
Administrative Procedure
Chapter 4 – Academic Affairs

AP 4021 PROGRAM DISCONTINUANCE

References:

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

Program Discontinuance

The review and decision regarding the viability of a program is a joint venture of the faculty and administration.

- A. **Definition:** Discontinuance refers to the elimination of an entire discipline or program of study (an inactivation of all degrees, certificates and courses within the discipline).
- B. The Vice President of Academic Affairs, school dean, department head, program coordinator or director may initially question the viability of a program. A program may be considered for discontinuance due to any of the following:
 - 1. A sustained (3 or more years) period of low enrollment
 - 2. A sustained (3 or more years) period of low retention or completion rates
 - 3. Infrequent course offerings
 - 4. A lack of demand for the program in the labor market and low or declining job growth
 - 5. The inability to transfer the program major if it is an ADT or transfer based program.
- C. Once a program has been identified as at-risk for discontinuance based on the above criteria, the following group will form an evaluation team: Vice President of Academic Affairs, the school Dean, the Department Head and the full-time faculty of the department in question.
- D. Within a month of being identified as an at-risk program, the Vice President of Academic Affairs will meet with the evaluation team. Full-

time faculty must be given one week notification, during normal business hours in a primary term, of all meetings regarding program discontinuance and are encouraged to participate in the process. The evaluation team will determine viability and possible intervention and support strategies prior to a recommendation to discontinue. The research and concluding recommendation will be in writing and completed within a semester.

1. Written documentation may include research, data and information from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness; faculty, staff, and students of the program; Program Plan and Program Review documents; the Advisory Committee; the Articulation Officer; Office of Workforce Development; employers in the labor market; and deans and department heads from other affected programs.
2. The following set of questions, at minimum, must be addressed:
 - (a) What is student demand for the program considering recent and current enrollment?
 - (b) What are the retention, persistence, and completion rates for the program?
 - (c) What is the long-term viability of the program?
 - (d) What is the labor market demand, industry trends, regional economic forecast, and related industry job demand for the graduates of the program?
 - (e) What is the success level of students who have completed the program and are currently working in the field?
 - (f) Which high school and/or university programs articulate with the program?
 - (g) What percentage of students have transferred from the program?
 - (h) What is the cost of the program compared to similar programs at other colleges and other programs at this college?
 - (i) Are there any courses within the program that are required in another program?
 - (j) Are there elements of the program that could be offered in another program?
 - (k) Is the program offered at any nearby colleges?

- (l) What effort has been made to support the program?
 - (m) What effect has the program had on college diversity efforts?
 - (n) How would the elimination of the program affect the College's ability to fulfill its mission?
 - (o) Does the program meet a special community need or provide special benefits to the college?
 - (p) How would the elimination of the program affect students maintaining continuous enrollment in the program?
 - (q) What strategies are in place to guarantee that students maintaining continuous enrollment in the program achieve their academic and vocational goals?
- E. If a determination is made by the evaluation team to recommend continuation of the program, intervention strategies to support the program will be documented. Such strategies may include outreach projects to recruit new students, curriculum or scheduling modifications, faculty retraining, and/or investment in updated equipment.
- F. If a determination is made to recommend continuation of the program in a modified form, the modification, including a list of courses required for completion of the program, shall be documented. The modifications may include the introduction of a certificate or may entail a substantial change to the program. If a substantial modification is proposed, it is deemed a new program proposal and must be approved by the committees and offices listed under AP 4020 Program and Curriculum Development.
- G. If a determination is made to recommend program discontinuance, the evaluation team will document a timeline and measures plan considering the affected students, faculty, staff and operations. Consideration will be given to the following:
1. **Students:** In the event that a student has declared a major and the corresponding program is to be inactivated or discontinued, the student will be notified each year by the Counseling Department of the following:
 - (a) There will be a teach-out period of no longer than 5 years;
 - (b) Course substitutions may be provided by the department to satisfy the requirements, or

- (c) The student will be assisted to select a major that contains the highest percentage of courses that have been completed, or
 - (d) The student will be redirected to other community colleges in the area that provide the award, and

 - (e) The college cannot award a degree or certificate when a program has been inactivated at the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.
- 2. **Faculty:** A timeline and process to support faculty must be developed in conjunction with the local bargaining unit and in accordance with the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

 - 3. **Staff:** Transfer of staff shall be in consultation with the appropriate bargaining unit and in accordance with the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

 - 4. A plan will be developed to inactivate courses, reestablish the program (if appropriate in the future) and address other operational issues.
- H. The final written documentation supporting program discontinuance shall be forwarded to the College Planning Committee, where a final recommendation will be made to the Superintendent-President's Executive Committee for action to the Board of Trustees, and communicated to the evaluation team, affected department faculty and area dean.

 - I. In the event that publicly documented actual budget shortfalls demonstrate that funding levels are not sufficient to maintain all programs, which then becomes a rationale for considering program discontinuance, the process described in this regulation should also be followed as a matter of shared governance.

Program Inactivation

- A. Definition: Inactivation refers to the elimination of individual certificates, degrees or courses within a discipline, while potentially retaining the overall program of study.

- B. If a department head initiates the inactivation process, they shall follow the established practice of inactivation set out by the AD/GE Subcommittee.

Also see BP 4020 Program, Curriculum, and Course Development, AP 4020 Program and Curriculum Development, and AP 4022 Course Approval.

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