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## WKU announces recommended cut of 101 academic programs

By AARON MUDD [amudd@bgdailynews.com](mailto:amudd@bgdailynews.com) 22 hrs ago

With a review of all 380 of its academic programs complete, Western Kentucky University Acting Provost Cheryl Stevens announced in an email to faculty and staff Monday a recommendation to suspend 101 programs.

“Given a declining population of high school students, downturn in the number of international students, and reduced state allocations, we need to optimize allocation of scarce resources to promote and support growth,” Stevens wrote in the email.

The recommendation is the result of a review by the Comprehensive Academic Program Evaluation Committee, a group with 15 faculty representatives and three staff, and it's slated to go before the Board of Regents' Academic Affairs Committee on Friday.

The full Board of Regents will have a final say on the cuts at its May 10 meeting.

In an interview Tuesday, WKU spokesman Bob Skipper and Interim Potter College of Arts and Letters Dean Merrall Price wouldn't give specific estimates on how many jobs could be lost or how much money would be saved as a result of the cuts. Instead, Skipper said the program review process was about making WKU's programs more relevant to students.

"This is about offering programs that are going to attract students," Skipper said. "It's a refocus of our energy and resources."

Price echoed that view.

"While money is a concern, this was not the fundamental origin of this process," Price said.

She added that instructors could still be needed to teach their courses as part of the university's general education offerings, even if there's no longer a major or minor being offered.

Asked directly if no jobs would be lost as a result of the cuts, Price said: "We certainly don't have planned layoffs at this point. We're not planning at this point to go in and cut specific jobs."

Among the programs targeted for suspensions are majors in popular culture, French and art education and minors in economics, biology, chemistry, mathematics and other sciences. Minors in the humanities are also targeted, including theater, English and government.

Of the 101 academic programs recommended for suspension, Stevens said they include 11 undergraduate degrees, four graduate degrees and 86 other credentials such as minors and certificates.



“Of these (programs), 42 currently have no students – one undergraduate, four graduate and 37 other credentials. The majority of the remaining programs have fewer than 10 students enrolled in each,” Stevens wrote, adding that the program review process involved deans and department heads making careful and sometimes tough decisions in deciding which programs were viable.

In addition, Stevens said 55 programs have been identified to be altered, another 15 will be grown and 209 programs will be maintained as they exist. The full recommendation is online at [bgdailynews.com](http://bgdailynews.com).

Beginning in August, the CAPE process involved department heads, deans and faculty and staff working to develop recommendations to reach the Board of Regents by May 10. The process began at the individual program level with department heads conducting a “self-study” using university data to assess their programs. From there, the assessments went to college-level committees that scored them and forwarded them to the university’s deans, who issued their own recommendations.

A larger CAPE Committee then conducted its own review using factors such as the program’s enrollment, number of degrees granted and how well it aligns with careers. On Friday, after the sudden resignation of Provost Terry Ballman, WKU President Timothy Caboni announced that the CAPE Committee’s recommendations would not be altered by the provost before they’re presented to the board.

Regardless of the program cuts, WKU is required to “teach out” programs for currently enrolled students.

“Rest assured students enrolled in a suspended program will be supported and allowed to complete their program. And while a degree program may be eliminated, we still may teach that subject to maintain the electives our students need to complete the Colonnade program or to support other programs,” Stevens added.

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CAPE Committee Program Recommendations  
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