Charge and Charter

The Academic Committee is a core component of the University's structural reset process. Its purpose is to evaluate the University's academic portfolio and faculty model to recommend a sustainable, mission-aligned academic structure that supports student success, enrollment stability, and long-term institutional resilience, adaptability, and viability. One of multiple byproducts of this work will be the preliminary informing of the next iteration of the Academic Strategic Plan. The committee works in parallel with the Operations Committee and provides recommendations to senior leadership regarding academic investment priorities, program sustainability, faculty alignment, and portfolio redesign.

Scope

1. Evaluating the Academic Portfolio

- Assess the University's academic programs, modalities, and instructional structures
- Review enrollment trends, contribution margins, demand forecasts, completion outcomes, and mission alignment
- Identify programs with strong strategic potential as well as programs requiring redesign, consolidation, or sunset consideration

2. Defining a Sustainable Academic Model

- Recommend a portfolio that aligns with target enrollment and financial model
- Evaluate appropriate program range, instructional complexity, and faculty capacity
- Consider the balance between mission-centered offerings and financial sustainability

3. Simplifying Academic Complexity

- Identify opportunities to reduce unnecessary program duplication, administrative layering, and curricular complexity
- Recommend strategies to streamline academic operations while preserving quality and student experience

4. Supporting University-Wide Structural Balance

- Deliver recommendations that, combined with operational restructuring, create a sustainable long-term institutional model
- Ensure academic recommendations are integrated with enrollment, staffing, operational, and financial realities

5. Complete work with a focus on student experience, belonging, and retention – including opportunities for enhancing student support programming.

Purview

The committee will review programs and instructional structures, including but not limited to:

- Undergraduate programs
- Graduate and doctoral programs
- Online and hybrid offerings
- General education structure
- Certificates and micro-credentials
- Low-enrollment and high-cost programs
- Academic support structures (TLE, HIP, Library, etc.)
- Faculty staffing and deployment models
- Program leadership and academic administrative structures
- Scheduling and modality practices
- Opportunities for interdisciplinary or consolidated structures

The committee may also review:

- External demand and workforce projections
- Benchmarking against peer institutions
- Accreditation and regulatory implications
- Mission-centered and distinctive academic offerings

Guiding Principles

- Mission over tradition
- Academic quality alongside sustainability
- Structural solutions over incremental reductions
- Transparency over protection of existing structures
- Shared accountability
- Data-informed decision making
- Student success and access as primary objectives
- Stewardship of faculty talent and institutional identity

Decision Framework

Each program or academic structure will be categorized as:

- **Invest** – Expand or prioritize where strong demand, mission value, or strategic opportunity exists.
- **Sustain** – Maintain with disciplined oversight and continued assessment.
- **Modify** – Redesign curriculum, delivery, staffing, or structure to improve effectiveness and sustainability.
- **Reduce/Realign** – Consolidate, scale back, or reposition programs or structures.
- **Sunset** – Initiate phased discontinuation of programs no longer aligned with institutional priorities or sustainability.

Committee Membership (15-16)

Co-Chairs

Cam MacDonald (Senate President)

Erica Ingalls (Dean of Student Affairs)

Members

Kristine Bureau (Admissions+)

Michelle Gibbs (Finance)

Angela Speer (IDS)

Evelyn Dang (UG Student)

Eduardo Escalera (Grad Student)

Bill Matsch (Trustee)

Quinn Waller (SA)

Samit Shah (RHCHP, Dean)

Vincent LaBarca (RHCHP)

Mark Basham (RC)

Heider Tun-Tun (RC)

Lynetta Mier (RC Associate Dean)

Justin Perea (IDS)

Luka Powanga (Anderson)

Matt Daly (Anderson Associate Dean)

Sheryl Tirol (Ex Officio)

Jake Bucher (Ex Officio)

Stephanie Morris (Ex Officio)

Responsibilities and Work Plan

Phase 1: Portfolio Framework and Baseline Assessment

The committee should first establish familiarity with the program optimization dashboard as well as other metrics for assessing program viability. Additional work/conversation will be needed to bring everyone to shared understanding of the role of governance in managing the portfolio.

Phase 1A: Portfolio Evaluation Framework and Academic Models (4–6 weeks)

Guiding Questions

- What defines a sustainable program?
- How should mission alignment be weighed alongside financial performance?
- What enrollment, margin, or completion thresholds matter?
- How should interdisciplinary or emerging programs be evaluated?
- What faculty and instructional assumptions will guide interpreting data?

Phase 1B: Structural Academic Review (6–8 weeks)

- Evaluate administrative models around:
  - Efficiencies
  - Identity alignment
  - Student demand
  - Strategic differentiation
  - Ensuring support to deliver our portfolio, without administrative bloat
- Develop alternative academic and faculty model scenarios
- Explore opportunities for consolidation, interdisciplinary structures, or redesign

Deliverables

- Program evaluation criteria weighting
- Academic model assumptions and drafted considerations
- Definitions for Invest/Sustain/Modify/Reduce/Sunset categories

Phase 2: Baseline Portfolio Assessment (8-12 weeks)

- Inventory all academic programs and instructional activity
- Analyze enrollment trends, net revenue, margins, and completion outcomes
- Identify instructional complexity and duplication

Deliverables

- Grouping programs into Invest/Sustain/Modify/Reduce/Sunset categories

Phase 3: Recommendation Development

- Prioritize recommendations
- Estimate enrollment, financial, and operational impact
- Assess transition requirements (governance and possible accreditation considerations)
- Identify implementation sequencing and dependencies (timeline)

Phase 4: Integration and Final Reporting

- Coordinate with the Operations Committee
- Align academic recommendations with operational and financial models
- Present a consolidated structural reset plan to SLT and the Board

Expected Deliverables

1. Recommendations for how senior leadership should use optimization moving forward.
2. Program-by-program categorization and recommendations
3. Faculty/Academic Administration structural model recommendations
4. Multi-year academic sustainability projections
5. Implementation roadmap with timelines and dependencies
6. Risk assessment and mitigation strategies

Meeting Cadence

- Weekly meetings during active review
- Subgroups may meet independently
- Monthly progress reports to Senior Leadership
- Formal presentations to the Board on key decision points
- Open forums with the community

Decision Authority

Body	Role
Academic Committee	Analysis and recommendations
Senior Leadership Team and President	Reviews and approves major changes
Board of Trustees	Reviews and provides feedback on recommendations
Shared Governance Bodies	Consultation and feedback/recommendations consistent with governance processes

Success Measures

The committee's work will be successful if it:

- Aligns the academic portfolio with institutional mission and enrollment realities, to reset the institution.
- Improves long-term academic sustainability
- Reduces unnecessary complexity
- Preserves or strengthens academic quality and student outcomes
- Supports strategic growth opportunities
- Contributes to achieving efficient, necessary, and adaptable structural financial balance
- Builds greater institutional clarity regarding academic priorities