

Request for Program Discontinuation

Proponent's Contact Information	
Program to be Discontinued:	BSc in Computing and Network Communications (CNET), offered jointly with Sheridan College
Date effective:	September 2022
Academic Unit:	Department of Computer Science
Submitted by:	Brian J. Ross, Chair
Email:	bross@brocku.ca
Date Submitted:	January 16, 2023

The Request for Program Discontinuation shall include:

<p>Rationale for the Proposed Discontinuation Provide a clear rationale for the request, documenting the results of program committee discussions.</p> <p>The CNET program began nearly 20 years ago, as a joint program between Brock University and Sheridan College. After a meeting on August 23, 2022, with our Sheridan College partners, both parties agreed that the program is not viable. The reasons for this decision are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Low student interest, and high attrition rate. Currently, only 2 students are in the 4th year at Brock, and only 1 student in the upper-year at Sheridan College. Historically, there has been low interest and student success in the program. Furthermore, the complexity of a curriculum split between two institutions means there are few alternate degree pathways for students who must drop out of CNET studies. 2. Obsolete curriculum. Computing and networking technology have grown in complexity since the inception of the program 20 years ago. The CNET curriculum has not kept pace with these changes. The overhaul needed to update the CNET program would be substantial, and cannot be justified considering the low student interest. Neither institution wishes to pursue any revision to the program.
<p>Details of Resource Implications Describe how resources of the program (human, physical and budgetary) will be redistributed.</p> <p>There are no dedicated resources (physical or budgetary) for CNET, other than significant time required by the Computer Science program advisor to advise CNET students when problems arise. Freeing up this time will be easily redirected towards advising the high number of computer science majors.</p>
<p>Termination Plan and Timing of Discontinuation A phased closure plan and timeline for the program discontinuation, taking into account the requirements of those students currently enrolled in the program to allow them to meet requirements for graduation.</p> <p>Fall 2022 will be the final cohort. Students currently in the program will be allowed to finish their studies.</p>
<p>Evidence and Documentation of Consultation Include the results of any consultation with other units (academic or administrative) that will be impacted by the program discontinuation.</p> <p>Please see email communications with the Dean, Faculty of Mathematics & Science, Brock's CCEE office and Sheridan College attached.</p>

Decanal Comments

Include certification that the proposed discontinuation is appropriate and in line with the strategic direction of the Faculty. For undergraduate programs, the relevant Dean(s) shall be the Dean(s) of the Faculty within which the program resides. For graduate programs, the relevant Deans shall be the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Dean(s) of the relevant Faculty or Faculties.



Peter Berg, Dean FMS

Subject: RE: Outcome of CNET renewal discussions

Date: Tuesday, August 23, 2022 at 3:26:35 PM Eastern Daylight Saving Time

From: S. Ejaz Ahmed

To: Brian Ross, Brian Power

CC: Donna Phelps, Miriam Richards, Michelle Knapman

Dear Brian,

Thanks to you and team for time and effort on this matter, and I support the decision. I am wondering if the department has approved the decision as well?

Best,
Ejaz

From: Brian Ross <bross@brocku.ca>

Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2022 3:22 PM

To: S. Ejaz Ahmed <sahmed5@brocku.ca>; Brian Power <bpower@brocku.ca>

Cc: Donna Phelps <dphelps@brocku.ca>; Miriam Richards <mrichards@brocku.ca>; Michelle Knapman <mknapman@brocku.ca>

Subject: Outcome of CNET renewal discussions

Dear Ejaz and Brian,

You might recall that the BSc in Computing and Network Communications (CNET) degree has been up for renewal for many years. This is a joint program between Brock and Sheridan College that started in 2002. Since 2018, Donna Phelps and I began conversations with relevant people at Sheridan College to explore its renewal; the last agreement expired years earlier. The renewal process has been slow, unfortunately, and there also unavoidable delays.

Our partners at Sheridan College have had time to reflect on the merits and problems with CNET. Today they met with Donna, Michelle Knappman, Scarlet Stark, and myself. After some frank discussion, the conclusion is that neither Sheridan College nor the Department of Computer Science believe the program is viable, and we agree that it should be discontinued. The reasons for this conclusion are as follows:

1. **Low student interest.** Historically, there has been little interest in the program. Currently, there are only 2 year-4 students. Conversely, Sheridan now has 1 lone student in their upper—year of CNET. The program consequently is expensive for them and us to manage, and hard to justify.
2. **High attrition rate, inflexible program.** CNET students struggle with year 1 and 2 COSC courses (as do other COSC majors). Given the relatively few students who enter CNET, many drop the program before their first CO-OP term, or attending Sheridan College for their courses. By necessity, the curriculum is rigid. Should a student fail a course, the usual outcome is that they must be removed from the program.
3. **Technology has advanced.** Networking technology has advanced significantly since the CNET degree began in 2002. The current courses in the curriculum are inadequate as a result. CNET students are significantly disadvantaged when they attend Sheridan College's courses (taken by Sheridan's other degree majors). Sheridan College did ask if we could offer an introductory networking course for CNET students, to prepare them for Sheridan's courses. The answer is an unequivocal no -- we will not add a new course for this purpose. We have more pressing priorities right now, for our existing degrees and

new degrees (BSc Data Science, PhD ISDS, Engineering initiative,...).

Consequently, at today's meeting, all the parties agreed that it is time to discontinue CNET. I support this decision, which I feel is sound and ethically the best one for students. However, we all agreed that there may be new opportunities between Sheridan College and Brock in the future.

I must thank Donna for her **many** hours of hard work during this renewal process, as well as when advising CNET students over the years. Since those who designed CNET have retired, it has been a challenge to renew this degree without our department's "institutional memory" of CNET and its origins.

Regards,
Brian

Brian J. Ross
Professor and Chair
Department of Computer Science
Brock University
bross@brocku.ca
www.cosc.brocku.ca/~bross/

Subject: RE: Outcome of CNET renewal discussions
Date: Thursday, August 25, 2022 at 1:29:32 PM Eastern Daylight Saving Time
From: Julia Zhu
To: Brian Ross
CC: Donna Phelps, Cara Krezek

Hi Brian,

Thank you for looping us in.

Would you be able let me know when the CNET program will be discontinued? Are we looking at grandfathering any current and coming CNET students or they will be switching to a different program?

Thank you for your support.

Regards,
Julia

Julia Zhu, MA

Associate Director, Co-op Education

Brock University | Co-op, Career & Experiential Education

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From: Brian Ross <bross@brocku.ca>
Sent: Thursday, August 25, 2022 10:53 AM
To: Julia Zhu <lzhu@brocku.ca>
Cc: Donna Phelps <dphelps@brocku.ca>
Subject: FW: Outcome of CNET renewal discussions

Hi Julia,

Hope you had a good summer! It went by too quickly though.

For your information, both the department of computer science, as well as our partners at Sheridan College, have made the decision that the Computing and Network Communications BSc program should be terminated. There are many reasons (please see email below). This decision will affect your office as well, given CNET's co-op component. However, the primary reason for this decision is the low number of students in the program, and thus the impact will be minimal to all participating parties.

Anyway, if you would please acknowledge this email, I can then inform the Provost office that your office has been informed.

Regards,
Brian

Brian J. Ross
Professor and Chair
Department of Computer Science
Brock University
bross@brocku.ca
www.cosc.brocku.ca/~bross/

From: Brian Ross <bross@brocku.ca>
Date: Tuesday, August 23, 2022 at 3:22 PM
To: Ejaz Ahmed <sahmed5@brocku.ca>, Brian Power <bpower@brocku.ca>
Cc: Donna Phelps <dphelps@brocku.ca>, Miriam Richards <mrichards@brocku.ca>, Michelle Knapman <mknapman@brocku.ca>
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Regards,
Brian

Brian J. Ross
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Subject: Re: CNET program discontinuation
Date: Friday, September 16, 2022 at 5:02:29 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From: Sherri Murray
To: Mark Orlando, Brian Ross
CC: Donna Phelps

Hi Everyone:

I am meeting with the Vice Provost on Wednesday so should have a response by the end of next week.

Sherri

From: Mark Orlando <mark.orlando@sheridancollege.ca>
Date: Friday, September 16, 2022 at 4:52 PM
To: Brian Ross <bross@brocku.ca>, Sherri Murray <sherri.murray@sheridancollege.ca>
Cc: Donna Phelps <dphelps@brocku.ca>
Subject: Re: CNET program discontinuation

Hi Brian,

We are following a similar process here. I am hoping we can synchronize our process with yours. Could you hold off finalizing for a week or so? We can probably get something that works for both our institutions. I am copying [@Sherri Murray](#) who is working on a document now for your review. Sherri, do you have an approximate ETA?

It has been a pleasure working with you Brian. I am hoping we can collaborate again sometime in the future.

Warm regards,

Mark

Mark Orlando, MSc (*He/Him*)
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From: Brian Ross <bross@brocku.ca>
Sent: Monday, September 12, 2022 9:35 AM
To: Mark Orlando <mark.orlando@sheridancollege.ca>
Cc: Donna Phelps <dphelps@brocku.ca>
Subject: CNET program discontinuation

This message was sent from outside of Sheridan College. Please be careful when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding to requests for information.

Hi Mark,

I hope your start of term is going well.

We are about to submit the paperwork to discontinue the CNET articulation agreement between our institutions. One item I must include is evidence of communication between us that shows that we are in agreement with this decision. I think that an email acknowledgement from you will suffice, that shows agreement with the decision from our last Teams meeting:

- The CNET program will be terminated.
- Current students in the program will be allowed to finish their programs.

Therefore, if it is not too much trouble, would you please send me a response to this email stating that you concur with this conclusion? Then we can get the program formally removed from our calendar.

With thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Ross
Professor and Chair
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bross@brocku.ca
www.cosc.brocku.ca/~bross/