



Emergency Management and Homeland Security 2013-2014

Year Five Focus Area: PROGRAM SELF EVALUATION and SUMMARY¹

Program review should model a miniature accreditation self-evaluation process within a designated area of the campus. In essence, it provides a model and practice that generates and analyzes evidence about specific programs. Eventually this work should guide the larger work of the accreditation self-evaluation as well as guiding planning and budgeting decisions. The review should be a candid self-evaluation supported by evidence, including both qualitative and quantitative data. It should honestly document the positive aspects of the program and establish a process to review and improve the less effective aspects of a program.

Program Review: Setting A Standard – The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges

I. Program Description

Emergency management and homeland courses prepare students for employment with emergency management agencies such as local cities and county governments in California, non-profit organizations such as the American Red Cross, and federal agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security (FEMA). Additionally, those currently working in the field can earn a recognized degree. Students may earn a certificate of achievement in Emergency Management and Homeland Security. Coursework satisfies general education requirements for an associate in science degree.

The program was the first in California approved by the Department of Homeland Security. Lecture courses began in spring 2011 and are offered in distance education format.

Essential career-collateral opportunities exist for people serving in complementary career fields of public safety, security, education and other private organizations that prepare for, train and respond to actual emergency responses. Examples of these careers fields are fire services (paramedic, emergency medical technicians [EMT] and fire inspectors), law enforcement services (municipal, state and federal), industrial and private security organizations, educational administrators (required by law for public institutions), and defense contractors that are required to maintain a system that is compatible with the National or State Incident Management systems (NIMS/SIMS).

II. Discuss progress toward objectives identified in the Educational and Facilities Master Plan 2011 - 2020.

¹ Reference to Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) Standards:

Standard IIA.2 (b) The institution relies on faculty expertise and the assistance of advisory committees when appropriate to identify competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, programs including general and vocational education, and degrees. The institution regularly assesses student progress towards achieving these outcomes.

A number of items have been completed during the last review period. As instructional programs primarily meet real-world state, federal and local requirements established for First Responders, the department is currently exploring how best to place students who have earned the Degree.

The Advisory Board has requested that career technical training in the form of basic and advanced training not be reduced as part of the current cost savings initiatives taken in response to the current economic situation. The committee sees the college's training programs as meeting the immediate employment needs of the emergency management service community.

III. Are there obstacles or barriers that restrict the rate of student completions or are delaying timely completion?

Since its inception, the EM/HS program has many students who are not prepared for the rigor of the approved curriculum. The EM/HS curricula includes real world, pertinent and current didactic information tied to the goals of the emergency management communities at the local, state and federal level. Students seemingly struggle with the concepts presented as they have not had the work experience component or involvement within the emergency management community. With this stated, there has been success in the program as the inaugural group of students now are close to completing their degree requirements and will move out into the workforce to seek career opportunities. The EM/HS program is proving to be a strong department within the college that has received strong support from the management. The student population and course offerings have increased since the program's Certificate and Degree implementation.

IV. Identify three to five measurable self-improvement objectives to improve student retention and completion during the next five years.

1. Most apparent is that the expansion of programs will require additional faculty to support the increase in the number and frequency of required core class offerings. Since most courses are currently offered online, a campus-based course that meets weekly should be added in the course offering matrix in the future.
2. Hold an annual meeting with all students who are currently enrolled in the program or successfully completed the program within the last three years to a "symposium" whereas employers and students network and discuss career opportunities. This interaction can be used as a source to gain information on how the EM/HS program is preparing students for public safety careers.
3. Seek funding to send students back to the Emergency Management Institute in Emmittsburg Maryland and have them be part of the annual EMI conference, or have students take a course offered by FEMA at this on site location. Funding should be explored through local, state, federal and private funding sources. Encourage students to seek out free online learning within the current course offerings by FEMA.
4. The Department will seek funding from additional sources from within and from outside agencies such as federal, state and local governments. Awards received will be managed to enhance the mission of the college while supporting the Emergency Management program. VTEA funding should be acquired on an annual basis to support and expand the program.

V. Discuss opportunities for change that may exist within the next five years.

1. As the economy continues to rebound and grow stronger, we will see more opportunities in the emergency management career field.
2. Department managers should work closely with its advisory board as well as monitor the economic situation on a state and federal level to determine when retirements will take place as well as when the workforce demands for public safety careers will increase.
3. There is opportunity in the college to form partnerships and consortiums with local community colleges and four-year degree institutions to benefit this program as well as the public safety industry as a whole. There can be reciprocal-program partnerships where students can take courses at two or more colleges to facilitate degree completion in within two years or articulation agreements with four year institution to have students enter in their third year (junior year) of a related program of study.
4. Currently the California CSU system is creating associates of science degree (AST) transfer for the emergency management and homeland security program. The draft of this program should be complete at the end of Fall 2013. Dr. Hadsell, faculty, is on the state curriculum team for this project.