Draft Recommendations: Program Viability & Improvement Process and Procedures

Recently, Academic Senate has been conducting a review of several programs for improvement and viability. During this review, we have developed insights into how this process can be standardized and improved.

In general, the process followed by the ad-hoc Committee on Program Improvement and Viability (PIV) was, by nature, ad-hoc. We recommend that this should become a standing committee so that it can more effectively address the "program improvement" part of its name. Two of the three programs reviewed had deteriorated to the point that the committee felt it had no choice but to recommend their discontinuation. The programs in question had ongoing problems over the many years. Had the committee been involved in evaluating and recommending improvements years earlier, it's possible that the programs could have been restored to vibrant health rather than deteriorating to terminal condition.

Therefore, we recommend that henceforth there be established a permanent standing PIV committee that will follow a process of at least 2 years in length for each program referred to it.

Specific recommendations:
- No later than January after the fall semester during which program reviews were submitted, the dean should evaluate which programs might be on path to become unviable. For such programs, the dean should forward their program reviews to the PIV committee along with a detailed explanation of the dean's concerns and any actions that had been taken to address those concerns.
- Within one month of receipt of the documentation from the dean, the PIV committee should review the documentation and meet with the dean to discuss.
- Within one month of the meeting with the dean, the PIV committee should meet with as many faculty members as possible from the program under review to discuss the issues identified by the dean and to the learn the faculty members' perspectives.
- The PIV committee should hold additional follow-up meetings with the dean, the faculty members, and other relevant personnel, as appropriate.
- By the end of that spring semester, the PIV committee should draft a set of **program improvement** recommendations, outlining specific actions recommended for the program faculty to take, along with a timeline for completing those actions, and transmit that report to the Academic Senate.
- The PIV committee will evaluate progress on its recommendations over subsequent semesters.
- The PIV committee may make additional recommendations and transmit them to the Academic Senate.
- By the end of the spring semester in the academic year following the initial referral from the dean, the PIV committee should transmit another report to the Academic Senate, detailing any progress made and any continuing deficiencies. The report will make

recommendations for further actions aimed at program improvement or will recommend steps toward beginning the process of program discontinuation.

- In subsequent semesters, the PIV committee should continue following these procedures until one of the following occurs:
    - The dean informs the PIV committee that all concerns regarding the viability of the program have been adequately addressed, or
    - The program has been discontinued.