FOOTHILL COLLEGE PROGRAM DISCONTINUANCE/SUSPENSION PROCEDURE

BACKGROUND AND UNDERLYING CONCEPTS

This procedure is based on the guiding principles that:

- Program discontinuance is both academic and professional for local academic senates, and therefore requires faculty participation in all circumstances, including times of "extreme financial hardship" for the district;
- Criteria used to assess program viability and all procedures involving such assessment are to be clearly articulated and transparent
- Insofar as program discontinuance impacts employment, it is a matter of collective bargaining, and as such the Faculty Association will be given the necessary time to resolve collective bargaining issues in accordance with the FA Agreement;
- Discontinuance of any program must be considered in the context of impact for both colleges in the district;
- Program Review and Program Discontinuance are distinct processes.
- Program faculty should be given every reasonable opportunity to correct problems well in advance of the determination that a program must be discontinued or suspended.

Vital academic considerations include the following:

- Effects on students;
- Education and budget planning;
- Issues of regional coordination for occupational programs
- Community workforce and economic development needs

Due to these considerations, qualitative as well as quantitative data must be used in discussions of program discontinuance. As stated above, program review and program discontinuance are distinct processes. However, when done rigorously and with the full engagement of program faculty, **any and all potential problems that might ultimately lead to the need for program discontinuance should come to light during program review**. Accordingly, there are multiple opportunities built into the program review process for faculty and administrators to communicate clearly and explicitly about the vitality of the program. Though not required, part-time faculty within a program are invited and encouraged to participate in both the Program Review and the Program Discontinuance processes.

Quantitative data include the following:

- Retention, persistence, and completion rates;
- Enrollment trends;
- Frequency of course offerings;
- Workplace demand for programs primarily intended to support the college's career/workforce mission,
- Other quantitative data detected and explicitly identified as potentially problematic during the program review process

- Program-Level Student Learning Outcome assessment data

Qualitative data include the following:
- Existence of a transfer major for programs primarily intended to support the college's transfer mission, ;
- Program articulation with transfer institutions
- Alignment with or duplication within overall college curriculum;
- Alignment with the college mission and/or strategic initiatives;
- Program-Level Student Learning Outcome assessment data
- Other qualitative data detected and explicitly identified as potentially problematic during the program review process

PROCESS

1. In the event that data are explicitly identified as problematic during the Annual Program Review, this shall trigger an out-of-cycle Comprehensive Program Review to be completed during the next quarter.
2. In the event that the Comprehensive Program Review process explicitly identify a program as potentially at risk, an internal review process is triggered:
   a. Within two weeks the following will occur:
      i. A meeting will convene to include the division dean, program faculty and staff, the VPI, and if appropriate, the college Articulation Officer. The purposes of this meeting are to discuss the nature of the quantitative and qualitative data triggering the determination, review the program structure and goals, identify measures that could be taken to make the program viable, and document a plan to implement these measures with explicit benchmark goals and timelines. Minutes from this meeting will to be sent to the academic and classified senate presidents, the college curriculum committee faculty co-chair, and the college president.
      ii. The Foothill academic senate president will bring the item forward to the next APM committee meeting as an information item
      iii. The Foothill vice president of instruction will come to the Foothill academic senate to discuss the specific criteria leading to the triggering of the internal review process
   b. Program faculty and staff, the division dean, the VPI, and if appropriate, the college Articulation Officer, will work collaboratively for at least two quarters to gather appropriate additional data and to monitor progress on the measures identified in subparagraph 2a above to make the program viable. These measures may also include the possibility of transferring the program or combining the program with the sister college. Documentation of progress will be sent at least monthly to the academic senate president, the college curriculum committee faculty co-chair, and the college president, and brought to APM as an information item.

3. After completion of the internal review at the end of two quarters, if the benchmarks defined as per 2a (above) have not been reached the Vice President of Instruction and the president of the Foothill academic senate will convene a Program Viability Review Committee (PVRC).
    a. The membership of this committee will include the president of the Foothill academic senate or his/her designee, the FHDA District academic senate president, faculty in the affected program, the college Articulation Officer, the division dean, the vice president of instruction or his/her designee, and one at-large Foothill College faculty member. The Foothill academic senate will ratify all faculty appointments.
    b. Upon formation of the PVRC, the De Anza College vice president of instruction and faculty from any parallel De Anza program will immediately be notified of its formation as well as its meeting schedule.
    c. Also upon formation of the PVRC, the Foothill College president will come to the Foothill academic and classified senate to discuss the specific criteria and events leading to the PVRC formation.
    d. The charge of the PVRC is to review progress toward renewed viability and make a recommendation to PaRC regarding the program. Options would include continuation, suspension, discontinuance, or combining the program with the sister college's program. This committee will hold open meetings in accordance with the Brown Act and include provision for public comment, and will have a first and second reading of action items. PVRC meeting minutes will be forwarded to both academic senates as support for the recommendation.

4. If it is determined by the PaRC that the program should be discontinued, both of the following will occur:
    a. Written formal normal notice will be sent to program faculty;
    b. There will be a recommendation for a phase-out period to ensure that all students in the program have the opportunity to complete the program and to ensure that the Faculty Association may resolve contractual issues for faculty in the affected program.

5. If it is determined by the PaRC that the program should be suspended, all of the following will occur:
    a. Written formal normal notice will be sent to program faculty;
    b. There will be a recommendation for a phase-out period to ensure that all students currently in the program have the opportunity to complete the program and to ensure that the Faculty Association may resolve contractual issues for faculty in the affected program; and
    c. Program faculty and administrators will collaborate to plan the timeline and criteria for reevaluation of suspension status, and this plan shall be sent to the academic and classified senate presidents, the college curriculum committee faculty co-chair, and the college president.

6. In the event that the district administration declares a time of "extreme financial hardship," and time doesn't reasonably allow for all of the above to occur:

    a. Foothill College administrators will rely primarily on previously documented annual and comprehensive program reviews in their identification of any/all programs that may need to be suspended and/or discontinued.

    b. The vice president of instruction will visit the academic senate to explicitly identify the programs and criteria being considered for discontinuation and/or suspension

    c. Immediately upon identifying potentially targeted programs...

*I drafted the above proposed Foothill procedure being mindful that the proposed DISTRICT Prog Discon. Procedure requires our the following:

1. Each college shall implement policy and procedure which explicitly identify:
    a. criteria that might trigger concerns about program viability;
    b. mechanisms and timing of communication and collaboration processes which are inclusive of program faculty and administrators; and
    c. mechanisms by which program viability problems might be remedied as an alternative to discontinuance;
    d. the timing for communication with administrators and faculty via the Academic and Professional Matters (APM) committee, to identify programs at the sister college that might be affected and to explore the possibility of merging/absorption by the sister college

2. If one of the colleges determines through its shared governance process that program discontinuance is necessary, all of the following will occur:
    a. Written formal normal notice will be sent to program faculty, the Faculty Association, and Classified Union. The timing of notification shall be in accordance with Article 15 of the FA Agreement;
    b. College faculty and administrators will collaborate to develop a phase-out plan to be brought to APM for discussion and feedback. This phase-out plan will include provisions to ensure that:
        i. there is timely and ongoing communication with affected faculty and staff
        ii. all students currently in the program have the opportunity to complete the program and are appropriately counseled, and
        iii. the Faculty Association has time to resolve contractual issues for faculty in the affected program in accordance with Article 15 of the FA Agreement