

**Allan Hancock Joint Community College
District Board Policy
Chapter 4 – Academic Affairs**

BP 4021 PROGRAM VITALITY

Allan Hancock College is committed to programs and curriculum of high quality, relevant to community and student needs, and evaluated regularly to ensure quality and currency. To this end, Allan Hancock College supports programs and classes that fulfill the goals of its mission as elaborated in the Educational Master Plan and Strategic Plan. Programs with low or declining enrollments, decreased demand for service, or clear obsolescence may be identified for discontinuance or renewal based on the following considerations:

1. **Review:** There must be a comprehensive and systematic review of the program's educational quality and effectiveness, including program enrollment, completions, program demand, and other relevant factors.
2. **Consultation:** The college must consult with its Academic Senate to form a review committee that includes administrator/s, faculty, students, staff, and may include community members.
3. **Alternative Options:** The college must explore alternative options before discontinuing a program, which may include program restructuring, sharing resources, or other measures to maintain program viability.
4. **Student and Staff Considerations:** Consideration must be given to the impact on enrolled students, as well as the reassignment of the program's faculty and staff.
5. **Adequate Notice:** The college must provide adequate notice to affected parties, including students, faculty, and staff.
6. **Governing Board Approval:** The decision to discontinue a program requires the approval of the college's governing board.

In accordance with Title 5, Section §51022, College districts are required by regulation and statute to develop a process for the discontinuance of courses or programs and minimum criteria for the discontinuance of occupational programs. Additionally, Education Code §78106 stipulates that career and technical education programs shall meet certain requirements to maintain program viability.

The process for review of program vitality/feasibility is set forth in administrative procedure 4021.

References: Title 5 Section 51022, Education Code §78016

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(Replaces Board Policy 7960)

Allan Hancock Joint Community College District
Administrative Procedure
Chapter 4 – Academic Affairs

AP 4021 PROGRAM VITALITY

Program Vitality is a component of college planning that leads to increased quality of instruction and services and better use of existing resources. This policy ensures a thorough, collaborative approach to evaluating a program's viability and feasibility. It aims to balance program quality, resource allocation, and institutional goals using quantitative and qualitative data, with a focus on shared governance and data-driven decision-making.

PROGRAM VITALITY PROCESSES SHALL:

- Be used to review the proposed continuance or discontinuance of instructional and student services programs, including career and technical programs.
- Rely on the discipline expertise of the program faculty, and involve staff, and administration. Committees may also incorporate higher education partners and Career and Technical programs advisory committee members.
- Reference current program reviews, and consider factors like workforce demand, resources needed, and legislative mandates,
- Reflect the values and goals established in the college planning processes and published in the current Educational Master Plan,
- Be based on a current, published list of criteria, and that such criteria be established through the shared governance process,
- Consider the intended and unintended consequences of discontinuance,
- Consider viability, vitality, revitalization, suspension, or discontinuance,
- Result in a document that contains recommendations that will be presented to the college community through the shared governance process.

DEFINITIONS:

- **Instructional Program:** For purposes of this policy, an educational program is defined as an organized sequence of courses leading to a degree or certificate. Educational programs are subject to the program review process according to the college's program review schedule. Vocational or occupational programs shall be reviewed every two years. (California Education Code §78016).
- **Student Services Program:** Student services programs support students' academic success, personal development, and overall well-being throughout their educational journey. These programs are designed to provide comprehensive

assistance to help students achieve their educational and career goals and can include entities mandated by regulation. Student Services programs are subject to the program review process according to the college's program review schedule.

- **Evaluation Committee:** A committee formed in response to a program being listed as for discontinuance. This committee develops the Vitality Report.
- **Vitality Report:** A report that makes recommendations about the continuance or discontinuance of a program under this policy to the Academic Senate.
- **Evaluation List:** A list of programs that are identified as under discontinuance for purposes of this policy. This list is developed by the Executive Team.
- **Executive Team:** This team is composed of the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA), Vice President of Student Services (VPSS), academic deans, and others.
- **Vitality Data Packet –** Quantitative and qualitative program data developed by Institutional Effectiveness.

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

1. **Conditions for Discontinuance:** The following conditions may cause the VPAA and/or VPSS to recommend a program for discontinuance:
 - a. Current Program Review and analysis of enrollment or transfer trends
 - b. Changes in demand in workforce/employment trends and/or verifiable changes in community need
 - c. Changes in requirements from transfer institutions
 - d. Availability of human, physical, and/or financial resources
 - e. Legislative mandates
 - f. Request from department chair with support from discipline faculty
2. **Financial Emergencies:** If the Board of Trustees formally declares a financial emergency, the superintendent/president and the Academic Senate may set new timelines by which the proposals for program modification or discontinuance submitted to AP&P will be acted upon and a final report of recommendations submitted by AP&P.
3. **Shared Governance:** The Administration, recognizing the District's policy to consult collegially with the Academic Senate in academic matters as outlined in Title 5 Section §53200(C) and Section §53203 and as stated in Board Policy 4020 and Board Policy 2510, acknowledges that Academic Senate must have a fundamental and integral role in any discussion of program continuance or discontinuance.
 - a. **The role of the Academic Senate is** to consider the recommendations of the Academic Policy and Planning Committee (AP&P) based on the recommendations of the Vitality Report and forward its recommendations for program continuance/discontinuance to the superintendent/president or designee, and to report to the Board of Trustees when applicable.
 - b. **The role of the Academic Policy and Planning Committee is** to examine, research, and analyze the Vitality Report presented for program vitality review. Upon a thorough review of the Vitality Report, it will forward its recommendations to the Academic Senate.

PROCESS & TIMELINE:

Fall 1 Vitality Process Initiated

1. Deans and administrators overseeing the discipline identify programs at risk and inform the VPAA or VPSS. The criteria to identify at-risk programs should:
 - Refer to the program goals, the mission of the college, and local community and industry needs
 - Include specifically defined measures or set standards that can be applied fairly to all programs
 - Be based on trends over time, typically five or more years
2. The administration develops a list of programs to evaluate and shares the list with Academic Senate Executive (ASE)
3. Data packet developed (IE)
4. An Evaluation Committee is formed for each at-risk program

Spring 1 Semester

1. Evaluation Team meets regularly to review and evaluate quantitative data and document contextual data.
2. The Evaluation Committee submits the Vitality Report to the Academic Senate by the end of the semester.
3. Academic Senate notifies Academic Policy & Planning Committee (AP&P)

Fall 2 Semester

1. AP&P reviews and makes recommendations to the Academic Senate by end of October.
2. The Academic Senate votes on recommendations by the end of the semester recommendations for program continuance/discontinuance to the superintendent/president or designee, and to report to the Board of Trustees when applicable.

FORMATION OF THE EVALUATION COMMITTEE:

1. As soon as possible following the delivery of the list of affected programs, an Evaluation Committee shall be identified by the Academic Senate and shared with the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The Chair of the Evaluation Committee will be appointed by the Senate Executive Committee, and cannot be a member of the affected discipline or a member of AP&P. The Chair of the Committee organizes the meeting cycle and facilitates the meetings.
2. The Evaluation Committee shall include representatives from the following constituencies:
 - Faculty members, appointed by the Academic Senate
 - One discipline expert from the affected program
 - One faculty member from a related program or discipline. Neither of these faculty will be a member of AP&P, when possible.
 - One counseling faculty not closely related to the program under review.
 - One student appointed by the Associated Student Body Government (ASBG).
 - Administration – dean of the affected program.

- One classified staff member from the affected program, and one classified staff member from a related program or discipline appointed by CSEA.
- One advisory committee member for CTE programs.
- A representative from Institutional Effectiveness serves as a resource specialist.

PROGRAM EVALUATION STUDY:

For each affected program, an Evaluation Committee shall conduct a Program Evaluation study. Both qualitative and quantitative factors from the Vitality Data packet are discussed and evaluated.

EVALUATION COMMITTEE DISCUSSION CRITERIA:

1. Qualitative factors are based on the mission, values, and goals of the institution and access and equity for students. These factors include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Quality of the program and how it is perceived by students, faculty, articulating universities, local businesses and industry, and the community
 - b. The ability of students to complete their educational goals of remediation, obtaining a certificate or degree, or transferring
 - c. Balance of college curriculum
 - d. Effect on students as a result of modifying or discontinuing the program
 - e. Comprehensiveness of the college experience
 - f. Uniqueness of the program
 - g. Importance of the program in its relationship to other programs, including high school pathways
 - h. Replication of programs in the surrounding area and their efficacy
 - i. Potential for a disproportionate impact on diversity at Allan Hancock College
 - j. Necessity of the program to maintain the mission of the College
 - k. Source of funding for the program (outside vs. general funds)
 - l. Impact on other programs, including transfer, if the program is modified or closed. If there are any, these must be identified.
 - m. Requirements by federal/state/accreditation or other areas (e.g. Title IX) for the program. If there are any, these must be identified.
 - n. Impact on articulated programs.
 - o. Other
2. Quantitative factors are based primarily on Institutional Effectiveness data and the Program Review where applicable. Factors that may be considered include but are not limited to:
 - a. Program Results showing:
 - A sustained downward trend in Full-time Equivalent Student (FTES) generated, enrollment, number and composition of sections offered, percent fill, FTES composition, retention, or persistence
 - b. Changes in demands in the workforce, transfer rates, job-outs, completers and graduates, and non-completers
 - c. Projected demand for the program in the future
 - d. Changes in class offerings
 - e. Availability of human resources
 - f. Availability of human resources

- g. FTES generated/Full-time Equivalent Faculty (FTEF)
- h. Enrollment trends
- i. Operating cost per FTES
- j. Capital outlay costs/year

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF PROGRAM EVALUATION:

There are three potential outcomes of the Vitality Report:

1. **Recommendation to Continue:** A program may be recommended to continue when, after full consideration, it is decided that it is in the best interest of the college, its students, and the larger community to do so.
2. **Recommendation to Continue with Qualification:** A program may be recommended to continue with qualifications. These qualifications may include specific interventions designed to improve the viability and responsiveness of the program.
 - a. A specific timeline should be provided during which the various interventions will occur.
 - b. Expected outcomes and indicators of success for each intervention should be outlined in advance. The programs should have access to normal program resources during that time.
 - c. Since the qualification(s) may include modifications to courses and/or the program, AP&P timelines should be considered.
 - d. After the specific qualification period is completed, the program will be reviewed again according to the provisions in this policy.
3. **Recommendation to Discontinue:** A recommendation to discontinue a program will occur when, after a full evaluation study, it is concluded that it is no longer in the best interest of the college, its students, and the larger community to continue the program. Any recommendation for program discontinuance will include the criteria used to arrive at the recommendation. The recommendation shall include a detailed plan and recommended timeline for phasing out the program with the least impact on students, faculty, staff and the community.

The recommendation must provide either a way for currently enrolled students to continue their programs of study or a plan for them to meet their educational objectives through alternative means.

The recommendation shall also consider the requirements of collective bargaining for full-time faculty and CSEA staff, including application of policies for reduction in force and opportunities for retaining.

EXPEDITED PROCESS FOR MUTUALLY AGREED PROGRAM DISCONTINUANCE

This expedited process is based on the existing Administrative Procedure for Program Vitality review and would maintain the essential elements of the original process while significantly reducing the timeline while still ensuring proper evaluation and planning for the transition.

1. **Mutual Agreement:** The Executive Team, in consultation with the program faculty and relevant stakeholders, identifies a program for potential discontinuance. All parties (including the Academic Senate, program faculty, and administration) agree in principle to discontinue the program in an expedited timeline.
2. **Rapid Evaluation:** A simplified Evaluation Committee is formed within two weeks, consisting of:
 - One faculty member from the affected program
 - The dean of the affected program
 - One Academic Senate representative in consultation with counseling faculty
 - One student representative
 - One classified staff member from the affected program
3. **Abbreviated Vitality Report:** The Evaluation Committee produces a condensed Vitality Report within four weeks, focusing on:
 - Key quantitative data supporting discontinuance
 - Qualitative factors influencing the decision
 - A detailed phase-out plan for the program
4. **Expedited Review:** The Academic Policy and Planning Committee (AP&P) reviews the Abbreviated Vitality Report within two weeks and provides its recommendation to the Academic Senate.
5. **Rapid Senate Action:** The Academic Senate reviews AP&P's recommendation and votes on the discontinuance proposal within two weeks.
6. **Final Approval:** The superintendent/president presents the recommendation to the Board of Trustees for final action at the next scheduled board meeting.

Timeline

This expedited process would follow a similar process and could be completed within a single semester:

- Weeks 1-2: Formation of simplified Evaluation Committee
- Weeks 3-6: Preparation of Abbreviated Vitality Report
- Weeks 7-8: AP&P review and recommendation
- Weeks 9-10: Academic Senate review and vote
- Week 11 or next available meeting: Board of Trustees final action

Key Considerations

- This expedited process should only be used when there is a clear consensus among all stakeholders.
- The phase-out plan must still adequately address the needs of current students, faculty, and staff.
- The expedited process maintains the core principles of shared governance and academic oversight.

EXEMPTIONS FROM PROGRAM VITALITY REVIEW FOR PROGRAM DEACTIVATION

A formal Program Vitality review is not required for program deactivation if **all** of the following conditions are met:

1. The deactivation will have no significant impact on:
 - The comprehensiveness and balance of offerings across the college curriculum and within the district
 - The college's educational and budget-planning process
 - Students, faculty, and staff
 - Transfer opportunities to four-year colleges and universities
 - Local businesses and industries or the region as a whole

2. The proposed deactivation falls under one of these scenarios:
 - **Replacement with Transfer Degree:** The existing curriculum review and approval process recommends archiving a local AA or AS degree in favor of a new AA-T or AS-T in the same discipline.
 - **Faculty Determination:** Discipline faculty determine that a program of study is no longer relevant or viable and recommend archiving the program through the existing curriculum review and approval process.
 - **Regulatory or Industry Changes:** Changes in legislative or industry requirements render the program noncompliant or irrelevant, as documented in the program review.

Consensus Requirement: If discipline faculty cannot reach a consensus regarding archiving the program, they may recommend a full Program Vitality review process.

References:

- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Inventory of Approved and Projected Programs
- Florida Community College memo Process for Evaluating Academic Programs at Risk. March 2003
- Program Discontinuance: A Faculty Perspective. ASCCC, adopted Spring 1998
- Skyline College working draft Program Improvement and Discontinuance Process. April 2003
- Solano County Community College District Policy 6100 Program and Curriculum Development. Adopted November 1986, revised December 2001
- Title 5 Sections 51022, 53200, 53203 and 55130
- West Valley College Academic Senate paper WVCAS Policy and Process for Program Discontinuance. December 2002

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