

From: [Wachter, Renee](#)
To: [Everyone \(Staff&Faculty\)](#)
Subject: Academic Program Changes
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Chancellor



October 31 , 2017

Dear Colleagues,

As we all know, the higher education landscape is changing. The recent announcement from President Cross about restructuring UW Colleges, in addition to provisions in the latest biennial budget that tie a portion of institutional funding to performance metrics, are further proof that not only is the higher education paradigm shifting, it's now hitting close to home.

While the performance metrics haven't been announced by the Board of Regents yet, we anticipate one of the metrics will address graduation rates. Our 4-year graduation rate is 18 percent, with our 6-year graduation rate at 43 percent.

Research reviewed by the Provost's Summer Taskforce on Guided Pathways for Student Success has shown that too many program choices often lead to misguided decisions, particularly for first generation students and students from historically underrepresented backgrounds. While there is myriad of published student success research, this particular piece of research also hits close to home. Consider this:

- We are an institution that proudly has a large percentage of first-generation college students—46 percent of our entire undergraduate student body.
- UW-Superior offers many, many program choices for our students. We currently have 63 undergraduate majors and 57 undergraduate minors.

Given these facts, this is research that we need to be especially sensitive to and apply to our institution in the name of student success. Now is the time to reduce course and program array, making it easier for students to make sound decisions and persist through to graduation.

In consultation with university leaders, the decision has been made to suspend the following majors and minors effective immediately:

<u>Major Programs</u>	<u>Minors</u>
Broad Field Science (major)	Computer Science
Broad Field Science (Teaching) (major)	Computer Science (Teaching)
Chemistry: Forensic (concentration)	Earth Science
Communicating Arts: Journalism (track)	Geography
Communicating Arts: Media Studies (track)	Geography (Teaching)
Political Science (major)	Global Studies
Sociology (major)	Health and Human Performance
Theatre (major)	History (Teaching)
Visual Arts: Art History (concentration)	Journalism
Masters in Art Therapy	Legal Studies
	Media Communication
	Photography
	Physics
	Physics (Teaching)
	Psychology (Teaching)

Major programs and minors on suspension status will not be open to accepting new or additional students. These programs will be given a period of five years to make changes that will make them more viable in today’s marketplace. Suspended programs can be reinstated when the demand and resources justify the continued operation of the program without Board of Regents approval.

Three percent of our undergraduate majors are in suspended programs, with the majority holding senior status. If we exclude these seniors, the count is around 1%. **These suspensions will not affect current students enrolled in these programs.** Faculty and professional academic advisors will be working with these students to ensure they can complete their program. I also want to make clear that **no faculty will be laid off as a result of these suspensions.**

Additionally, the following programs have been placed on “warning” status effective immediately:

<u>Major Programs</u>	<u>Minors</u>
Broad Field Social Science	Biology (Teaching)
Broad Field Social Science (Teaching)	Chemistry (Teaching)
Chemistry	English
Chemistry (Teaching)	English (Teaching)
Computer Science	Mathematics (Teaching)
Economics	

History
History (Teaching)
Mathematics
Mathematics (Teaching)

For these major programs and minors, action plans will need to be developed in coordination with Academic Affairs by June 1, 2018. As with students in suspended programs, these warnings will not preclude current students enrolled in these programs to complete. The university will continue to offer more than 50 majors and 40 minors.

If you have questions or concerns regarding the suspension of these programs, I encourage you to join Provost Jackie Weissenburger, Interim Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management Brenda Harms, and me at one of our open forums on November 1 at 4pm and November 2 at 9am. Both forums will be held in the Yellowjacket Union Great Room. A Frequently Asked Question page will be posted shortly on the [Provost's Taskforce on Guided Pathways for Student Success webpage](#).

A meeting took place this morning with all department chairs. Announcements about these actions are being shared with students and the media. Academic advisors will be reaching out to students in affected programs to provide any needed support.

While we are confident this is the right move for our students and their success, this wasn't a decision that was made lightly. I ask for your support and, as needed, assistance with implementation.

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