

**Process for Program Discontinuance**

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**Background and Philosophy**

In accordance with Title 5, Section 51022, “College districts are required by current regulation and statute to develop a process for program discontinuance....”. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) has recommended that local senates create a process for program discontinuance that takes into account the following issues:

- negative effects on students,
- college curriculum balance,
- educational [and budget] planning,
- regional economic and training issues, and
- collective bargaining issues.

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.” In formulating this process, all recommendations of the ASCCC have been considered. Fundamentally, the spirit of access and equity for students must be considered throughout.

Program Review, the Educational & Facilities Master Plan, and other strategic planning activities should be referenced and considered among sources of data and direction in this process, but it is important to emphasize that their primary purpose and use is not to target programs for discontinuance. It is also important to note that program discontinuance should occur only after most serious deliberation, and after all recommended intervention strategies have been implemented but still result in a program that falls outside the college’s mission and master plan, and the department’s goals and objectives. Finally, it is imperative to state that the purpose of a program discontinuance process is to have criteria in place to guide a discussion should it ever be needed. It should not be construed as an inducement to look for programs to discontinue, or to discourage participation in an academic process such as program review.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

The Victor Valley College Academic Senate is establishing its Program Discontinuance Policy in accordance with Title 5, Section 51022, and in consideration of the recommendations and guidelines of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. The primary purpose of this policy is not intended to target programs for discontinuance, but rather to establish criteria and guidelines for the decision-making

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process. Program Review, the Educational & Facilities Master Plan, and other strategic planning activities shall be referenced and considered among sources of data and direction within the process. Program discontinuance should be considered only if, after most serious deliberation, and after all recommended intervention strategies have been implemented, a program continues to fall outside the college's mission and master plan, as well as the department's goals and objectives. The policy should not be construed as an inducement to look for programs to discontinue, or to discourage participation in an academic process such as program review. The Executive Board will disseminate the necessary information regarding any program considered for discontinuance at the monthly Academic Senate meeting.

**PROCESS**

**I. Definitions**

Due to various uses of the following terms, for the purposes of this process, the following will be the definition of discipline, program and department:

**A. Discipline:** An individual area of study within a program for transfer or associates degree for certificate programs.

**B. Program:** An organized sequence of courses leading to a defined objective, a degree, a certificate, a diploma, a license, or transfer to another institution of higher education (CCR Title 5 Section 55000).

**C. Department:** A collection of associated disciplines and programs

**II. Initiating A Discussion on Program Discontinuance**

- Program discontinuance discussions can be initiated by administration or the affected divisions and departments.
- The Academic Senate and its relevant committees, including the Curriculum Committee, must have a fundamental and integral role in any discussion of program discontinuance, recognizing the district's policy to rely primarily on the Academic Senate's advice in academic matters.
- The instructor(s) and the department chair of the program being considered will have the opportunity to present the program's relevance at the cabinet level.
- The instructor(s) and the department chair of the program being considered for discontinuance should be given 6 months to do research and provide documentation of the relevance of their program and what action, if any, should be taken.

**III. Discussion Criteria**

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The discussion concerning any specific program considered for discontinuance must necessarily have two components: Qualitative and Quantitative. Both qualitative indicators and quantitative indicators must be discussed in order to have a fair and complete review leading to a decision to either continue or discontinue a program.

**A. Qualitative Indicators**

Qualitative indicators are based on the mission, values, and goals of the institution, and access and equity for students. These indicators include, but are not limited to:

- The pedagogy of the discipline.
- The development of the whole student.
- The relevant educational experience for each student.
- The balance of college curriculum.
- The effect on students of discontinuing the program.
- The potential for a disproportionate impact on diversity at Victor Valley College.
- The quality of the program and how it is perceived by students, articulating universities, local business and industry, and the community.
- The ability of students to complete their degree or certificate or to transfer. This includes maintaining the catalog rights of students.
- The replication of programs in the surrounding area.

**B. Quantitative Indicators**

The list of quantitative indicators is long. Any and/or all of these quantitative indicators need to be reviewed to inform the discussion on program discontinuance. They include, but are not limited to:

- The projected demand for the program in the future.
- The persistence of students in the program.
- Enrollment trends over a sustained period of time.
- Frequency of course section offerings.
- Term to term persistence (significantly below the college average) of students within the program.
- Retention or success rates (significantly below the college average) of students.
- Productivity in terms of the FTEs (actual) per FTEF ratio (the version of WSCH/FTE that takes enrollment activity for all attendance types into consideration).
- Number of graduates from the program (where applicable).
- When the discipline is being considered for termination: The decline in importance of service to those in related programs.
- The placement rate of students in the job market over the past 3-5 years.

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- The number of students completing certificates and/or associate degrees in that field over the past 3-5 years.

**C. Discussion Guidelines**

- Discussion of program discontinuance must include all parties potentially affected by the decision. These include faculty, staff, administrators, students, the employing business and industry, and the community. Extraordinary efforts must be employed to ensure that the student and community voice is heard.
- Discussion of program discontinuance will be conducted in public, open meetings. The dates, times and locations of these meetings will be published using all means of college communications including print, email and voicemail and local news outlets/press releases.
- Discussions will be conducted using the best practices for meeting facilitation, including agreed upon ground rules, and recording and publishing outcomes of discussions.
- Discussions will include both qualitative and quantitative indicators. Sources of data for all indicators will be referenced and cited.
- Deliberations and conclusions shall rely primarily on the advice of the Academic Senate per district policy.

**IV. Possible Outcomes of Program Discontinuance Discussion**

There are three potential outcomes of the Program Discontinuance process. A program may be recommended to continue, to continue with qualification, or to discontinue.

**A. Recommendation to Continue**

A program recommended to continue will do so when after full and open consideration it is decided that it is in the best interest of the college, its students, and the larger community to do so. The conclusions resulting in this recommendation will be documented in writing, maintained by the Academic Senate and forwarded to the Executive Vice President of Instruction as information. No further action is required.

**B. Recommendation to Continue with Qualifications**

A program may be recommended to continue with qualifications. These qualifications may include specific interventions designed to improve the viability and responsiveness of the program. A specific timeline will be provided during which these interventions will occur and expected outcomes will be outlined in advance. All interventions and timelines will be published in writing by an agreed upon party, maintained by the Academic Senate and forwarded to the Executive Vice President of Instruction as information. After the specified qualification period is completed the program will be reviewed again.

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**C. Recommendation to Discontinue**

A recommendation to discontinue a program will occur when, after a full and open discussion, it is concluded that the program falls outside the college's values and mission and/or the department's goals and objectives. Any recommendation for program discontinuance will include the following:

- The criteria used to arrive at the recommendation, verified by an agreed upon neutral party.
- A detailed plan and timeline for phasing out the program with the least impact to students, faculty, staff and the community. Due consideration will be given to mechanisms to allow currently enrolled students to complete their programs of study. Students' catalog rights will be maintained and accounted for in allowing them to finish the program.
- A plan for the implementation of all requirements of collective bargaining for faculty and staff, including application of policies for reduction in force and opportunities to retrain.

This recommendation and discontinuance plan will be documented in writing by agreed upon parties, which will include the signatures of the Superintendent President, Executive Vice-President of Instruction, department chair(s), Dean(s) and the Academic Senate President. The final recommendation will be maintained locally by the Academic Senate and presented to the Board of Trustees for approval if deemed necessary.

Reference Bibliography

- \_ Program Discontinuance: A Faculty Perspective. ASCCC, adopted Spring 1998
- \_ Title 5 Section 55130
- \_ Title 5 Section 51022 Instructional Program
- \_ Education Code Section 78016 Review of program: Termination