

UI Faculty Council approves 18 program closures

By Halley Griffin, Daily News staff writer

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Eighteen University of Idaho degree programs moved a step closer to elimination Tuesday.

A more contentious round of cuts will be considered by the UI Faculty Council next week.

The council approved 18 notices of intent to close programs at its Tuesday meeting, with the addition of one notice of intent to merge the departments of chemical engineering and material science and engineering.

Each notice of intent was first approved by the University Curriculum Committee, which is led by department of art and design faculty member Jill Dacey.

Half of the courses on the chopping block Tuesday were master of arts in teaching degrees in an array of subjects, including Spanish, French, German, biology, history, chemistry, Earth science and geology.

"All those (master of arts in teaching degrees), the departments have no problem," Dacey said, adding that the College of Science or the College of Education will develop replacement teaching programs.

The rest of the programs had very low enrollment, Dacey said. They included a certificate in advanced materials design, a bachelor of science degree in technology and training development, education specialist degrees in education, counseling and special education, and master of science degrees in professional-technical and technology education, educational leadership, curriculum and instruction, and special education.

The proposed cuts and consolidation will now go before the State Board of Education, which has the final say on the matter. The board could consider the council's recommendations during its April meeting.

Provost Doug Baker thanked the council for participating in the process of streamlining the university's functions.

"There is a cost, even though there are hardly any students" enrolled in the programs, Baker said.

The notices were approved with virtually no discussion, and are among 41 proposed program closures or consolidations.

While some are proceeding forward without controversy, others like the undergraduate degrees in physics and communication studies are more contentious.

One notice of intent was pushed back to next week's meeting, when the more controversial programs are expected to be discussed.

The notice, a proposal to drop a master of science degree in geological engineering, was denied by the curriculum committee.

Council member Ed Schmeckpeper made the motion to postpone the discussion of the geological engineering degree until Engineering Dean Don Blacketter could be present.