﻿AY20-25-BandC

Faculty Senate Issue Log Form

Title-of-Issue: Certificate Program and Degree Program Approval Requirements
Description: Please review the current policies and procedures relative to certificates to remedy the deficiencies that are identified below. The Program Prioritization Task Force identified glitches in the approval process for certificates and recommends changes to the handbook to involve the faculty senate in the approval of certificate programs offered for academic credit. The handbook includes policies titled College and Department Curricular Recommendations? (p. 173) and Policy on Certificate Programs (p. 174).  The College and Department Curricular Recommendations policy does not specifically reference certificates as awards that would be reviewed by the faculty senate.  In addition, the way the certificate program language is described in the Policy on Certificate Programs, for-credit certificates currently developed without review by faculty subcommittees or approval by the faculty senate.  In addition, information on the expectations of certificate programs (or degree programs for that matter) are not outlined.  The Program Prioritization Task Force recommends that the policies be changed to require senate approval for certificates awarded for academic credit.  Also, the task force recommends that the senate adopt and publish requirements for certificate programs.  Examples of requirements the task force asks the senate to consider include variations of the following:  (1) future certificates that go five years averaging less than one awarded certificate a year shall be terminated, (2) in seeking approval to create new certificates for academic credit, program proposers must ensure that there is no duplication, (3) program proposers must ensure that the certificate program is appropriately named to reflect the scope of the certificate and be commensurate with associated credit hours, (4) the proposal should outline the strategy used to develop the certificate, (5) the proposal should identify how workload is addressed in the proposed certificate, (6) certificate programs can be structured in different ways depending on the needs of students and market demand (e.g., as stand-alone certificates, certificates embedded in degree programs, and so on), (7) the proposal should include sections required by the State Council of Higher Education Virginia, (8) the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment should be involved in supporting all stages of certificate creation, assessment, and closure, (9) metrics for evaluating viability of certificates will be developed in agreement with academic units proposing and/or offering the certificate and will be approved by AA, and (10) productivity and continuance of certificates will be evaluated on a yearly basis.
Rationale: Certificates awarded for academic credit are academic awards that reflect on the entire academic institution.  As such, the faculty senate should be involved in reviewing and approving the awards.  In addition, the lack of certificate guidelines has resulted in the proliferation of certificate programs, many of which end up under enrolled or even dormant.  For example, of 54 certificate programs that have existed for five or more years at ODU, just 24 of them averaged one award a year of the past five year.  Among under enrolled or dormant programs, faculty and administrative costs dedicated to the program may not be justifiable.
Name: Brian Payne
Department: Academic Affairs