



Sept. 23, 2024

Re: Substantive Pause for Academic Year 2026-2027

Dear colleagues,

In anticipation of the university's reaccreditation visit from Higher Learning Commission peer reviewers during the 2026-2027 academic year, we are setting a pause on substantive undergraduate curriculum changes for that academic year.

Under this proposal, the curriculum cycle will be unchanged during the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 academic cycles. Please proceed with any updates in courses and programs as needed. For the following year, 2026-2027, please do not plan to make any substantive curriculum changes that are not required by an outside entity.

This pause will allow Academic Affairs and other members of the university community the additional bandwidth to ensure a successful HLC visit with the intent of not only receiving reaffirmation, but moving the university from the most restrictive accreditation pathway to the least restrictive one, offering a more effective accreditation process.

The pause will not stop curriculum changes from happening, but is intended to significantly reduce the number of changes presented during that cycle for the 2027-2028 catalog. If a program must make a substantive change to meet outside accrediting requirements, such as ABET, AACSB, CDE, Nursing board, etc., or to meet a change in federal or state rules, then that change would still happen. The substantive curriculum change proposal would need to include a note as to which of the above reasons was causing the change.

The pause will not only aid in the university reaccreditation effort, but it will also have additional benefits across the institution. The university is scheduled to start the transition from the Banner student information system to a new, cloud-based system during 2027. This change is an enormous one and will consume significant resources in the Registrar's office and across the institution. Some relief in the form of fewer substantive curriculum changes would also be helpful.

In addition, our HLC liaison has endorsed this pause to aid peer reviewers. One of the past challenges for the university during reaccreditation visits has been the number of curricular changes – particularly the introduction of new majors – that has produced additional scrutiny during and following the on-campus review.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Shaun T. Schafer or anyone in the Office of Curriculum, Academic Effectiveness and Policy Development.

Sincerely,

Laura Niesen de Abruna, Provost

Liz Goodnick, Faculty Senate President

Jess Retrum, President, Council of Chairs and Directors