

BAKERSFIELD COLLEGE PROCEDURE FOR PROGRAM DISCONTINUANCE

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 academic and student services 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 Bakersfield College Academic Senate has established a Program Discontinuance Procedure 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."

Procedure

I. Definitions

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

A.1.Services: Services provided to assist student in achieving their educational and career goals.

B. Committee: When a formal discussion is initiated the Academic Senate will form a **Program Discontinuance Task Force** whose membership will include the Senate President or designee, Curriculum Chair, the relevant Vice President (either Academic Affairs or Student Services), Area Dean, and affected program faculty. The faculty members of this committee shall be approved by the Academic Senate.

II. Initiating the Discussion on Program Discontinuance

Program discontinuance discussions can be initiated by one of the following:

- Academic Senate
- President
- Vice President of Instruction
- Vice President of Student Services

A recommendation to initiate the program discontinuance process by any individual or group shall be made in writing to the program's Director or Department Chair, the Area Dean, or the Academic Senate President. Such a recommendation must be based on observed and documented early warning signs (see examples below) that indicate significant problems for the academic or student service program in question.

III. Early Warning Signs

Early warning signs may include one or more of the following:

- Significant or ongoing drop in enrollments or services;
- Significant or ongoing drop in completion rates;
- Changes in job market, community/student needs or interests, transfer requirements;
- Diminished outside funding resources;
- Lack of available qualified program personnel;
- Obsolete/outdated equipment (without significant internal resources to support updates); and/or
- Diminished pool of prospective students, e.g. closure of a major governmental or private enterprise.

IV. Program Discontinuance Stages

The program discontinuance process shall progress through the following stages:

Stage 1: Awareness

The awareness stage includes the initial suggestion for program discontinuance made by some individual or group to the program's Director or Department Chair, the Area Dean, or the Academic Senate President. This stage must include preliminary documentation of early warning signs that are impacting the program in question. Based upon the strength of this preliminary evidence, the program's Director or Department Chair, the Area Dean, or the Academic Senate President will

either end the discussion of program discontinuance, or proceed to **Stage 2**. Upon completion of Stage 1, the originator of the program discontinuance suggestion may appeal the decision of the program's Director or Department Chair, the Area Dean, or the Academic Senate President to a College Vice President or the College President who may then request, in writing, that the process proceed to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Investigation

The investigation stage shall be initiated by either the Academic Senate, the College President, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, or the Vice President of Student Services and shall include communication with other governance stakeholders that the program discontinuance process has progressed beyond Stage 1. At this stage, the Program Discontinuance Task Force shall be formed and shall engage in the research and documentation of qualitative and quantitative evidence outlined in Section IV below. The result of this research and documentation shall be a written report stating the case for program discontinuance. Based upon the strength of this report, the Program Discontinuance Task Force shall vote whether to end the discussion of program discontinuance, or proceed to Stage 3. If the Task Force does not elect to proceed to Stage 3, the College President may request, in writing, that the process continue to Stage 3.

Stage 3: Final Recommendation

The final recommendation of the Program Discontinuance Task Force shall take one of the forms outlined below in Section V, and shall be discussed and voted upon in open session by the Academic Senate. The result of this vote shall be forwarded to the College President.

Whereas 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 discussion of program discontinuance.

V. Formation and Charge of the Program Discontinuance Task Force

When a formal discussion is initiated, the Academic Senate will form a Program Discontinuance Task Force. The Task Force will be charged with:

- Electing a chair from its prescribed membership;
- Exercising discretion to expand its membership to include program support staff, student services representatives, related or dependant discipline faculty or staff, and/or advisory committee members or other community members with relevant expertise;
- Gathering all qualitative and quantitative evidence into a written report;
- Participating in all public meetings and discussions; and/or
- Recommending to the Academic Senate one of the three potential outcomes of the discontinuance process (see Section V).

VI. Evaluation Criteria

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

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

- The pedagogy of the discipline (are the methods, analyses, and techniques currently used appropriate and updated?);
- The balance of college curriculum;
- The balance of student services
- The development of the whole student;
- The effect of program discontinuance on students and student learning outcomes;
- The potential for a disproportionate impact on diversity;
- The quality of the program, which may include input from program review, student evaluations, articulating universities, state and/or federal agencies, local businesses and/or industry, and the community;
- The ability of students to complete their degrees or certificates or to transfer including maintaining rights of students as stipulated in the college catalog;
- The replication of programs in the surrounding area or at other locations within the KCCD; and/or
- The ability of programs to meet standards of outside accrediting agencies, licensing boards and governing bodies.

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

- Enrollment or participation trends over at least the past five years;
- The projected demand for the program or service in the future;
- The persistence of students in the program;
- Frequency of course section offerings;
- Term to term persistence of students within the program;
- Retention or success rates of students;
- Student completion rate;
- Productivity in terms of WSCH per FTE ratios;
- Cost/FTES trends;
- Costs to revitalize the program;
- Success rate of students passing state and national licensing exams;
- Number of students contacted/served;
- Student use of curriculum support materials (i.e. statistics on use of books, journals, online databases, etc.);
- Number of students accessing computer workstations, photocopiers, and other technologies;

- Number of weekly open student service hours or student contact hours;
- Number of students served by curriculum support activities (attendance at workshops, orientations, etc.); and
- Number of student served by service support activities such as probation workshops, new student workshops, or disqualification workshops.

Discussion Guidelines

Discussion of 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.

Discussion of program discontinuance will be conducted according to the procedures herein contained in public, open meetings. The dates, times and locations of these meetings will be published using all reasonable means of college communications.

Discussions will include both qualitative and quantitative evidence. Sources of data for all evidence will be referenced and cited.

A written record of all discussions and recommendations will be distributed to each Task Force member and kept at the Academic Senate office for review by the public.

V. Possible Recommendations of the Program Discontinuance Committee

There are three possible recommendations that the Program Discontinuance Task Force can make. A program may be:

- A. Recommended to Continue,
- B. Recommended to Continue with Qualifications, or
- C. Recommended 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 Task Force and maintained by the Academic Senate.

B. Recommendation to Continue with Qualifications

Based upon the aforementioned qualitative and quantitative criteria, a program may be recommended to continue with qualifications which may include:

- Funding for marketing and/or faculty recruitment;
- Updating and/or purchasing equipment, if needed;
- Seeking outside resources such as partnerships;
- Bringing in an outside consultant to advise the college on the program;
- Updating faculty skills and knowledge of the program area to meet current needs; and/or
- Setting clear timelines, delegation of responsibilities, and outcomes.

These qualifications 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 Task Force 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 Program Discontinuance Task Force, which will then recommend whether to continue or discontinue the program.

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 Task Force 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.

VII. Conclusion of the Process

The Committee's recommendation shall be forwarded to the Academic Senate for action. The Academic Senate's recommendation will then be forwarded to the College President for action. 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."