

## 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.

[The most recent version of this review has taken place at Academic Senate in Fall 2024.](#)

### 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. A program vitality study is triggered in one of two ways:
  - a. Instructional programs:
    - i. The program does not meet thresholds for a number of key metrics in their comprehensive program review.
    - ii. A formal request is made by the Department Chair/Coordinator over the program, the Dean over the Program, or the Vice President over the Program.
  - b. Service programs:
    - i. A formal request is made by the Department Chair/Coordinator over the program, the Dean over the Program, or the Vice President over the Program.
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
    - i. Revisions include programmatic changes and also a plan of support from the college.

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- 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

Note: As this process is engaged, there shall be no repercussions towards the faculty participating in the process. If there are actionable negative behaviors towards the faculty, this will trigger work with the AFT.

### 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 via the comprehensive review:

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.

There may be circumstances which would necessitate that a program vitality study be conducted in a year other than the one in which a program completes their 3-year comprehensive review. Thus, a program vitality study can also be triggered via an ad-hoc (or out-of-cycle) request. The request must be formally submitted by the Department Chair over the program, the Dean over the program, or the Vice President over the program via the Ad-Hoc Program Vitality Request Form (Appendix D). If a program vitality study is triggered via an ad-hoc request, another vitality study cannot be triggered for a minimum of three years. This will prevent programs from needing to undergo this process multiple times in a short timeframe.

### Student and Administrative Service Programs

Data on student and administrative 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, surveys, etc.) Thus, a vitality study for service programs is triggered via an ad-hoc request. The request must be formally submitted by the Department Chair/Coordinator over the program, the Dean over the program, or the Vice President over the program via the Ad-Hoc Program Vitality Request Form (Appendix D). If a program vitality study is triggered via an ad-hoc request, another vitality study cannot be triggered for a minimum of three years. This will prevent programs from needing to undergo this process multiple times in a short timeframe.

### 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)
  - [For CE programs, there are notes provided from an advisory committee meeting in which a discussion with the advisory committee has been documented with committee responses.](#)
- 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). [This individual will be able to provide additional information, however does not vote.](#)
- 1-2 Faculty from outside Division
- [1-2 Students within the discipline/program or division. If this does not work, students can come from ASVC. The students are advisory only and does not vote.](#)
- 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, [marketing](#), etc.)
      - Specific marketing and outreach plan with upscaling and promotions supported by the college
      - An enrollment plan which specifies upscaling vs. degree/certificate strategies
      - 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.)
      - Specific marketing and outreach plan supported by the college
      - An enrollment plan which specifies upscaling vs. degree/certificate strategies
      - 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).

*Recommendation for Strengthening or Reducing the Program*

If the group recommends to either strengthen or reduce the program, 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. The program then enters a monitoring period to ensure that the implementation plan is followed. A one-year follow up report is required to be submitted by the program to the recommendation group within 4 weeks of the subsequent year's program review submission deadline using the Program Vitality Follow-Up Form (Appendix E). The Recommendation Group reviews the report, and holds a meeting within 4 weeks of the program's submission of the Program Vitality Follow-Up Form. At the meeting, they review the progress made towards the implementation plan, and make one of the following recommendations:

- No further action needed
- Additional follow up report to be submitted in one year
- Recommend discontinuance

If an additional follow-up report is recommended, the second-year follow up report is required to be submitted by the program to the recommendation group within 4 weeks of the subsequent year's program review submission deadline using the Program Vitality Follow-Up Form (Appendix E). The Recommendation Group reviews the report, and holds a meeting within 4 weeks of the program's submission of the Program Vitality Follow-Up Form (Appendix E). At the meeting, they review the progress made towards the implementation plan, and make one of the following recommendations:

- No further action needed
- Recommend discontinuance

#### *Recommendation for Program Discontinuance*

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 - Appeals Process**

At this point, if there is just reason for a program to appeal the discontinuance process findings, the discipline department chair/coordinator and/or the discipline dean will .....

#### **Step 6.7 – 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 7.8 – 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, area 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



## 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



# Appendix B

## Program Vitality Response Form

Program Name:

### Program Vitality Trigger Data

Category/Metric	Trigger Criteria	Program Value	Trigger Y/N
<b>Student Demand</b>			
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		
<b>Student Success</b>			
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		
<b>Program Currency</b>			
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		

1. Please provide a general response to the data above.
  - a. If this is being completed in response to an ad-hoc vitality request, please provide a general response to the reasons described in the ad-hoc request form.
2. Are there other factors that are influencing the lack of the degree/certificate attainment that are not considered within the numbers above (ex. Students typically transfer without a degree, state/legislative factors that influence student persistence, discipline is preparation towards a higher degree, etc)? Explain the circumstance below.
3. Number of faculty currently serving in this discipline?
4. Based on the number of faculty, what impact does this have on the program?  
What revisions to curriculum have taken place in the past to directly support growth of this area?
5. Describe budgetary issues this program has faced in the past 3 years
6. Management projections for programming that is on the horizon to support high skill and high wage (How might this degree/certificate/program be altered to meet industry needs in the coming years)?
7. What support has been provided to faculty to upskill?
- 3-8. Please highlight the strengths of your program.
- 4-9. Please provide a detailed response for each metric above that was triggered.
  - a. If this is being completed in response to an ad-hoc vitality request, please provide a detailed response to each reason listed in the ad-hoc vitality request form.
- 5-10. What solutions have you considered to improve these metrics?
- 6-11. What resources does your program need to implement these solutions?

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- 7.12. How long would it take for these solutions to improve the metrics above that were triggered?
- If this is being completed in response to an ad-hoc vitality request, please describe how long it would take to implement the solutions to address the reasons in the ad-hoc request form.

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

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

15. What other college systems might be affecting the enrollment for courses (ex. Program Mapper is not correct, lack of marketing, college systems are not allowing enrollment, etc.)?

What marketing and enrollment support has the department received from the college thus far?

What has been the history of Program Review requests and denial of those requests from the college?

16. Has the degrees/certificates associated with this department been utilized as part of the automated degree awarding system?

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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.



**Appendix D**

**Ad-Hoc Request for Program Vitality Study**

I, [Name, title] am requesting that an ad-hoc program vitality study be conducted on [Program Name] for the reasons below:

Once complete, please submit this form to the department chair/coordinator over the program, the Dean over the program, and the Vice President over the program. Upon receipt, the department chair/coordinator and/or lead program faculty will need to complete the Program Vitality Response Form (Appendix B) within four weeks. A Recommendation Group (described on page 4 of this document) will then be convened within 2 weeks after that to review the Program Vitality Response Form, and provide a recommendation on the program's vitality.



## Appendix E

### Program Vitality Follow-Up Form

Program Name:

Name of person/people who completed this form:

#### Program Response

1. Have any components of the implementation plan been fully completed? If so, please describe.
2. Have any components of the implementation plan been partially completed? If so, please describe.
3. Are there any components of the implementation plan for which no progress has been made? If so, please describe.
4. Is there any other information that you believe should be considered by the Recommendation Group?

#### Recommendation Group Response

Recommendation Group Chairs:

Recommendation Group Members:

Based on the progress made towards the implementation plan, the Recommendation Group recommends:

- ☐ Program Continuance and Revision
- ☐ No Further Action Needed
  - ☐ Additional Follow-Up Report to be Submitted in One Year (This option cannot be selected if this is a second-year follow-up report.)
- ☐ Program Discontinuance

Rationale for recommendation: