

Los Angeles Valley College

Viability Review of Educational Programs

Overview

- Program Viability Review is a process meant to assure that the College's instructional resources are used in response to the College's Mission, its Educational Master Plan, the needs of its students, and the requirements of the community it serves.
- Viability review involves a specific process, one that is a result of the regular Program Review process, or upon special request.
- The term *program* as it relates to this review process includes all degree and certificate instructional programs, all instructional disciplines, and all departments or other campus units offering instruction.
- Board Rule 6803 requires that each college, in consultation with its Academic Senate, develop procedures for initiating and conducting a viability review of educational programs.
- Board Rule 6803.10, Education Code 78016, and Title 5, §51022(a) require that a viability review be conducted prior to program discontinuance (termination).
- This policy shall supersede the existing Program Discontinuance Process.
- If the recommendation resulting from the viability review is Departmental Reorganization and is accepted at all levels, then the standard Department Modification Process is bypassed.

Outcomes

Viability review committees make recommendations that include but are not limited to the following:

1. *Program Initiation*

The institution or adoption of a new program, a new discipline, or a new department

2. *Program Modification and Improvement*

A plan of action to enhance the performance and effectiveness of an existing program, discipline, or department

3. *Departmental Reorganization*

The restructuring of an existing program, discipline, or department for greater effectiveness, including the joining of smaller departments into a larger one, or splitting a larger department into smaller ones.

4. *Program Discontinuance*

The discontinuance (termination) of an existing program, discipline, or department

- In general, program discontinuance should be recommended only after a serious attempt has been made to improve program effectiveness and efficiency, unless it is clear that future efforts at remediation are not warranted.
- Pursuant to Board Rule 6803.10, a viability review is required prior to program discontinuance and must consider the following:
 1. The effects on students and student success if the program is discontinued;
 2. Provisions that can and should be made for students in progress to complete their training;
 3. The impact that discontinuance of the program will have on the comprehensiveness and balance of offerings across the college curriculum and within the district;
 4. How the program's discontinuance would impact the educational and budget-planning process used at the institution;

5. How the program's discontinuance affects the region;
 6. The effects of the program's discontinuance on transfer to four-year colleges and universities;
 7. The effects of the program's discontinuance on local businesses and industries;
 8. The effects of the program's discontinuance on faculty and staff.
- "The College President and College Academic Senate President shall make program discontinuance recommendations to the Board of Trustees for approval. The recommendation shall include a description of the viability review process and the reasons for the recommendation."
[Board Rule 6803.10]

Establishing a Special Viability Review Workgroup

The process of Viability Review is carried out by a special review workgroup organized by the Program Effectiveness and Planning Committee (PEPC) in all cases of Program Initiation, Program Modification and Improvement, Departmental Reorganization, or Program Discontinuance. The process may be initiated by a request or motion on the part of any of the following with sound rationale: the Discipline/Department; the College President; the Vice President of Academic Affairs; PEPC as the result of Program Review; the Educational Planning Committee (EPC) as the result of Educational Master Planning; the Academic Senate.

The Review Committee exists until it files its recommendations. Membership on the Review Committee should include:

- The Academic Senate President or Designee
 - 1 – PEPC member (selected by PEPC)
 - 1 – EPC member (selected by EPC)
 - 1 – Department Chair (selected by the Chairs and Directors)
- The Curriculum Committee Chair or designee
 - 1 – AFT representative
- The Vice President of Academic Affairs or designee
 - 1 – Academic Dean

At most two additional members from other institutions when either program initiation or program discontinuance are being considered.

Information Data Gathering

Decisions made in the course of the Program Viability Process must be based on a broad and thoroughgoing investigation of factors relating to the benefits of a program for students, for the college, and for the community served by Valley College. They must, therefore, take into consideration information that goes far beyond simple measures of current student demand or weekly student-contact hours. The following general types of information should be gathered as needed and weighed in the process of formulating the Review Committee's recommendations:

1. Relation of the program to the College Mission
2. Relation of the program to the Educational Master Plan
3. Recent Program Review or accrediting agency recommendations
4. Measures of student demand (enrollment, average class size, degrees/certificates, or surveys)
5. Measures of labor-market demand (CTE only)
6. Current program effectiveness (FTEF/FTES ratio, success and retention) [not required for program initiation]
7. SLO Assessment Data
8. Advisory Committee Recommendations or other reports (CTE only)
9. Interviews [not required for program initiation]

10. Open Forum [not required for program initiation]
11. Projected impact on overall educational program, students, faculty, college budget, community

Process

- I. Once a Special Review Committee has been formed, it will meet to elect a chair and establish a specific plan for the study it is about to undertake. Note: if a Department is initiating a viability review for the purpose of program discontinuance as state on page 1, then, the department only need to address the considerations for program discontinuance and the review committees meets to ensure that the impact to current students is minimal and mitigation strategies are in place in accordance with these considerations.
- II. This plan should include data gathering, solicitation of position papers from faculty, staff, and students involved, interviews with faculty in the affected area and in related instructional areas, interviews with students and administrators, consultations with outside experts and faculty and/or administrators from other institutions, administration of surveys, and/or use of focus groups. At least one well-publicized open forum should be held to allow any concerned member of the campus community or of the College's service area the opportunity to voice opinions and express concerns. In addition, the committee shall consult when necessary with District, regional, and State agencies and institutions overseeing specific types of programs, such as certain vocational programs.
- III. Within six months of the committee's formation, it will produce a *Program Viability Report* specifying the outcome of its deliberations and making specific recommendations for action, complete with timelines.

This Viability Report must include the following:

1. a summary of the process used by the committee
 2. a review of all data consulted
 3. recommendation for program initiation, program modification, department reorganization, or program discontinuance.
 4. a detailed assessment of the recommendations' impact on the College's overall educational program and budget, as well as its impact on all students, faculty, and staff involved.
- IV. Approvals
Viability Review Workgroup recommendations shall be forwarded to PEPC for recommendations/approval.

The review will then be forwarded simultaneously to the Academic Senate and Institutional Effectiveness Council (IEC) for recommendation/approval. IEC will also receive information from EPC regarding potential FTEF allocation and from the Budget Office regarding fiscal impacts.

The Senate's decision shall be taken to the College President through consultation with the Academic Senate President and the AFT Chapter President. [Article 17, §A.2 AFT Faculty Guild Collective Bargaining Agreement] IEC will make a formal recommendation to the College President through the Shared Governance Process.

- V. The College President makes the final decision and reports out to the Institutional Effectiveness Council, Council members from Program Effectiveness and Planning Committee, Educational Planning Committee, Academic Senate, and the appropriate Vice President will report back to their respective constituencies.

Copies of this *Viability Review of Educational Programs*, signed by the College President and the Academic Senate President, shall be on file the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of the Academic Senate.

College President _____

Date: _____

Senate President _____

Date: _____