

Saddleback College Program Vitality Inquiry Policy and Process

Background and Philosophy

Pursuant to Title 5, Section 51022, “College districts are required by regulation and statute to develop a process for program discontinuance and minimum criteria for the discontinuance of occupational programs.” Additionally, Education Code §78016 stipulates that every vocational and occupational program shall meet certain requirements prior to termination.

As part of a series of position papers on academic and professional matters, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) has recommended that local senates develop a process for program discontinuance (not just limited to occupational programs) that takes into account the following issues:

- effect on students,
- college curriculum balance,
- educational and budget planning,
- regional economics and training,
- collective bargaining agreements.

The Saddleback College Academic Senate has established a Program Discontinuance Inquiry (PDI) policy in accordance with the aforementioned sections of the Education Code, Title 5, and ASCCC recommendations. In its paper, “Program Discontinuance: A Faculty Perspective,” the ASCCC outlines issues and criteria to consider in creating this process. In addition, it states, “The development of a program discontinuance process, should be considered within the context of the college mission statement, and should be linked with the college educational master plan and the department’s goals and objectives.”

Process

I. Definitions

- Program:** An organized sequence of courses leading to a defined objective, a degree, certificate, diploma, license, or transfer to another institution of higher education (CCR Title 5, Section 55000). (e.g. completing a program of study leading to a certificate in Computer Maintenance Technology, an AS degree in Business, or transfer).
- Committee:** When a formal discussion is initiated, the academic senate will form a Program Vitality Inquiry Committee whose membership will include the Faculty Curriculum Coordinator, Faculty Educational Planning and Assessment Co-Chair, Vice President for Instruction, Division Dean, and all program faculty or, if there are no fulltime faculty, a minimum of two tenured faculty from a related discipline selected by the Academic Senate.

II. Initiating an Inquiry into Program Vitality

A Program Vitality Inquiry (PVI) can be initiated in college governance forums including the Consultation Council, VPI Council, and the Academic Senate, as well as in the relevant division or department meeting. In order to initiate the process, a formal written request must be made to the Academic

Senate indicating the grounds for such an inquiry, such as the viability for transfer or a perceived failure to comply with Education Code §78016.

Pursuant to BP2100.1, whereby the Board of Trustees relies primarily on the advice of the Academic Senate in academic and professional matters, the Academic Senate shall have a fundamental and integral role in any inquiry into program discontinuance.

III. Formation and Charge of the Program Vitality Inquiry Committee

When a formal written request is received, the Academic Senate will form the PVI Committee. The Committee will be charged with:

1. Electing a chair from its prescribed membership.
2. Exercising discretion to expand its membership to include program support staff and student services representatives.
3. Gathering all qualitative and quantitative evidence into a written report.
4. Participating in all public meetings and discussions.
5. Recommending to the Academic Senate one of the three potential outcomes of the PVI process.

IV. Evaluation Criteria

Both qualitative evidence and quantitative evidence as indicated below shall be evaluated within the discussion concerning program discontinuance:

a. Qualitative Evidence

The committee shall gather qualitative evidence to assess the program's alignment with the mission, values, and goals of the institution, and access and equity for students. Factors to be considered may include, but are not limited to:

1. The pedagogy of the discipline, (are the methods, analyses, and techniques currently used appropriate and updated?)
2. The balance of college curriculum.
3. The development of the whole student.
4. The effect of program discontinuance on students and student learning outcomes.
5. The potential for a disproportionate impact on diversity.
6. The quality of the program, which may include input from program review, student evaluations, articulating universities, local businesses and/or industry, and the community.
7. The ability of students to complete their degrees or certificates or to transfer. This includes maintaining rights of students as stipulated in the college catalog.
8. The replication of programs in the surrounding area.
9. The ability of programs to meet standards of outside accrediting agencies, licensing boards and governing bodies.
10. The ability of programs to meet standards of outside accrediting agencies, licensing boards and governing bodies.

b. Quantitative Evidence

The quantitative evidence may include, but is not limited to:

1. Enrollment trends over the past five years.
2. The projected demand for the program in the future.
3. The persistence of students in the program.
4. Frequency of course section offerings.
5. Term to term persistence of students within the program.
6. Retention or success rates of students.
7. Student completion rate.
8. Productivity in terms of WSCH per FTE ratios.
9. Success rate of students passing state and national licensing exams.
10. Enrollment trends over a sustained period of time.

c. Discussion Guidelines

1. Inquiry into program discontinuance shall include faculty, staff, administrators and all parties potentially affected by the decision. These parties may also include students, the employing business/industry, and the community.
2. Discussions will be conducted by the Academic Senate in public, open meetings. The dates, times and locations of these meetings will be published using all reasonable means of college communications.
3. Discussions will include both qualitative and quantitative evidence. Sources of data for all evidence will be referenced and cited.
4. A written record of all discussions and recommendations will be kept at the Academic Senate office for review by the public.

V. Possible Recommendations of the Program Vitality Inquiry Committee

There are three possible recommendations the PVI Committee can make. A program may be recommended to continue, to continue with qualifications, or to discontinue.

a. Recommendation to Continue

The recommendation for a program to continue shall be based upon the aforementioned qualitative and quantitative criteria and will be documented in writing by the Committee and maintained by the Academic Senate.

b. Recommendation to Continue with Qualifications and/or Recommendations for Revitalization

Based upon the aforementioned qualitative and quantitative criteria, a program may be recommended to continue with qualifications and/or recommendations for revitalization. These qualifications and/or recommendations must include any requirements imposed by an external regulatory, governing or licensing body to which the program is subject. A specific timeline will be provided during which these interventions will occur and expected outcomes will be specified in writing and made available to all concerned parties.

All interventions and timelines will be documented in writing by the Committee and maintained by the Academic Senate. After the specified qualification period is completed the program will be again evaluated based upon the aforementioned qualitative and quantitative criteria by the PVI Committee.

c. Recommendation to Discontinue

The recommendation for a program to be discontinued shall be based upon the aforementioned qualitative and quantitative criteria and will be documented in writing by the Committee and maintained by the Academic Senate. A recommendation to discontinue is mandated if so ordered by an external regulatory, governing or licensing body to which the program is subject.

If a program is recommended for discontinuance, the following procedures will be implemented:

- A plan and timeline for phasing out the program will be completed. The plan shall include procedures to allow currently enrolled students to complete their programs of study in accordance with the rights of students as stipulated in the college catalog.
- A plan for the implementation of all collective bargaining requirements for faculty and staff.
- The plan must include any recommendations imposed by an external regulatory, governing or licensing body to which the program is subject.

VI. Conclusion of the Process

The Committee’s recommendation shall be forwarded to the Curriculum Committee for information and to the Academic Senate for action. The Academic Senate’s recommendation will then be forwarded to the College President for action, who may consult with the Consultation Council. Pursuant to Title 5 Section 53203(d) (1), “the recommendation of the Senate will normally be accepted, and only in exceptional circumstances and for compelling reasons will the recommendation not be accepted. If a recommendation is not accepted, [the President] shall promptly communicate [his or her] reasons in writing to the Academic Senate.”

Reference Bibliography

- Program Discontinuance: A Faculty Perspective. ASCCC, adopted Spring 1998
- Title 5 Section 55130
- Title 5 Section 51022 Instructional Program
- Title 5 Section 53203(d)(1)
- Education Code Section 78016 Review of program: Termination

Approved by Academic Senate on April 20, 2005

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