

Modesto Junior College Program Initiation, Revitalization, Reduction, and Discontinuance Guiding Principles and Procedures

I. Definition of a Program and Title 5 Conformity

- A. *Definition of a Program:* A program is defined 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 learning” (**Title 5, Section 55000**).
- B. *Title 5 Conformity:* In conformance with **Title 5 (CCR sect. # 51022 and 55130)**¹ as well as with generally accepted institutional good practice, the purpose of the procedures described here is to conduct a thorough assessment of programs that have been identified as requiring either initiation, revitalization, reduction, or discontinuance. Modesto Junior College recognizes that its curriculum and course offerings must be responsive to the needs of the students and the community that it serves and, furthermore, that the college must continue to support its mission as well as the goals of individual programs over time. Because the needs of the students and our community change over time, the content and make-up of the educational programs at our college must not only undergo regular program review for efficacy and in order to assure that the college is effectively using its resources to meet the education needs of our community but in certain cases recommendations must also be made to either initiate, revitalize, reduce or discontinue a program. The purpose of the following procedures is to ensure a sound, fair and unbiased determination of a course of action in those cases where a program is to be recommended for initiation, revitalization, reduction or discontinuance.

II. Principles and Criteria Informing Identification of a Program for Potential Initiation, Revitalization, Reduction or Discontinuance

- A. *Principles:* The following are animating principles that guide the determination of a program as a candidate for initiation, revitalization, reduction or discontinuance:
- 1) The purpose of this document is to provide a procedure whereby instructional or student services programs undergo a formal and transparent review by a Program Committee (Initiation, Revitalization, Reduction or Discontinuance) composed of key representatives of major constituent groups to recommend to the Academic Senate a course of action in regards to the identified program. This recommendation, as well as the Academic Senate’s decision on this recommendation, is to be approached with the Modesto Junior College’s long-term strategic planning and mission in mind.

¹ *Title 5 Sections 51022 and 55130: “(a) Every vocational or occupational training program offered by a community college district shall be reviewed every two years by the governing board of the district to ensure that each program, as demonstrated by the California Occupational Information System, including the State-Local Cooperative Labor Market Information Program established in Section 10533 of the Unemployment Insurance Code, or if this program is not available in the labor market area, other available sources of labor market information, does all of the following: (1) meets a documented labor market demand.”

- 2) The college community, as well as the larger community we serve at Modesto Junior College, is best served when curricular and pedagogic rationales drive the budget development process. Similarly, the college community, as well as the larger community we serve at Modesto Junior College is best served when strictly fiscal rationale do not drive the program initiation, revitalization, reduction or discontinuance process unless fiscal exigency is declared by the Yosemite Community College District Board of Trustees.
- 3) Program initiation, revitalization, reduction and discontinuance is a very serious matter that has long-term consequences for the students, faculty, the college, the district and our community. Short-sighted, reactive decision-making can often make a situation worse so this kind of programmatic decision should be made with gravity, fairness and an overwhelming abundance of evidence.
- 4) There is an inexorable link between academic planning and student success. Diversity begets diversity—programmatic diversity is a cornerstone to equitably serving a diverse community such as ours. Robust student success demands a wide range of programs, both large and small, covering a diverse spectrum of skills, professions and trades and program initiation, revitalization, reduction or discontinuance should be guided by this ideal.
- 5) The review and decision regarding the revitalization, reduction, or discontinuance of a program is a joint venture of the faculty and the administration that aims for consensus and operates under the principles of shared governance and decision-making based on “good faith” efforts.
- 6) Program reduction and discontinuance can be particularly traumatic for a college community. Therefore, any program deemed “at risk” for program reduction or program discontinuance should be based on overwhelming evidence that a given program is not serving students and the community and is failing to serve at significant cost to the district. If there is an objective need to reduce or discontinue a program and it is done under normal fiscal conditions, then it should be fairly easy to gain consensus – as the data will be so overwhelming that few could disagree – including those in the program affected. The program reduction or discontinuance should be informed not only by data but the request and final Academic Senate recommendation should also be historical in nature, not simply based on relatively short time periods. Given the interdependence of many of our college programs, the reduction or discontinuance of a program must not threaten other programs who require course offerings in the program going through a program reduction or discontinuance. Programs should not be discontinued solely because of retirements, impacted resources, personality conflicts, chronic neglect or other issues of mismanagement—in these cases a program support plan should first be pursued.

- B. *Criteria:* The following are criteria informed by data that help to determine if a program is a candidate for initiation, revitalization, reduction or discontinuance. Student enrollment data, student success rates, labor force needs, community needs and transfer-student needs, program review data and curricular mapping information should all be considered required criteria for any Program Committee.

1. Evidence that a Program is a Candidate for Reduction or Discontinuance

- i. The program has a sustained (five or more years) period of low enrollment or the program has a sustained (five or more years) period of decreasing retention rates.
- ii. The program has a sustained and significant downward trend (five or more years) in FTES generated, load, enrollment, number and composition of sections offered, percent fill, FTES composition, retention, and persistence and a sustained increase in expense or annual cost/FTES over five (5) years.
- iii. Transfer rates of students who have graduated from the program have decreased over the past five (5) years.
- iv. For programs that are mainly vocational in nature: lack of demand in the workforce as evidenced by a substantive decrease in jobs offered in this field over the past five (5) or more years.
- v. For programs that are primarily academic in nature: decreasing success rate of students passing state and national licensing exams over the past five (5) or more years.
- vi. The cost of the program is significantly above the median cost of similar programs (out of a pool of at least four at other colleges from our cohort group in the California community college system) over the course of at least five (5) years.
- vii. Program outcomes for the program are substantively shared by another existing program; the program is not unique and much of the content is duplicated by other programs.
- viii. The academic course articulation or transfer pattern with universities in California has been discontinued.
- ix. The program fails to relate or support any other programs at the college.

2. Evidence that a Program is a Candidate for Initiation or Revitalization

- i. Program initiation or revitalization will positively affect students and student learning outcomes.
- ii. Program initiation or revitalization will increase campus diversity.
- iii. Program initiation or revitalization will remove permanent or cyclical barriers to student success in other programs.
- iv. Program initiation or revitalization will help the college fulfill its mission.
- v. Program initiation or revitalization will help meet the needs of special communities and will not negatively impact a special and vital community need.

III. Process to Request the Formation of a Program Initiation, Revitalization, Reduction or Discontinuance Committee

- A. *Initiation of the Process:* The process begins with a request to the Modesto Junior College Academic Senate to form a Program Committee, this will be a **Request to Form a Program Initiation Committee, Program Revitalization Committee, Program Reduction Committee or a Program Discontinuance Committee**. Requests to the Academic Senate to consider forming a Program Committee must originate with a formal written request to the Academic Senate at Modesto Junior College. If the Program Committee requested is either a Program Initiation Committee or a Program Revitalization Committee, then evidence must show that the program will help the college fulfill its mission, serve a vital community need, will increase student success and/or increase campus diversity. If the Program Committee requested is either a Program Reduction Committee or a Program Discontinuance Committee, the normal program review cycle (over the past 5 years) must be part of the request and the rationale must illustrate negative quantitative indicators, such as low enrollment, a significant downward trend in enrollment, and/or lack of currency or relevance.
- B. *Academic Senate Vote on the Request:* Based on the request submitted in writing to the Academic Senate, the Academic Senate will vote (after both a first and a second read of the request) on whether to accept or reject the Request to Form a Program Committee. The Academic Senate decision should be accompanied by a detailed rationale explaining the reasons for either accepting or rejecting the Request to form a Program Committee.

IV. Formation of a Program Initiation, Revitalization, Reduction or Discontinuance Committee

- A. *Program Committee Make-Up:* After accepting a Request to Form a Program Committee, the Academic Senate will then initiate the formation of a **Program Initiation, Revitalization, Reduction or Discontinuance Committee**. The Program Committee is charged with researching, formulating and returning to the Academic Senate to provide a final recommendation to the Academic Senate, which will then vote to either accept or reject the recommendation of the Program Committee. The Program Committee will be made up of the following six (6) members: **The Academic Senate President, the Academic Senate Vice-President, the Faculty Co-Chair of the Curriculum Committee, the Vice-President of Instruction, the relevant supervising dean of the program under consideration, and the President of ASMJC**. After the Academic Senate has voted to accept the request to form a Program Committee, the Program Committee make-up will be approved by the Academic Senate before the Program Committee begins its work of formulating and returning to Academic Senate with a final recommendation.

V. Program Committee Charge and Final Recommendation to the Academic Senate (Completed by the end of the following semester).

- A. *Program Committee Charge:* The Program Initiation, Revitalization, Reduction or Discontinuance Committee is charged with making a final recommendation to the Academic Senate on whether to proceed or not with a program initiation, revitalization, reduction or discontinuance. Establishment of a **consensus** within the Program Committee is important in regards to the conclusion and recommendation to be presented. This consensus will be informed by the principle of a "preponderance of evidence threshold," meaning the program cannot be initiated, revitalized, reduced or discontinued with a paucity of evidence. Absent consensus, the Program Committee will make a presentation of a majority and minority report to the Curriculum Committee and ultimately to the Academic Senate.
- B. *Role of the Curriculum Committee in Advising the Academic Senate:* The consensus findings or the majority and minority reports of the Program Committee will be forwarded to the Curriculum Committee before presentation to the Academic Senate. The **Curriculum Committee, a committee of the Academic Senate, must have a fundamental and integral role in any discussion of program initiation, revitalization, reduction or discontinuance**, recognizing the Curriculum Committee's important function of overseeing curricular development and modification. The Curriculum Committee will also forward its own consensus or majority and minority report to the Academic Senate so that when voting to accept or reject a recommendation to initiate, revitalize, reduce or discontinue a program the Academic Senate has both the recommendation of the Program Committee and the opinion of the Curriculum Committee.
- C. *Final Recommendation to the Academic Senate:* A final written document will be created and voted on by the Academic Senate to serve as its official recommendation. This official Academic Senate recommendation will list both the Program Committee recommendation and the opinion of the Curriculum Committee as well as the Academic Senate's own final determination. The official Academic Senate recommendation document should include all relevant research, a clearly worded and detailed recommendation for action, and an analysis of the impact the action will have on all affected areas of the college. The recommendation shall also consider the requirements of collective bargaining for faculty and staff, including application of policies for reduction in force and opportunities for retraining. **The Academic Senate's Official Recommendation to Initiate, Revitalize, Reduce or Discontinue a Program will then be forwarded to the Academic Senate, the Vice-President of Instruction and the Modesto Junior College President as well as the Yosemite Community College District Board of Trustees for final approval.** Pursuant to Title 5 Section 53203(d) (1), "...the recommendation of the Senate will normally be accepted, and only in exceptional circumstances and for compelling reasons will the recommendation not be accepted. If a recommendation is not accepted, [the President] shall promptly communicate [his or her] reasons in writing to the Academic Senate."

VI. Follow-Through Stage: Initiation, Revitalization, Reduction or Discontinuance Task Force

- A. *Formation of a Task Force:* During the academic year, **within a month** of the Yosemite Community College District Board of Trustees approval of the **Academic Senate's Official Recommendation to Initiate, Revitalize, Reduce or Discontinue a Program**, the Academic Senate, along with the college Vice-President of Instruction and the appropriate dean or college administrator overseeing the program, will form a **Program Initiation, Revitalization, Reduction or Discontinuance Task Force**. The Vice President of Instruction will call a meeting of the dean or administrator and a minimum of 4 faculty from the proper academic area, or a related area if necessary, to follow-through on the final, approved initiation, revitalization, reduction or discontinuance by forming a Program Initiation, Revitalization, Reduction or Discontinuance Task Force. The composition of this Initiation, Revitalization, Reduction or Discontinuance Task Force must be approved by the Academic Senate before the task force begins its work of crafting a final plan for the program's initiation, revitalization, reduction or discontinuance.
- B. *Charge of the Task Force:* The charge of the Program Initiation, Revitalization, Reduction or Discontinuance Task Force is to study the program and decide how best to either initiate the new program, revitalize a program, reduce a program or discontinue a program. The initiation, revitalization, reduction or discontinuance plan will be completed by the task force before the **end of the following semester**.
- C. *Work of the Task Force:* In the case of a program initiation or revitalization, the task force should develop a plan of action—either an initiation plan or intervention strategies in order to revitalize and support an existing program. Strategies for initiation or revitalization may include specific outreach projects to recruit new students, the development of articulation agreements, modification of scheduling, curriculum development, faculty retraining, and investment in infrastructure. Identification of institutional barriers to the success of the program may also be appropriate to address. In the case of a program reduction or discontinuance, the task force should craft a plan on how to inactive courses or reduce sections of courses, reduce the faculty and staff associated with that program, address the needs of affected students, faculty and staff, and create a timeline for the process. Students already enrolled in the program must be given the time to complete the program or assistance in transferring to a college which offers a similar program. A process to facilitate the retraining of faculty which includes timelines and college support must be developed in conjunction with the local bargaining unit. Staff must be given assistance to transfer to another area of the college. Any Program Initiation, Revitalization, Reduction or Discontinuance Task Force must work closely with the Curriculum Committee to assure the courses are created, reactivated, deactivated or discontinued according to Curriculum Committee procedures and policies.

D. *Approval of Program Initiation, Revitalization, Reduction or Discontinuance Task Force Plan of Action:* **The final Plan of Action of the Program Initiation, Revitalization, Reduction or Discontinuance Task Force must be forwarded to the Academic Senate, the Vice-President of Instruction and the Modesto Junior College President as well as the Yosemite Community College District Board of Trustees for final approval.** Upon final approval, the Program Initiation, Revitalization, Reduction or Discontinuance Task Force will then oversee the implementation of the approved plan. Until the task force plan of action is complete, the Program Initiation, Revitalization, Reduction or Discontinuance Task Force should submit a progress report each academic semester to the Academic Senate, the Vice-President of Instruction and the Modesto Junior College President detailing progress on the **Plan of Action of the Program Initiation, Revitalization, Reduction or Discontinuance Task Force.**

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