MEMO ON FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE CREATION OF NEW DEGREE PROGRAMS

In the current financial climate, when CUNY enrollments are at an all-time high and its resources are limited, decisions on launching new academic programs need to be approached with particular care. Proliferation of new degree offerings should not be allowed to compromise the quality of our existing programs.

The 2015 Faculty Handbook for the Preparation of New Programs, distributed to all CAOs, provides detailed guidance on the documentation required for new programs. Here we highlight some key aspects of a successful program proposal.

Goal and Purpose

- It is insufficient to simply establish the proposed curriculum as a legitimate field of academic inquiry. Colleges must also demonstrate that they have the necessary resources and faculty expertise to maintain a new degree program and must substantiate reasonable grounds for expecting that the program will become self-sufficient within its first five years. While the detailed revenue and expenditure charts provided in the Handbook are obligatory for the full proposals, the program’s cost assessment should inform campus discussions from the beginning.

Faculty

- Proposals requiring new FT faculty hires necessitate a strong justification in the context of a college’s long-term goals. CUNY campuses are discouraged from finalizing new faculty hires in the anticipation of a new program yet to be approved.

- New proposals that do not require hiring additional full-time members also require scrutiny. A proposal must analyze how existing programs will be affected by the reassignment of full-time faculty. Programs that draw resources away from established programs for a small number of new majors are not viewed favorably. Relying mainly on adjunct faculty for a new program is also not an advisable strategy.