

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 viability workgroup organized by the Program Effectiveness and Planning Committee (PEPC) in cases of Program Initiation, Program Modification and Improvement, Departmental Reorganization, Program initiated Viability, or Program Discontinuance. The exception to this process is for program-initiated discontinuance originating from the discipline where the program in question resides; in these cases, programs can initiate a discontinuance using the form provided on the PEPC Program Viability page. 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; PEPC as a result of viability trigger 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. Any voting member shall not be from the program/department under viability review. Membership on the Review Committee should include:

The Academic Senate President or Designee

1 – PEPC member, faculty (selected by PEPC)

1 – EPC member, faculty (selected by EPC)

1 – Department Chair, faculty (selected by the Chairs and Directors)

1 –The Curriculum Committee Chair or designee, faculty

1 – AFT 1521A (faculty representative)

1 –Dean (shall not be associated with the program/department under viability review)

1 – AFT1521A (classified staff)

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 thorough 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 information will be gathered and weighed in the process of formulating the viability workgroup'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) [may consider external data as deemed appropriate]

5. Measures of labor-market demand (CTE only)
6. Current program effectiveness (FTEF/FTES ratio, fill rates, course success, and course retention) [may consider external data as deemed appropriate]
7. SLO Assessment Data
8. Advisory Committee Recommendations or other reports (CTE only)
9. Interviews [may consider external data as deemed appropriate]
10. Open Forum
11. Projected impact on overall educational program, students, faculty, college budget, community

Process

- I. Once a viability workgroup has been formed, it will meet to elect a chair and establish a specific plan for the study it is about to undertake. The chair must be faculty.

- II. This plan for study should include:
 - a. Schedule meetings
 - b. Assign roles and tasks to workgroup members
 - c. Review the department's Program Review(s)
 - d. Review department's data, including viability triggers
 - e. Review program documentation such as the course catalog, schedule of classes, and outlines of record.
 - f. Identify additional data needed for the study and initiate requests for data from the appropriate sources
 - g. Solicit position papers from faculty, staff, and students involved
 - h. Schedule and conduct interviews with faculty, students, and administrators in the affected area and in related instructional areas
 - i. Administer surveys
 - j. Schedule and conduct focus groups
 - k. At least one well-publicized open forum must be scheduled and 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
 - l. When necessary, consult with District, regional, and State agencies and institutions overseeing specific types of programs, such as certain vocational programs

- III. Program Initiated Viability: If a department is initiating a viability review to explore program discontinuance the department needs to address the data required to complete the program-initiated discontinuance form (note: this form is provided on the PEPC Program Viability page). The review workgroup meets to ensure that the impact to current students is minimal and mitigation strategies are in place in accordance with these considerations.

- IV. By the end of the subsequent primary term of the workgroup'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.

V. Approvals

The viability workgroup's report with recommendations shall be forwarded to PEPC for recommendations/approval.

PEPC gives the report to the budget office for fiscal input and EPC as an informational item.

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 Academic Affairs 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.

- VI. 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.

College President _____ Date: _____

PEPC Chair _____ Date: _____

Senate President _____ Date: _____