



Manual of Policy and Procedures

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ANNUAL REVIEW OF EXISTING ACADEMIC PROGRAMS		
Date August 12, 2024		

PURPOSE

The overall purpose of the policy is to support the mission of the VSC: for the benefit of Vermont, to provide affordable, high quality, student-centered and accessible education, fully integrating professional, liberal, and career study, consistent with student aspirations and regional and state needs. To fully implement this mission, VSC academic programs must be of high quality and remain current, competitive, and cost-effective. Through this policy, the Board of Trustees charges the member institutions with establishing guidelines for an Annual Review of Existing Programs: annual review of the academic program array using enrollment, retention, graduation, workforce alignment, and cost effectiveness data, with a summary report of each institution's plans to adjust its program offerings based on this review.

This policy affects graduate, baccalaureate and associate degree programs and Title IV-eligible certificates. The criteria and processes for the Annual Review follow. This policy is designed to complement VSC Policy 101: Program Review and Continuous Improvement Process (PreCIP).

Annual Enrollment Review: Policy and Procedures

Each institution will review program enrollment, retention, graduation, workforce alignment, and cost effectiveness data on an annual basis within the context of shared governance and ongoing institutional planning and improvement. Annual data on all VSC degree programs and summary reports of each institution's plans to evaluate and address program enrollment and cost effectiveness will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for review.

These reports are intentionally quantitative in nature and are designed to complement some of the more qualitative aspects of VSC Policy 101: Program Review and Continuous Improvement Process. The Board of Trustees recognizes that analyses of enrollment demand, workforce alignment, cost effectiveness, prioritization of resources, and improvement strategies are best conducted by the individual institution as a whole. The Board further recognizes that the VSC mission requires full support of general education curriculum system-wide.

A. New Program Monitoring

New programs (in existence five years or less) will be included and progress towards meeting

original projected enrollments identified ~~as such~~. Each institution will provide a rationale for any programs identified for transition or closure as a result of the institution's annual data review.

B. Minimum Viable Program Size

In exercising its fiduciary responsibilities to the member institutions and system as a whole, the Board shall start with a rebuttable presumption that programs in existence for five or more years that are not achieving minimum program sizes should be reviewed for probable closure. The minimum program size necessary to maintain quality and ensure effective prioritization of resources is 5 or more program graduates or 25 or more active first majors annually. Certificates are exempt from these thresholds, as are any associate degrees wholly contained within the curriculum of baccalaureate programs. Each institution will include in its annual review the ~~Annual~~ identification of programs with enrollments below the minimum size based on either the most recent year's data or a running three-year average. For such programs, each institution will document its review process to determine the viability, continuation, discontinuation, or investments required to achieve minimum program size.

C. Cost Effectiveness

Each institution will provide an analysis of the cost effectiveness of programs within its array using metrics consistent with the institution's operations, for example class size average, student-faculty ratio, and gross and net revenue.

D. Workforce Alignment

Each institution will include in its annual review an analysis of the alignment between its programs and Vermont workforce needs and opportunities for students.

The process for Annual Enrollment and Cost Effectiveness Review follows:

1. The Council of Presidents will confirm the format, data collection methodology and requirements of the data and summary reports to be submitted to the EPSL Committee.
2. Reports may include data such as enrollment history, retention and graduation rates, class size average, and net program revenue.
3. Each institution's summary report will address key discoveries from the data and explain institutional plans for acting on that data.
4. By December of each year, the member institutions will submit data and summary reports to the Chancellor, including data and reports on programs identified for closure. Any evaluation, planning, or implementation of potential program closures shall be undertaken in a manner consistent with applicable terms of bargaining agreements and accreditation standards.
5. The Chancellor will review the reports of the member institutions and provide a recommendation to EPSL regarding the summary reports and any additional action steps that may be warranted.
6. EPSL will review reports and Chancellor's recommendations and submit a resolution to the Board of Trustees.

Signed by:  Chancellor