

From: [Suzanne R Smith](#)
Subject: Program updates
Date: Thursday, November 2, 2023 11:36:05 AM

November 2, 2023

Program updates

Dear campus community:

SUNY Potsdam has been notified that our requests to discontinue/deactivate academic programs have all received final approval from both SUNY System Administration and the New York State Education Department, per [SUNY policy #1701](#).

These difficult but necessary decisions are critical to our financial stability plan, helping us to recalibrate the College's academic offerings to match student demand and workforce need. While we work to address our structural deficit, we wish to reiterate that these decisions are not based on the rigor of those programs, the quality of the faculty, or the experiences of our alumni and current students.

These programs will be phased out over the next three to four academic years:

- Art History (Bachelor of Arts)
- Chemistry (Bachelor of Science)
- Dance (Bachelor of Arts)
- French (Bachelor of Arts)
- Music Performance (Master of Music)
- Philosophy (Bachelor of Arts)
- Physics (Bachelor of Arts)
- Spanish (Bachelor of Arts)
- Theatre (Bachelor of Arts)

SUNY Potsdam has also received approval to deactivate our Bachelor of Arts degree program in Arts Management. Under the deactivation policy, this program will now enter into a three-year period in which it cannot accept new students, but will remain as a registered program. During this time, it is expected that a proposal could be developed to either revise the program or recommend its discontinuance.

Students

In all, the identified programs represent 3.9% of SUNY Potsdam's total enrollment. All students in the impacted programs would be provided with individualized plans for degree completion. Every student currently enrolled in these programs has been contacted, and is being connected with a representative from the dean's office who will work in collaboration with the student's academic advisor. All current students will receive support to complete their degree here, enroll in a different major or transfer elsewhere, based on their personal

circumstances and desires. All impacted students can graduate with a SUNY Potsdam degree in that field if they wish.

Faculty and staff

It is important to note that just because a program is discontinued does not mean that all positions associated with that area will be eliminated. Remember, all currently enrolled students in the impacted programs will be supported in completing their degrees. This process can take several years, and even after it is complete, we will need to maintain some positions in impacted areas to support our General Education Program and other coursework needs.

SUNY Potsdam is currently offering a one-time, local [voluntary separation program](#) available to all full-time employees who are New York State retirement eligible. This program is supported by an allotment of funds from the Potsdam College Foundation, and applications are due by Dec. 1. Once that deadline has passed and decisions are made, the administration will assess how to move forward.

As with other areas across campus, there may be a reduction in faculty roles in the areas chosen to be retained, as well as those that are being discontinued/deactivated, as we match our workforce to student need. At this stage, we cannot project the exact number of positions which will ultimately be impacted overall, as that will heavily depend on uncertainties like retirements and attrition. We are just at the outset of a multi-year process, and SUNY Potsdam must follow the respective collective bargaining agreements with the unions representing our faculty and staff.

Additionally, now that the program discontinuances/deactivations have been approved, we will work with the deans on departmental reorganization.

For more information on our financial stability plan, including answers to frequently asked questions and an archive of campus communications on this topic, please visit www.potsdam.edu/fsp.

Sincerely,

Suzanne R. Smith, Ph.D.
President
SUNY Potsdam

Alan Hersker, Ph.D.
Interim Provost
SUNY Potsdam