

Report to the Dean & Faculty Senate: Associate of Science, Science

Matthew D. Mingus
Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee Chair

The University of New Mexico – Gallup’s Associate of Science degree program in Science was recently reviewed at the 12 February 2016 meeting of the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee. In a unanimous decision, and after carefully examining the material submitted by the Division of Arts & Sciences, **the Committee decided to reject the AS in Science program review in its current form.**

While the Committee ultimately decided to reject this particular program review document, it should be noted that the program review itself was relatively well-written and complete. The only serious concern the committee had with the presentation of the review was the temporal ambiguity of program alterations (in both the recommendations of the Division Chair and the Dean). For more detailed information concerning the Committee’s evaluation of the submitted materials, please contact the Dean’s office and request a summary of our compiled rubric sheets regarding this program.

The AS in Science is clearly, as noted in the program review, a problematic program. On the one hand, the program’s graduation rates are abysmal, not even reaching double-digits over the duration of the past nine years. On the other hand, there seems to be no similar degree in which to “park” the 400+ students currently enrolled in this program. While the Division Chair recommended creating certificates within the broader degree program (as a way to potentially increase program completion rates and focus student energies/credit hours), several committee members – particularly those representing the health careers – believed many such certificates would imply potential opportunities that do not currently exist. Instead, the committee recommends establishing concentrations that would track students toward a particular goal (i.e. the nursing program, transfer in various off-site degree programs, etc.). Concentrations will hopefully encourage students to focus on a particular program more quickly, while allowing those same students to potentially complete the AS in Science without necessarily completing a concentration. Concentrations could also more easily establish student cohorts, which would be beneficial for the students themselves and for institutional research. We would like a list of potential concentrations, degree pathways emphasizing those concentrations (and possible articulation into further study), and assent by the faculty who would be involved in those concentrations (particularly math faculty, who seem absent from the current program review).

The Committee was also concerned with the current number of credit hours required to graduate with an AS in Science. As it stands now, students need sixty-three credits to graduate. UNM’s main campus in Albuquerque has made it clear that bachelor’s programs should ideally only require 120 credit hours for completion, and that associate’s degrees should ideally require

no more than sixty or sixty-one credit hours for completion. The Committee would like to see the required credit hours for the AS in Science reduced by two credits.

The Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee requests that these revisions be considered by 1 April 2016, and that an altered program review be submitted on that date.

If at all possible, we hope that a Form C addressing the concerns of the Committee, the Division Chair, and the Dean can be submitted to Faculty Senate by the end of the Spring 2016 semester.

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