

Program Review Report

Program: Associate of Science Wildland Fire Science
Department: Department of Biology, Chemistry, and Environmental Science
College: College of Arts and Sciences
Review Date: April 27, 2017

Summary:

A program review for the Associate of Science Wildland Fire Science was presented to the ACD committee by Mr. Joaquin Gallegos, Chair for Biology, Chemistry and Environmental Science.

The calculated three-year average of declared students in the program is 9.3 (headcounts) per year with a decreasing enrollment trend that went from 14 students in FY 14 to 4 students in FY 17. The three-year graduate average is 0.66 students per year. Student retention for the last three years is higher than 90%, with a very low graduation rate.

The fiscal analysis of the program shows an average revenue of \$46,451.00 (based on tuition and state funding formula) and the budget associated with the program was \$6,532.00 (based on salaries for faculty/staff, equipment, contracts, and supplies). This level of funding reflects the lack of full-time faculty and other staff associated with the program, which could be an explanation for the low graduation rate. The program review session revealed that this program was unofficially put on moratorium by Provost Martinez in summer 2015 and no new students have been accepted since then. The suspension was not submitted for approval to the Board of Regents.

The review revealed leadership instability in the program in recent years. Other observations include that there is a lack of an external advisory group, and lack of full-time faculty with appropriate credentials to teach the program. This last point is a concern raised by the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) 2016 visit in terms of the faculty to programs ratio for several programs offered at Northern.

The program review also showed that no student learning outcome assessment or programmatic assessment has been done. The main reason for this is that courses in the field have been delegated to adjunct faculty. Therefore, there is no evidence of the quality of the program which could jeopardize the institutional accreditation.

Conversations with program leadership indicated that the program will require investment of full-time faculty and staff to enable a strong assessment program that will translate into a high-quality program compliant with HLC requirements. The current fiscal environment does not allow this option.

Recommendations:

The Dean's Council recommend the following:

1. suspend the program as of fall 2017 so that new students cannot longer enrolled
2. develop a teach-out plan to graduate the current students enrolled
3. accept the recommendation to continue to offer the Wildland Fire Science courses through Continuing Education since the development of those skills will enable the participants to obtain an external certification that will make them eligible for the jobs in the field.

Provost & VP Academic Affairs