

## **STREAMLINING PROGRAM POLICIES**

**ACTION**  
**Agenda Item D-1**  
**November 8, 1999**

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### **Recommendation:**

That the Council approve the attached guidelines for new program approval, program review, and extended-campus activities.

### **Rationale:**

- The *1999-2004 Action Agenda* and the Council staff's 1999-2000 Plan of Work calls for the streamlining of the process by which new academic programs are approved at Kentucky's postsecondary institutions and monitoring the performance of the institutions and their programs.
- Current academic program policies are voluminous, regulatory, and bureaucratic, and date back as far as the 1970s. They require the Council and its staff to spend great amounts of time and effort engaged in oversight that is neither productive nor value adding. These policies—and the time-consuming procedures that accompany them—are obsolete.
- The bold reform goals outlined in the *Kentucky Postsecondary Education Improvement Act of 1997*, *2020 Vision*, and the *1999-2004 Action Agenda* require academic program policies that reflect international best practices, create strong partnerships between the Council and institutional governing boards, and provide flexibility to Kentucky's universities and the KCTCS within the context of institutional missions and plans.
- As a first step, in April 1999 the Council delegated to the KCTCS Board of Regents program approval authority for new certificate, diploma, associate in arts, associate in science, associate in applied science, and associate in applied technology degree programs at the KCTCS institutions.
- These new guidelines for Kentucky's universities reflect the goals of postsecondary education reform and were developed in consultation with the Council of Chief Academic Officers.

# ATTACHMENT A

## Guidelines for New Program Approval

### *Program Approval Delegation*

- That the governing board at each of the four-year institutions be authorized to approve, on behalf of the Council, new academic programs that fall within its selected band of programs. The program band is based on the institution's mission, existing programs, and disciplinary strengths.
- That the Council retain its approval authority for programs in the following areas:
  - First-professional programs
  - Engineering programs at the comprehensive institutions and engineering programs at the doctoral level at the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville
  - Teacher and school personnel preparation programs
  - Health-related programs above the baccalaureate level
  - Other programs falling outside each institution's negotiated program band

For new programs in these areas, institutions will be required to submit full program proposals. "Statements of compelling need" will no longer be required.

- That the Council staff may request a full proposal for any program within a negotiated band.

### *Program Development Principles*

It is expected that all new program proposals will be developed within the context of institutional missions and plans, statewide reform goals, and the Council's *2020 Vision* and *1999-2004 Action Agenda*. The following principles should be considered:

- All universities and Kentucky Community and Technical College System institutions will be in compliance with relevant EEO/AA requirements before implementing any new programs or substantial program modifications.
- Programs should be designed to ensure that students can move easily into related credential programs in the system.
- The Council strongly encourages the development of new joint and cooperative programs and the consolidation of existing programs into joint or cooperative programs with other institutions.

- The establishment of new programs will be based on compelling evidence of student demand and employment opportunities for program graduates.
- Senior institutions wishing to establish new sub-associate certificate programs for academic credit will consult with the KCTCS administration using procedures approved by the Council.
- The Council may encourage the development of targeted programs that meet critical statewide or regional needs through financial incentives or Requests for Proposals.

### ***Program Advisory and Consultation Process***

This new process for program approval is built around public dialogue among Kentucky's institutions of postsecondary education. This dialogue is designed to increase cooperation and collaboration and, in the process, prevent unnecessary duplication. To achieve these goals, inter-institutional discussion should begin after a new program has been approved at the departmental level.

For new program proposals that are within an institution's current program array and not within areas that require Council approval, the following program advisory and consultation process will be used by the four-year institutions and the KCTCS:

1. The proposing institution will provide the following information to the Council staff for posting to the Council's website:
  - Program title and suggested federal classification code
  - Brief program description
  - Brief statement of need and demand for the program
  - Preliminary plans for collaboration with other institutions
  - Plans for delivery through distance learning technologies
  - The name(s) of primary institutional contact(s)
2. Other public and independent institutions in Kentucky and the Council staff will have six weeks to comment on or state official opposition to the proposed program. Comments and stated opposition will be posted.
3. If there is no unresolved opposition to the program by the end of the six-week period, the Council staff will notify the institution that it may complete the institutional process of program approval and subsequently implement the program.
4. If another institution or the Council staff expresses major concerns about the proposed program, the Council staff will decide how best to proceed. In doing so, the Council staff may require additional information and may recommend that the Council take action on the proposal.

Programs falling outside an institution's negotiated program band and programs that fall within areas that require Council approval will follow the consultative process for other new programs outlined above in steps #1 and #2. Then, upon completion of the institution's internal approval process (including board approval), the institution will submit a complete program proposal to the Council for its consideration.

### ***Campus Consultation Visits***

An institution's internal proposal guidelines and approval procedures should reflect the principles outlined in these guidelines. The Council staff will periodically visit the campuses, including the colleges within the KCTCS, to review the process by which selected new programs are developed. Council interest during the campus visits will focus on the following matters of statewide importance:

- Evidence that a rigorous process of determining demand supported the need for the program
- Evidence of collaborative efforts with other postsecondary institutions
- Evidence that employer and other relevant groups were consulted on curriculum design
- Actual articulation agreements and other credit transfer arrangements with related credential programs at the institution and at other institutions
- Evidence that sound methods for evaluating student learning and success are in place