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ABSTRACT

Statewide review of new academic programs is now a fairly common phenomenon, but serious review of existing programs is a much rarer practice. Now that economic conditions threaten to leave many programs stranded, we face the uncomfortable fact that institutions are very sensitive to questions raised about the legitimacy of existing programs. Even with heavier institutional or multicampus system involvement in the review of existing programs, there will still remain several important roles for the statewide agency. They must not yet undertake self-evaluation; they must monitor the quality of the self-evaluation processes that are underway; and they must ensure that even high quality self-evaluation is placed in the broader context of state, regional, and national needs. Twenty-eight coordinating boards are engaged in some form of review of existing programs, with two other boards having such procedures under development. Issues important to address are: (1) which programs to review; (2) the criteria for review of existing programs; (3) strategies and procedures for existing programs; (4) board start-up strategies; and (5) costs and benefits of review of existing programs. (Author/KE)

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CRITERIA AND STRATEGIES FOR PROGRAM  
DISCONTINUANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL CLOSURE

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## PROGRAM DISCONTINUANCE

While statewide review of new academic programs is by now a fairly common phenomenon, serious review of existing programs is a much rarer practice. There are some obvious reasons for this. Until recently expansion was the name of the game, and most board attentions were concentrated on which new programs were going where. If mistakes were sometimes made and new programs approved before there was actual justification for them, usually the incoming tide of expansion ultimately covered them up. Now that the tide is turning and threatening to leave many programs stranded and visible as it recedes, we face the uncomfortable fact that it is doubly sensitive to raise questions about the legitimacy of existing programs. Faculty have already been hired and some of them have become tenured; students have been accepted into the programs with expectations of finishing them, and some are occupying dormitory beds, helping to pay off construction bond debts; specialized library or laboratory facilities may have been acquired.

Above all, the notion of campus autonomy is much more deeply involved when it is a question, not of denying permission for a new program, but of recommending or ruling that an existing program be terminated. Academic programs lie at the heart of the enterprise and it should be understandable that

statewide movements in the direction of review of existing programs cause deeply felt concerns and even hostile reactions.

Yet, given the need to find the means for reallocation of resources, such statewide intervention seems inevitable. For one thing, the institutions themselves have not seemed anxious to grasp this nettle; Glenny's survey of institutional presidents (1975) indicated, for example, that only 3 percent had engaged in extensive graduate program elimination or consolidation between 1968 and 1974. Another 27 percent reported that "some" elimination or consolidation of graduate programs had occurred. The corresponding estimates for the period 1974 to 1980 were 7 percent and 50 percent, indicating a near doubling of intent. (Insert Table 1 here).

The record seems somewhat better when one turns to system headquarters of multi-campus institutions. There Lee and Bowen (1975) report that since 1970 seven of the nine large systems they studied had initiated programs for the periodic review of existing graduate and professional programs. Five or six of these systems agreed that their review of existing programs had become more inclusive and more stringent, including considerations of quality, costs and campus missions. Furthermore, seven of the nine systems estimated that their review procedures would become even more inclusive and more stringent over the next ten years. (Insert Table 2 here).

However, even with heavier institutional or multi-campus system involvement with review of existing programs, there will

Table 1

12. For each level, indicate extent of elimination or consolidation of <u>courses</u> for purposes of reallocating resources:	From 1968 to 1974			From 1974 to 1980			1968-1974:	1974-1980
	Extensive	Some	Very little	Extensive	Some	Very little	(N)	(N)
Undergraduate .....	5	45	50	14	61	25	(1110)	(1079)
Graduate .....	3	29	68	7	58	35	( 423)	( 418)
Professional .....	3	27	70	4	48	48	( 307)	( 297)
Other (specify):	22	45	33	18	36	46	( 9)	( 11)
<hr/>								
13. For each level, indicate extent of elimination or consolidation of <u>programs</u> for purposes of reallocating resources:								
Undergraduate .....	3	38	59	9	54	37	(1091)	(1053)
Graduate .....	3	27	70	7	50	43	( 421)	( 412)
Professional .....	2	22	76	3	40	57	( 303)	( 296)
Other (specify):	10	50	40	15	46	39	( 10)	( 13)

Source: L.A. Glenny, "Institutional Research in a Postsecondary World" Association of Institutional Research Conference, St. Louis, Mo. April 28, 1975

## ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Review of Existing Programs

## 1. Current Universitywide procedures for periodic review of existing academic programs

	None in effect	In effect		
		Less than 5 years	5 to 10 years	More than 10 years
a. Undergraduate programs	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>
b. Graduate/professional programs	<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>

## 2. State budgetary requirement of priority listing of existing programs

- a. 7 No requirement  
 b. 2 Has been required, but not regular practice  
 c. - Is required and part of regular practice  
 d. - Other

## 3. Changes since 1969 in Universitywide review of existing programs

- a. 1 Little or no change  
 b. 6 More inclusive now  
 c. 5 More stringent now, based on academic quality  
 d. 5 More stringent now, based on campus mission, etc.  
 e. 6 More stringent now, based on fiscal criteria  
 f. - Other

## 4. Expected changes in Universitywide review

	1979	1984
a. Little or no change	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
b. More inclusive/stringent	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>
c. Less inclusive/stringent	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
d. Other	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

Source: E.C. Lee and F.M. Bowen, Managing Multicampus Systems, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, forthcoming.

still remain several important roles for the statewide agency. They must provide the only review for those institutions not yet undertaking self-evaluation; they must monitor the quality of the self-evaluation processes which are underway; and they must ensure that even high quality self-evaluations are placed in the broader contexts of state, regional and national needs. Just as state interests sometimes clash with those of the institutions in terms of approving new programs, so there may occasionally be a disparity between institutional and state interests in the pattern of program termination.

#### State Board Activities in Review of Existing Programs

Subject to a more complete report next Fall when Bob Barak and I will have gotten deeper into our data, I would estimate as of now that some eleven of 28 coordinating boards are engaging in some form of review of existing programs, with two other boards having such procedures under development. Of the 19 consolidated governing boards, six seem to be underway in this area and two more report procedures under development. So, for each type of board, slightly under half are already in, or contemplating soon entering into, this kind of activity.

The issue of actual board powers in this area is a slightly different question. In theory all consolidated governing boards would have such program review powers: what the board giveth, it can taketh away. Coordinating boards, on the other hand,

vary widely in their powers to review existing programs, ranging all the way from no mention at all of the issue in the enabling legislation, to granting power only to recommend termination, to authorizing final powers in certain fields or for certain types of institutions, to granting blanket regulatory powers over all public higher education, to even folding in private sector programs as in New York.

Some of the variations reflect the rich diversity that runs through this area (like so much of American higher education), making the job of the observer attempting generalizations nearly impossible. For example, one state board with only the power to approve new programs nevertheless undertook a study and made recommendations concerning termination of existing ones and met with no institutional opposition. In several other cases, approval of new programs has been made contingent on their being evaluated after some time period like three to five years; the Doctor of Arts programs in Illinois were approved under these conditions, so the state board's limited recommending powers were strengthened somewhat by this technique. Another pattern linking stronger powers over new programs to weaker ones over existing programs is cited by Lee and Bowen, but is not one that I could recommend: that is, to trade-off review-level approval of a desired new program for institutional termination of some existing one. That may have the "ring of reality" to it, but I see it as no substitute whatsoever for satisfactory on-going procedures for reviewing existing programs.

There are also examples of boards lacking general powers which nevertheless have limited powers over special subjects or certain institutional jurisdictions. The Pennsylvania Board of Education can provide examples of both kinds: it has stronger review powers over the state colleges than over the other public institutions in the state; and it has review powers over <sup>new</sup> teacher education programs in all 86 institutions, public and private, which have such programs.

Another interesting variation involves the role of the statewide board in cases of voluntary institutional termination of programs. In Massachusetts the enabling legislation creating the statewide board could be interpreted to mean that this board would have to approve any institutional termination of programs or degrees. And in Illinois, an issue has recently been raised as to whether, once an institution voluntarily terminated a program, state board approval would be necessary for its subsequent re-introduction. (When the Board of Higher Education pressed for the need for re-approval, an institutional spokesman warned that under such conditions, the university would never, never, never voluntarily terminate its programs.)

The Illinois Board in 1971-72 was the scene of another variation in program termination, but the activities were only tenuously linked to the kind of review process I am concerned with; in any case, they have been well analyzed and criticized in two articles in the Summer 1973 issue of the Education

Record (Flentje and Sample; Lanier). Thus, I will just here note in passing that that board, faced with a proposed executive budget increase of only 5 percent for higher education, asked all public institutions to respond within a month with a list of their low priority programs, the sum of resources devoted to which would constitute at least 15 percent of that institution's operating budget from state appropriated sources. Not without some protests over both inadequate time and the method involved, most institutions complied and from these overall low priority lists, some \$24.1 millions worth of program reductions were recommended. This constituted about 4.5 percent of the base budget. Then this sum was added to \$36.6 million of new money and \$5.2/<sup>million</sup> gained through deferral of capital grants to constitute a recommendation for a new and improved program kitty of \$65.9 million. The new priorities had already been established in each institution's proposed next year's budget. We might note that the termination of academic programs constituted only a modest part of the total savings and that the exercise has not been repeated since. (Insert Table 3 here).

#### Which Programs to Review?

This is no trivial procedural question, as a failure to pay careful attention to this issue could result in the whole process becoming unworkable. For it is not merely a matter of dealing one at a time with proposed new programs, but rather of

Table 3

## Summary of Programmatic Recommendations in 1972-73 Operating Budget Request

Program Increments		Program Decrements	
Increasing Access.....	\$26,354,811	Reducing Overhead Expenditures.....	\$ 9,397,481
Public universities.....		Eliminating or Reducing Duplicate or Low-Need Programs..	5,113,544
Special support programs.....	\$ 833,568	Graduate programs.....	\$ 2,314,900
Expanded undergraduate enrollments.....	3,252,594	Teacher education programs.....	1,745,000
Public community colleges.....		Other specific duplicate or low-need	
Expanded enrollments.....	6,768,649	programs.....	1,053,644
Disadvantaged students program grants..	1,400,000	Subtotal.....	\$ 5,113,544
Expanded scholarship and grant program		Eliminating Involuntary Physical Education.....	2,362,889
for students.....	14,000,000	Eliminating Programs Outside Institutional Scope and	
Subtotal.....	\$26,354,811	Mission.....	419,756
Improving Faculty and Employee Benefits.....	16,423,915	Eliminating Underutilized Computer Capacities.....	3,539,000
Merit salary increases.....	\$12,223,915	Moving University Hospital Toward User-Cost Basis.....	1,700,000
Improved health benefits.....	4,200,000	Net Reduction for Nonrecurring Expenditures, for Programs	
Subtotal.....	\$16,423,915	No Longer Requiring Funds, and for Certain	
Health Education Programs.....	8,393,956	Zero-based Items.....	1,583,970
New and improved programs.....	\$ 6,211,756	Total.....	\$24,116,610
Expanded enrollments.....	2,149,200		
Subtotal.....	\$ 8,393,956		
New Senior Institutions.....	4,868,035		
New and expanded academic programs....	\$ 3,695,321		
Developmental programs.....	1,172,714		
Subtotal.....	\$ 4,868,035		
Improving Undergraduate Education.....	4,606,553		
Public universities.....			
New and improved programs.....	\$ 1,085,146		
Innovative program options.....	1,412,872		
Voluntary physical education programs..	858,535		
Community colleges.....			
Vocational-technical program incentives..	1,250,000		
Subtotal.....	\$ 4,606,553		
Implementing Master Plan—Phase III.....	2,610,392		
New programs.....	\$ 910,392		
Institutional program grants.....	1,000,000		
Community service program grants.....	700,000		
Subtotal.....	\$ 2,610,392		
Operating and Maintaining New Buildings.....	2,681,012		
Total.....	\$65,938,674		

Source: H.E. Flentje and S.B. Sample,  
 "Statewide Reallocation Through  
 Program Priorities." Educational  
 Record, Summer 1973, 54, (3), 175-184.

reaching into the morass of existing programs, offered in nearly infinite variety, with parallel curricula often wearing different labels, and selecting according to some apparently justifiable rationale those few programs which can be evaluated in depth at any one period of time. An attempt to approach review of existing programs on a more massive scale would probably result in either great superficiality or an overload of board capacity and/or budget. (We will have more to say on the costs of review of existing programs in our later report.)

No surprise, then, that except for a University of Wisconsin system review of undergraduate programs currently underway, and completed reviews in both New York and Wisconsin of masters' degree programs, all state reviews (including others in New York and Wisconsin) pertain to the level of doctoral programs. The universe there is the most limited; costs are higher; unemployment issues are more dramatic; and quality considerations seem more amenable. On the other hand, job market aspects often transcend state boundaries, particularly in smaller states.

Of course, even within the restricted doctoral field, further selection is necessary. Most states engaged in this process seem to rely on quantitative indicators as tripwires to bring certain programs before the institutions and the state-wide board for in-depth evaluation. After some early experiences with what one questionnaire respondent called "institutional suspicion and paranoia," some states stressed that programs thus selected for detailed evaluation were under no presumption

of being "in trouble"; that to the initial quantitative criteria would be added qualitative and other dimensions; and that a whole host of possible extenuating factors would be considered before program termination decisions would be reached. Quantitative indicators often included program productivity, costs, student demand, and extent of program duplication within the state.

West Virginia uses a mixed set of indicators and a very particular way of dealing with them. Using cost, output, institutional priority and program quality, each institution is asked to make forced ratings about each program. Sixty percent of the programs should be rated as normal on each of the four variables; twenty percent should then be placed on either side of the normal range. Each institution should then select which programs it wishes to have reviewed in depth.

While the above methods offer various ways to get an administrative handle on a difficult problem, they suffer from the common defect that the program evaluations tend to be of isolated doctorate/<sup>programs</sup> at different institutions and do not necessarily involve the statewide orientation and competences of the state board. Ideally, at the very least, all doctorates in a given subject area would be evaluated at the same time; at the very best, this would be done for whole field clusters at a time, in recognition of the interdependence of advanced work in related fields. The New York state review started out with pilot studies in single subject areas: a history

review for the humanities/social sciences, and a chemistry review for the natural sciences. With later reviews in astronomy, English, and physics, criticisms were made of the single subject approach and next year's review will be of all foreign language doctorates and those in comparative literature. The Florida Board of Regents has some proposed new guidelines which anticipate using HEGIS clusters as the means of selection.

One final observation of program selection: a Wisconsin document speaks well to the danger of allowing the quantitative tripwires to be the exclusive channel through which programs are chosen for more intensive analysis.

For a variety of judgmental reasons, administrators or planning committees for a particular institution might ask for more intensive review of a program which had not been selected through the audit process. For example, the anticipated retirement or departure of key faculty members in a given program might create a presumption that review of the program should be undertaken prior to restaffing; or a regularly scheduled site visit by an accreditation team might catalyze an institutional audit and review of a program in conjunction with the preparation of documents for the visitors; or planning studies concerning the minimum staffing which should be maintained for the essential programs of an institution might generate need for review of particular programs; or recommendations from system-wide or institutional task forces on curriculum changes could also generate need for program review. (quoted in Barak, 1975).

#### Criteria for Review of Existing Programs

It would be possible to make this into a very lengthy paper ringing the changes on all the combinations of criteria being used or proposed by state agencies. But to some extent

that has already been done through numerous extracts from state documents included in Bob Barak's paper, "A Survey of State-Level Academic Program Review Policies and Procedures for Higher Education," April 1, 1975. Furthermore, our planned monograph will be a much more appropriate vehicle for the nuanced details which may be of considerable interest to others around the country engaged in roughly the same pursuits (at the multi-campus and institutional levels as well).

Here, then, I propose merely to do two things:

- 1) list the ten criteria for program discontinuance suggested by the ECS report, Coordination or Chaos, (1973), along with a tally from Barak's paper on how many states responding to his survey were using each criterion; and
- 2) reproduce two pages from the Final Report of the Montana Commission on Postsecondary Education (1974) which lists some 22 possible criteria to be employed in reviewing existing programs, plus an additional eight when graduate programs are involved! If most of these criteria were to be applied seriously, the Montana Board of Regents could probably use enough additional staff to lower the unemployment rate by several degrees.

The ten criteria suggested by the ECS report and the number of states reporting to Barak to be using them are as follows:

- 1) the number of graduates from the program in each of the last five years (14 states);
- 2) the number of students enrolled in the program (entry and dropout rates) (10 states);
- 3) the size of classes and the cost of courses identified as integral elements in the program (4 states);
- 4) cost per program graduate (8 states);
- 5) faculty work load (2 states);
- 6) program quality as reflected by its regional or national reputation, faculty qualifications and the level of position achieved by graduates of the program (8 states);
- 7) total production of a program's graduates from all institutions in the state, region and/or nation (2 states);
- 8) the economies and improvements in quality to be achieved by consolidation and/or elimination of the program (5 states);
- 9) general student interest and demand trends for the program (9 states); and
- 10) the appropriateness of the program to a changed institutional role or mission (9 states).

The thirty possible criteria listed by the Montana Commission are as follows:

*Appropriate criteria for the review of existing programs will be developed over a period of time and will be subject to change as conditions alter. Therefore, we hesitate to specify them but believe they should take account of the following factors:*

- a. number of graduates from the program in each of the last five years.*
- b. number of students enrolled in the program for each of the last five years, rate of completion, the rate of attrition, ratio of enrollment to degree productivity.*
- c. the number of students not enrolled in the program but who were served by it for each of the last five years.*
- d. the size of classes identified as integral elements in the program.*
- e. for colleges, universities and community colleges, cost per credit hour of the courses identified as integral elements in the program (upper division, lower division and graduate).*
- f. for vocational-technical centers, cost per contact hours for courses identified as integral elements in the program.*
- g. cost per program graduate.*
- h. faculty/instructor workload.*
- i. faculty/instructor qualifications.*
- j. reputation and intrinsic value of the program.*
- k. positions achieved by graduates of the program.*
- l. positions attained by persons enrolled in the program who may have achieved their educational objectives without completing requirements for the degree or certificate.*
- m. total production of graduates in the program area from all institutions in the state (and when appropriate, in the region and/or nation).*
- n. economic and/or qualitative improvements which might be achieved by consolidation and/or elimination of the program.*
- o. general student interest, evaluation and demand for the program; morale of students in the program.*
- p. indicators of present and future demand for graduates of the program.*
- q. appropriateness of the program to the mission of the institution.*
- r. any needs for other programs of higher priority which might be funded fully or partially from savings realized by discontinuance of the program under review.*

- s. *adequacy of support services, particularly library, laboratory and educational facilities.*
- t. *compatibility with state plans.*
- u. *similarity to programs offered at any of the other units.*
- v. *relevance of the program to its objective.*

*In addition, the following criteria should be applied to the review of graduate programs by the Regents:*

- a. *average time of completion of those to whom the degree has been awarded.*
- b. *benefits accruing to the institution and the state independent of enrollment or degree production.*
- c. *proportion of departmental resources devoted to the program.*
- d. *sources of funding — state, federal, etc.*
- e. *qualifications of faculty.*
- f. *qualifications and backgrounds of students attracted to the program.*
- g. *relationship to the impact upon undergraduate program.*
- h. *availability of similar graduate programs at other units.*

(Montana Commission on Postsecondary Education, 1974, pp. 37-38)

The National Board on Graduate Education, in a passage quoted with approval by a recent ECS Task Force on Graduate Education (1975), commented on dangers associated with oversimplified use of quality, productivity and manpower criteria:

1. A single measure of quality should not be applied to very diverse programs--programs that may be serving the needs of nontraditional students for nontraditional forms of graduate education. Multiple indicators of quality, sensibly related to different program missions, should be developed.
2. Statewide planners should resist the temptation to apply simplistic formulas to doctoral programs, such as "eliminate any program that has not produced more than two doctorates within the last two years." Such statistical measures may flag programs in need of review, but no program should be eliminated on the basis of simple statistics alone.
3. When evaluating graduate programs, planners should not attempt state-by-state labor market analyses, since the mobility of the highly educated is certain to confound such analyses. A more appropriate criterion, we believe, is assured access to graduate education for residents within the state (or within the region, through reciprocal programs).

Just as we urged the federal government not to overreact to current labor market imbalances, so we also urge state governments to take a long-run view in supporting graduate universities. The lengthy process of building excellent graduate programs can be undone very rapidly, and when these programs need to be built again, as some of them surely will, the costs will be enormous. (see National Board on Graduate Education, 1973, p. 20).

Such disclaimers on manpower planning may be well meaning, but in some fields like history doctorates, the employment picture has become so grim that one feels such considerations must be playing at least an implicit role when it comes, for

example, to judging what to recommend for history doctoral programs of marginal quality. But implicit criteria make it difficult for the institutions to read all the signals.

### Strategies and Procedures for Review of Existing Programs

State practices vary so markedly here that generalizations are difficult. So much obviously depends on the particular circumstances of each state. Thus I shall merely offer observations on the various groups involved in the process and then try to examine some related emerging issues.

The state board staff obviously have a major role to play, and no agency should venture into these troubled waters unless it is well staffed in this area. This means persons of maturity, sensitivity and judgment, preferably with some years of experience in the academic side of universities or colleges. Once this policy area has been opened up, it may be hard to let go of it without having invested tremendous amounts of staff time. And the more senior the staff involved, the better. A major reason why the controversial New York review of doctoral programs has not been more explosive has been the intimate involvement from the beginning of Ted Hollander, Deputy Commissioner for Higher Education. Even the strongest critics of the doctoral review concede that he brought to his role in this task a reputation as a fair and exceedingly competent staff member.

The staff role can be larger in small states where the program review problems may be of a more manageable scale or in states where it may have been possible to build up mutual confidence and trust between the institutions and the central board. The staff role will also tend to be larger in states which choose to rely primarily on quantitative criteria for evaluation. In such cases they will need to rely heavily on the accuracy of the state's information system, and they must learn to treat this information with considerable sensitivity. Premature leaks of evaluations concerning terminated or probationary status can prove politically very explosive. We even heard some suggestions that the ominous term "probation" be abandoned because of the damage to the morale of the faculty, students and institutional administrators involved with the program in question; some euphemistic label such as "acceptable--under development" was preferred. The board staff relying primarily on quantitative measures dealing with program productivity will also have to be alert to the danger that, in the absence of quality controls, they may be encouraging endangered programs of low productivity to lower standards in order to generate a higher body count.

Finally, I would urge all parties to the process, but particularly the board staff, to keep very much in mind the desirability of trying to find positive incentives for institutional cooperation. This can be done more readily inside the jurisdiction of a consolidated governing board where access

to a whole host of system incentives (such as funds, flexibility, etc.) lies alongside the program review process. For coordinating boards with only advisory powers and no major budget leverage, it may be more difficult, but I would still urge this as a major staff concern.

The use of outside consultants becomes more common when the evaluation criteria are qualitative. It seems too explosive for the staff or in-state consultants to hazard these judgments. But outside consultants are not without their problems too. For one thing they normally lack an intimate knowledge of inter-institutional relationships or the general pattern of the statewide context. Yet isolated judgments of program quality really need to be linked to broader policy considerations. This raises questions about the relations between outside consultants and both the staff which provides orientation for their efforts and any statewide institutional advisory committee which will be reviewing their report. During the first pilot runs in the New York state doctoral program review, there were a few comments to the effect that both the State Education Department staff and the Doctoral Council reviewing the rating committee recommendations were perhaps too much in awe of the academic "stars" who had been used as consultants. As a consequence, the history rating team was allowed to disregard guidelines urging attention to teaching excellence as well as other factors; it focused exclusively on traditional measures

of quality: two books published per faculty member, faculty depth in most major fields, appropriate library facilities and full-time graduate students. This resulted in a recommendation to terminate the program at St. Johns University which claimed that it was serving a part-time urban population as a definite service to the statewide goal of broadened access.

There were also statewide ramifications to the initial history rating team recommendations for termination at SUNY-Albany and probation for Syracuse University and SUNY-Binghamton. Although the Binghamton finding later under appeal was altered to approved status, some critics said that the original verdicts showed little concern for matters of geographic access to doctoral programs for students between the New York City area and Western New York.

Another example of the need to keep the high-powered consultants' enthusiasms under control was in another reversed early finding to approve most parts of the SUNY-Buffalo history program, but to recommend phasing out of <sup>its</sup> doctoral work in Latin-American and Asian areas. Such selective fine-tuning was considered excessive state intervention and subsequent rating team findings were confined to recommendations for departments as a whole.

One should, on the other hand, note that there was widespread praise for the quality of the consultants used in New York, that the State Education Department formed the 50-60

member consultant panel for each subject with help from the institutions, and that each chairman of a department about to be reviewed was allowed to veto from the panel the names of persons considered undesirable as site visitors for any reason.

New Jersey decided to use outside consultants in its review of masters programs in the state colleges. Listed below are the criteria to be employed in selecting the consultants:

- \*1. recognized authorities in their fields
2. knowledgeable about and concerned with education in their fields
3. likely to understand readily the role and problems of state colleges
4. likely to help faculty and others develop constructive suggestions for improving programs
5. likely to appreciate the merits of differing opinions and approaches in a field
- \*6. not related to the institution offering the program for evaluation and not associated with any educational institution in New Jersey
7. not primarily associated with an institution from which a significant percentage of the program's faculty received their professional training
8. free of any other personal, institutional or ideological obligation that might be supposed in the normal case to affect impartiality of judgment.

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\*Items marked with an asterisk are taken verbatim from "Procedures for Evaluation of State College Graduate Programs", Item 2, paragraph b. These are criteria of eligibility, and presumably no exceptions would be made except in the clearest case, with general consent, when no suitable alternative is available. The other criteria raise more difficult questions of interpretation, but might be considered important criteria of desirability.

Although I can see its becoming a sensitive kind of operation, SNEEO might consider keeping a central file on state experiences with outside consultants, with recommendations, confidential or otherwise, based on the extent to which the subject-oriented experts also possessed some sensitivity to institutional and statewide concerns. As more and more institutions and multi-campus systems join state agencies in the business of evaluating quality, there will probably be a shortage of outstanding disciplinary scholars who are also sensitive to the broader dimensions. The use of consultants will, of course, add to the bill for evaluation, but up to a certain point at least, it seems worth it. (The New York doctoral evaluation budget was \$59,000 last year.)

Nor is there any respite from complexity when we come to consider the use of an inter-institutional advisory committee in the review process. Two states responding to our program review questionnaire reported that they had started out using only staff analysis but soon found that institutions cast as the passive victims of the review would appeal negative recommendations on both procedural and substantive grounds, and sometimes win board reversal of staff findings. In an area as sensitive as I have already tried to depict this to be, it is absolutely essential, no matter how great the state pressures for early and/or drastic results, to lean over backwards to

grant the institutions full procedural due process, and to get their maximum contributions to the substantive wisdom of the results.

Admittedly, some of the institutional "suspicion and paranoia" (as earlier quoted from one respondent) is more "for the record" than a genuine position. Some institutional presidents have privately admitted that because of their relations with faculty, students, trustees, and alumni, they were forced to take public positions critical of a program discontinuation process, whereas in fact they very much welcomed getting some external leverage to help them crack open entrenched internal positions. Yet, clearly, the larger part of institutional concern is real and merits a serious response.

It is also important to realize that responding to such concerns by creating an inter-institutional advisory committee is only the first step toward meeting the problem. In an earlier book on statewide coordination (1971, Chapter 7), I discussed at some length the various dangers with runaway committees, log rolling, Have-Nots ganging up on the Haves, etc. Suffice it to say here that, particularly in the early months if it happens to be a new committee, there will have to be a disproportionate investment of senior staff time if this crucial body is to be groomed to play its proper role. On the one hand, the staff must see that the centrifugal forces do not

come to dominate its deliberations; on the other hand, the staff must be hypersensitive to the danger that either in reality or in appearance, the advisory committee comes to be viewed more as the "lap dog" of the central staff than as a major source of candid criticism from the institutions. Realizing that there will be dangers either way, I would urge serious consideration for the possibility that some institutional representative and not a member of the central staff chair the meetings.

One of the interesting aspects of the New York doctoral review process has been the role of the Doctoral Council, a 13 member group of graduate deans (or equivalents), with two from SUNY, two from CUNY and nine from private universities. Its predecessor body endorsed the need for the prestigious Fleming Committee to make its report "Meeting the Needs of Doctoral Education" (1973). This report provided the basis for the Regents Position Paper No. 19 which in turn led to the present doctoral review. The institutional representatives on the Doctoral Council have, then, from the beginning been in on the process and most of them continue to support it today. Some have had some difficulties with their home institutions which seemed to fear that they had been too "socialized" to the statewide point of view.

The Doctoral Council, chaired by Ted Hollander, played a major role in reviewing the early pilot runs, offering sub-

stantive as well as procedural recommendations. A few institutions, however, were concerned that if this body, with their representatives on board, took substantive positions, they (the institutions) might be inhibited in later expressing strong positions to the contrary. So there was a period during subsequent subject reviews when the role of the Doctoral Council was reduced to that of commenting on matters of due process only. This, though, created a situation in which a marginal strengthening of an institution's freedom to react after the Commissioner's decision on the rating committee's recommendation (now tempered only by staff advice) had been purchased at the price of the institutions' collective advice to the Commissioner before his decision. According to reports just received in July, the Doctoral Council will revert back to its former status of rendering both substantive and procedural comments. If all this sounds complicated, that's because it is! (The New York review process is further described in the Chronicle of Higher Education of January 27, 1975 and in an excellent article by Amy Plumer (1975).)

Concerning any roles for members of the statewide boards, I would guess that, sooner or later, given the controversial nature of the process, they will be involved in one way or another. One respondent to our questionnaire reported that his board members felt distinctly uneasy in the face of these intimate academic matters. On their consolidated governing

board, they had been used to worrying about budgets and buildings and football teams. One answer to this problem, not without dangers of its own, is to create a standing committee of board members on academic programs, so that over a period of time and with careful staff assistance, some members can build up a real sophistication in these areas. Hopefully, they will not become so sophisticated that they will be tempted casually to substitute their own private preferences for careful judgments by outside consultants and board staff!

#### Board Start-Up Strategies

In terms of general strategy questions, boards contemplating starting up the process might ask themselves whether it is better to commence in low key or to come on very strong. Some shock-ridden New York institutions might plead for the former, on a variety of grounds. For one thing, some were surprised to find that so-called pilot runs were leading to immediate operational decisions. The pilot studies, qua pilots, accomplished their purposes, for subsequent subject reviews were much improved processes. But high degrees of anxiety and some hostility might have been greatly lessened during the admittedly imperfect early procedures if all concerned had not seen real bullets placed in the chambers of Commissioner Nyquist's weapons.

Another argument for a mellow beginning to the review process is that negative findings constitute, in a certain sense, evidence of some boards' own earlier acts of negligence. The New York Regents, for example, had formal roles of approval for most of these doctoral programs on the way up; if they, along with most of the rest of us, can be excused for not having anticipated problems of excess supply, there is no such general excuse for their having earlier taken their role as "quality-controllers" so casually. Having mid-wifed, as it were, at the birth of some of these marginal doctoral programs, they might be considered to have a moral obligation to exercise their relatively recent conversion to the cause of very high standards with some compassion and circumspection.

Some institutions have also opposed immediate operational decisions on subject fields in an ad hoc manner. Rather they urge, as mentioned earlier, that related fields be evaluated in clusters; that recommendations on given subject fields be given to the institutions or multi-campus systems in question with the opportunity to provide a coherent institutional response, taking into consideration the relation of the field in question to the central core missions of the campus, its relations with other inter-dependent fields on campus, and, if possible, folding in the particular response to the institution's (and system's) own long-range planning efforts. While such a pattern might invite lengthy institutional minuets before "Action

with a capital "A" finally occurs, it would go a long way toward restoring the concept of institutional integrity in the program review process. And there would be nothing at all to prevent state boards with adequate powers from still finding at the end that the institutional response did not satisfy all the necessary concerns. What would have been lost would be time and some possible savings from earlier rather than later termination. But within reasonable limits issues of time should not be used to bypass important procedural points unless elements of outright fraud require immediate intervention. And I happen to believe that the net savings to the state of earlier program termination are quite modest. (The SUNY-Albany history graduate program, for example, has about 35 students, about 2 to 3 of whom receive doctorates each year. There had been plans to increase the output to 5 or 6 per year. One doesn't know what staff reductions might occur among the 22-25 faculty if the doctorate is eliminated. One suspects there would be few dismissals but rather a freeze on new hiring and some shifts in teaching assignments.)

On the other hand, consumer protection and fiscal retrenchment are popular items these days in state government circles, and a board struggling for political survival may feel in need of surrendering some institutional goodwill in order to purchase some life insurance. There is also the academically much more respectable justification that a board starting out with high

standards rigorously applied is much more likely to encourage institutional and multi-campus system reviews that transcend cosmetic pleas for improvement of quality and result in actual program retrenchments. There are already some signs of this in New York, where, facing not only the push of Regential doctoral reviews but also the pull of state and New York City budget cuts, SUNY-Binghamton and SUNY-Albany and the City University of New York have all engaged in serious procedures for internal retrenchment. (For example, 40 percent of CUNY's masters' programs are being cut.)

Finally, to return to political considerations, Machiavelli, who too often has been proven uncomfortably accurate in his assessment of political gains and losses, has advised that when unpleasant tasks remain to be done, they should be undertaken aggressively at the outset, before the recipients' ability to resist has come to focus. Then, subsequently, when the situation permits an easing of the degree of intervention, many of the other parties will respond to the relative improvement of affairs (e.g., the movement of the foot from the neck to the stomach), and life can go on with a medium degree of intervention and the recipients' gratitude for the lessening of tensions. It is hard to talk thus with my tongue in my cheek, but lest anyone misunderstand me, I personally favor paying the price of the mellow approach to program review.

### Costs and Benefits of Review of Existing Programs

The paucity of the following remarks will reveal: a) that I am no economist; b) that not much has been written on the subject by others; and c) that the whole area may be too new to permit meaningful assessments. It seems clear that the major costs will be the heavy investment of staff time, administrative support costs for the inter-institutional advisory committee, and the use of outside consultants, if any. (The New York budget for this item, already mentioned, was \$59,000 per year.) No board with a very tight budget or overworked staff should undertake this as a new assignment unless it is able to let go something else substantial. (Retrenchers retrench thyself!).

We are also pretty hazy as to the exact benefits of the program discontinuation process. One respondent stated quite pessimistically that very little savings resulted, as most faculty were merely transferred to related degree programs. (The SUNY-Albany faculty and student numbers were given above.) On the other hand, Max Bickford reported from Kansas that their process had resulted in the elimination of 81 programs. Surely that has allowed some significant savings? There are also possible benefits already alluded to above; namely, that institutions and multi-campus systems will follow the lead of state board procedures and engage in serious program reassessments in many fields other than those chosen for statewide

evaluation. Finally, there may be some not illegitimate public relations pay-offs, as the state's academic reputation grows and as state officials may find their confidence in the system increased enough to be willing to fund new programs.

### Emerging Related Issues

Let me comment briefly on several related items. First, I would hope that careful attention will be paid to the interface between program termination and collective bargaining. For the moment I have not heard stories of actual interaction, but when program terminations begin to be more common and result in some faculty dismissals or reassignments, you can be sure that negotiating agendas will not be far behind. There is also an interesting side issue here: if, in fact, a state board has allowed an institution or multi-campus system receiving a program termination recommendation to reply that all necessary internal resources will be mobilized to improve the program in question, how is this radical upgrading to occur? Often an entrenched block of mediocre faculty is the heart of the problem; yet any attempt to bypass that power structure may result in violation of a collective bargaining agreement protecting the faculty's right to self-government within the department. I leave that issue for organization theorists and lawyers to wrestle with.

Another area that will probably receive more careful attention in coming years is that of exploiting the potential of consortia and interstate agreements to the solution of problems of program retrenchments. Up to the present, to the best of my knowledge, consortia and organizations like SREB, WICHE and NEBHE have been more useful at handling "add-on" programs cooperatively than they have with respect to existing programs being phased out. But there is certainly a potential there worth investigating. Votruba (1975) has written a report on regional organizations for the ECS Task Force on Graduate Education.

While New York state may be unique in giving its Board of Regents such sweeping powers over the private sector, I can see the possibility of some private sector issues emerging in other states with respect to program termination. We know that approximately 44 states now have programs giving state aid directly or indirectly to private institutions within their borders. We also know that as some private institutions in deep financial trouble stagger close to the edge, they and their supporters ask the state for emergency bailing-out. What, one may ask, will the institutions in the public sector be thinking as some of their own programs are recommended for termination while related programs of perhaps similar quality at private institutions receiving substantial state subsidies are exempt? Methinks that such private institutions had best

not assume that state monies can be acquired in any significant amounts without surrendering sizable amounts of institutional sovereignty. Whether or not this will go so far as to include state recommendations for program terminations in the private sector, I do not know; but certainly one can anticipate demands for it from public sector institutions.

Finally, I want to raise questions about the relationship between state board review of existing programs and the marked increase of legislative program evaluation. Two good articles in the Spring 1975 issue of Higher Education in New England (Glenny; and Pingree, Murphy and Weatherspoon) provide the context very nicely. According to these authors, legislators are becoming dissatisfied with merely voting the budget or passing a law and not later finding out what the actual program impacts were. Distrusting the executive branch, they have now in some 28 states set up post-audit oversight activity. They wish to use the performance information thereby gained to help them make reallocation decisions in the present context of fiscal austerity. Thus far, report Pingree, et.al., during the first five years of formal operation the impact on higher education has been limited; but the handwriting on the wall, they say, is clear:

If administrators don't begin now to provide relevant and useful program data, state legislatures may well attempt to impose various sanctions, such as elimina-

ting or drastically reducing programs which do not exhibit positive effects. The legislatures may fail in these efforts, but the result will not be a public relations bonanza for higher education.

.....  
 ...public higher education might best be served by accepting, however reluctantly, the legitimacy of legislative program evaluation and by meeting appropriate criticism with speedy remedial action.

Might I suggest a different ending to the second paragraph?

Public higher education might best be served by "...state boards demonstrating to legislators and governors that they can take enlightened leadership in helping the higher education community undertake careful reallocation of resources to meet changing societal needs." Surely review of existing programs would constitute a major element in the over-all process of reallocation. Let us hope that the institutions, whose cooperation is so vital to the success of program review, will see that genuine cooperation with the state board just might produce results which would be sufficiently impressive to keep detailed legislative program review at arm's length. Of course, the chances are real that even such efforts may not suffice, in which case we should all pray for high quality staff in the legislative audit divisions. But I have long felt that there is a better chance for a state board buffer role in the program review area than in that of state budgeting where political pressures seem overwhelming. If these observations on state board review of existing programs will help improve the odds, then it will have been well worth the effort.

## INSTITUTIONAL CLOSURE

- I. Institutional closure is not merely program discontinuation  
     "write large;" it is a much more politicized issue.
- II. Responses to our questionnaires indicated that in most states  
     there has not yet been an effort to develop state policy  
     guidelines anticipating this problem.
- III. But in a few states the issue has emerged formally.
  - A. Public sector:
    1. South Dakota - Dick Gibbs
    2. Montana - Pat Callan and Larry Pettit
    3. Wisconsin - Governor Lucey and John Weaver
    4. New York - Pusey Committee (public and  
     private sectors)
    5. Oklahoma - viability guidelines - E.T. Dunlap
    6. Michigan - forecast of financial requirements  
     to 1980's - Bob Huxol
  - B. Private sector:
    1. More privates closing but Ostar says also many  
     new ones opening
    2. Grim projections - e.g. New York - Hollander's  
     "Curiouser and Curiouser" - Cazenovia,  
     Eisenhower, Finch, PIB College of White  
     Plains - Pusey Committee

3. Alabama - Athens College - John Porter
4. Florida - New College - Bob Mautz
5. Ohio - Rio Grande merger - Dolph Norton
6. Broader context of state policy vis-a-vis  
private sector.

IV. Role of Statewide Board in a Highly Politicized Issue.

- A. Develop general guidelines in advance
- B. Quickly mobilize relevant facts to any particular  
cases
- C. Make policy recommendation (only if requested?)
- D. Weigh hazards of playing major political role.

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