

**Proposition:** 04-25/26

**Proposal Type:**     ☒ **Bill**   ☐ **Resolution**   ☐ **Memorial**   ☐ **Joint Proposition**   ☐ **Other**

**Title:** Faculty Senate Endorsement of Academic Program Sustainability Plan Proposal

**Date Submitted:** 11/17/2025

**Sponsor (s):** O. Bello (Engineering), C. Brown (A&S), W. Walker (A&S), D. Overstreet (NMSU-A), C. Erickson (Business), S. Hanson (ACES), M. Montanez (ACES),

**Proposed Committee:** Budget and Planning

**Prior Approval:** N/A

**Proposal:**

The Faculty Senate endorses the intent and goals of the Academic Program Sustainability Plan (APSP) as proposed by the University Program Approval Committee (UPAC). We support the direction of the APSP and commit to the development of sustainable, mission-aligned academic programs. However, our endorsement is contingent upon addressing the following concerns, which are also detailed in the attached report prepared by the Faculty Senate Curriculum and Planning Committee.

**1) Vague definitions:**

Several key terms such as program, sustainability, and low-yield, are currently too loosely defined. Clear, operational definitions are required to ensure consistent interpretation and equitable application across colleges and disciplines.

**2) Inadequate Metrics:**

The metrics used to evaluate programs must reflect the variety of ways that academic units contribute to the university's mission and the needs of the state.

We affirm that:

- Enrollment and degree completion alone are insufficient indicators of program value.
- Metrics must incorporate disciplinary norms, accreditation requirements, service teaching, statewide workforce needs, and the land-grant mission. We endorse the APSP's stated flexibility and emphasize that implementation must recognize the differing roles, values, and contributions of programs rather than apply uniform standards across diverse disciplines.

**3) Appropriate Review Cycle:**

We affirm the need for ongoing faculty involvement throughout the review, monitoring, and implementation processes. Shared governance requires active faculty participation at every stage of the APSP's development and application.

These concerns are fully articulated in the attached report prepared by the Faculty Senate Curriculum and Planning Committee. The Faculty Senate requests that the administration formally review and address these concerns; the report serves as the Faculty Senate's official response to the APSP.

**Rationale:** Central Administration is seeking ways to better support academic programs with low enrollment and few graduates, and to respond to concerns of the NM State legislature regarding the efficient use of university funds. The Curriculum and Planning Committee previously reviewed the APSP and recommended that the Faculty Senate provide feedback and a conditional endorsement aligned with the concerns raised in their report.

**Background:** During Summer–Fall 2024, the University Program Approval Committee (UPAC) developed the Academic Program Sustainability Plan (APSP) to identify and support “low-yield” academic programs at NMSU. The APSP establishes strategies intended to strengthen enrollment, increase graduation rates, and promote long-term sustainability. Its goal is to align resources effectively, support campus growth, and enhance student success.

The plan emphasizes data-informed decision-making and outlines a three-year implementation process. Importantly, no immediate program eliminations are planned. Rather, the APSP proposes the development of sustainable, department-driven action plans.

In September 2025, the Curriculum and Planning Committee was tasked by the Faculty Senate Vice Chair with reviewing the APSP. Their review raised several issues requiring clarification, including:

- the criteria for classifying a program as “low-yield,”
- whether definitions should vary across departments,
- the limitations of using only enrollment and degree completions as primary viability metrics, and
- the necessity of contextualizing expectations across diverse academic programs.

The Provost has requested that the APSP be formally adopted. The plan has been previously reviewed by the Faculty Senate Curriculum & Planning Committee, the Board of Regents, and the Department Head Academy.

The attached Curriculum and Planning Committee report, along with the UPAC proposal and the Provost’s invitation to review, provide the basis for this Faculty Senate response.