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Program Vitality Process

Background

Ventura College is required by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, as well as by VCCCD Administrative Procedure 4021, to have a process in place to regularly assess the vitality of all programs. In 2020, a taskforce of the VC College Planning Committee began examining our program vitality process, and working to make it more systematic and transparent. The members of this taskforce were:

- Daniel Clark, Academic Senate President
- Ryan Petitfils, Math Faculty
- Ralph Fernandez, Technology Department Chair
- Nan Duangpun, Technical Data Specialist
- Coleen Trivett, Costume Technician
- Dorothy Farias, Agriculture Faculty
- Phillip Briggs, Dean of Institutional Effectiveness

This taskforce spent a year analyzing an extensive amount of data, reviewing models from other colleges and districts, and developing a draft process to share with the campus community. It was presented to the College Planning Committee on Date, the Academic Senate on Date, the Classified Senate on Date, and the VC Executive Team on Date. Feedback from these groups was incorporated into the draft, and a final version was approved by the College Planning Committee on Date, the Academic Senate on Date, and the Classified Senate on Date.

Steps in Program Vitality Process

The program vitality process has the following steps, which align with VCCCD Administrative Procedure 4021. Each step will be described in detail in later sections. The timeline for each step is described in Appendix A.

1. Program vitality study is triggered if a program does not meet thresholds for a number of key metrics in their comprehensive program review.
2. An ad-hoc recommendation group is formed to review the metric data and the program's response to the data. This group then makes a written recommendation for one of the two options below:
   a. Program Continuance and Revision
   b. Program Discontinuance
3. Chief Instructional Officer (CIO) or Chief Student Services Officer (CSSO), Analysis and Recommendation – Upon receiving and analyzing the formal written report of the Recommendation Group, and following consultation with the discipline, the Chief Instructional Officer (if the program is instructional) or the Chief Student Services Officer (if the program is a student service program) formally informs the area dean, department chair/coordinator, discipline faculty and the Academic Senate President of programs that have been identified for possible discontinuance, accompanied by a written rationale for the recommendation.
4. Academic Senate Review and Recommendation - After reviewing the recommendations and the supporting documentation of the CIO/CSSO concerning possible program discontinuance, the

Academic Senate shall review the recommendations and supporting documentation and take one of the following actions:

   a. Concur with the recommendations of the CIO/CSSO; or
   b. Demur with the recommendations of the CIO/CSSO and propose an alternative course of action to address the issues set forth in the CIO/CSSO's justification for program discontinuance.

The Academic Senate's formal written recommendation shall be transmitted to the College President no later than two regularly scheduled meetings after receiving the written rationale for the program discontinuance recommendation.

5. College President Review and Recommendations - Following the review of the formal and written recommendations of the CIO/CSSO and Academic Senate regarding possible program discontinuance, the President shall determine the proposed course of action with respect to each program identified. The College President shall communicate his/her final recommendation to the area dean, department chair/coordinator, discipline faculty and academic senate president, followed by written notification of the college community and shall then forward his/her recommendations to the District Chancellor for possible action by the Board of Trustees.

6. Board of Trustees Review and Action - The Chancellor and Board of Trustees shall be provided a complete record of the process followed at the campus, as well as the findings and recommendations of the Recommendation Group, CIO/CSSO, Academic Senate and College President prior to taking action on any recommendations pertaining to program discontinuance. Following review of the complete record, the District Chancellor shall prepare a report to the Board of Trustees including recommendations for action pertaining to programs recommended for discontinuance. The Board of Trustees will hold a public hearing and take action regarding any programs recommended for discontinuance.

7. Implementation of Board Actions - In the event that the Board of Trustees acts to discontinue a program, the College President, in consultation with the area dean, department chair, discipline faculty and Academic Senate President, shall develop a plan that must include the following elements:

   a. Timeline and process for curricular and programmatic deletion/discontinuance approval at the local and state level
   b. Provision for students currently in the program for completion and/or transfer
   c. Provision for displaced faculty and staff, where feasible
   d. Provision for impact on budget and facilities
   e. Removal of program from course catalog

Step 1 - Program Vitality Study Trigger

Every program completes a comprehensive program review every three years, in which they analyze data on key metrics, and create objectives for the next three years. In the intervening years, programs complete a smaller mini-review in which they assess progress made towards their objectives. The program review process is staggered so that approximately 1/3 of programs are completing a comprehensive review in a given year.

Instructional Programs

It is important to define the level of analysis of program vitality. The Title V definition of an educational program is "an organized sequence of courses leading to a defined objective, a degree, a certificate, a diploma, a license, or transfer to another institution of higher education." This definition implies that a program is composed of the courses required for a degree or certificate. However, we have a number of disciplines that do not offer a degree or certificate (e.g. Chemistry, French, etc.). It is important that this process reviews these disciplines, as well. Thus, after much discussion and analysis, it was decided that the program vitality process would be focused on the discipline level. Those disciplines that offer degrees and/or certificates will review additional data on the number of degrees and certificates awarded.

There are two different scenarios that will trigger a vitality study:

1. Vitality study is triggered on a discipline if the discipline does not meet thresholds for 3 or more key metrics.
2. Vitality study is triggered on a degree/certificate if it does not meet the threshold for awarding degrees/certificates.

The metrics and thresholds are below:

Student Demand

- Discipline enrollment
    - 5-year trend: 10 percentage points lower than the overall college trend
    - Average discipline enrollment: 15 or less over the last five years
- Discipline fill rate
    - 5-year trend: 10 percentage points lower than the overall college trend
    - Average over last 5 years: Less than 70%

Student Success

- Course Success Rate
    - 5-year trend is 10 percentage points lower than overall college trend
- Degree and Certificate Completions
    - 15 or fewer awards over past 5 years (i.e. average of 3 awards/year).

Program Currency

- Course offerings
    - 30% or more of active courses in catalog have not been offered in last five years.
- Updated curriculum
    - 30% or more of course outlines of record haven't been updated in more than five years.

Student Service Programs

Data on student services is more limited than it is for instructional programs. In addition, the software systems used to collect data vary by service (i.e. Starfish, SARS, Accudemia, etc.) Thus, the metrics used

to trigger a vitality study are also more limited. To trigger a vitality study, a student service would need to be below the thresholds for both metrics below:

Student Demand

- Student Headcount
    - 5-year trend: 10 percentage points lower than the overall college trend

Student Survey Data

- Point-of-Service Survey Data for Most Recent Year
    - Service has an average score of less than 3.0 on any of the 7 survey questions that assess the 6 student success factors, and overall satisfaction. An average score of less than 3.0 would indicate that the majority of students who visited the service had a negative experience there.

Step 2 – Ad-Hoc Recommendation Group

An ad-hoc recommendation group is formed to review the metric data and the program's response to the data. The group is to be composed of the following members:

- Division Dean over Program (Co-Chair)
- Department Chair/Coordinator over Program (Co-Chair)
- 1-2 Program Faculty
- 1-2 Faculty from Division
- 1 Counselor
- 1-2 Advisory Board Members (CE Programs only)
- 1-2 Classified Staff Members from Program (if applicable)
- 1-2 Faculty from outside Division
- Curriculum Committee Faculty Co-Chair or Designee

The Department Chair/Coordinator and lead program faculty submit a written response to the recommendation group using the Program Vitality Response Template (Appendix B).

The group then provides a written report (Appendix C) that includes the following information:

1. Recommendation:
    a. Program Continuance and Revision with one of the three options below
        i. No action needed
        ii. Strengthen the program
            - Resources required to strengthen the program (e.g. hire faculty member, facilities upgrades, etc.)
            - Implementation timeline
            - Re-evaluation timeline
        iii. Reduce the program
            - Specific reductions that are recommended (e.g. curriculum reductions, number of sections offered, facilities reductions, staffing reductions, etc.)

- Implementation timeline
- Re-evaluation timeline

    b.   Program Discontinuance

2.   Written rationale for the recommendation above

If program continuance and revision is recommended, the Recommendation Group Report, along with the Program Vitality Response template is sent to both the Division Dean and the Chief Instructional Officer (if it is an instructional program) or Chief Student Services Officer (if it is a student service program). If resources or reductions are recommended, the Division Dean provides context to the CIO/CSSO about how the recommendations could be implemented. The CIO/CSSO then provides a written response to the program and the recommendation group.

If program discontinuance is recommended, the Recommendation Group Report, along with the Program Vitality Response template is sent to both the Division Dean and the CIO/CSSO. The process then continues to the next step below.

Step 3 – Chief Instructional Officer or Chief Student Services Officer

Upon receiving and analyzing the formal written report of the Recommendation Group, and following consultation with discipline faculty, the Chief Instructional Officer or Chief Student Services Officer formally informs the area dean, department chair/coordinator, discipline faculty and the Academic Senate President of programs that have been identified for possible discontinuance, accompanied by a written rationale for the recommendation.

Step 4 – Academic Senate

After reviewing the recommendations and the supporting documentation of the Chief Instructional Officer concerning possible program discontinuance, the Academic Senate shall review the recommendations and supporting documentation and take one of the following actions:

1.   Concur with the recommendations of the Chief Instructional Officer; or
2.   Demur with the recommendations of the Chief Instructional Officer and propose an alternative course of action to address the issues set forth in the Chief Instructional Officer's justification for program discontinuance.

The Academic Senate's formal written recommendation shall be transmitted to the College President no later than two regularly scheduled meetings after receiving the written rationale for the program discontinuance recommendation.

Step 5 – College President Review and Recommendations

Following the review of the formal and written recommendations of the Chief Instructional Officer and Academic Senate regarding possible program discontinuance, the President shall determine the proposed course of action with respect to each program identified. The College President shall communicate his/her final recommendation to the area dean, department chair/coordinator, discipline faculty and academic senate president, followed by written notification of the college community and

shall then forward his/her recommendations to the District Chancellor for possible action by the Board of Trustees.

Step 6 – Board of Trustees Review and Action

The Chancellor and Board of Trustees shall be provided a complete record of the process followed at the campus, as well as the findings and recommendations of the Recommendation Group, Chief Instructional Officer, Academic Senate and College President prior to taking action on any recommendations pertaining to program discontinuance.

Following review of the complete record, the District Chancellor shall prepare a report to the Board of Trustees including recommendations for action pertaining to programs recommended for discontinuance. The Board of Trustees will hold a public hearing and take action regarding any programs recommended for discontinuance.

Step 7 – Implementation of Board Actions

In the event that the Board of Trustees acts to discontinue a program, the College President, in consultation with the area dean, department chair, discipline faculty and Academic Senate President, shall develop a plan that must include the following elements:

1. Timeline and process for curricular and programmatic deletion/discontinuance approval at the local and state level
2. Provision for students currently in the program for completion and/or transfer\
3. Provision for displaced faculty and staff, where feasible
4. Provision for impact on budget and facilities
5. Removal of program from course catalog

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Appendix A

Program Vitality Timeline

1. Comprehensive Program Review and Vitality Study Trigger – Early October

2. Recommendation Group Formed – October 31

   a. Report submitted by December 31

3. CIO/CSSO – Report submitted by January 31

4. Academic Senate – Report submitted by February 28

5. College President – Report submitted by March 31

6. Board of Trustees Agenda – May meeting

7. Implementation Plan Created – August 15

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Appendix B

Program Vitality Response Form

Program Name:

Program Vitality Trigger Data

Category/Metric	Trigger Criteria	Program Value	Trigger Y/N
Student Demand			
Enrollment: 5-Year Trend	10 percentage points below the overall college trend		
Enrollment: 5-Year Average	15 or less over the last five years		
Fill Rate: 5-Year Trend	10 percentage points below the overall college trend		
Fill Rate: 5-Year Average	Less than 70% over the last five years		
Student Success			
Course Success Rate: 5-Year Trend	10 percentage points below the overall college trend		
Degree and Certificate Completions: 5-Year Average			
[Enter Degree/Certificate Name, if applicable]	15 or fewer awards over the past 5 years		
[Enter Degree/Certificate Name, if applicable]	15 or fewer awards over the past 5 years		
[Enter Degree/Certificate Name, if applicable]	15 or fewer awards over the past 5 years		
[Enter Degree/Certificate Name, if applicable]	15 or fewer awards over the past 5 years		
[Enter Degree/Certificate Name, if applicable]	15 or fewer awards over the past 5 years		
[Enter Degree/Certificate Name, if applicable]	15 or fewer awards over the past 5 years		
[Enter Degree/Certificate Name, if applicable]	15 or fewer awards over the past 5 years		
[Enter Degree/Certificate Name, if applicable]	15 or fewer awards over the past 5 years		
[Enter Degree/Certificate Name, if applicable]	15 or fewer awards over the past 5 years		
Program Currency			
5-Year Course Offerings	30% or more of active courses in catalog have not been offered in last five years		
Updated Course Outlines of Record	30% or more of course outlines of record have not been updated in more than five years		

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1. Please provide a general response to the data above.

2. Please highlight the strengths of your program.

3. Please provide a detailed response for each metric above that was triggered.

4. What solutions have you considered to improve these metrics?

5. What resources does your program need to implement these solutions?

6. How long would it take for these solutions to improve the metrics above that were triggered?

7. Have these metrics been triggered in the past? If so, what resources were provided or went unmet?

8. Is there any other information that you believe should be considered by the Recommendation Group?

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Appendix C

Recommendation Group Report Template

Program Name:

Recommendation Group Co-Chairs:

Recommendation Group Members:

Group Recommendation

Based on all available information, the Recommendation Group recommends:

☐ Program Continuance and Revision

    ☐ No Action Needed

    ☐ Strengthen the Program

    ☐ Reduce the Program

☐ Program Discontinuance

Implementation Plan for Program Continuance and Revision

Instructions for Recommendation Group: Only complete this section if the Group's recommendation is for Program Continuance and Revision. If "Strengthen the Program" is also selected, the plan needs to include the resources needed to strengthen the program (i.e. hire faculty member, facilities upgrades, etc.). If "Reduce the Program" is selected, the plan needs to include the specific reductions that are recommended (e.g. curriculum reductions, number of sections offered, facilities reductions, staffing reductions, etc.). In either case, the plan needs to also include a timeline for implementation, as well as a timeline for re-evaluation.

Rationale for Recommendation to Discontinue Program

Instructions for Recommendation Group: Only complete this section if the Group's recommendation is for Program Discontinuance. Please describe the rationale for the group's decision to recommend discontinuance.