

**SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS**

**Academic and Student Affairs**  
**Consent**

**AGENDA ITEM: 6 – D (1)**  
**DATE: March 29-30, 2022**

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**SUBJECT**

**Senate Bill 55 Task Force Recommended Policy Revisions: BOR Policy 2:23 – New Programs, Program Modifications, Curricular Requests, and Inactivation / Termination (New Policy) (Second Reading)**

**CONTROLLING STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY**

- [BOR Policy 1:1](#) – General Authority, Powers and Purpose of the Board
- [BOR Policy 1:2](#) – System Mission Statement
- [BOR Policy 2:23](#) – Program and Curriculum Process
- [AAC Guideline 2.9](#) – New Undergraduate Degree or Major
- [BOR Policy 2:1](#) – External Review of Proposed Graduate Programs

**BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION**

**History:**

Senate Bill 55 Task Force (SB55<sup>1</sup>) was created to review the following:

1. The possible combining of administration at all levels of operation within an institution;
2. The possible combining of operations and functions across multiple institutions;
3. The possible combining of the administration of programs across multiple institutions;
4. A review of the duplication of program offerings;
5. A review of the academic majors with low enrollments and low numbers of graduates;
6. A review of functions outside the core missions of teaching, learning, and research;
7. A review of the operations and functions provided as an efficiency through the central office of the Board of Regents;
8. A review of the viability of the university centers; and

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<sup>1</sup> SD Legislature, 2020 Senate Bill 55, <https://sdlegislature.gov/Session/Bill/11827/69874>, Retrieved August 31, 2021.

(Continued)

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**DRAFT MOTION 20220329\_6-D(1):**

I move to approve the second and final reading of the proposed new BOR Policy 2:23, as presented.

9. Any other possible cost-effective measures the task force determines are worthy of examination.

The SB55 Task Force was separated into three subcommittees: Academic, Administration and Infrastructure. The SB55 Academic Subcommittee was charged with reviewing Program Review, Duplication of Programs, and Course Enrollment. This subcommittee began its work in October of 2020 and finalized its recommendations at the June 2021 SB55 Task Force meeting held in Brookings, South Dakota.

### **SB55 Task Force Recommendations:**

The recommendations from the task force were provided to the Regental system's academic leadership (AAC), student leadership (SAC/Enrollment Management), finance and administration leadership (BAC), Council of Presidents (COPS), and various other stakeholders throughout the Regental system. The Board of Regents reviewed the recommendations at its August Retreat.

Specifically related to New Program Requests, the SB55 Task Force recommended that:

- The Board of Regents use the data provided in the degree and workforce gap analysis to inform decisions on academic program duplication within the system (i.e., academic programs offered at more than one institution).
- The degree and workforce gap analysis should be used by the Board of Regents and state universities to identify high demand occupations and related academic fields that may require expansion or development to meet anticipated workforce needs.
- The Board of Regents should explore additional opportunities for collaboration between institutions in the delivery of online coursework.
- The Board of Regents should review new programs as part of the overall program productivity evaluations (see proposed BOR Policy 2:34).

### **Outcome:**

The Board of Regents academic staff in collaboration with the Academic Affairs Council (AAC) has developed a revised BOR Policy 2:23 (see Attachment I). The draft revisions consider other external Regental policies, academic policies, and various research tools.

The draft policy in Attachment I is designed to move all curriculum planning into one succinct policy. Therefore, the draft policy should be reviewed as a new policy that will *completely replace* the current policy. No strikethrough language is included as the changes are substantial.

The summary of changes to this policy include:

1. Purpose: The additions to this section reinforce the idea that the standards, processes, and procedures are established to promote the critical components of programming, including academic quality, student success, strategic impact, internal and external evaluation (demand), etc. (Page 5)

2. Definitions: This section incorporates common definitions from the newly proposed policies: BOR Policy 2:23, BOR Policy 2:34 and BOR Policy 2:35. (Pages 5-7)
3. Policy Statements: The statements represent the objectives and expectations of the policy. (Page 7-8)
4. New Program Request, Timeline and Policy: This section attempts to identify workflow, i.e. who is involved and the timeline associated with their actions.  
  
The major recommended change in this section moves the *Intent to Plan* review and approval to the BOR Executive Director rather than the Board of Regents. If approved, the Full Proposal Application will be submitted to Board of Regents. (Pages 8-9)
5. Academic Certificates, Specialization and Minors: This section remains the same with the addition of who owns it and when (timeline) the process occurs. (Page 9-11)
6. Curriculum Requests/Modifications: This policy section is a carryover of the current 2:23 policy. (Pages 11-12)
7. Program and Curriculum Inactivation/Termination: This outlines the associated AAC Guidelines. (Page 12)

## **IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Academic programming and curricular offerings are essential aspects of that which the Board of Regents governs. This governance is in direct coordination with the university stakeholders (e.g., Faculty, Academic Leadership, etc.). Programming is initiated at the university level and those curricula are tightly coupled to the Higher Learning Commission accreditation; the governing board maintains the governance of BOR policies and procedures for programs and curriculum.

This is the second reading of the proposed new draft of this policy. A few minor revisions have been made since the first reading at the October 2021 Board meeting and are highlighted **yellow** within Attachment I.

The timeline for the activity related to this draft policy, guidelines, forms, communication, and technology platform is as follows:

- Draft BOR Policy 2:23 Second and Final Reading – March 2022
- AAC Guideline Revisions – May 2022
- Enrollment and Budget Projections – August 2022
- Automation of Workflow/Technology – September 2022
- New Process – Effective September 2022

The Board of Regents academic staff supports the recommendations of the SB55 Task Force and recommends approval of the new draft of Policy 2:23 as presented.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment I – Draft of New BOR Policy 2:23

## SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

### Policy Manual

**SUBJECT:** New Programs, Program Modifications, Curricular Requests, and Inactivation/Termination

**NUMBER:** 2:23

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#### A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish standards, processes, and procedures by which academic curricula and programs receive approval and modification. This policy is designed to ensure all programming and curriculum are of the highest quality, facilitate student success, increase workforce and strategic alignment, and mitigate duplication.

#### B. DEFINITIONS

1. **Board of Regents:** Defined as the constitutional body responsible for governing the Unified System of Public Higher Education in South Dakota, which encompasses its supervision, coordination, management, and regulation. Board of Regents Policy 1:0, 1:1 and SDCL § 13-49 through § 13-53 provides the authority to govern academic programming.
2. **Institution:** Defined as one of the six (6) universities: Black Hills State University, Dakota State University, Northern State University, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, South Dakota State University, and University of South Dakota.
3. **Program and Curriculum Terminology:**
  - 3.1. **Academic Program:** This is defined as undergraduate (associate or bachelor) and graduate/professional (master, specialist, doctorate) degrees approved and offered at each of the Regental institutions.
  - 3.2. **Academic Certificate:** A program comprised of undergraduate, graduate, medical or law credit hours typically centered upon a focused area of study. The coursework required may be embedded within the degree, or it may be independent of a degree.
  - 3.3. **Accelerated Graduate Program:** An accelerated graduate program is a graduate program at a Regental institution that allows a student to count specific courses for undergraduate and graduate credit simultaneously.
  - 3.4. **Undergraduate Degree:** A student's primary area of study at the associate or bachelor's level:
    - 2.3.1. **Associate Degree:** A program comprised of undergraduate credit hours, typically with a combination of focused area of study (major) courses and general education courses. The program conforms to the commonly accepted minimum program length of 60 credit hours.

**Commented [MJK1]:** This references the recommendation on Program Review and Evaluation – found in BOR Policy 2:34 Proposed Policy

Strategic Impact  
Academic Quality  
Student Success  
Financial Health  
Internal/External

The objective is to ensure those core elements flow through all academic programming policies.

**Commented [MJK2]:** Updating Definitions to ensure they mirror definitions included in both policy and AAC guidelines.

- 2.3.2. Bachelor's Degree:** A program comprised of undergraduate credit hours, typically with a combination of focused area of study (major) courses and general education courses. The program conforms to the commonly accepted minimum program length of 120 credit hours.
- 3.5. Graduate Degree:** A student's primary area of study at the master's, specialist's or doctoral level:
- 2.4.1. Master's Degree:** A program comprised of advanced study and course work beyond the bachelor's degree, typically in academic fields or professional fields.
- 2.4.2. Specialist's Degree:** A program which requires a minimum of 60 credit hours beyond a baccalaureate degree or a minimum of 30 credit hours beyond a master's degree.
- 2.4.3. Doctoral Degree:** The program is the highest academic qualification and is typically in research fields or professional fields.
- 3.6. Specialization:** A designated plan of study within an existing degree program or major, typically have one-third to two-thirds of the credits in common with the remaining course work fulfilling the requirements of the specialization(s) offered. Specializations may attach to only one major. Associate degree programs shall not have specializations. Completion of the academic specialization shall be indicated on the student's academic transcript.
- 3.7. Minor:** A designated plan of student enabling a student to make broad but limited inquiry into a discipline or field of study beyond the major. Minors are only awarded in conjunction with completion of a degree program and the awarding of a bachelor's degree. Completion of the minor shall be indicated on the student's academic transcript.
- 3.8. Emphasis:** An emphasis is a concentration within a major accomplished by individual student choices within a plan of study. For example, within a major on adult health the student may focus on the older adult. An emphasis is not a separate program. A catalog may describe an emphasis but not detail it as a specific plan of study. Emphasis shall not print on the transcript.
- 3.9. Transcript:** A transcript is documentation of a student's permanent academic record.
- 4. Program Actions:**
- 4.1. Intent to Plan:** A preliminary request to plan a new undergraduate (associate or bachelor) and graduate/professional (master, specialist, doctorate) degree program.
- 4.2. Full Proposal – Degree:** A proposal requesting authorization to implement a new undergraduate (associate or bachelor) and graduate/professional (master, specialist, doctorate) degree program.
- 4.3. Full Proposal – Academic Certificate/Specialization/Minor:** A proposal requesting authorization to implement a new academic certificate, specialization, or minor.
- 4.4. Inactive:** An inactive program is a program a university has authority to offer, but the program is not admitting new students and has not formally terminated. A presumption exists that inactive status is a temporary status; universities review

inactive programs periodically to determine the feasibility of reactivating or terminating the program.

- 4.5. Minor Program Modification: Changes to courses (additions, revisions, or deletions) that do not change the nature of the program, distribution of courses in the program, or total credit hours required for the program.
- 4.6. Substantive Program Modification: Changes to total credits (required in discipline, supportive courses, elective courses, or required for the program), program name, existing specialization, CIP code, or other similar changes.
- 4.7. Teach-Out: A program designated as inactive that is determined for program closure, is placed in Teach-Out. During the Teach-Out stage, a comprehensive plan (in compliance with regional accreditation requirements) will be developed by the university to ensure all students are guided through options to complete or transfer to another program and appropriate options for all human, facility, and fiscal resources are identified.
- 4.8. Program Closure: A planned termination of a program.

### C. POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Board of Regents Policy 1:0, 1:1 and SDCL § 13-49 through § 13-53 provides the authority to govern academic programming.
2. Approval of an intent to plan does not overwrite the Full Proposal process and does not guarantee approval of the Full Proposal.
3. The Board of Regents will receive the Full Proposal and act on that proposal.
4. If the Board of Regents approve the Full Proposal and the university is seeking accreditation, this approval allows the university to proceed toward accreditation.
5. Approval of a new program does not indicate that the SDBOR or the university have identified the program as a funding priority.
6. The Board of Regents approves academic programs that are recorded on a transcript, including specializations, certificates, undergraduate minors, undergraduate degrees and majors, graduate degrees, and location of study.
7. The Board of Regents encourages academic departments and colleges to be innovative and to explore creative programming intended to meet the workforce demands and that serve the academic disciplines, students, and the state of South Dakota.
8. The Board of Regents discourages duplication of programs except in cases where regional or state workforce demand provides strong rationale for additional offerings. The university requesting the program must provide justification within the full proposal. The Regents may not approve given the duplication of programming.
9. All program requests should consider the academic program request with these critical elements: Strategic Impact, Academic Quality, Student Success, Financial Health and Internal and External Market Evaluation.

**Commented [MJK3]:** This references SB55 recommendations on Duplication of Programs.

**Commented [MJK4]:** This references the recommendation on Program Review and Evaluation – found in BOR Policy 2:34 Proposed Policy

Strategic Impact  
Academic Quality  
Student Success  
Financial Health  
Internal/External

The objective is to ensure those core elements flow through all academic programming policies.

10. Academic certificates, specializations and minors are designed to support the system workforce, increase student skills, address student demand for a particular area of study, and facilitate student viability in an area of interest.
11. Accelerated Graduate Programs: Accelerated graduate programs accepting thirteen (13) total credit hours up to a maximum of twenty-five (25) total transfer credit hours require formal approval by the Board of Regents (See Academic Affairs Guideline Form 2.20).
12. A program may only be in an inactive status for a maximum of five years before final action must be taken to re-open or close (Program Closure). The exception will be if a program is identified for program closure due to program productivity per BOR Policy 2:34.
13. All program actions must comply with the university accrediting body, and program accreditation body (for those with special accreditation).

#### D. NEW PROGRAM REQUEST TIMELINE AND OVERVIEW

##### 1. New Program

1.1. Initial Program Exploration: Each university will define the internal process through which new programs are requested. If the internal university process approves the request, then the university shall proceed to the Intent to Plan step.

##### 1.2. Intent to Plan:

1.2.1. Step 1: Intent to Plan: The university will complete the intent to plan form. The BOR Executive Director (or designee) will review the plan and act upon that intent to plan. The intent to plan if approved will move to the next step.

1.2.2. Step 2: Intent to Plan: The approved intent to plan form shall move to the Academic Affairs Council (AAC). The universities shall provide this intent to plan to the appropriate faculty and academic leadership for feedback. AAC will provide appropriate feedback, strategic consultation and collaboration.

1.2.2.1. Timeline: The university has 24 months following the review by AAC to proceed to submit the Full Proposal. If a Full Proposal is not received by this deadline, it will be inactivated.

1.2.2.2. Exemption to Intent to Plan: An Intent to Plan is not required for associate degree programs that meet the following criteria and align with the institutional mission:

1.2.2.2.1. The program is a two-year equivalent of an existing bachelor's degree program currently approved at the university, or

1.2.2.2.2. The program proposal has 80% of the curriculum common with an existing bachelor's degree program currently approved for the university, or

1.2.2.2.3. The program is stackable to two or more bachelor's degree programs approved for the university, or

**Commented [MJK5]:** This policy has changed to outline all academic degree programs (undergraduate or graduate).

**Commented [MJK6]:** A recommendation to send this exploration directly to the Executive Director and BOR Academic Staff due to the exploration of the program. This allows the university to work through an initial outline as the Full Proposal will have the full details.

A report will be provided to Committee A and the Full Board.

**Commented [MJK7]:** This was in the previous policy. No changes.

1.2.2.2.4. The BOR Executive Director determines the program will have an immediate impact on an emerging critical workforce shortage area in South Dakota as documented by the university.

1.2.3. Step 3: BOR academic leadership will provide a report to BOR Committee A regarding all intent to plan requests submitted. A report to the full Board of Regents will be placed under Routine Informational Items.

**Commented [MJK8]:** Committee A will be updated during their regular meetings and via a report.

### 1.3. Full Program Proposal:

1.3.1. Step 1: Full Program Proposal: The full proposal application shall go to the BOR academic affairs staff who will review the submission to ensure it is complete, comprehensive, and within the university mission. The full proposals will include feedback from university academic leadership, faculty, enrollment management and finance and administration.

**Commented [MJK9]:** This is a new process implemented to align the enrollment projections and budget projects for new programming. These projections will part of the New Program Review in BOR Policy 2:34.

1.3.2. Step 2: Full Program Proposal: The full proposal application will move to AAC. AAC will provide appropriate insights, recommendations, and feedback to the university. If a proposed program duplicates another university program, AAC can request that the proposal be held for additional consideration at a future meeting.

1.3.3. Step 3: Full Program Proposal: If AAC recommended additional review, the university will submit back to AAC an updated version of the application proposal. Upon agreement, the proposal shall move to a final review by the university President.

1.3.4. Step 4: Full Program Proposal: Required graduate external review process (BOR Policy 2:1) unless waived by the BOR Executive Director (or designee) shall be processed.

1.3.5. Step 5: Full Program Proposal: At the next appropriate Council of Presidents (COPS) meeting, BOR academic leadership will provide the full proposal application as a part of the Board of Regents Agenda review. If there are concerns, a President may request a discussion.

1.3.6. Step 6: Full Program Proposal: BOR academic leadership will submit to BOR as an agenda item for consideration during their next meeting. During the BOR meeting, the university may be asked to provide additional information or respond to questions about the proposal.

1.3.7. Step 7: Full Program Proposal: The BOR will act upon the full proposal application. If denied, there is no further action. If approved, the BOR academic affairs staff will complete the necessary technical processing for the program to launch.

## 2. New Academic Certificates, Specializations, and Minors

The process to request a new academic certificate, specialization, and/or minor shall be governed by Academic Affairs Guidelines.

**Commented [MJK10]:** No substantive changes were made to this section.



**2.1. Initial Academic Certificate/Specialization/Minor Exploration:** Each university will define the internal process through which new academic certificates, specializations, and minors are requested. If the internal university process approves the request, then the university shall proceed to the Full Proposal step.

**2.1.1. Certifications**

A certificate program is a sequence, pattern, or group of academic credit courses that focus upon an area of specialized knowledge or information and develop a specific skill set. A certificate may include either undergraduate and/or graduate/professional courses and include courses offered collaboratively with another Regental university. Completion of a certificate appears on student transcripts. Certificates typically serve one of three purposes: serving as a standalone education credential option for students not seeking additional credentials (i.e., bachelor's or master's degree), serving as a value-added credential that supplements a student's major field of study, or serving as a stackable credential with credits that apply to a higher-level credential (i.e., associate, bachelor's, or master's degree).

Standalone certificates typically address areas of high workforce demand or a specialized body of knowledge. Such certificates require well-defined learning outcomes that provide clear pathways to further education and employment. Proposals for new certificates must identify one or more of these three purposes as justification for authorization of the credential. Certificate programs are typically a subset of the curriculum offered in degree programs and include previously approved courses. Certificate programs by design are limited in the number of credit hours required for completion. Certificate programs consist of nine (9) to twelve (12) credit hours, including prerequisite courses. Proposals to establish new certificates as well as proposals to modify existing certificates must recognize and address this limit. In rare cases, unique circumstances or standards for licensure will allow a certificate to be approved for more than twelve (12) credit hours.

**2.1.2. Specializations**

Specializations contain courses within the discipline(s) of the existing program. Specializations appear in the institutional catalog and on the transcript. Majors that offer specializations typically have one-third to two-thirds of the credits in common with the remaining course work fulfilling the requirements of the specialization(s) offered. A specialization may attach to only one major. Associate degree programs shall not have specializations. While there is no minimum or maximum number of credits for a specialization, universities should align credit hours with current university and system policies and guidelines on academic majors and minors.

**2.1.3. Minors**

Minors by design are limited in the number of credit hours required for completion. Minors typically consist of eighteen (18) credit hours, including

prerequisite courses. Proposals to establish new minors as well as proposals to modify existing minors must recognize and address this limit.

The majority of Regental system academic programs require one hundred and twenty (120) credits to graduate; minors exceeding the eighteen (18) credit hour thresholds significantly hinder students' ability to graduate in one hundred and twenty (120) credit hours. In rare cases, unique circumstances or standards for licensure will state requirements leading to academic minors approved for more than eighteen (18) credit hours.

Per BOR policy 2-29, degree seeking students may complete requirements for a minor at any Regental university that has been approved to grant that minor. This minor will be recorded on the transcript in conjunction with a degree/major at that university or a degree/major at any other Regental university. A minor will only be recorded on the transcript in conjunction with a degree and major. A minimum of 50% of the minor program must be completed at the institution granting the degree.

## **2.2. Full Proposal:**

- 2.2.1.** Full Program Proposal is submitted to BOR academic affairs staff who will review the submission to ensure it is complete and comprehensive.
- 2.2.2.** Full Program Proposal is submitted to AAC by the university and reviewed. AAC will provide appropriate insights, recommendations, and feedback to the university. AAC can request that the proposal be held for additional consideration at a future meeting.
- 2.2.3.** Full Program Proposal is updated based on feedback from AAC. university President conducts final review of proposal.
- 2.2.4.** Full Program Proposal is submitted to Council of Presidents (COPS) by the university and reviewed.
- 2.2.5.** Full Program Proposal is submitted to BOR as a consent agenda item for their next meeting.
- 2.2.6.** If approved, the BOR academic affairs staff will complete the necessary technical processing for the academic certificate, specialization, or minor to launch.

## **E. NEW CURRICULUM REQUESTS, MODIFICATIONS, AND INACTIVATION TIMELINE AND OVERVIEW**

### **1. New Curriculum Approval**

- 1.1.** The process to offer an existing common course, general education course, an authority to offer, request to create a new unique course, request a new prefix, request permission to seek accreditation, request to create a new cross-listed course, and request to create a new common course shall be governed by Academic Affairs Guidelines.

**Commented [MJK11]:** This section documents where to find the AAC Guidelines.

- 1.2. Common Course Catalog: It is the expectation of the BOR to maintain the common course catalog, which is designed to facilitate ease of student transfer and collaborative programming across institutions.
- 1.3. General Education: All changes to general education must comply with BOR Policy 2.7, 2.11, 2.26, and 2.31, and Academic Affairs Guidelines section 8.

## 2. Curriculum Modifications

- 2.1. Minor Course Modification: The minor course modification process shall be governed by Academic Affairs Guidelines
- 2.2. Substantive Course Modification: The substantive course modification process for Common Courses and Unique Courses shall be governed by Academic Affairs Guidelines.

## 3. Curriculum Inactivation

The process to inactivate a course shall be governed by Academic Affairs Guidelines.

## F. PROGRAM MODIFICATION TIMELINE AND OVERVIEW

### 1. Minor Modification

The minor program modification process shall be governed by Academic Affairs Guidelines.

### 2. Substantive Modification

The substantive program modifications process shall be governed by Academic Affairs Guidelines.

### 3. Program Revisions

Any revisions to a currently approved academic program exempted from the intent to plan and full proposal will be reported and approved by the Regents during a regularly scheduled meeting. Exemption from the full program request is very limited and must be approved by the Executive Director. AAC Guidelines outline information regarding the process to be followed by the institutions.

## G. PROGRAM MORATORIUM AND SUNSET TIMELINE AND OVERVIEW

### 1. Inactivation/Termination

- 1.1. Program Inactivation: The process to inactivate a program shall be governed by Academic Affairs Guidelines.
- 1.2. Program Termination: The process to terminate a program shall be governed by Academic Affairs Guidelines.
- 1.3. Site Termination: The process to terminate a site shall be governed by Academic Affairs Guidelines.

**FORMS / APPENDICES:**

[AAC Form 2.20](#) – Accelerated Graduate Program Request

Definition References:

[Higher Learning Commission Policy Book](#)

[National Center for Education Statistics - Glossary](#)

[U.S. Department of Education – Structure of U.S. Education](#)

**SOURCE:**

BOR May 1993; BOR January 2002; BOR December 2003; BOR August 2005; BOR March 2017; BOR December 2018; BOR March 2022.

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