

# Comprehensive Program Review Report



## Program Review - Fire Technology

### Program Summary

#### 2021-2022

**Prepared by:** Rick Smith, Fire Technology Coordinator

**What are the strengths of your area?:** The Fire Technology Program has many strengths, which include, but are not limited to:

- Student success is up program-wide, from 80% in 19-20, to 81.8% in 20-21.
- Our courses are commensurate with those offered by other Community Colleges nation-wide, making them easily portable for students transferring into or out of our district.
- I work closely with our Veteran's Office coordinating credits earned through military service that are applicable to our program and graduation requirements.
- Many of our courses are designed and regulated by the Office of the State Fire Marshal, Training Division, and are required by fire departments throughout California for entry level as well as promotional positions.
- The State Board of Fire Services issued a five-year reaccreditation for the program in August, 2020.
- Fire 270, the Basic Fire Academy, had 30 cadets in 2021, including 4 females.
- We successfully implemented and proctored the new evaluation process for Academy cadets as required by the State Fire Marshal for the fourth year, improving our delivery of this challenging process.
- We have the support of an active and involved advisory committee, though meetings this year have been impacted by the pandemic.
- We enjoy excellent cooperation with, and share some facilities and equipment with, the Porterville College Fire Technology Program. I have also spent time this year in an advisory role to the new Coordinator at PC.
- We participate in a number of outreach opportunities in an effort to publicize and attract attention to our program.
- We have removed outdated and obsolete courses from the catalog.
- We have begun meetings with Visalia Fire Department respecting the use of their facility. We were able to use it for our academy this year.
- Though not part of Fire Technology, an additional EMT251 course offering provides greater opportunity for candidates to complete fire academy prerequisites.

**What improvements are needed?:** The fire Technology Program has a number of areas that could be improved, which include the following:

- Fire 270 does not attract enough female students, though the most recent class had 4. This, unfortunately, reflects the male dominance of this industry, particularly in the local area.
- We do not attract enough Black students.
- To help with the previous two points, we need to find instructors from these demographic groups.
- We have no full-time faculty teaching in the program. Instructors for many of our offerings must be approved by the State Fire Marshal's Office to teach their courses. This limits the pool of available instructors.
- The program needs access to more comprehensive facilities to properly administer instruction and required skills evaluation for academy cadets.
- Student success among specific demographic groups in all classes must be continually monitored.
- The hiring, retention and scheduling of assistant instructors in the academy is challenged by the low pay of this position and competition from overtime in their departments.

**Describe any external opportunities or challenges.:** One possible opportunity for program expansion is the creation of a Paramedic Training Program. Another is the exploration of an MOU with Visalia Fire Department for the use of their training facility, for which talks have begun. This grows more urgent with the High Speed Rail impacts on our current training facility on

Houston Avenue. Additionally, the continued expansion of the EMT offerings, with the potential to host an EMT course at the Hanford Center, would help prepare academy candidates. I strongly advocate the delivery of one or more EMT courses at the Hanford Center, both for the purpose of expanding opportunities for students in this prerequisite, and also as a comprehensive pathway toward a firefighter/paramedic certification.

We should develop an Instructional Services Agreement to offer to local fire departments.

We will also proactively take steps to foster an Antiracist environment throughout our program delivery.

The Covid-19 pandemic has challenged our advisory committee participation.

Recently, the State Fire Training Division has issues significant increases in the fees it charges us to deliver their courses. This resulted in a budget deficient for FY 20-21 in the Student Material Fees account. Though the necessary changes to the course are underway to address this, the process will not allow the necessary revision before Spring 22, and then only if the process is administered smartly and expeditiously.

**Overall SLO Achievement:** All of our current courses meet or exceed their SLO goals.

**Changes Based on SLO Achievement:** All courses are meeting their target outcomes. We will work to be certain that our outcome goals are valid and relevant, and adjust them as needed. Overall, for a department comprised solely of adjunct faculty, I am pleased with the results.

**Overall PLO Achievement:** I am satisfied with current PLO achievement; however, we should work to increase participation in the program by Black and Female students.

**Changes Based on PLO Achievement:** The program should be expanded to better serve the needs of our students and industry, and to provide greater opportunity to each of these constituent groups. We will work to add courses and continue to offer high-quality vocational education throughout the district.

**Outcome cycle evaluation:** The department seems to be making satisfactory progress within the three-year assessment cycle in a majority of its cour

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## Action: 2020-2021 Update Department Mission and Value Statements to reflect Antiracist and antibias core values.

As part of our Call to Action, I would like to update our mission and value statements to reflect that our organization actively provides equitable opportunities for all students, notwithstanding their race, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other distinguishing characteristic which may have previously resulted in inequitable treatment.

Specifically, I would like to increase our outreach in student recruitment to include locations, organizations, and other settings where these underrepresented students are more likely to be found. Examples may include our own athletic department, and churches, youth centers, and schools in impacted neighborhoods.

By exposing these potential students to our programs and the employment opportunities available to our graduates, I hope to increase the number of female students as well as Black students.

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**Implementation Timeline:** 2020 - 2021

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**Identify related course/program outcomes:** District Objective 2.1

Increase the percentage of students who earn an associate degree or certificate (CTE and Non-CTE) by 5 percentage points over

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three years.

District Objective 2.4 By 2021, Increase the percentage of CTE students who achieve their employment objectives by 5 percentage points

**Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position):** Rick Smith, Fire Technology Coordinator

**Rationale (With supporting data):**

**Priority:** High

**Safety Issue:** Yes

**External Mandate:** Yes

**Safety/Mandate Explanation:** Specifically articulating antiracist and antibias as core values of our organization will help to provide equity for all students, removing institutional barriers, and provide for a safe environment in which our students can learn, grow, and prosper.

This action will support the Chancellor's Call to Action mandate.

## Update on Action

### Updates

**Update Year:** 2021-2022

08/25/2021

**Status:** Continue Action Next Year

While some documents have been updated, not all have. Because I consider this to be very important, I will to continue it into next year.

**Impact on District Objectives/Unit Outcomes (Not Required):**

## Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2018-2021

**District Objective 2.1** - Increase the percentage of students who earn an associate degree or certificate (CTE and Non-CTE) by 5 percentage points over three years

**District Objective 2.4** - By 2021, Increase the percentage of CTE students who achieve their employment objectives by 5 percentage points

## Action: 2020-2021 Implementation of an Instructional Services Agreement with fire departments located within the district.

Design and implement an Instructional Services Agreement whereby a portion of FTES funding is passed through to local fire departments and college credit awarded to their employees for training provided while on the job by the fire department.

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**Implementation Timeline:** 2020 - 2021

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**Identify related course/program outcomes:** District Objective 2.2 Increase the number of students who earn an associate degree or certificate annually.

District Objective 2.4, Increase Career Technical Education course success rates and program completion annually.

**Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position):** Rick Smith, Fire Technology Coordinator

**Rationale (With supporting data):** Some fire departments within the district receive permission from the district to enter into Instructional Services Agreements with Monterey Peninsula College, whereby a portion of FTES funding is passed through to the department for training that is provided in the course of employment by department instructors. Employees earn college credits, which can be used toward the awarding of degrees and/or certificates, and the college increases FTES and the associated funding. There is strong interest in other departments for this type of program to be implemented here at COS.

**Priority:** High

**Safety Issue:** No

**External Mandate:** No

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## Safety/Mandate Explanation:

| Update on Action   |
|--|
| <p><i>Updates</i></p> <p><b>Update Year:</b> 2021-2022 <span style="float: right;">08/25/2021</span></p> <p><b>Status:</b> Continue Action Next Year</p> <p>This action is continued. It is complex and requires more time to develop and implement.</p> <p><b>Impact on District Objectives/Unit Outcomes (Not Required):</b></p> |

## Link Actions to District Objectives

|   |
|---|
| District Objectives: 2018-2021  |
| <b>District Objective 2.2</b> - Increase the number of students who transfer to a four-year institution by 10 percent over three years          |
| <b>District Objective 2.4</b> - By 2021, Increase the percentage of CTE students who achieve their employment objectives by 5 percentage points |

## Action: Enter in to a Memorandum of Understanding with Visalia Fire Department for the use of their training facility.

The current joint training facility operated by the college and Kings County Fire Department (KCFD) is in the path of the high speed rail project and its availability will soon end. Though KCFD is in the planning stage for a replacement, a new facility is several years away. In the interim, the Fire Technology program must have a facility to continue offering Fire 270 and Fire 280. Visalia Fire Department has a very comprehensive facility, and an MOU will help to assure its availability for our use.

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**Implementation Timeline:** 2020 - 2021

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**Identify related course/program outcomes:** District Objective 2.1

Increase the percentage of students who earn an associate degree or certificate (CTE and Non-CTE) by 5 percentage points over three years.

District Objective 2.4 By 2021, Increase the percentage of CTE students who achieve their employment objectives by 5 percentage points

**Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position):** Rick Smith, Fire Technology Coordinator

**Rationale (With supporting data):** Fire technology training requires very specialized facilities for live fire and other training.

These facilities must meet design and safety standards to provide a secure and safe location to provide this training. Without a suitable facility, this training may not occur.

**Priority:** High

**Safety Issue:** Yes

**External Mandate:** Yes

**Safety/Mandate Explanation:** Training of this type must occur in approved facilities designed for this specific use to provide safety for students and staff, in accordance with California State Fire Training guidelines.

| Update on Action   |
|--|
| <p><i>Updates</i></p> <p><b>Update Year:</b> 2021-2022 <span style="float: right;">08/25/2021</span></p> <p><b>Status:</b> Continue Action Next Year</p> <p>Though we have gained access to this facility, Kings County Fire (KCF) continues in their development of a new facility. Whichever is eventually chosen, State Fire Training, our accrediting agency, strongly recommends an MOU to assure its availability for our use.</p> |

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Impact on District Objectives/Unit Outcomes (Not Required):

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## Action: 21-22 Review and raise hourly pay for Assistant Instructors

Pay for Assist Instructors is low, resulting in challenges finding and scheduling these necessary employees.

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Implementation Timeline: 2021 - 2022

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Identify related course/program outcomes:

**Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position):** Rick Smith, Fire Technology Coordinator

**Rationale (With supporting data):** Many of our topics, particularly manipulative skills, require the use of several Assistant Instructors to provide both effective instruction, and safety oversight for our students. These student to instructor ratios and qualifications are established by State Fire Training and are compulsory. It is often difficult to schedule these in sufficient numbers because the pay is so low. It is simply not worth it for our assistants, who are all active-duty firefighters and therefore spend a significant time away from home, to come to the college for an evening for the pay offered. The current pay for an assistant is roughly half that of the lead instructor; my recommendation is to make it 75% of the lead rate.

**Priority:** High

**Safety Issue:** Yes

**External Mandate:** Yes

**Safety/Mandate Explanation:** The presence of these assistants is mandated by our accrediting agency. If we cannot provide the required student to instructor ration, our ability to provide this instruction is compromised and our accreditation is threatened.

## Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

**District Objective 2.1** - Increase the number of students who earn an associate degree or certificate (CTE and non-CTE) by 5% from 2021-2025.

**District Objective 2.4** - Increase the percentage of CTE students who achieve their employment objectives by five percentage points (job closely related to field of study and attainment of a livable wage) and the number of CTE students who successfully complete 9+ CTE units in a single year by 10% from 2021-2025.

## Action: Base budget increase to meet basic needs of program.

Increase the base budget for the program.

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Implementation Timeline: 2021 - 2022

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Identify related course/program outcomes:

**Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position):** Rick Smith, Fire Technology Coordinator

**Rationale (With supporting data):** The base budget for this program has not changed since my hire in 2015. Meanwhile, the cost

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of materials and supplies has increased, with some needed supplies having very volatile prices that have led to some wild swings in past years. Examples include lumber, and the necessity to purchase and have delivered cars to use for automobile rescue training. Additionally, much of our equipment (Chain and circular saws, breathing apparatus, air cylinders, fire extinguishers, etc) require annual maintenance, for which no budget line is provided. This results in the existing materials and supplies budget being used for this, reducing the amount available for these materials and supplies.

**Priority:** High

**Safety Issue:** Yes

**External Mandate:** Yes

**Safety/Mandate Explanation:** Maintenance and upkeep, as well as the use of high-quality tools and equipment is essential to provide safe training for our students. Much of this maintenance is required by OSHA or other regulatory agencies.

## Resources Description

**Adjustment to Base Budget** - The budget amount for materials and supplies for this program has not increased since I arrived in 2015. Inflation and the volatility of some commodity prices leave us without sufficient funding for necessary equipment updates, maintenance, and normal supplies. (Active)

**Why is this resource required for this action?:** This resource IS the action.

**Notes (optional):** Increase Instructional Materials and Supplies (43100) to \$11,000, OR Increase to \$8,000 and add new Maintenance line at \$3,000.

**Cost of Request (Nothing will be funded over the amount listed.):** 11000

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## Action: Create outreach program for college athletes and veterans.

Expand the current cooperation with the Veteran's Office, and establish new outreach to athletic programs, for the purpose of enlightening their students on firefighting as a career.

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**Implementation Timeline:** 2021 - 2022

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**Identify related course/program outcomes:**

**Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position):** Rick Smith, Fire Technology Coordinator

**Rationale (With supporting data):** I believe strongly in the need to increase participation in the program by female and black students. I feel that opening ties to these important student subcultures (athletes and veterans) will help to spread the message of firefighting as a career choice, and make help create interest in students who have never previously this as a career.

**Priority:** High

**Safety Issue:** No

**External Mandate:** Yes

**Safety/Mandate Explanation:** I believe that diversification of our students will help to meet the Chancellor's call to action respecting diversity and equity.

## Link Actions to District Objectives

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