AP 4021 Educational Program Viability Review

I. Introduction

An educational program is defined in Title 5 Section 55000 (m) as “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.”

Educational Program Viability Review (EPVR) defines the process for evaluating a program’s viability distinct from the College’s program review process and separate from discipline faculty-initiated program deactivation, or modification through the Curriculum Committee process.

Educational Program Viability Review provides the Chief Instructional Officer of the college with a written report that includes recommendations regarding an educational program’s continuance (no action taken), revitalization, consolidation, suspension, discontinuance, or hold due to dire fiscal emergency.

The College shall not suspend, discontinue, or place a program on hold due to a dire fiscal emergency unless an EPVR process has been conducted.

II. Guiding Principles

- In all cases, primary consideration shall be given to how to best serve the college mission and student needs.
- The formal initiation of the EPVR should follow collegial consultation between faculty and administration regarding the program’s viability.
- The purpose of the EPVR is to have criteria and a procedure in place to guide a discussion when the process is needed. The process shall provide the opportunity for participation by all stakeholders, which may include, but is not limited to students, faculty, classified employees, administrators, transfer institutions, and the community.
- The process shall require careful examination of all pertinent evidence, both quantitative and qualitative. This may include, but is not limited to, human, curricular and budgetary considerations, alternative organizational structures, community needs, external regulations, and the college culture. Sources of data for all evidence shall be referenced and cited.
- Consideration of continuance (no action taken), revitalization, consolidation, suspension, or discontinuance shall include an analysis of the potential benefits and the potential costs of each alternative. This
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analysis shall include non-monetary costs (e.g., faculty workload, student impact).

- Budgetary concerns do not in and of themselves comprise a sufficient reason to discontinue a program.

- Following the College’s overall “evidence-based decision making process,” the EPVR shall consider examples of quantitative and qualitative evidence as outlined below. (Anecdotal evidence is inappropriate and shall not be considered.)

III. EPVR Initiation

The EPVR may be initiated by the:

- Chief Instructional Officer
- Dean of the program
- Faculty Senate
- Curriculum Committee

The recommender(s) shall prepare a written proposal clearly stating the reasons calling for EPVR, including evidence of prior dialogue among stakeholders. The proposal shall discuss each of the supporting factors and identify the sources of all supporting data. The recommender(s) shall also consider and refer to the program’s most recent Program and Services review (PSR) in the proposal. The proposal shall be submitted to the Chief Instructional Officer and the Faculty Senate President who will assemble the EPVR committee.

IV. EPVR Committee Membership

The EPVR committee membership shall include:

- President of the Faculty Senate or his/her designee
- The dean of the school housing the program in question (or the dean designee of the Chief Instructional Officer in the event that the dean cannot serve.)
- Four faculty members appointed by the Faculty Senate,
  - Two full-time faculty members shall be from the program in question. If there are fewer than two full-time faculty in the program, then full-time faculty from related disciplines, adjunct faculty from
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the program in question or outside subject matter experts shall be selected.

- If the program under review is a CTE program, at least one of the remaining non-program faculty shall be from a different CTE program.
- If the program in question is not a CTE program, at least one of the remaining faculty shall be from a related discipline.

- A student representative appointed by the Associated Students of Chaffey College (The student representative shall be a non-voting participant on the committee), and
- Optional – One non-faculty representative for the program in question chosen by the EPVR committee.

The dean (or dean designee) and one faculty member shall be selected by the committee members as the co-chairs of the EPVR Committee. The responsibilities of the co-chairs of the EPVR Committee include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Maintenance of objectivity, neutrality, and integrity during the entire process.
- Providing for the recording of minutes for each meeting. In addition to written minutes, meetings may be recorded by agreement of a majority of the committee members. If the meeting is recorded, this shall be announced to all present, including visitors.
- The creation of a report that specifies the outcome of the EPVR Committee’s research and deliberations and makes specific recommendations, complete with timelines.

The committee shall have access to research compiled by the Office of Institutional Research, along with assistance from, and information supplied by, other college departments as necessary in the conduct of its activities pursuant to this procedure.

The committee shall exist until it completes its recommendations and report, and either (1) its recommendations are fully implemented, (2) the committee determines that the program is viable and recommends termination of the EPVR process, or (3) the committee has discharged its obligations as outlined in section VIII of this procedure.
V. Criteria Used in Conducting the EPVR

The EPVR must take into account both qualitative and quantitative evidence. Factors to be considered include but are not limited to the following:

A. Qualitative Evidence

- Relation of the program to the college mission.
- Relation of the program to Institutional Goals.
- Breadth and balance of the college, school, departmental curriculum.
- Development of the whole student.
- Pedagogy of the discipline. (Are the methods, analyses, and techniques currently used appropriate and updated?)
- Impact of the program suspension or discontinuance on students and student learning outcomes.
- Potential for a disproportionate impact on college diversity.
- Quality and relevance of the program, which may include input from PSR, student evaluations, outside agencies, transfer institutions, local businesses and/or industry, and the community.
- Ability of students to complete their degrees/certificates or to transfer. This includes maintaining rights of students as stipulated in the college catalog.
- Levels of outside support and recognition (e.g., articulating colleges and universities, employing businesses or industries, program awards and commendations).
- Ability of programs to meet the standards of outside accrediting agencies, licensing boards, and governing bodies.
- Evidence regarding other Chaffey programs in similar circumstances not being evaluated under the EPVR process.
- Existence or lack of similar programs at surrounding colleges.
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B. Quantitative Evidence

- Enrollment trends over the past five years.
- Frequency of program course section offerings to assure reasonable availability for students to complete the program within a reasonable duration.
- Projected industry demand for the program.
- Retention or success rates of students over past five years.
- Term-to-term persistence (significantly below the college average or disciplinary norms) for those students in courses in the program over a sustained period of time.
- Extent to which the program is cost-effective relative to disciplinary norms and compared to similar programs at comparable institutions.
- Program completion rates over the past five years.
- Success rates of students on industry, state, and national licensing exams.
- Student satisfaction as demonstrated through surveys with statistically significant results.
- Unavailability of transfer major or changes in transfer requirements at the program level (for transfer programs).
- Insufficient physical resources (including facilities, equipment and supplies).
- Changes in labor market demand and/or technology. (Analysis of demand for the program through the use of labor market information may result in curriculum modifications such as adding options for higher demand specialties).
- Lack of available qualified program personnel.
- Accrediting agency recommendations.
- Failure to meet licensure requirements, state mandates, certification standards or accreditation requirements.
- Evidence regarding other Chaffey programs in similar circumstances not being evaluated under the EPVR process.
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VI. Procedure for EPVR Committee

- EPVR Committee to be assembled within thirty (30) faculty contract service days of the original recommendation; EPVR Committee shall be convened during the regular academic year, with all meetings taking place during faculty contract service days.

- The EPVR Committee shall develop a schedule for completion of its work.

- The EPVR Committee shall complete its work within the equivalent of one semester (“EPVR Period”). However, if the EPVR Committee determines that more time is required, the Committee may adjust the EPVR Period.

- Time shall be allowed for the preparation of a dissenting report by the program Dean, impacted students, faculty, and any other stakeholders.

- The EPVR Committee shall ensure that it considers all appropriate qualitative and quantitative evidence and input from impacted students, faculty, and any other stakeholders.

- EPVR Committee shall prepare a written report that includes recommendations. That report shall be distributed to the program Dean, impacted students, faculty, and any other stakeholders at least fourteen (14) days before the end of the EPVR Period.

- Impacted students, faculty, and any other stakeholders shall have fourteen (14) days to prepare, if desired, a dissenting response to the report that will accompany the EPVR Committee’s report to the Chief Instructional Officer.

- The EPVR Committee’s report and the dissent shall be combined into one document and presented to the Chief Instructional Officer. The Chief Instructional Officer shall issue a decision within thirty (30) business days.

- The EPVR Committee’s report and records of the evidence and comments pertaining to that report shall be maintained publicly and electronically, giving access to the College community and stakeholders.

- The Chief Instructional Officer shall distribute the decision and action plan to all stakeholders both internal and external, including, but not limited to the Curriculum Committee, Faculty Senate, Catalog and Scheduling office, Counseling, and Financial Aid. When appropriate, notification of the decision shall be communicated to the Chancellor’s Office, the College’s accreditor, outside accrediting agencies, and local industry.
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VII. EPVR Report

The EPVR Committee’s report shall be in writing and include:

- An executive summary.
- The initiating documentation.
- The membership of the EPVR Committee.
- The schedule for the EPVR Period.
- Minutes of each EPVR Committee meeting.
- History and background information regarding the program.
- A description of all qualitative and quantitative evidence considered.
- Detailed findings.
- Recommendations, including the rationale for the EPVR Committee’s recommendation(s) and a discussion of impacts on impacted students, faculty, and any other stakeholders.
- The dissenting response, if applicable.

VIII. EPVR Recommendations

The possible results of an Educational Program Viability Review are continuance, revitalization, suspension, hold due to dire fiscal emergency, or discontinuance. Each is discussed below.

A. Program Continuation

The EPVR may recommend that the program continue, and that no action is necessary.

B. Program Revitalization

The EPVR Committee may recommend that a program continue with qualifications. These may include, but are not limited to, specific interventions designed to improve the program’s viability. Examples of Program Revitalization may include, but are not limited to:

- A plan of action to enhance the performance and effectiveness of an existing program, discipline or department, which could include
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establishing training/professional development for faculty and or curriculum changes/updates.

• A recommendation to restructure an existing program, discipline or department for greater effectiveness, including restructuring or joining of smaller departments into a larger one or splitting the program into smaller departments.

• A recommendation to develop a new program from the existing program.

• A plan to bring the program and its benefits to the attention of students, counselors, high schools, and other members of the college community, and/or a plan of outreach to community members, local businesses, or other external stakeholders.

The EPVR Committee’s report for program revitalization shall include an action plan and a timeline during which these interventions will occur. After the specified revitalization period is completed, the program will be reviewed again on a regular PSR cycle.

If a program revitalization report is approved, the program faculty and others identified in the report shall implement the action plan contained in that report. The action plan may be amended or revised at any time during its pendency by mutual consent of the full-time program faculty and the program Dean. Amendments or revisions shall be reported to the EPVR Committee and the Faculty Senate. The EPVR Committee shall monitor program progress in a manner and schedule set forth in the action plan. If appropriate, the EPVR Committee may call for submission of the summary and evidence as part of the program’s PSR. The program faculty shall submit a written summary and evidence of the activities undertaken pursuant to the action plan at intervals described in the plan. Progress on the action plan shall also be reported to the Faculty Senate.

If, after a reasonable time, there has not been a statistically significant increase in key performance indicators or on activities required in the action plan, the EPVR Committee shall recommend an appropriate action. Appropriate actions can include but are not limited to:

• An extension of two semesters, after which the EPVR Committee will re-evaluate the program’s progress.
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- Accept the program in its current state if it serves a community, educational, or training need.
- Create a new action plan to achieve needed changes/improvement(s).
- Discontinue the program. The EPVR Committee shall develop an action plan to phase out the program.
- Plan for retraining and reassignment of program faculty and classified staff must also be addressed in accordance with the current collective bargaining agreements.

C. Program Suspension

The EPVR Committee may recommend that a program be temporarily suspended for one to three years. Any recommendation for program suspension must include the criteria used to arrive at the recommendation. Examples or reasoning for the temporary suspension may include but are not limited to:

- Safety issues
- Equipment purchase update
- Unqualified faculty
- Certification/licensing/accreditation issues
- Regulatory suspension

The EPVR Committee’s Recommendation Report for Program Suspension shall consider and/or include the following:

- A detailed plan and recommended timeline for the suspension of the program with the least impact on students, faculty, staff and the community.
- An impact report explaining how phasing out the program for suspension will affect students, faculty, staff, and the community. This report shall include a discussion of the potential for a disproportionate impact on college diversity.
- The amount of cost savings achieved by virtue of the program’s suspension.
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- Recommendations for how currently enrolled students may continue their program of study or a plan for students to meet their educational objectives through alternative means while the program is under suspension.
- The requirements of collective bargaining for faculty and staff, including application of policies for reduction in force and opportunities for retraining of faculty and staff, if necessary, while the program is under suspension.
- A detailed plan for program resumption, including a recommended timeline for resuming program operations.
- Plan for retraining and reassignment of program faculty and classified staff must also be addressed in accordance with the current collective bargaining agreements.

D. Program Hold Due to Dire Fiscal Emergency

The EPVR Committee may recommend that a program that is viable under normal circumstances, but is threatened by a dire fiscal emergency be placed on hold. In such circumstances, the EPVR Committee shall issue a report indicating that the program will be placed on hold for the duration of the fiscal emergency. The report shall also set fiscal benchmarks for initiating resumption of the program. The program shall continue to participate in the Program and Services Review process during the period it is on hold due to dire fiscal emergency.

The EPVR Committee's Recommendation Report for Program Hold Due to Dire Fiscal Emergency shall consider and/or include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Financial evidence used to determine the existence of the dire fiscal emergency, including the savings achieved by virtue of the program's suspension.
- Agreements with other local districts that may alleviate some or all of the emergency conditions.
- Impact of the program hold on students, faculty, staff, and the community, including a discussion of the potential for a disproportionate impact on college diversity.
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- Recommendations as to how currently enrolled students may continue their program of study or a plan for students to meet their educational objectives through alternative means while the program is on hold.
- Detailed timeline for implementation of the hold with the least impact on students, faculty, staff and the community.
- Detailed timeline for program resumption that includes measurable financial and/or other benchmarks.
- Plan for retraining and reassignment of program faculty and classified staff must also be addressed in accordance with the current collective bargaining agreements.

E. Program Discontinuance

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 for the program to continue. A discontinuance recommendation should only be made after a serious attempt has been made to improve the program’s effectiveness and efficiency, and when it is clear that future efforts at remediation are not warranted. Any recommendation for program discontinuance must include the criteria and evidence used to arrive at the recommendation.

The EPVR Committee’s Recommendation Report for Program Discontinuance shall consider and/or include the following:

- Impact of the program discontinuance on students, faculty, staff, and the community (including but not limited to local businesses, industries, colleges, and universities), including a discussion of the potential for a disproportionate impact on college diversity.
- Recommendations as to how currently enrolled students may continue their program of study or a plan for students to meet their educational objectives through alternative means once the program is discontinued.
- Detailed timeline for discontinuing the program with the least impact on students, faculty, staff and the community.
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- Plan for retraining and reassignment of program faculty and classified staff must also be addressed in accordance with the current collective bargaining agreements.

References:  Education Code Section 78016;
Title 5 Sections 51022 and 55130
ACCJC Accreditation Standard II.A.15

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