VERMONT TECH

Manual of Policy and Procedures

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	Date: August 1, 2018	

PURPOSE

Vermont Technical College strives to provide Vermont Tech students and the State of Vermont with academic programs that provide students with the technical, broad educational and focused skills to meet the challenges of career placement and career development in the economic environment of a new century. As the economic realities and career requirements of this environment change, Vermont Tech must modify existing programs, develop new programs and terminate those programs that no longer meet the needs of students or the State. This Policy and Procedure establishes the process and criteria for the development, review and termination of academic degree programs. (Non-degree programs are not addressed in this P&P).

STATEMENT OF POLICY

I. **NEW PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

Process
New program ideas may arise from the Vermont Tech faculty or staff, from the needs of Vermont business and industry or from other external sources, such as alumni or sister institutions. The ideas are presented to the Academic Dean for an initial discussion and information exchange. If there is sufficient initial interest, a program development group of Vermont Tech faculty and staff will be formed by the Dean of Academic Affairs. This program development group will gather information on program needs, similar programs and career prospects for graduates and determine if the program is compatible with the mission of the College. The Academic Dean will present the new program idea to the Registrar and to President and Cabinet for comment. With Cabinet approval, the President will submit an "early notification" to the Council of Presidents (COP) and the Chancellor before any further action is taken. With COP and Chancellor Approval, VSC Policy 102, Appendix A, establishes the data and information to be gathered at this time. The new program development group will make a presentation to the Program and Curricula Committee (P & C) and to the Academic Affairs subcommittee of the Faculty Assembly.

If the recommendation is to continue program development and the P&C Committee and the Cabinet concur with this recommendation, VSC Policy 102, Preliminary Approval form (Appendix A) will be completed by the new program development committee's "point of contact". Additionally, the point of contact will begin to establish a Program Advisory Committee (PAC) of external constituents to advise regarding curriculum. The preliminary approval form of Policy 102 will be reviewed and approved by the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean will request

placement on the next Education, Personnel, Student Life (EPSL) subcommittee of the Board of Trustees (BOT). If approved for further development by the EPSL Committee, the Final Policy 102 documents (Appendix B) will be completed by the point of contact and reviewed by the Academic Dean. The Final Proposal will be presented by the President to the COP and Chancellor for a recommendation to present for approval to the EPSL Committee. Concurrently, at the College the Final Proposal of Policy 102 is reviewed and recommended for approval by the Faculty Assembly, and the P & C Committee. After all approvals both college –wide and at the Office of the Chancellor are attained, the Final Policy 102 documents will be presented to the full BOT for approval and resolution.

The VSC approval process follows VSC Policy 102.

If the new program is approved for implementation by the VSC Board of Trustees, the new Program Advisory Committee (PAC) becomes a standing Advisory Committee and the program is continually monitored and reviewed as specified in Section II, Program Review.

Criteria for New Program Approval

Program Need:

- × Specific educational needs to be addressed and target populations;
- × Projections of student enrollments (both headcount and FT) over first three years of program;
- × Significance of the program to the mission of the College;
- × Public policy needs for the program in Vermont (are there similar programs in VT/region?); and
- × Potential economic development impact of the program.

Program Quality:

- × Adequacy and appropriateness of degree requirements to meet objectives of the program;
- × Student outcomes and expectations appropriate to meet objectives of the program;
- × Adequacy of faculty qualifications; and
- × Availability of resources for the program from Vermont Tech as well as collaborative resources from the VSC

Program Cost Analysis
Data on the financial impact of a new program will include start-up costs, the incremental cost and the continuing cost. Start-up costs include facilities renovations, equipment needs, new library holdings and the costs of other new program needs that the College does not have currently available. The incremental cost is the cost of adding the new program courses to the curriculum and the additional costs for support courses. This assumes that the addition of each 10-12 new students will require an additional section of General Education courses or an additional section for any section taught by another program.

The continuing cost is the cost of the degree program over its full delivery. This cost includes the actual cost per contact hour for all support courses as calculated on an annual basis as well as an estimated cost per contact hour for the new courses based on the projected course

enrollments. This continuing cost for the program can then be compared with the expected tuition revenue for the term of the program. This revenue to cost ratio can then be compared to the College average to determine if additional resources will be needed to support the program and the extent of the resources that would be projected to support the program until enrollments make it self-supporting. Continuing non-instructional costs such as computer hardware and software or library acquisitions should also be anticipated and included in the continuing cost estimate.

II. **PROGRAM REVIEW**

Vermont Tech academic degree programs are reviewed continually by the sponsoring departments, annually by Vermont Tech and Program Advisory Committees, and periodically by VSC Policy 101 and by external accrediting agencies such as the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, American Veterinary Medical Association, National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission and other program specific accrediting bodies. This P&P addresses the internal Vermont Tech review of academic programs.

Degree programs are also reviewed by their sponsoring academic departments with input from their Program Advisory Committee, external accrediting agencies and with the benefit of comparison with similar programs in sister institutions. The Dean of Academic Affairs and Dean of Administration provide additional academic cost analysis data on an annual basis for each program review.

Criteria for continual and annual academic program review:

Program Need:
- × Are educational needs of target population being met?
- × Are student enrollments, potential enrollments and retention adequate?
- × Does the program contribute to the mission of the College?
- × Does the program continue to meet a public policy need of Vermont?
- × To what extent does the program contribute to the State's economic development?

Program Quality:
- × How do current students and recent graduates characterize their educational experience? Did the program meet their needs? Expectations?
- × Are program faculty qualifications appropriate for the program?
- × Does the history of resource allocation to the program meet program needs?
- × How do employers and prospective employers accept program graduates? Placement history?

    Curricular Analysis:

- × Is the curriculum sequence meeting the needs of program students, potential employers and industry expectations?
- × Are course outlines meeting program requirements and do actual course experiences reflect course outlines?

- × Are there course or curricular adjustments that can improve student performance, program effectiveness and College efficiencies?

Academic Cost Analysis: Two methods of academic cost analysis provide valuable data: full program cost/revenue and yearly program cost/revenue. The full program cost/revenue analysis calculates the cost of the academic program for its full multi-semester sequence by calculating the instructional cost per student contact hour (or instructional cost per faculty workload credit hour) and the total budgeted cost per student contact hour (or per faculty workload credit hour). The instructional cost (or total budgeted cost) for the program is the sum of all student contact hour costs for all courses required for graduation. This cost is then compared with the total tuition and instructionally based fees (e.g., some lab fees) received for the terms of enrollment.

The yearly program cost/revenue data are prepared by the Dean of Administration based on a program budget analysis. All major program costs including the portion of support department costs directly attributable to students from the major taking the support courses as well as a prorated assignment of academic support costs and capital equipment costs based on FTE students in the major are calculated for the previous academic year using actual cost data. This yearly cost is then compared to the total tuition revenue for that year generated by students in the major. These data also give the number of FTE students that would be required for student tuition revenue to meet program instructional costs.

Although there is no formal reporting mechanism for continual departmental reviews or the annual review of academic cost analysis data, the Dean of Academic Affairs, or Department Chairs may initiate changes based on such reviews. Proposals for program changes are submitted to the Program and Curricula Committee for information and response and to the Faculty Assembly for recommendation to the President.

New programs will have their annual data compared to initial Policy 102 projections for the first three years.

Annual review data are kept on file for use during periodic external evaluations by the VSC, program accrediting bodies or the NEASC.

III. **TERMINATION OF ACADEMIC DEGREE PROGRAMS**

During the annual or periodic program reviews, when a program is identified as deficient in one or more of the criteria for program evaluation--quality, need, curricular analysis or academic cost analysis--a review for termination may be initiated. Such a termination review begins with a special meeting of the Program Advisory Committee, perhaps augmented with other Vermont Tech faculty who have taught in the program or who have taught support courses for the program. This group will be asked to review all the data from the annual reviews focusing on the same criteria of need, quality, curricular design and academic cost analysis. They should also include consideration of the presence of tenured faculty in the program, application history and enrollment projections, job placement opportunities and the relationship of the geographic location of the opportunities to the geographic flexibility of graduates, and the academic soundness of a program with low enrollments.

This review group will make a recommendation for consideration by the department, the Program and Curricula Committee and the Faculty Assembly. The P&C Committee may make a recommendation to the Faculty Assembly. The Faculty Assembly forwards its recommendation to the President, who in consultation with Cabinet, has the final decision.

A decision to terminate an academic degree program is submitted to the VSC Board of Trustees.

Any decision to terminate a program must carry with it a plan to allow students currently enrolled in the program a reasonable amount of time to complete the requirements for the degree. Normally this period would be one year after students would otherwise have been expected to complete the program had it not been terminated.

POLICY MODIFICATION HISTORY

I.   The following dates reflect chronological changes made to this policy which are henceforth considered depreciated.

   a) July 2007

   b) June 2009

   c) 8/1/2018

Signed By:	*Patti Mou*	Patricia Moulton President