OFFICE OF THE SENIOR VICE PROVOST AND DEAN OF GRADUATE STUDIES
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 2, 2018

TO: Maurie McInnis
Executive Vice President and Provost

FROM: Mark JT Smith
Dean of the Graduate School & Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Proposal to close the Master of Science in Applied Physics (MSAP) degree program

In May 2017 the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) recommended closure of the Master of Science in Applied Physics (MSAP) degree program due to the low number of degrees awarded over time. The THECB defines a low-producing Master's program as one that produces fewer than 15 graduates in 5 years.

Following receipt of the THECB's recommendation, and pursuant to the Graduate School's procedures for initiating the closure of a graduate-level academic program, the Graduate School solicited recommendations from the Dean of the College of Natural Sciences, the Department Chair in Physics, and the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) for the graduate program in Physics. In addition, the Graduate School notified the Faculty Council, who is charged with considering issues and policies outlined in **HOP 2-2230, Threatened Faculty Retrenchment**. In each case, these individuals and/or groups provided confirmation that they support (or do not object) to the proposed program closure, effective fall 2018. Those recommendations are enclosed for your review. Rationale for supporting the THECB's recommendation include the following:

- No program applications have been received since 2009.
- Currently, there are no students enrolled in the MSAP program.
- The Physics faculty voted to close the Applied Physics program in December 2017. The vote was 25 in favor and 0 against, with 18 abstentions.
- No faculty will be impacted by the program closure because no tenured or tenure-track faculty are currently associated with the Applied Physics program.

The closure of the MSAP program will not impact other graduate programs offered by the Department of Physics. The department will continue to offer the Master of Arts (MA) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees in Physics.

I recommend your approval of the proposed program closure. If you support the request, please forward the proposal and supporting materials to President Fenves for a final decision.

MS/mlb
Enclosures

Approved: Maurie McInnis 05/04/18
Maurie McInnis Date
Executive Vice President and Provost

Subject: Annual Low-Producing Program List Posted
Date: Wednesday, May 10, 2017 at 3:49:28 PM Central Daylight Time
From: TX Higher Education Coordinating Board
To: Broadway, Michelle L
Category: Green Category

60x30TX Plan

Sent on behalf of Rex C. Peebles, Assistant Commissioner; Academic Quality and Workforce Division; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

TO: Presidents and Chief Instructional Officers at Texas Community Colleges, Lamar State Colleges, and Technical Colleges; and Chancellors, Presidents, and Chief Academic Officers at Texas Public Universities

FROM: Rex C. Peebles, Assistant Commissioner

SUBJECT: Annual Low-Producing Program List Posted

DATE: May 10, 2017

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) staff prepared the annual list of low-producing degree programs (LPP) for Fiscal Year 2017. The LPP list is posted online at www.thecb.state.tx.us/LPP. A report on the LPP will be submitted at the June 28 meeting of the Committee on Academic Workforce and Success (CAWS) and to the Board of the THECB on July 27.

Institutions may review their LPP programs in the List of Low Producing Programs - Fiscal Year 2017 Review. Programs marked "Exempt" for a specific year received an exemption from review for that year in a previous year's review. Programs marked "New" were instated too recently for review in that year. A program is reviewed starting in the eleventh year of its existence. Programs that are low producing for three years in a row are annotated with "Yes" in the column "Low Producing Program Three Years in a Row."

At the June CAWS meeting, THECB staff may recommend to its Board members that they issue a recommendation to an institution's governing board to consolidate or close a degree program that has been on the annual list of low-producing programs for three or more consecutive years. If the institution's governing board does not accept the THECB's recommendation, then the university system (or the institution, where a system does not exist) must identify the programs recommended for consolidation or closure on its next legislative appropriations request. In those situations, a system or institution also needs to develop a plan for the degree program to achieve the minimum standard for the degree awarded, or if the standard is not attainable, the institution needs to provide a rationale describing the merits of

continuing the degree program.

For additional information, visit www.thecb.state.tx.us/LPP or contact Reinold Cornelius at 512-427-6156 or Reinold.Cornelius@thecb.state.tx.us.

c: CSTC Liaisons

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60 X 30 logo

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Proposal to Close the Master of Science in Applied Physics (MSAP) Degree Program
Summary for Graduate Assembly

In May 2017 the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) recommended closure of the Master of Science in Applied Physics (MSAP) degree program due to the low number of degrees awarded over time. The THECB defines a low-producing Master's program as one that produces fewer than 15 graduates in 5 years.

Following receipt of the THECB's recommendation, and pursuant to the Graduate School's procedures for initiating the closure of a graduate-level academic program, the Graduate School solicited recommendations from the Dean of the College of Natural Sciences, the Department Chair in Physics, and the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) for the graduate program in Physics. All three provided information confirming that they support (or do not object) to the proposed program closure, effective fall 2018. Rationale for supporting the THECB's recommendation include the following:

- No program applications have been received since 2009.
- There is one currently enrolled student who plans to graduate in spring 2018.
- The Physics faculty voted to close the Applied Physics program in December 2017. The vote was 25 in favor and 0 against, with 18 abstentions.
- No faculty will be impacted by the program closure because no tenured or tenure-track faculty are currently associated with the Applied Physics program.

The closure of the MSAP program will not impact other graduate programs offered by the Department of Physics. They will continue to offer the Master of Arts (MA) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees in Physics.

The Faculty Council is charged, specifically, with considering issues and policies outlined in **HOP 2-2230, Threatened Faculty Retrenchment.** A copy of the THECB's proposal and UT Austin's supporting recommendations have been submitted to the Office of the General Faculty for consideration by the Faculty Council.

A complete copy of the proposal and related recommendations are available in the Office of Graduate Studies. Contact Michelle Broadway, Assistant Dean, at mbroadway@austin.utexas.edu or 232-3625 for additional information.

Subject: Re: Action Required: MSAP degree flagged as low-producing program
Date: Tuesday, October 17, 2017 at 2:20:40 PM Central Daylight Time
From: Ritchie, Jack
To: Broadway, Michelle L
CC: Hicke, Linda A, Knopf, Daniel F, Smith, Mark J, Wolcott, David A
Category: Address Immediately

Michelle,

The Department of Physics does not object to the elimination of the Master of Science in Applied Physics degree.

Jack

Jack Ritchie
Chair, Department of Physics
College of Natural Sciences
The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX 78712-1192
(512)471-4488

From: Broadway, Michelle L
Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2017 5:17 PM
To: Ritchie, Jack L
Cc: Hicke, Linda A; Knopf, Daniel F; Smith, Mark J; Wolcott, David A
Subject: Action Required: MSAP degree flagged as low-producing program

Dr. Ritchie -

On July 28, 2017, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) voted to recommend the closure or consolidation of several UT Austin graduate degree programs that were identified as being low-producing for three years in a row. Coordinating Board rules define Master's programs that produce fewer than 15 graduates over a five-year period (average of three per year) and doctoral programs that produce fewer than 10 graduates over a five-year period (average of two per year) to be low-producing.

Data from the Coordinating Board indicate that the **Master of Science in Applied Physics (MSAP)** degree **(CIP 40.0801)** produced 1 graduate during the previous five-year period. Consequently, the THECB recommended closure of this program to the UT System.

The UT System Office of Academic Affairs is coordinating a low-producing programs review process that will culminate in action by the Board of Regents for programs that the University wishes to retain. If the Department of Physics would like to continue offering the MSAP degree, please submit an action plan for program continuation to Assistant Dean Michelle Broadway in the Graduate School on or before **November 1, 2017**. All action plans should include the following information:

- Provide a narrative that explains the causes of low production.
- Identify specific strategies to recruit, retain and/or graduate more students. Include benchmarks and timelines presented on a realistic, achievable timeframe.
- Provide the number of degrees conferred in AY 2016 (fall 2016 - summer 2017).

- Indicate if the number of graduates produced in the most recent academic year reflects a trend upward, suggesting that the productivity issue is already being addressed, or downward, suggesting that annual production may continue to not meet the state threshold.
- Provide the number of program admissions in the last five years.
- Indicate if the number of admissions in the last five years reflects a trend toward shrinking or growing enrollment.
- Indicate if the program has sufficient enrollment to produce an average of three graduates per year.
- Include additional information that may support the request to retain this degree program. Other considerations may include, but are not limited to, the program being the only one of its kind offered in the state, indicators of high quality of the program and the superior student experience, cost issues, geographic proximity to similar programs, size of the program, among other things.

Action plans submitted to the Graduate School on or before **November 1** will be forwarded to the Provost for consideration. Approved requests will be forwarded to the UT System Office of Academic Affairs. Following a review of the action plan and relevant program data, the UT System Office of Academic Affairs will make a recommendation to the UT System Board of Regents at its February 2018 meeting.

Additional information about the Coordinating Board's Low-Producing Programs process is available on the THECB website at http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=9B488705-FA7E-5ACB-C8ED111CBC477B33 .

THECB - Low-Producing Programs

www.thecb.state.tx.us

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (Coordinating Board) adopted rules establishing procedures for the annual review of the number of graduates produced by ...

Additional information about UT System's Review Process for Low-Producing Programs is available online athttps://www.utsystem.edu/sites/default/files/offices/academic-affairs/Review%20Process%20for%20Low-Producing%20Programs%2012-02-2013.pdf .

The Offices of Academic Affairs & Health Affairs

www.utsystem.edu

11/26/2013 The Offices of Academic Affairs & Health Affairs Review Process for Low-Producing Programs Background This document outlines a recommended process a U. T ...

For related questions or assistance with this process, please contact Assistant Dean Michelle Broadway at mbroadway@austin.utexas.edu. Copies of requests to continue Low-Producing Programs from previous years are available upon request.

Best,

Michelle B.

cc: Linda Hicke, Dean, CNS
Dan Knopf, Associate Dean for Graduate Education, CNS
Matt Ervin, Graduate Coordinator
Mark J.T. Smith, Dean of the Graduate School and Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
Dave Wolcott, Chief of Staff, Office of the Provost

MICHELLE BROADWAY, Assistant Dean
The University of Texas at Austin | The Graduate School | 512-232-3625 | utexas.edu/ogs

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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January 3, 2018

Mark J. T. Smith
Dean of the Graduate School & Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

Dear Dean Smith:

During the 2017 reporting cycle, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (TEHCB) identified the Master of Science in Applied Physics degree as having been a low-producing program for three years in a row and, consequently, recommended closure of the degree program to the UT System. Following this recommendation, the Physics Department is soliciting the closure of the Master of Science in Applied Physics degree by the Fall of 2018.

This degree was created in 1995 and was designed to provide students with a broad background of graduate-level courses in physics and related fields with an emphasis on those aspects of science most used in an industry setting. This program was always envisioned to be ancillary to the other graduate degree programs of the Department of Physics and, therefore, has never required nor received any faculty or staff of its own accord. The enrollment in this program has been low as illustrated below, and no external applications have been received since 2009.

Year	Enrollment
1997-1998	5
1998-1999	6
1999-2000	4
2000-2001	4
2001-2002	4
2002-2003	2
2003-2004	1
2004-2005	1
2005-2006	1
2006-2007	1
2007-2008	2
2008-2009	2
2009-2017	0

While no students have applied to enter the program for the past eight years, a few terminal students, unable to produce a Ph.D. thesis, have settled with a Master of Science in Applied Physics. At the moment there is one such student who plans to finish by the end of the Spring 2018 semester. The closure of the program, beginning Fall 2018, will have no impact on his graduation or that of any other student. Most terminal students choose to have a Master of Arts instead. In the current admission cycle no one has applied to the program in question.

There will not be any impact on faculty either. Given the low enrollment, no tenured, tenure–track faculty or staff are currently associated with the program, hence there is no need to present a plan for their redeployment or to help to find new employment.

The Physics Faculty voted to close the program on December 7, 2017. The vote was 25 in favor and 0 against, with 18 abstentions.

Best regards,

Sonia Paban
Associate Professor of Physics
Physics GSC chair
paban@physics.utexas.edu

COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCES
Dean's Office

120 Inner Campus Dr., Stop G2500 • Austin, TX 78712-1252 • (512) 471-3285 • Fax (512) 232-

Mark J. T. Smith
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Texas at Austin

February 2, 2018

Dear Dean Smith:

I am writing to support the recommendation to close the MS Applied Physics degree program. Rational for supporting this recommendation include the following:

- The program has been inactive for eight years.
- The Physics faculty are strongly in favor of the program closure.
- No faculty will be impacted by the program closure.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Linda Hicke

Linda Hicke
Dean of the College of Natural Sciences
The University of Texas at Austin