

Irvine Valley College Process for Discipline/Course Realignment

I. Background

Title 5, Section 53203 authorizes local community college boards “to adopt policies for appropriate delegation of authority and responsibilities to its college and/or district academic senate.” More specifically, local senates are granted primary responsibility for developing recommendations concerning academic and professional matters. These include, but are not limited to “curriculum, including establishing prerequisites and placing courses within disciplines” (Sec. 53200). The South Orange County Community College District’s Board Policy 2100.1 delegates such authority to the Academic Senates.

In April 1994, and as part of an on-going series of position papers on various academic and professional issues, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) recommended that local senates create a process for placement of courses within disciplines (“Placement of Courses Within Disciplines,” ASCCC, April 1994). This recommendation was again reaffirmed in a more recent document, “Qualifications for Faculty Service In The California Community Colleges: Minimum Qualifications, Placement of Courses Within Disciplines, And Faculty Service Areas” (ASCCC, Spring 2004).

The Irvine Valley College Academic Senate has established its Discipline/Course Realignment Process in accordance with Title 5, Sections 53200 and 53203, and in consideration of the recommendations and guidelines of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. This document is not intended to determine which courses belong in a given discipline, department, or school, but rather to establish criteria and guidelines for the decision-making process.

II. Definitions

For the purposes of this process, the following definitions will be used:

A. Discipline: An individual area of study within a program (i.e. History, English, Math for transfer or associate degree; Word Processing, Office Administration, or Nutrition for certificate programs). Each discipline consists of all the courses in the Master Course file that make up the discipline. This is the baseline level of instruction and is linked to a Taxonomy of Programs (TOPS) code.

B. Program: 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 (CCR Title 5 Section 55000). (i.e. completing a program of study leading to a certificate in Computer Electronics Technology, or an AS degree in Business, or leading to transfer). This definition comes from the Curriculum Standards Handbook.

C. Department: A collection of associated disciplines and programs. This is an organizational designation as well as a pedagogical one.

D. School: An administrative unit of the college encompassing one or more **academic** departments.

III. Initiating A Discussion on Discipline/Course Realignment

- Discipline/Course realignment discussions may begin in a variety of venues, including: the Academic Senate and its committees, the President's Council, the Office of Instruction, the Office of Student Services, the Deans' Council, and individual Departments or Schools.
- Regardless of where discussions begin, the process for discipline/course realignment, including any recommendations resulting from that process, shall be conducted in the Academic Senate, recognizing the South Orange County Community College District's policy to rely primarily on the Academic Senate's advice in academic and professional matters.
- Discussions concerning any specific discipline/course considered for realignment shall be based on Guidelines outlined below in order to have a fair and complete review leading to a decision to realign a discipline/course or leave it where it currently stands.
- Given the fact that Irvine Valley College is already structured along the traditional lines of Schools and Departments, the latter including a number of disciplines, the burden of proof for realignment must fall with the school, department, or administrative or governance unit wishing to change the existing organizational structure.

IV. Discussion Guidelines

Guidelines are based on the mission, values, and goals of the institution, and access and equity for students. They include, but are not limited to:

- The pedagogy of the discipline, i.e., are the methods, analyses and inquiry currently used appropriate in the department or school where the program is currently housed?
- Faculty qualifications, i.e., are the academic qualifications for faculty teaching the discipline appropriate for the department or school where the discipline is currently housed?
- Articulation issues, i.e., are current articulation agreements appropriate? Are students being negatively affected by the current alignment. What kind of change would realignment have on articulation? Would students be negatively affected as a **result** of the realignment?

- The quality of the program and how it is perceived by students, articulating universities, local business and industry, and the community.
- The ability of students to complete their degree or certificate or to transfer. This includes maintaining the catalog rights of students.
- The prevalent alignment of the discipline, i.e., where it is housed in other colleges and universities and where it is placed in the state's TOPS (Taxonomy of Programs) code (although the TOPS code is not intended to be a model for the organization of academic programs, it has been used by colleges for a number of purposes, see "California Community Colleges, Taxonomy of Programs, February 2004, Sixth Edition, Corrected Version, November 2004, p. ii).
- Will the discipline/course budget be affected as a result of the realignment?
- Will the discipline/course offerings be affected as a result of the realignment?
- How will realignment affect equipment/facilities currently used by the discipline?

V. Discussion Format

- Discussion of discipline/course realignment must include all parties potentially affected by the decision. These include faculty, staff, administrators, students, the employing business and industry, and the community, if applicable.
- Final determination regarding the decision to realign a discipline or course shall be made by the Representative Council of the Academic Senate.

VI. Process

A. Stage One

Every effort will be made to develop a recommendation for the realignment of a discipline/course by meetings of faculty and administrators potentially affected by the decision (from the discipline being considered for realignment and from the unit where the new discipline would be housed). It may also include students and community members, if appropriate. The bases for these discussions shall be those outlined in the in Sections IV and V above.

If all individuals concerned are in agreement that a realignment is in order, this recommendation will be communicated in writing (using the Guidelines outlined in Section IV above) by representatives of both units to the Academic Affairs Committee, which will forward it, with its own recommendation, to the Representative Council of the Academic Senate. The Academic Affairs recommendation will be agendized at a Representative Council meeting. The Representative Council will, in turn, make its final determination and communicate it in writing to the Vice-President for Instruction. The Vice-President for Instruction will bring the recommendation to the President's Executive Council for a decision on the Academic Senate recommendation.

B. Stage Two

In the event there is no agreement among all those concerned, the matter will be referred to the Academic Affairs Committee.

The Academic Affairs Committee will convene a special meeting to consider the issue. A faculty (or administrative) representative of the concerned parties shall submit a “position paper” to argue its case. Position Papers may also be submitted by other concerned parties. Arguments shall be based on the Guidelines outlined in Section IV above. The Committee will review the documents presented. It will then invite representatives to attend a subsequent, special meeting of the Committee to make a brief, oral summary of the position papers and answer questions from Committee members. The recommendation of the Committee will be forwarded in writing to the Representative Council of the Academic Senate for its review and action.

The Representative Council will agendaize the recommendation and, at its discretion, may require additional documentation, clarification, or schedule further presentations from the representatives. The Representative Council’s final determination will then be forwarded in writing to the Vice-President for Instruction. The Vice-President for Instruction will bring the recommendation to the President’s Executive Council for a decision on the matter.

Reference Bibliography

- Placement of Courses Within Disciplines. ASCCC, approved April 1994
- Title 5 Sections 53200, 55002
- SOCCCD Board Policy 2100.1
- Qualifications For Faculty Service in The California Community Colleges: Minimum Qualifications, Placement of Courses Within Disciplines, and Faculty Service Areas. ASCCC, adopted Spring 2004.
- California Community Colleges. Taxonomy of Programs. February 2004. Sixth Edition. Corrected Version, November 2004.
- Mission College. Policy And Process For Program Discontinuance., May 17, 2001

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