

PROGRAM DISCONTINUANCE

AP No. 4021

Board Reviewed: 8-15-07; 5-13-15; 6-8-16; 5-8-19

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I. Initiation of Program Discontinuance

Program discontinuance is an academic and professional matter. Considerations that are integral to this procedure include its effects on students, curriculum, budget and planning, and regional labor needs in the case of career and technical disciplines.

The procedure for program discontinuance should have no adverse effect on current students, involve the creation of a timeline for review and recommendations for improvement and action, and ensure the responsibility for program discontinuance is the shared function of faculty and administration.

The Program Review Committee, the administration, or the faculty, in consultation with the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Academic Senate, can request an analysis for the discontinuance of a program. This does not need to occur within the planning or program review period, which shall be every two years for career and technical education programs and every six years for academic programs.

II. Initial Analysis

Elements in the program discontinuance analysis may include, but are not limited to:

Qualitative data

1. Effects on students
2. Balance in the college curriculum
3. Education and budget planning
4. Issues of regional coordination for occupational programs
5. Quality of the breadth and depth of the curriculum
6. The teaching and learning process
7. Student satisfaction
8. Perception of the program at articulating universities, local businesses and/or industry, and the community
9. Factors of employment in business and industry
10. Goals and objectives in the Educational Master Plan

Quantitative Data

1. Enrollment trends (e.g., lack of demand) over a sustained period of time
2. Frequency of course section offerings to assure reasonable availability for students
3. Retention rates
4. Success rates
5. Term-to-term persistence for those in courses in the program
6. Student completion rates
7. Demand in the local and regional workforce
8. Availability of transfer major
9. Cost to develop and maintain program.

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III. Program Discontinuance Task Force

The Vice-President of Academic Affairs, in consultation with the Academic Senate, will form the Program Discontinuance Task Force. The task force will be co-chaired by the Vice President and the Academic Senate President or their designees. Members shall include a faculty member in the division containing the program, the dean of the affected division, one other dean, and one faculty member who is not in the affected division. Faculty are appointed by the Academic Senate. Where appropriate, program support staff, student services personnel, and the community may be invited to participate. Meetings of the task force shall be public.

IV. The charge to the Program Discontinuance Task Force is:

1. Gather and evaluate all qualitative and quantitative evidence
2. Recommend to the Superintendent/President, the Academic Senate and the Planning Fiscal Council that a program should
 - a. Continue
 - b. Continue with Qualifications
 - c. Discontinue

V. The task force will review the materials related to the program analysis, as well as data supporting the following criteria:

A. Career and Technical Education Programs

1. Declining market/industry demand
2. Advisory Committee recommendation
3. Decreasing number of students enrolled
4. Low or decreasing WSCH/FTEF
5. Poor rate for student achievement of program goals (e.g. completion rate, numbers of degrees and certificates, job placement)
6. Decline in importance of service to related disciplines (applies only when discipline does not offer degree or certificate)

B. Academic Programs

1. Declining university transfer trends
2. Insufficient frequency of course offerings to assure reasonable opportunity for completion of the program
3. Lack of available resources
4. Poor retention within courses
5. Poor rate for student achievement of program goals (e.g. completion rate, numbers of degrees and certificates)
6. Unavailability of the transfer major
7. Poor term-to-term persistence for students in the major

VI. Within 90 days of being convened, the task force will determine which recommendation shall be forwarded to the Superintendent/President, the Academic Senate, and the Planning and Fiscal Council.

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- A. Recommendation to Continue – A recommendation for a program to continue must contain a documented argument based on the qualitative and quantitative data.
- B. Recommendation to Continue with Qualifications – A recommendation for a program to continue with qualifications must contain a documented argument based on the qualitative and quantitative data. Qualifications may consist of requirements of an external regulatory, governing, or licensing body to which the program is subject.

The task force will create a timeline not longer than 18 months that incorporates actions to be undertaken by the program faculty and division dean and the expected outcomes. The Vice President of Academic Affairs will monitor the program's progress. At the end of the specified time, the task force will reevaluate the program.

- C. Recommendation to Discontinue - A recommendation for a program to be discontinued must contain a documented argument based on the qualitative and quantitative data. Should an external regulatory, governing, or licensing body order the discontinuance, the recommendation shall be considered mandated.

In the event of a recommendation to discontinue, the task force will create a timeline for phasing out the program. The plan must include procedures to allow currently enrolled students to complete their plans of study as outlined below.

VII. Completion of Plans of Study

In the event a program is discontinued, the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the dean of the affected program will devise a plan that allows currently enrolled students in the program can complete their plan of study in accordance with the College Catalog. The plan will include the following actions:

- A. Identify and contact students in the affected major, degree, and or certificate program.
- B. Award degrees and certificates to students who have already completed but not petitioned.
- C. Identify courses that each student must complete.
- D. Confirm which faculty teach the courses identified in C.
- E. Appoint a faculty member as program coordinator during the discontinuance process.
- F. Confirm sufficient counseling support exists for each student.
- G. Develop Admissions and Records procedures to ensure students enroll in courses identified in C.
- H. Identify similar programs at area colleges.
- I. Determine if completed courses will transfer so that a student may complete the program, degree, and/or certificate at the area college.
- J. Establish the length of time needed for each student to complete.

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- K. Develop a schedule for each student so that he/she is ensured of timely completion.
- L. Create a program-wide timeline for final discontinuance of the affected program.
- M. Communicate the action plan to affected students as well as program faculty.
- N. Communicate the action plan to the community and external agencies and licensing groups where appropriate.

VIII. Conclusion of the Process

The Program Discontinuance Task Force will forward its recommendation to the Superintendent/President, the Academic Senate, and the Planning and Fiscal Council. As program discontinuance is an academic and professional matter, mutual agreement is required.

Upon mutual agreement after receiving the recommendation, the Superintendent/President will forward the recommendation to the Board of Trustees. Any program that receives a recommendation to discontinue can be terminated by the Board within a year.

IX. Collective Bargaining

As this procedure impacts employment, it is a matter of collective bargaining in all cases. The Rio Hondo College Faculty Association and the California School Employees Association will be notified and given the necessary time to resolve the issues of collective bargaining.

X. Sources/References:

Education Code Section 78016;
Title 5 Sections 51022 and 55130;
ACCJC Accreditation Standard II.A.15.