Los Angeles Pierce College
Viability Review of Educational Programs

Overview

Program Viability Review is a Senate-directed 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 *special* process, one that is only invoked under *unusual* circumstances: it is not part of the regular Program Review process, and it is not a process that should be applied to all departments, disciplines, or programs in a regular fashion.

The term *program* as it relates to this review process, includes all organized sequences of courses leading to a defined objective, a degree, a certificate, a diploma, a license, or transfer to another institution of higher education as defined in Title 5 §55000(m).

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 following existing policies:

1. Department Establishment and Modification Policy, Adopted by the Pierce Academic Senate March 24, 2003 & modified May 5, 2003
2. Guidelines for Discontinuance of Instructional Programs, Adopted by the Pierce Academic Senate and approved by the College President October, 1998

Outcomes

Viability review task forces 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 Discontinuance*
    The discontinuance (termination) of an existing program, discipline, or department.

3. *Substantial Program Modification and Improvement*
    A plan of action to enhance the performance and effectiveness of an existing program, discipline, or department.
    a. Non-substantial changes to programs as outlined in the Program and Course Approval Handbook shall be forwarded to the Curriculum Committee and shall not be a basis for initiating program viability.

4. *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.

Establishing a Special Viability Review Task Force
The process may be initiated by a request or motion to EPC on the part of any of the following: the Department; the College President; the Vice President of Academic Affairs; the Educational Planning Committee (as the result of Program Review and/or Educational Master Planning); the Curriculum Committee (as a result of the curriculum approval process); or, the Academic Senate.

In cases of program modification and improvement or departmental reorganization Viability Review is carried out only if there is no consensus within the Educational Planning Committee or when a majority of the Educational Planning Committee calls for such a review.

The process of Viability Review is carried out by a task force organized by the Educational Planning Committee.

The Review Task Force exists until it files its recommendations. Membership on the Review Task Force shall include:
- The Academic Senate President or Designee
- 2 - Educational Planning Committee members (selected by the Educational Planning Committee)
- 2 - Department Chairs (selected by the Academic Policy Committee)
- The Curriculum Committee Chair or designee
- 2 - AFT representative

- The Vice President of Academic Affairs or designee
- 1 - Dean
- Discipline faculty from other institutions as deemed necessary by the EPC

As a general rule, members (or related dean) of the departments or disciplines under review should not be part of the Review Task Force.

Information 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 Pierce 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 Task Force's recommendations:

1. Relation of the program to the College Mission
2. Relation of the program to the Strategic Master Plan
3. Recent Comprehensive Program Review, Annual Program Plan, or accrediting agency recommendations
4. Measures of student demand (may include, but not limited to, enrollment trends over the past five years, projected demand for the program in the future, frequency of course offerings, and average class size)
5. Measures of demand in the service area (may include, but not limited to, data from CTE Advisory Committee, regional labor market data, and passage rates on state and national licensing exams, if applicable)
6. Current program effectiveness (may include, but is not limited to, term to term persistence of students within the program and student success and completion rates)
7. Outside expert opinion (may include input from Advisory Committees, articulating universities, and local businesses and industries)
8. Projected impact on overall educational program, students, faculty, college budget, community

Process

- Once a Special Review Task Force has been formed, it will meet to elect a chair and establish a specific plan for the study it is about to undertake.

- 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. The task force shall consult when necessary with District,
  - regional, and State agencies and institutions overseeing specific types of programs, such as certain vocational programs. In addition, data being considered by the Review Task Force will be sent to the department/discipline for comment during the review process for at least ten (10) working days.
- Within 60 working days of the task force's formation, it will produce a *Program Viability Report* specifying the outcome of its deliberations and making specific recommendations for action, complete with timelines.

Content of the Report

The Viability Report must include the following:
1. a summary of the process used by the task force
2. a review of all data consulted
3. 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.

Program Initiation

1. Departments submit program initiation proposals—AA or AS degrees, AA-T or AS-T degrees, Certificate of Achievement, Certificate of Competence, Certificate of Completion—to the Curriculum Committee. The proposal should address the program approval criteria established in Administrative Regulation E-64 Procedures for Development and Approval of New Educational Programs and Options.
2. The Curriculum Committee Chair forwards program initiation proposals to the EPC for information or action.
3. Proposals for Associate Degrees for Transfer shall not undergo viability review.
4. Proposals for noncredit programs (e.g. certificate of competence or certificate of completion) shall not undergo viability review.
5. Proposals that seek to sequence existing courses into a new program may undergo a fast-track viability review.
6. Proposals that originate and are recommended by Regional Consortia shall not undergo viability review.

The recommendation to initiate a program shall be based upon quantitative and qualitative criteria and will be documented in writing by the Review Task Force. Recommendations must consider and address the appropriateness of the projected time for implementation of the new program as well as whether such implementation will adversely affect existing college functions, services, and staff.

Quantitative Evidence
Quantitative evidence may include, but is not limited to:
1. Measures of student demand (enrollment trends over the past five years, projected demand for the program in the future, frequency of course offerings, and average class size as well as future projections and rationale for growth, if applicable)
2. Program effectiveness (term to term persistence of students within the program and student success and completion rates)
3. Recent Comprehensive Program Review, Annual Program Plan, or accrediting agency recommendations
4. For CTE programs, measures of demand in the service area (data from Advisory Committee, regional labor market data, passage rates on state

and national licensing exams, if applicable, and implementation timeline for resulting new courses)

Qualitative Evidence

Factors to be considered may include, but are not limited to:
1. Contemporary analysis of the relevance of a discipline
2. Current College curriculum and offerings as they relate to the College Mission
3. Relation of the program to the Strategic Master Plan
4. The ability of students to complete degrees, certificate, or transfer requirements
5. Outside expert opinion (may include input from Advisory Committees, articulating universities, and local businesses and industries)
6. Measures of demand in the service area (may include, but not limited to, data from CTE Advisory Committee, regional labor market data, and passage rates on state and national licensing exams, if applicable)
7. Impact on existing department/disciplines

Program Discontinuance

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.

Making the Decision
- The Viability Review Task Force recommendation to discontinue a program shall be forwarded to the EPC for approval.
- The EPC shall forward the recommendation to the Academic Senate for approval. At the same time, notification is sent to the Curriculum Committee and Academic Policy Committee for information.
- The Senate's decision shall be taken to the College President.
- "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]
- The Academic Senate President shall communicate the College President's decision to the Department Chairs involved.

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.

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College President   Date

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Senate President   Date

Adopted by the Pierce Academic Senate April 25, 2005
Revised and approved by EPC December 11, 2015
Adopted by Pierce Academic Senate February 22, 2016
Revised and Approved by EPC April 13, 2018
Adopted by the Pierce Academic Senate May 7, 2018