MEMORANDUM

To: Valparaiso University Faculty and Staff

From: Mark Schwehn, Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date: Revised January 30, 2013 by Council of Deans

Subject: Academic Program Initiation Policy

VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC PROGRAM INITIATION POLICY

I. GENERAL

This memo outlines basic procedures for academic program initiation at Valparaiso University. Academic Program here refers to courses of study or new combinations of courses, e.g. majors. Such programs must finally secure approval of the relevant governing bodies. The creation of new administrative units requires faculty consultation but is finally an administrative matter, e.g. the creation of a new college.

II. ORIGIN OF PROSPECTUS AND PROPOSAL

A proposal may originate from any level of the University, but will be considered in accordance with the process described in this policy regardless of the originator. Before submitting a formal proposal for a new program of any type, the originator(s) will submit a short prospectus describing the program. This prospectus will be the basis of a preliminary decision as to whether or not such a program would be both feasible and desirable for the University. Minimum elements of the prospectus include a basic description of and rationale for the program, an estimate of the demand for it, and a budget estimate of the resources required to implement it.

The originator(s) will pass the prospectus to the Dean (or Deans) who will oversee the program, if established. The Dean may deem the program described in the prospectus unfeasible and stop the process at this point. Should the Dean wish to continue the process, he or she will introduce the prospectus to the Provost Council (PC). The PC will consider the prospectus and approve or disapprove it with comments returned to the originators in either case. Approval of the prospectus does not constitute approval of the proposed program; it is approval to proceed with assembling a full, formal proposal.

In some cases, a market research firm may be of significant assistance in conducting market research for a prospective program. The Provost determines which
prospectuses Valparaiso University sends to a research firm for study. Based on the firm’s report, the Provost will decide whether or not to assemble a full proposal and continue the process.

If the proposal’s originators need university-level staff assistance/expertise when preparing the proposal, they may informally approach the appropriate university units with the request, or they may formally request assistance by coordinating through the Provost’s Office. Assembling a full proposal is time consuming and requires significant research; hence, college and university-level staff assistance, particularly in areas such as institutional research, marketing, and finance, will normally be necessary for the originator(s).

III. CONTENTS OF PROPOSAL

Once the originators have received approval to submit a full proposal, they will assemble the following minimum contents:

1. Executive Summary
   - No more than two pages
   - Summary of the proposal’s principal points
2. Introduction
   - Purpose and scope of the proposal
   - Problem or need the proposal addresses
3. Background
   - Descriptions of similar programs elsewhere (successes and failures)
   - Discussion of any current or past related programs at VU
4. Detailed description of program
   - Contribution to mission
   - Alignment with strategic plan
   - Rationale
   - Assessment plan
   - Accreditation issues (if applicable)
5. Business plan: Substantial portions of this section may be provided in the market research firm’s report, if one was prepared for this project. At a minimum, this section will define and analyze the market and competitive climate as well as describe how the proposed program will address the competition and make a strong entry into the academic marketplace.
   - Market analysis and strategy
   - Marketing plan, to include discussion of promotional strategies and costs
   - Financial analysis, to include costs, resources required, staffing and revenue projections, sustainability
   - Time schedule for implementation
6. Conclusion
IV. PROCESS

As with the prospectus, the process begins when the originator(s) of the proposal pass it to the Dean(s) who will oversee the program, if established (see timeline in the Appendix).

The Dean(s) will also provide his or her college’s curriculum committee with a copy of the proposal for the committee’s comment.

The Dean(s) will then assemble the curriculum committee’s comments along with his or her recommendation and pass the proposal to the Provost.

The Provost will then provide the Provost Council with a copy of the proposal for comments and recommendations. The Provost will normally assign a two week deadline for return of comments and recommendations.

Once the Provost has reviewed responses from the Provost Council, the Provost may disapprove the proposal and stop the process or recommend approval.

Upon approval of the proposal, the Provost will forward the curriculum recommendations embedded in the proposal to the Educational Policy Committee (EPC) of the Faculty Senate or to the Graduate Council if the proposed program is a graduate program. If EPC/Graduate Council recommends disapproval of the proposed program, it will return the proposal to the Provost for further action. If EPC/Graduate Council recommends approval, the proposal will be passed to Faculty Senate for action or information.

The Faculty Senate will then consider the undergraduate curricular recommendations and vote to approve or disapprove. If the Senate recommends approval, it will forward the proposal to the President who shall decide whether to initiate the program. If the Senate disapproves of any elements of the curriculum, it will return the proposal to the Provost for further action. When the proposal is of such magnitude that it warrants consideration of the Board of Directors, the President may forward the proposal to the Board for its final approval.

The following chart summarizes the program initiation process.
Even if the proposal originates at the University level, it begins with the Dean(s) who will oversee the program, if established.
APPENDIX: Example Timeline for Considering a Program Initiation Proposal

This timeline is an example of a prospectus that goes to an external firm for market research. External research takes approximately six to eight weeks. A prospectus which does not require this step could, of course, complete the consideration process that much faster.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No later than the end of March</th>
<th>1. Prospectus submitted to Dean(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No later than mid-April</td>
<td>2. Prospectus submitted to Provost Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>No later than end of April</td>
<td>3. Prospectus to market research firm (if applicable)</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>4. Hanover returns market research report</td>
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<td>No later than end of August</td>
<td>5. Full proposal assembled, sent to Dean(s)</td>
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<td>No later than the end of September</td>
<td>6. College curriculum committee(s) review, Dean(s) sends to Provost</td>
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<td>Mid-September</td>
<td>7. Provost Council review</td>
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<td>October meeting</td>
<td>8. Provost forwards to EPC or Graduate Council for vote</td>
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<tr>
<td>November meeting</td>
<td>9. EPC/Graduate Council forwards to Faculty Senate for vote/information</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>10. President makes final decision</td>
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