all prerequisite courses must be consistent with common prerequisites for similar degree programs within the State University System and the Florida College System, or an exception must be sought through the Articulation Coordinating Committee in accordance with Board of Governors Regulation 8.010.

(ii) In a proposal for a baccalaureate program, if limited access status is sought in accordance with Board of Governors Regulation 8.013, adequate justification must exist for such a designation, and evidence must be provided that diversity, articulation, and workforce issues are appropriately addressed.

(iii) In a proposal for a baccalaureate program, the total number of credit hours must not exceed 120, or an exception must be sought from the Board of Governors in accordance with Board of Governors Regulation 8.014.

(iv) A proposal for any degree level must include a plan to achieve a diverse student body in the program.

(2) **Institutional Readiness.**

(a) *Indication of ability to implement a high quality program.* The proposal must provide evidence that the institution has the resources in place, or will make the necessary investments, to ensure that the proposed program will be of high quality. If appropriate, the proposal must provide evidence that the proposed program will specifically relate to existing institutional strengths such as other academic programs that have achieved national recognition, or related institutes and centers. If program reviews or accreditation activities in the discipline pertinent to the proposed program or in related disciplines have included recommendations affecting the proposed program, the proposal must provide evidence that progress has been made in implementing those recommendations.

(b) *Curriculum is appropriate for the discipline and program level.* The proposal must describe a sequenced course of study with expected student learning outcomes, including any appropriate industry-driven competencies for advanced technology and related disciplines, as well as a strategy for assessing student learning. Admissions and graduation criteria must be clearly specified and appropriate. The course of study
and credit hours required should include a timeframe consistent with similar programs. In cases in which specialized accreditation is available, evidence must be provided that the program will seek accreditation, or a rationale must be provided as to why the program will not seek specialized accreditation as required by Board of Governors Regulation 3.006.

(c) *Sufficient qualified faculty are available.* The proposal must demonstrate that sufficient qualified faculty are available to initiate the program based on estimated enrollments, and that, if appropriate, there is a commitment to hire additional faculty in later years. The proposal must demonstrate that the academic unit or units associated with this new degree have been productive in teaching, research, and service. For a research or professional doctoral program, evidence must be provided that the faculty in the aggregate has the necessary instructional experience, as well as research and grant activity, to sustain a doctoral program.

(d) *Sufficient institutional resources are available.* The proposal must demonstrate that the necessary library volumes and serials; classroom, teaching laboratory, research laboratory, office, and any other type of physical space; equipment; and appropriate clinical and internship sites are available to implement the program. For a graduate-level program, the proposal must indicate whether appropriate fellowships, scholarships, and graduate assistantships are in place, or if the University has made sufficient plans for their existence when student support is the norm in similar programs in the discipline.

(B) **New Degree Program Approval Authority and Process.**

(1) *Professional and Research Doctoral Degree Programs.* The UWF Board of Trustees must approve any proposed new research and professional doctoral degree programs for submission to the Board of Governors for authorization in accordance with Board of Governors’ Regulation 8.011(3). UWF Board of Trustees must determine that a proposal is complete and meets all criteria for new program authorization before submitting the proposed program to the Board of Governors for approval. In approving a new doctoral degree program, the Board of Governors shall consider the sufficiency of the University’s proposal evaluation process, the distinctive mission of the University, alignment with the State University System and UWF strategic plans, and the extent to which the program will contribute to the economic development of the local community and the state as demonstrated by its alignment with the Areas of Programmatic Strategic Emphasis adopted as part of the State University System Strategic Plan. The Board of Governors will only consider new doctoral programs at the June and November meetings. UWF may not offer the program earlier than the date specified in the proposal.

(2) If it is contemplated that a master's and a doctoral degree program will be implemented in the same field simultaneously, a single proposal for both degree levels should be developed, differentiating elements within the proposal as necessary. Both
degree levels must be approved by the UWF Board of Trustees prior to submitting the doctoral program for approval by the Florida Board of Governors.

(3) Bachelor’s, Master’s, Advanced Master’s, and Specialist and other Non-Doctoral Degree Programs. The UWF Board of Trustees has the responsibility and authority to approve for implementation new degree programs at the bachelor's, master's, advanced master's, and specialist level in accordance with Florida Board of Governors Regulation 8.011.

(4) New Program Approval Procedures and Guidelines. To comply with the BOG regulation and implement the UWF policy on new academic program approval, the UWF Division of Academic Affairs must have operational procedures and guidelines for review and approval of the Faculty Senate and the UWF Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee pursuant to UWF Policy P-01.02-03/14. Copies of the UWF policy on new academic program approval and the associated procedures and guidelines must be provided to the Florida Board of Governors. The approval procedures and guidelines for new academic programs must include at a minimum:

(a) A formal process for determining degree programs that UWF will explore for implementation over the period covered by UWF's strategic plan and Florida Board of Governors' SUS Strategic Plan;

(b) A formal process for review and approval of proposed programs by the appropriate curriculum, financial and administrative entities of UWF;

(c) A formal written review of all doctoral program proposals by a qualified external consultant prior to consideration of the proposal by the UWF Board of Trustees or by a cross-section of visiting experts who contribute to the proposal development process;

(d) A process for final consideration by the UWF Board of Trustees that includes review of the proposed program by its Academic Affairs Committee with regard to implementation costs and the Florida Board of Governors approval criteria;

(e) Adoption of the common SUS new degree proposal format; and

(f) All changes to degree programs must be effective with a fall semester and be included in the Catalog.

(C) Independent Degree Programs at Off-Campus Instructional Sites.

Whether or not UWF has authority to offer a given degree program, off-campus instructional sites may not institute complete degree programs, or substantially complete degree programs, having designated faculty lines with independent curricula decision making
authority, designated facilities and instructional resources, and a designated student body unless such programs are approved by the UWF Board of Trustees. Each such program must meet the UWF Board of Trustees and Florida Board of Governors new degree program approval criteria and follow the same approval process as other new program offerings at UWF. This policy does not apply to programs that share faculty and students between instructional locations.

V. Procedures:


Internal Monitoring Procedures for Substantive Change
https://nautical.uwf.edu/files/org/acadmcncl/Revised_Substantive_Change_Procedures.pdf

Change Justification:

This policy is being revised and updated for conformity with Florida Board of Governors Regulation 8.011 Authorization of New Academic Degree Programs and Other Curricular Offerings.

Authority and Related Documents:

**Board of Governors**

Board of Governors Regulation 8.011 Authorization of New Academic Degree Programs and Other Curricular Offerings.

Board of Governors Regulation 8.010 Common Prerequisites.

Board of Governors Regulation 8.013 Limited Access.

Board of Governors Regulation 8.014 Bachelors' Degree Exceptions to 120 Credit Hours Requirement.
http://www.flbog.edu/documents_regulations/regulations/8_014.pdf

Board of Governors Regulation 3.006 Accreditation.
http://www.flbog.edu/documents_regulations/regulations/Reg_03_006%20Accreditation%20Final%202001_2015.pdf

AC-09.02-05/16 New Academic Degree Program Approval Policy 5.13.2016
Board of Governors Regulation 2.002 University Work Plans and Annual Reports.  

APPROVED: Dr. Judith A. Bense, President Date: 5/19/16

History:

AC-09.00-06/09 New Academic Program Approval Policy, adopted July 2009; revised hereby.