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## **MCTC Proposed Program Suspension Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Q: What does academic program suspension mean?**

A: Program suspension closes the program to new enrollment. Programs can be suspended for multiple reasons, but often programs are suspended prior to program closures to ensure no new students enroll in the program.

### **Q: Why is MCTC recommending that some programs be suspended?**

A: At MCTC, we want to make sure that the academic programs we offer provide the best outcomes for students in terms of transferability and employment, are cost effective and sustainable, and fit with the College's mission. Some of our programs do not meet these outcomes.

As part of an annual program review process, the college is recommending suspending some programs. The decision to suspend programs doesn't reflect on the quality of the programs or faculty.

### **Q: Which programs are being recommended for suspension?**

A: College leaders have recommended suspending the following programs: Air Traffic Control, Barbering, Biotechnology, Culinary Arts, Electrical Construction and Technology, and Electroneurodiagnostic Technology. Enrollment in these programs has been suspended for new students.

### **Q: Why is each particular program being recommended for suspension?**

A: **Air Traffic Control**—The number of students enrolled in the program has been declining since 2010, but enrollment dropped very significantly in December 2013, after the FAA announced that it would no longer give preferential interviews to applicants from MCTC or the country's other 35 College Training Initiative air traffic control programs. After the FAA announcement, the number of enrollees declined by two-thirds in one year, with only 14 students entering the pathway this fall. With the drop in enrollment, the historically high costs to operate the program have become even higher on a per-student basis, making this program unsustainable.

**Barbering**—Wages for graduates of this program are relatively low. According to the 2014 First Quarter DEED Detailed Occupational Data, the median hourly wage for barbers is \$12.12. This is below the City of Minneapolis' published livable wage standard of \$14.91 per hour. There are almost no salaried jobs for barbers, and few postings for barber jobs. Given the difficult job market in this field, this program has one of the highest student loan

default rates at the college. The cost to operate the program relative to the number of students enrolled is high. As alternatives, cosmetology programs are offered in the metro area at Saint Paul College and Century College.

**Biotechnology**—The Biotechnology program was created in 2006 with the anticipation of a coming biotechnology boom in Minnesota. However, the growth in biotechnology has not materialized to draw large numbers of students to this program. Since the program was launched, there have never been more than nine graduates from the program per year. Given its low enrollment and high cost, the program is very expensive to operate on a per-student basis. As alternatives, MCTC also offers both biology and chemistry two-year associates' degrees, and those programs can serve students who seek careers in biotech, but also prepare them more broadly for a range of career options.

**Culinary Arts**—Despite an increase in enrollment of nearly 30 percent between 2011 and 2014, most of the Culinary Arts courses remain under-enrolled. In addition, average wages earned by graduates have remained low. According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, cooks average \$9.98/hour. Chef wages nationally average \$20.42/hour, but there are fewer jobs for chefs than cooks and the growth in chef jobs will be slower than average. Given the difficult job market in this field, this program has one of the highest student loan default rates at the college. For those who wish to pursue culinary careers, there are several other colleges in the Twin Cities area that offer culinary programs, including sister institutions within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. These include Saint Paul College and Hennepin Technical College.

**Electrical Construction and Technology**—Electrical Construction and Technology, like many of our career and technical programs, was initiated to fulfill the need for electricians in the state. While the need for electrician apprentices has increased in the past few years, the number of students who graduate from the Electrical Construction and Technology program is low. The MCTC program graduates about seven students per year at a high annual cost. Similar programs are offered in the metro area at Saint Paul College, Anoka Technical College, and Dakota County Technical College.

**Electroneurodiagnostic Technology (ENDT)**—The ENDT program prepares students for well-paying careers, and 100 percent of graduates are employed in the field. However, enrollment has been chronically low, with just 13 students graduating last year. The program is expensive to operate, and less than half of the students who enroll complete the program.

**Q: If my program is suspended, is there a chance it will be reinstated rather than closed?**

A: It depends. Programs that have been suspended can only be reinstated with the approval of the chancellor at the request of the college. The college needs to submit a reinstatement plan that outlines why the program was suspended and how the college will ensure the success of the program moving forward. To this end, the colleges need to develop a reinstatement plan that addresses a number of factors (i.e. academic program need, enrollment trends, employment outlook, etc.).

**Q: If my program is suspended, will I have the ability to finish my coursework and graduate?**

A: It depends. Students currently enrolled in a program identified for suspension and/or closure will be contacted if they are eligible to complete their program of study. To be eligible, students need to have both declared the program as their major and be progressing through their major coursework. In addition, student records will be analyzed to ensure that students do not have financial holds or other issues that would prevent them from completing the program. All students with a declared major who have been enrolled within the past two years in one of the suspended courses will receive a communication regarding their specific eligibility.

**Q: How will I be notified if I am eligible to finish my program?**

A: Students will receive an email and letter from the College. The email will be sent to their College-assigned email address. Both the email and letter will be sent the week of Oct. 27.

**Q: Will I still be able to use financial aid for a program that has been suspended?**

A: Yes. As long as your academic program was financial aid eligible prior to the program suspension, the academic program will continue to be financial aid eligible.

**Q: Will my degree still be valid if the program I received it from is suspended or closed?**

A: Yes. However, students who do not complete the degree requirements for a specific program of study within the suspension timeframe will not be eligible to earn the program credential. Students who are enrolled in a program that is suspended may be required to take a full-time level of credits.

**Q: Will I have to complete my program in an accelerated format?**

A: Most eligible students will need to maintain a full-time status while they complete their program of study. It may be possible for a student to complete their program of study part time if they have earned sufficient credits in the program to do so.

**Q: Will I be required to attend summer school? If so, will I be able to use financial aid?**

A: It depends on the program. Students may be required to take summer courses in order to complete their program of study. Summer financial aid eligibility is based on funds remaining after the previous fall and spring terms. Summer award letters will be posted on [eServices](#) within a week of registering for your summer courses.

**Q: If I am not eligible to complete my program, can I appeal the decision? If yes, how?**

A: Students who have been determined to be ineligible to complete a program of study will have the ability to appeal the decision to the Academic Dean of the specific program. The Academic Dean will review the appeal and supporting documentation to determine if the student should be permitted to complete their program of study within the specified timeframe.