AP 4021 – Program Vitality/Program Discontinuance

Approved by Leadership: March 2014

Reference: Title 5 Section 51022, 55130
Education Code 78016
Program Discontinuance: A Faculty Perspective. ASCCC, adopted spring 1998

A primary mechanism of the program discontinuance process is a “Program Vitality Committee” that will ensure educational programs remain vital, effective, and student-centered. Program Review, the Educational and Facilities Master Plans, Unit Planning, the District Strategic Plan, enrollment trend analysis, SURE Reports, labor market information, and student success and learning outcomes data are of particular relevance to the Program Vitality review process.

Program Vitality Committee
Butte College shall establish a Program Vitality Committee that will ensure its educational programs remain vital, effective, and student-centered. The committee is composed of the following members:

- Chief Instructional Officer (CIO)
- Curriculum Committee Chair
- President of the Academic Senate
- 2 Educational Administrators (at least one with responsibility for a Career and Technical Education Program)
- 2 Teaching Faculty (chosen collaboratively by the Senate and CIO to ensure overall balanced faculty representation from General Education and Career and Technical Education)
- 1 Counselor chosen collaboratively by the Senate and CIO
- 1 Associate Faculty chosen collaboratively by the Senate and CIO
- 1 Student (chosen by the Associated Students Board)
- 1 Scheduling and Curriculum Analyst

The Chief Instructional Officer (CIO) and the President of the Academic Senate will be co-chairs of the Program Vitality Committee and will work in collaboration to set meeting agendas and facilitate meetings.

The primary function of the Program Vitality Committee is to make an independent assessment of the vitality of programs brought forward. The committee will use program review reports and other relevant quantitative and qualitative data in making this assessment.

Program Vitality Process
Departments seeking to discontinue programs for curricular reasons will take the request to the Curriculum Committee (see Section 5 on Deletion of Courses and Programs of the Curriculum Committee Bylaws).

A program may be brought to the Program Vitality Committee at any time. It may be brought to the committee by a faculty member, chair, advisory committee, student, dean, CIO, or other concerned individuals. If a program has concerns regarding its present and future vitality, it may request the
committee’s assistance for a deeper review. The committee’s recommendations will be
communicated in writing for review by the Academic Senate and Curriculum Committee and
transmitted to the President by the CIO.

Criteria to be Utilized in Discussion
The criteria will include qualitative and quantitative components. Program discontinuance/reduction
should not be based upon budgetary criteria alone except for the rare event in which the Board
declares financial exigency because state, federal, agency, or private funding for the program has
been severely reduced or eliminated. Even in such a case, all efforts will be made to convene the
committee to discuss proposed reductions with an understanding that an expedited process is in
order.

Program vitality indicators, including a balance of the curriculum between General Education, Basic
Skills, and Career Technical Education offerings, are relevant to the mission, values, and goals of the
institution and the principles of access, equity, and quality outcomes for students. These indicators
include, but are not limited to:

- Alignment with the Educational Master Plan and core mission
- Documented community and business need
- Student achievement rates in terms of certificates, degrees, transfer, or job placement
- Success and completion rates of students
- Persistence of students in the program
- Contribution to college diversity
- Program distinctiveness
- Availability of programs in the region
- Longitudinal enrollment trends
- Frequency of course section offerings
- Productivity and efficiency in terms of cost per student and FTE/FTEF
- Significant reduction or elimination of program income
- Influence on related programs and services

Data Sources:

- ARCC data outcomes
- Goals and data from unit plans
- SURE report data for return on investment
- Program Review commendations and recommendations
- CTE program specific data required for Title 5 curricular review and Perkins IV reporting data

Outcomes of Program Vitality Analysis and Discussion
The Program Vitality Process has three potential outcomes. A program may be recommended to
continue, to continue with qualification, or to be discontinued.

A. Recommendation to Continue

A program will be recommended to continue 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
recommendation to continue the program must take into account the appropriate advisory
committee and community input. The Program Vitality Committee may recommend that the
institution bolster the program in question if it deems needed resources or other support are
warranted but have been lacking.

B. Recommendation to Continue with Qualifications

The Program Vitality Committee may recommend continuing a program with qualifications. These
may include specific interventions designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the
program. As with the above recommendation, the committee may recommend that the institution bolster the program in question if it deems needed resources or other support are warranted but have been lacking. The committee will recommend a timeline for the interventions and will collaborate with the program and affected department to develop a list of expected outcomes.

These may include, but are not limited to:

- Specific interventions designed to improve the viability and responsiveness of the program.
- A plan of action to enhance the performance and effectiveness of an existing program which could include establishing training/professional development for faculty and or curriculum changes/updates.
- A recommendation to restructure an existing program, discipline, or department for greater effectiveness.
- A recommendation to develop a new program from the existing program.

C. Recommendation to Discontinue

Program discontinuance will occur generally only after serious deliberation and after recommended intervention strategies have been implemented and evaluated. A recommendation to discontinue a program will occur when, after a full evaluation study, it is concluded that it is no longer in the best interest of the college, its students, and the larger community for the program to continue.

The Program Vitality Committee Recommendation for Program Discontinuance may consider and/or include the following:

- A detailed plan and recommended timeline for phasing out the program for discontinuance with the least impact on students, faculty, staff and the community.
- An impact report explaining how phasing out the program for discontinuance will affect students, faculty, staff, and the community based on the Program Analysis data (Appendices B & C).
- Recommendations for how currently enrolled students may continue their program of study or a plan for students to meet their educational objectives through alternative means.
- The requirements of collective bargaining for faculty and staff, including applications of policies for reduction in force and opportunities for retraining of faculty and staff.

Steps in the Process

1. Discussion of program discontinuance/reduction will be conducted in publicized open meetings. In the case of Career and Technical Education programs, consultation with the appropriate entities as per Education Code 78016 will take place.

2. The proposed program discontinuance plan will be developed by the committee and reviewed in a Curriculum Committee meeting in which the affected department chair, the Associated Students’ President, and the Academic Senate President are invited.

3. Final deliberations and conclusions of the President and Board of Trustees shall rely primarily upon the advice of the Academic Senate and a thorough review of program data, labor market data, and other relevant information regarding impact on students, community, and the local economy.