

UNIVERSITY SENATE
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Introduced by: Educational Policy Council & Graduate Academic Council

Date: April 19, 2004

**PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE THE DOCTOR OF ARTS PROGRAM IN
HUMANISTIC STUDIES**

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:

1. That the University Senate approve the attached proposal to discontinue the Doctor of Arts program in Humanistic Studies as approved by the Educational Policy Council, the Graduate Academic Council and the College of Arts & Sciences' Faculty Council.
2. That this proposal be forwarded to the President for approval.

Doctor of Arts Program in Humanistic Studies 21 January 2004

The purpose of this document is to outline the rationale behind the recommendation to deactivate the Doctor of Arts (DA) Program in Humanistic Studies at the University at Albany, State University of New York. Once all of the students have exited (degree awarded, withdrawal, or expiration of the statute of limitations) a final discontinuance of the Program will be sought. Supporting documentation in the form of both quantitative and qualitative data is included below and in the Appendices. While the College of Arts and Sciences values all disciplines and recognizes that many graduates and current students of this Program have benefited from its existence, various motivating factors that are influenced by academic considerations, the current budgetary situation, and strategic planning for the future indicate that the termination of this Program is warranted at this time. Clearly, a primary impetus for this recommendation is the finding that the academic goals and mission of the College of Arts and Sciences are not supported or enhanced by its continuation.

All admissions to this Program have been suspended as of last spring. Discussions concerning this step were held in February 2003 with the previous director of the DA

Program in Humanistic Studies, Mary Beth Winn, and subsequently with the Program's Advisory Board. On April 4, 2003, a memorandum was directed to the Chairs of the Graduate Academic Council and the Council on Educational Policy indicating that the College of Arts and Sciences was considering the deactivation of the Program. Similar memos were sent to the Academic Programs Committee and the Academic Planning Committees of the CAS Faculty Council on April 17, 2003 (memos attached, see Appendix A). The Dean of the College later in April met with the Council on Educational Policy to explain her decision. Graduate Admissions was instructed to suppress the DAHS note from their relevant coding sheets thereby eliminating the possibility of future enrollments into this Program.

The decision to suspend admissions and to seek deactivation is supported by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Carlos E. Santiago (letter appended, see Appendix A). The deactivation is also a recommendation contained in the College's Strategic Plan, which was drafted by a 15-person committee last spring and summer, reviewed by the Council of Chairs and CAS Faculty Council in the early fall, and submitted to the Provost in November.

The comments that appear below address several areas of consideration related to the move to deactivate and to discontinue this Program. These areas include the history of the Program and the degree, academic issues regarding the relative standing of the degree, past student history, and enrollment and financial considerations.

Program Background

In the late 1970s and early 80s, several PhD Programs at the University at Albany were placed on probation or actually de-registered by the State Education Department (see Appendix B). Particularly hard hit were the PhD Programs in the humanities, including those in Classics, English, French, History, Philosophy, and Spanish. The DA Program in Humanistic Studies at the University at Albany was introduced in the mid-1980s to address the dearth of doctoral Programs that existed at this time in departments and units that represented the humanities.

The DA degree itself, according to the website of the National Doctor of Arts Association (<http://www.isu.edu/departments/graduate/ndaa/index.html>) was established in 1932 by the Association of American universities as a pedagogically oriented doctoral Program, but it was not until the late 1960s that the concept of a "cost-effective, non research, three-year doctorate" caught on, according to Judith Glazer (*A Teaching Doctorate? The Doctor of Arts Degree, Then and Now*, Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education, 1993). The degree was sanctioned by the Committee on Graduate Studies of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities in 1970 and by the council of Graduate Schools in the United States. The National Doctor of Arts Association says that at the peak of popularity, the DA degree was offered in 44 fields of study at a total of 31 institutions of higher learning. They further state: "In recent years, some departments have chosen to terminate their Doctor of Arts Programs, most frequently citing waning funds for graduate study, the decline in the academic job market

and the growing emphasis on pedagogy in traditional research oriented PhD Programs as the cause."

In addition to some of the reasons stated above, the case for deactivating the DA Program in Humanistic Studies at this time is also based upon the fact that the re-registration of many of our PhD programs in the early 1990s has alleviated the need for the degree. In fact, the PhD Programs in English, French, and History were re-registered in the early 90s and those in Philosophy and Spanish were removed from probation during that same period. With the passing of time, moreover, and the trend to encourage more interdisciplinary graduate work, the possibility of accommodating the interests of DA students in existing MA Programs or PhD Programs greatly increased, thereby eliminating to a large extent the original need that led to the creation of the DA Program in Humanistic Studies Program. Indeed, a variety of degrees can be attained today at both the masters and doctoral levels that were not possible when the DA Program was first introduced.

Standing of the Program and the Degree

As mentioned above in our introduction, the decision to deactivate the DA Program in Humanistic Studies was endorsed by the CAS Strategic Plan. That Plan articulated many recommendations to guide the College over the next five years aimed at enhancing the highly ranked programs of the College and moving to prominence other near-excellent programs. Overall the Plan sought to improve the University's reputation as a major research institution and help it place among the 30 top-rated public universities. It is felt that both the DA Program itself and the relative standing of this degree in the larger academic framework are not in line with current and future goals as articulated in the Strategic Plan.

An internal Program review of all doctoral programs was conducted in 1997 at the University at Albany, which placed programs in one of three categories. Of the 18 doctoral programs in CAS at that time, 3 were placed in category 1 (the highest rank), 12 were placed in category 2, 2 were placed in category 3, and the DA in Humanistic Studies was placed low in Category 2, about to move to category 3 because of loss of faculty."The rationale stated within the committee's Final Report cited the facts that new PhD Programs in some areas removed the practical need for the DA degree, that some of the more distinguished members of the Program had retired or were about to retire, and that GRE scores and credentials of applicants were weak (see Appendix C). While no new program reviews have been undertaken since that time, faculty resources for the DA Program have not increased.

As stated earlier, the DA Degree even at its height of popularity was offered at only a small number of institutions. Although some of these institutions are our peers or aspirational peers, many of them, in fact a definite majority, are not. The degree does not appear amongst those that the Carnegie Foundation uses to examine productivity or other standard measures it publicizes with regards to institutions of higher learning, nor does it appear to be nationally reviewed in a systematic fashion. In short, as the College works to

help the University improve its national ranking among public research institutions, it must direct its attention towards programs that will positively impact its profile.

Many of the outside institutions that do offer this degree do so in very specialized contexts to satisfy a particular educational market. For example:

Adelphi University - Communication Disorders

Ball State University - Music

University of Northern Colorado - Arts Administration & Music

Appendix D includes a listing, accurate and complete to the best of our knowledge, of institutions and the degrees they offer as related to the Doctor of Arts. While there exists no one complete listing or compendium of these institutions, the attached list was created from searches of websites, communication with actual faculty members at distant institutions, and listings provided by our own past Program director. Some of the universities and colleges mentioned to have DA Programs were no longer listing them, an indication of the national decline in offering the degree.

Past Student History

We have looked into the background of the students served by the DA Program in Humanistic Studies and acknowledge that it has served a useful function to these students. A large proportion of the students receiving the DA degree had positions prior to enrolling in the Program and sought the degree to enhance their existing credentials or secure a raise or promotion in their jobs. In some cases, the degree was undertaken to satisfy a personal goal or ambition. Some of these assertions come directly from letters that were submitted to the College of Arts and Sciences from past graduates of this Program (solicited by the former director of the Program and available upon request). These facts help to explain the high proportion of part-time students in the Program. According to the 1997 review of the Program (see Appendix C), the average time to degree was 9.5 years.

An analysis of the institutions at which these students teach, as provided by the former director of this Program, indicates that approximately 65% of past graduates are currently employed at institutions that identify themselves as community colleges or other institutions that do not require a research-based degree (e.g., Savannah College of Art & Design; Hanover College; Rogers State College; J. Sergeant Reynolds Community College).

Some of the students in the DA Program in Humanistic Studies already had MA degrees from University at Albany or other institutions prior to enrollment in the Program, although a prior graduate degree is not a prerequisite for admission. Others, according to Chairs or graduate directors in various departments, had failed to be admitted to PhD programs in the College or had dropped out of such programs. While we do not wish to make much of such anecdotal evidence, we feel that our established programs can

accommodate the vast majority of qualified students wishing graduate degrees in all areas of the humanities. A scan of the recent list of theses of DA students will reveal in most cases an obvious connection with a particular discipline, and hence an intellectual home for the student. Samples of thesis titles have included, "A Useful Citizen: Benjamin Franklin as a Defender of the Glorious Publick [sic] Virtue," "The Nature of Nature in the Poetry of Hardy, Dickinson and Frost," "Using the English Language, South African Writers Fight Back Against Colonizers' Writings and Philosophies," and "Trade, European Influence, and the Colonial Transformation in Ghana," just to name a few.

Enrollment and Financial Considerations

According to institutional research figures provided by Bruce Szelest, Assistant Director, Office of Institutional Research (see Appendix E), the Program has experienced a steady decline in "Enrolled New-To-Program" figures over the past few years. In fact for fall 2002, only 5 students applied for admission; 3 were admitted, and 2 enrolled. Nonetheless, the admission of students requires that certain courses be given to satisfy core requirements, making the Program less cost-effective with dwindling enrollments.

The amount of tuition revenue that has been generated by this Program has experienced some decline particularly over the past three years (exact figures provided by Wendell Lorang, Institutional Research, University at Albany, can be found in Appendix E):

1999-2000: \$116,040
2000-2001: \$121,568
2001-2002: \$113,723
2002-2003: \$ 85,275

The costs that were involved in operating this program for the 2002-2003 academic year included but may not be limited to the following:

\$79,660 - stipends RE: Teaching Assistantships
\$47,472 - total for tuition waivers
\$10,000 - Targeted Fellowship (independent of Assistantship Allocation)
\$29,868 - half-time secretarial position (\$18,233) + 3 course releases for the program director and two faculty members for the Program at a cost of \$2,500 each + a budget allocation of \$4,135 for Program operations (Note that there are no faculty lines directly within this Program.)

To summarize, the figures we might note for the most recent academic year, 2002-2003 are as follows:

APPROXIMATE REVENUE 2002-03: \$ 85,275

APPROXIMATE TOTAL COST 2002-03: \$167,000

Approximate Net Loss -\$81,725

The above costs do not include the considerable faculty efforts that go into the Program, and we argue that this is an important factor for consideration in a time of shrinking human resources. It would be incorrect to conclude that faculty resources are not involved in the administration and implementation of this Program simply because no faculty lines per se are allocated to this Program. In fact many hours are devoted to this Program in terms of independent study courses, advisement, examinations, service on thesis committees, etc. In addition, the assistantship allocation to the DA Program could be seen as competing with departmental faculty's interests in qualitatively strengthening PhD and professional masters programs, an increasingly sensitive issue in light of declining resources for supporting graduate students.

As the College strives to move its PhD and MA Programs to their next level of excellence and develop new graduate programs, we feel that faculty resources are best directed to these goals and to research initiatives. The current direction of the humanities disciplines suggest also that the boundaries of the traditional departments have become more permeable and more receptive to the kinds of interdisciplinary work formerly associated with the DA. We anticipate that students who were previously enrolled in this program may be accommodated within other programs within the College of Arts and Sciences.

Final Summary and Conclusions

The Doctor of Arts Program in Humanistic Studies is not wholly without merit. It was designed as an interdisciplinary non-research doctorate suitable for teaching careers or jobs for which the major and minor are relevant and a research background is not required. At the University at Albany, it was instituted at a time when a number of doctoral programs were either placed on probation or deactivated altogether. Indeed, at that point in time, it seemed to serve a specific niche that is no longer deemed necessary in the current academic climate. It is not usually a competitive degree for positions leading to tenure at research institutions. In addition, when reviewed in 1997, it bordered the lowest possible category in terms of its overall merits. Nevertheless, the Program has led to the academic enrichment of many of its former graduates and current students and has served to engage faculty and students across a broad range of disciplines. The information reviewed above provides information regarding the academic efficacy and merits of the current Program and the related financial impact of maintaining this Program. As clearly outlined within this document, the Program's costs as compared to the amount generated through tuition revenue renders the Program ineffective in terms of overall cost, both in terms of financial amounts and efforts and workload commanded from faculty and administrative units to maintain all aspects of the Program. The aforementioned information indicates that as a priority, the Program as it currently stands does not meet the desired set of features that would render it a viable and productive one. Therefore, the decision to deactivate and in turn discontinue this Program appears warranted at this time.