3D. Program Viability

Suggested Program Viability Process

Documents proposing revisions to policy and process regarding program viability were distributed to faculty, administrators, and students for feedback in 2002-2003. By the end of the spring 2003 semester, the proposed program discontinuance (renamed Program Viability) draft had been approved by all district colleges' Curriculum Committees, Academic Senate Governing Councils, the District Curriculum Committee, and the AFT Executive Committee. Below is a description of the Program Viability Process:

I. Definitions

A program is defined as an organized sequence of courses leading to a defined objective, a degree, a certificate, or transfer to another institution of higher education (SMCCCD Board Policy 6.13). At the discretion of the local college, student service programs which include an instructional component may be considered using this process.

II. Initiating a Discussion on Program Viability (Improvement/Discontinuance)

Program viability discussions may be initiated by any constituency or group. When a program has indications of not meeting the college's mission, strategic plans, division or departmental goals and objectives, and intervention strategies have been attempted, this process is initiated. Regardless of where the discussion is initiated, the Academic Senate and its committees, including its Curriculum Committee, in accordance with the District's policy to "rely primarily" on the Academic Senate's advice in academic matters, will guide the process and produce the recommendation to the appropriate body.

NOTE: If there is consistent consensus among all interested parties and stakeholders that a program should be discontinued, the Curriculum Committee may recommend discontinuance without initiating a formal procedure.

III. The Task Force

A sub-committee, under the direction of the Curriculum Committee, shall undertake the evaluation process. To facilitate and enhance a balanced examination of a program, discussions of program viability must include representation from all parties affected by the decision. These may include faculty, staff, administrators, students, the employing business and industry (if applicable), the community, and others deemed necessary by the Curriculum Committee.

NOTE: To complement the active acquisition of information, the sub-committee may organize an open meeting or forum to allow any interested individuals to make presentations of concerns or issues to the members of the sub-committee.

IV. Discussion Criteria
Discussions will include both qualitative and quantitative indicators. Sources of data will be referenced and cited.

    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:

1. balance of the college curriculum;
2. effect on students of discontinuing the program;
3. potential for a disproportionate impact on any one group of students;
4. quality of the program and how it is perceived by students, articulating universities, local business and industry, and the community;
5. ability of students to complete their degree or certificate or to transfer, including maintaining catalog rights of students;
6. replication of programs in the District/surrounding area;
7. community needs assessment;
8. student employability;
9. change in college mission.

B. **Quantitative Indicators**
There are many quantitative indicators that must be considered in any discussion of program viability. Any data used as a basis for decision-making must be sound, comprehensive, uniform and reliable. Quantitative Indicators include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. enrollment and retention trends
2. persistence/completion/success of students in the program
3. program review reports
4. FTEF Allocation Committee discussions
5. cost effectiveness

V. Possible Outcomes
A program may be recommended to continue, to continue with modifications, to consolidate, to relocate, to be put on hiatus, or to be discontinued.

VI. Recommendations
Recommendations on program viability shall rely primarily on the advice of the Academic Senate through its sub-committees, per District policy.

Final recommendations of the sub-committee will be forwarded in writing to the Curriculum Committee, who will review the report and forward it to the appropriate office, including the Office of Instruction and the Academic Senate. All recommendations will be maintained by the Academic Senate.

If the recommendation is to discontinue a program, the signatures of the Vice President of Instruction, the college President and other appropriate administrators, the ASSC President, and the Academic Senate President will be obtained before the recommendation is presented to the Board of Trustees for approval, if deemed necessary. The information of a program's discontinuance should also be reported to the State Chancellor's Office on the form entitled, "Non-Substantial Changes to Approved Program or Change of Active-Inactive Status," found in the "Program and Course Approval Handbook."

The written recommendation for discontinuance will include the criteria used to arrive at the recommendation, a plan and timeline for phasing out the program, and a plan for the implementation of all requirements of collective bargaining.

NOTE: District Board of Trustees Policy 6.13 and Procedure 6.13.1 pertain to Curriculum development, program review and program viability.