

UW-Stevens Point: Proposes adding, cutting programs to prepare for future

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The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point outlined a plan today to address fiscal challenges by shifting resources to invest in areas with growth potential.

UW-Stevens Point faces a deficit of \$4.5 million over two years because of declining enrollment and lower tuition revenues. It proposes adding or expanding 16 programs in areas with high-demand career paths as a way to maintain and increase enrollment.

To fund this future investment, resources would be shifted from programs with lower enrollment, primarily in the traditional humanities and social sciences. Although some majors are proposed to be eliminated, courses would continue to be taught in these fields, and minors or certificates will be offered.

This repositioning is necessary because of declining financial resources, demographic changes with fewer students in K-12 schools and rising competition among public and private universities, said Greg Summers, provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs. A significant increase in graduation rates recently has also contributed to overall enrollment declines.

A broad, liberal arts education continues to be critical, UW-Stevens Point Chancellor Bernie Patterson said in messages to students, faculty and staff today. "Importantly, we remain committed to ensuring every student who graduates from

UW-Stevens Point is thoroughly grounded in the liberal arts, as well as prepared for a successful career path. It is critical our students learn to communicate well, solve problems, think critically and creatively, be analytical and innovative, and work well in teams. This is the value of earning a bachelor's degree."

UW-Stevens Point proposes expanding academic programs that have demonstrated value and demand in the region, including:

Chemical Engineering

Computer Information Systems

Conservation Law Enforcement

Finance

Fire Science

Graphic Design

Management

Marketing

These programs have existed as options and would expand to majors. In addition, new bachelor's (or advanced) degree programs are proposed in:

Aquaculture/Aquaponics

Captive Wildlife

Ecosystem Design and Remediation

Environmental Engineering

Geographic Information Science

Master of Business Administration

Master of Natural Resources

Doctor of Physical Therapy

The recommendations recognize a growing preference among students for majors with clear career pathways, Summers said. "UW-Stevens Point is committed to strengthening our academic offerings while improving our liberal arts core to ensure students graduate with the knowledge and skills they will need to be successful in the future."

To create programs that meet the evolving needs of students, UW-Stevens Point proposes shifting resources from programs where fewer students are enrolled. Discontinuing the following programs is recommended:

American Studies

Art - Graphic Design will continue as a distinct major

English - English for teacher certification will continue

French

Geography

Geoscience

German

History - Social Science for teacher certification will continue

Music Literature

Philosophy

Political Science

Sociology — Social Work major will continue

Spanish

Students enrolled in any major that is eventually discontinued will have the opportunity to complete their degrees. This includes students who enroll in fall 2018. Courses would continue to be taught in these fields. Minors in English, Art,

History and Philosophy are among those continuing.

Additional programs in humanities and social sciences that have clear career pathways will provide opportunities to major in liberal arts fields, Summers said.

The proposal to discontinue programs must be reviewed by a campus governance committee, then the chancellor and UW System Board of Regents. Because possible program elimination may result in the layoff of some tenured faculty members, a new UW Board of Regents [policy](#) will be followed. This process is expected to begin in August. If a reduction in tenured faculty positions is recommended, cuts would occur no sooner than June 2020.

Summers described program discontinuation as difficult, painful and necessary. “If we accept the need for change, and we confront and solve the financial issues currently facing the institution, we can create a new identity for the regional public university. UW-Stevens Point can move forward with fiscal stability, new opportunities to build programs and grow enrollment, and renewed capacity to improve our service to the students and communities of central and northern Wisconsin, which are complex, diverse and ever changing.”