Defining a Program

The definition of a program will vary from college to college depending on the culture and structure of the institution. One aspect that is consistent across all colleges is that this definition should be determined through discussion between faculty and administration and approved by the college's or district's academic senate.

The Title 5 definition of a program is clearly focused primarily on curriculum. However, at many colleges such things as athletics, honors, Puente, distance education, and other student support services are and, in many cases, view themselves as programs, even though they would not fit the Title 5 definition.

While the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) requires that all colleges assess student learning at the course, program, and degree levels, it does not establish or impose a definition of what constitutes a "program," leaving that question to be answered differently by different colleges seeking to fulfill their mission and serve their communities. As such, the institution should take into consideration the variety of programs and services that may exist at their colleges as they develop a definition of programs.

The effectiveness of the ancillary and administrative units, as well as instruction and student services programs, all have an impact on the academic integrity of the programs and institutional effectiveness. ACCJC standards require that each college program measure its effectiveness by assessing its student learning outcomes. However, what precisely constitutes a program?

California community colleges are not the only ones that struggle with this issue. A review of the literature reveals references to program review, department assessment, unit reviews and a variety of other discussions that document the difficulty in separating academic departments and disciplines into programs. **Whatever the college constituents decide, this definition should reflect the college governance and budgeting structures but more importantly should create logical units of review to meet the goals and purposes of the college**.

The definition may need to vary for instructional, student service, and administrative programs.

Below are some of potential concepts for identifying or defining programs:

- Title 5 §55000(g) defines an educational program 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"
- disciplines, such as natural sciences, or even more broadly, as science
- departments, such as Early Childhood Education, Counseling, etc.
- academic majors or areas of emphasis, such as humanities
- student pathways such as career technical education (CTE) , basic skills, transfer. Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) or Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS)
- planning and goal setting processes (planning units), possibly relating to divisions such as career technical education
- college budget processes (cost centers)
- student service pathways that end in a specific outcome
- administrative services defined by administrative reporting structures
- governance structures, such as board of trustee processes or divisions underneath a dean or administrator

Obviously, the configuration and definition of a program will vary with the size and structure of a college. The ACCJC does not define programs for colleges because program review drives governance, budgeting, and planning. If the ACCJC defined programs, this would put it in control of governance, planning, and budget, a role that is inappropriate for the

accrediting commission. If any outside agency tried to define programs, the likelihood is that it would be counterproductive, working against a college's culture, organizational, and governance structures.

The dangers with mandated program definitions include oversimplification and homogenization. For instance, defining a standard program could result in a situation where some colleges have only a single faculty member or a program composed of only part-time faculty members because the definition is too narrow. In other situations, such as dictating programs that encompass career technical education, the institutional configuration to the mandated definition could create massive and unwieldy structures. This discussion is an essential local discussion. During these discussions, colleges need to consider the way that programs relate to and depend on other programs.

WHAT IS CURRENTLY IN PPR….

CHC Instructional Programs: (32 – 8 of which are STEM)

1. **Allied Health / Respiratory Care**
2. **American Sign Language**
3. **Anatomy**
4. **Art**
5. **Biological Sciences**
6. **Business Administration / Accounting / Marketing**
7. **Chemistry**
8. **Child Development and Education**
9. **Communication Studies / Journalism**
10. **Computer Information Systems/CS/Multimedia**
11. **Earth Science (Geology / Geography / Oceanography)**
12. **Economics**
13. **Emergency Medical Services**
14. **English**
15. **Fire Academy/Fire Technology**
16. **Foreign Language and Culture**
17. **Health and Physical Education**
18. **History**
19. *Interdisciplinary Studies / Multicultural Studies*
20. **Mathematics**
21. **Microbiology**
22. **Music**
23. **Paramedic**
24. **Philosophy / Religious Studies**
25. **Physics / Astronomy**
26. **Political Science**
27. **Psychology**
28. **Public Safety and Services**
29. **Radiologic Technology**
30. **Reading**
31. **Sociology / Anthropology**
32. **Spanish**
33. **Theatre Art**

CHC Instructional Support Programs??? (Unclear what these are in terms of the definition of a Program) -- should these be under Admin support services?

- **Distance Education**
- **Child Development Center**
- **Emergency Training Center**
- *High School Partnerships*
- **Honors Program**
- **Krasovec Simulation Center**
- **Library**
- **Non-Credit Program**
- **STEM Program**
- **STEM Success Center**
- **Tutoring Center**

CHC Student Services Programs:

- **Career Center**
- **Counseling**
- **DSPS**
- **EOPS / CARE**
- *International Students*
- **Student Success and Support**
- *Technology Success Center*
- **Transfer Center**
- **Admissions / Records**
- **Financial Aid**
- **Health and Wellness Center**
- **Student Life**
- **Veterans Resource Center**

CHC Administrative Support Programs:

- **Administrative Services Area (CBO, Communications, Facilities Use)**
- **Aquatics Program**
- **Cafeteria**
- **Campus Store**
- **Copy Center**
- **Custodial**
- **Institutional Effectiveness, Research & Planning**
- **Maintenance & Grounds**
- **Professional Development**
- **Technology Services**
- **Marketing and Public Relations**
- **Resource Development and Grants**

- ➤ CHC programs include: all Instructional Disciplines, Instructional Support Services, Student Support Services, and Administrative Support Services. All programs at Crafton Hills College fall into one of these fours organizations units as defined below. CHC programs are reviewed annually as a part of the annual planning and program review process. Additionally, some programs may be grouped together on an operational basis, particularly when shared staff or facilities are involved.

  - o **Instructional Programs:** An instructional discipline, such as biological sciences or computer information systems. An instructional program refers to one or several instructors working together to teach courses and help students advance toward a certificate or degree whose primary coursework is in the instructional discipline. Instructional Programs at CHC may be grouped together on an operational basis, particularly when shared staff or facilities are involved, such as is the case with Business/Accounting/Marketing.

  - o **Instructional Support Programs:** Instructional support programs are designed specifically to help students succeed in the classroom. These programs provide additional support and assistance to students, instructors, instructional assistants. The goal of instructional support programs is to maximize individual student success at Crafton Hills College. Examples of instructional support programs include the Tutoring Center, Distance Education, Honors and the STEM Program.

  - o **Student Services Programs:** Student Services Programs are designed to maximize individual student success and to support their progress at the college, while at the same time serving as a screening process for students who may need specialized support or services. Examples include Counseling, EOPS/CARE, DSPS, and the Transfer Center. In many but not all cases, such programs are supported by categorical funds dedicated to specific outcomes and are accountable to meeting those outcomes to maintain funding.

  - o **Administrative Support Programs:** Administrative Support Programs are designed to support all the educational processes on campus, including all the facilities on campus as well as all the technology provided to students, faculty, and staff. Organization of programs within Administrative Support is based on how to best serve students.