Comprehensive Program Review Report



Program Review - Fire Technology

Program Summary

2023-2024

Prepared by: Richard 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 for all courses is 82.5%. Though some courses fell during the year, others rose, and those that fell are still ahead of 21-22. The course that fell the farthest, Fire 159, is the introductory course for Fire Tech students, where many students explore their own interest in the field.
- FTES for the division is up, from 65 to 73.
- 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. I have also become involved with the LGBTQ+ Workgroup on campus, to assure that we are meeting the needs of this community of students.
- 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. We have sought to help these courses even though some have low enrollment. To cancel them removes opportunity for our students, forcing them to other colleges, and has a net result of limiting the number of candidates for promotion in local departments.
- The State Board of Fire Services issued a five-year reaccreditation for the program in August, 2020.
- Fire 270, the Basic Fire Academy, graduated 46 cadets in 2023, tying the previous record set in 2022. This included 4 female cadets. This academy took place during a very hectic and trying semester. Most of our instructors are active firefighters, and many local departments cancelled days off for weeks at a time while confronting record-breaking rainfall and flooding.
- We successfully implemented and proctored the new evaluation process for Academy cadets as required by the State Fire Marshal for the fifth year, improving our delivery of this challenging process. Additionally, we were able to provide this testing to local fire departments as requested.
- We have the support of an active and involved advisory committee.
- We enjoy excellent cooperation with, and share some facilities and equipment with, the Porterville College Fire Technology Program. Though this offers some cost sharing between programs, it also results in some issues, and I have focused on new equipment acquisition that is solely for our use.
- We participate in several outreach opportunities to publicize and attract attention to our program. New this year, I attended a meeting of students interested in attending HBCUs in an effort to attract more students from this group to our program.
- We were allowed access to Visalia Fire Department facilities.
- Additional female instructors were added to our cadre of instructors.
- Student Material Fees were adjusted to meet the new State Fire Training Fee Schedule.
- We hired a new instructor for Fire 163, a female Fire Captain from Dinuba who was formerly a student in our program.
- We have received funding through the paramedic program grant to purchase marketing materials, a first for this program.
- Though not part of Fire Tech, the college will begin offering a Paramedic program in summer 2024, which will work hand-in-hand with Fire Tech, and is designed to easily allow graduating Fire Academy students the opportunity to immediately transition to the program. This will help local departments with paramedic service to fill their need for dual qualified employees.
- A new course, combining the Firefighter 1 and 2 academies, has been launched for review.
- Inflation in the lumber market eased, and the granting of an ongoing budget increase and above base funding for last year resulted in less pressure on the budget. We are still behind in some equipment purchases, but are on much more solid

footing to meet those challenges

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 four, which is about average. 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. Specifically, and most urgently, our current training facility, which is co-operated with Kings County Fire Department, is impacted by High Speed Rail construction, and will soon be unusable. This facility hosts a significant portion of our instruction, and a suitable replacement must be provided. Though a new facility is proposed at the Santa Rosa Rancheria, the completion date (indeed the start date) is unknown, and subject to many variables not under local control. I believe that the college should seriously consider partnering with Kings County and Hanford Fire Departments to utilize existing, unused land at the Hanford Center to help address this urgent need.
- 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. Additionally, the extended nature of fire season and the reality of more frequent and intense weather-related events stresses the availability of these important positions.
- We need to devote more time to hiring a Fire Investigation Instructor so that we can offer the approved course.

Describe any external opportunities or challenges.: Implementation of the paramedic program currently in the design stage will provide additional opportunities for our students and a more focused candidate pool for hiring by local paramedic departments. The need for new training facility has grown more urgent with the High Speed Rail impacts on our current training facility on Houston Avenue. Kings County Fire Department is planning a new facility located near and financed by the Santa Rosa Rancheria, but there is no firm start date for this new facility.

The continued expansion of the EMT offerings, with the potential to host an EMT course at the Hanford Center, would help prepare academy candidates.

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

We must proactively take steps to foster an Antiracist and Antidiscrimination environment throughout our program delivery. We can enhance our current Firefighter 1 Academy with the integration of the new Firefighter 2 curriculum, as is the case with approximately 60% of the fire academies in California Community Colleges. This will provide a better product to our students and industry as well as moderately boost FTES and, perhaps, placement of our program graduates in careers. This has been formally proposed and is working its way through the review process but will require additional planning and coordination before it can be implemented. The target date for this is Spring, 2025.

The current enrollment capacity of 50 for Fire 270 has proven to be difficult to administer and may be unsustainable. Structural changes in delivery were implemented last year, which relieved some of the stressors. Continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of trying to maintain this number of students must be ongoing, with a possible reduction if changes are not persistently effective.

During the past year, we delivered state capstone testing for local fire departments, as per our status as an Accredited Regional Training Program. Though the departments paid the state fees for these tests, we did not charge them for my time. If these requests become more common, we should seek reimbursement for expenses related to delivery of these tests. It should be noted that in some cases, this expense could be waived in consideration of the use of certain fire department facilities or equipment.

Overall SLO Achievement: All of our 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 courses.

Action: 2022-2023 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.

Leave Blank:

Implementation Timeline: 2022 - 2023

Leave Blank: Leave Blank:

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
Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Update on Action

Updates

Update Year: 2023 - 2024 09/11/2023

Status: Continue Action Next Year

Though we have managed to continue without this, it remains in play as we approach reaccreditation in 2025.

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

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2018-2021

District Objective 2.2 - Increase the number of students who transfer to a four-year institution by 10 percent over three years

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

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 1.1 - The District will increase FTES 2% from 2021 to 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.

Action: 22-23 Review and raise hourly pay for Assistant Instructors

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

Leave Blank:

Implementation Timeline: 2022 - 2023

Leave Blank: Leave Blank:

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.

Specifically, I propose that the Salary Range be adjusted from Range 33 (27.49/hour) to Range 43 (35.09/hour).

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 accrreditation is threatened.

Update on Action

Updates

Update Year: 2023 - 2024 09/11/2023

Status: Continue Action Next Year

I would like to make more effort on this during the coming year. Impact on District Objectives/Unit Outcomes (Not Required):

Update Year: 2022 - 2023 09/13/2022

Status: Continue Action Next Year

No action was taken on this during 21-22, and it remains a priority. I have provided more comprehensive cost information, which I believe will be helpful in determining the feasibility of this action during the coming year.

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

Resources Description

Adjustment to Base Budget - Increase pay for Professional Experts used as assistant instructors to Step 43, 35.09/hour. This will increase Budget Line 11000-304042-24500 by an additional \$2500. (Active)

Why is this resource required for this action?: We currently have difficulty attracting these necessary instructors because of the relatively low pay.

Notes (optional):

Cost of Request (Nothing will be funded over the amount listed.): 2500

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: New Equipment Purchases

We the need for new and replacement equipment that have gone unmet with regular budget funds due to extremely high commodity costs, increased state fees, and inflationary pressure. For the safety of our cadets and staff, it is imperative that we maintain equipment that is well-maintained, adequate for the training at hand, and used in current industry.

These needs include: an additional ladder, SCBA Cylinders, Rescue air bag lifting kit, HIgh lift rescue jacks, Stihl Chain Saws, Stihl

Rescue Cut-off saws,

1-Thermal Imaging Camera, and appropriate tax and shipping.

Leave Blank:

Implementation Timeline: 2022 - 2023

Leave Blank: Leave Blank:

Identify related course/program outcomes:

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

Rationale (With supporting data): Our program makes use of may different types of fire equipment, some of which has reached the end of its useful life, plus new equipment needed to meet changing requirements and industry trends. It is imperative that we provide equipment that is safe and relevant to what students will use in their careers. This action includes some equipment whose replacement or purchase has been deferred due to outside economic influences over the previous three years.

Priority: High
Safety Issue: Yes
External Mandate: Yes

Safety/Mandate Explanation: The use of up-to-date, safe, and well maintained equipment is essential for the safety of our students and staff. All equipment is necessary to meet the mandated instructional content of our accrediting agency.

Update on Action

Updates

Update Year: 2023 - 2024 09/11/2023

Status: Action Completed

Funding request was granted and equipment purchased.

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

Resources Description

Equipment - Instructional - 1- 35 foot aluminum extension ladder\$1555	
10-SCBA Cylinders	\$12862
1-Rescue air bag lifting kit	\$3722
2-HIgh lift rescue jacks	\$675
2- Stihl Chain Saws	\$1300
2-Stihl Rescue Cut-off saws	\$1500
Tax and shipping	\$5000
Total	\$26614
/ A	

(Active)

Why is this resource required for this action?: To provide our students instruction in the most current and relevant fire service techniques, practices, and equipment, we must use the same equipment that fire departments use. Some of this equipment is to replace equipment that has reached the end of its useful life, and some will increase our ability to meet the needs of our industry for trained candidates for employment.

Notes (optional):

Cost of Request (Nothing will be funded over the amount listed.): 26614

Equipment - Instructional - Thermal Imaging Camera (Active)

Why is this resource required for this action?: This purchase provides needed equipment that is not in our inventory for teaching fire academy cadets the most current and effective rescue techniques using technology that is standard in all local fire departments.

Notes (optional):

Cost of Request (Nothing will be funded over the amount listed.): 16500

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 1.1 - The District will increase FTES 2% from 2021 to 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: Integrate Firefighter 2 curriculum into Firefighter 1 Academy.

Develop a new course that combines the existing Firefighter 1 course with the updated Firefighter 2 curriculum.

Leave Blank:

Implementation Timeline: 2022 - 2023

Leave Blank: Leave Blank:

Identify related course/program outcomes:

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

Rationale (With supporting data): There is already some overlap between the two courses, and setting up a new course which allows our students to achieve both objectives at the same time will provide a better product to the student and a more complete candidate for employment to our local industry. Over half of the colleges with Fire Technology Programs in California have alread completed this merger.

Priority: High
Safety Issue: No
External Mandate: No
Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Update on Action

Updates

Update Year: 2023 - 2024 09/11/2023

Status: Continue Action Next Year

Course has been developed and is working its way through curriculum. I will continue this through next year, because there is more planning required related to timing, course structure and legnth, and coordination with the paramedic program.

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

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 1.1 - The District will increase FTES 2% from 2021 to 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: Fire Investigation 1 Course

Hire an instructor and schedule a Fire Investigation 1 course.

Leave Blank:

Implementation Timeline: 2022 - 2023

Leave Blank: Leave Blank:

Identify related course/program outcomes: Increase the percentage of students who earn an associate degree or certificate

(CTE and Non-CTE) by 5 percentage points over three years

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

Rationale (With supporting data): Years ago, we offered a Fire Investigation course. This course was revamped by the state, and we havent offered it since. The revamped course has made it through curriculum review, and we should hire an instructor and offer the course.

Priority: High
Safety Issue: No
External Mandate: No
Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Update on Action

Updates

Update Year: 2023 - 2024 09/11/2023

Status: Continue Action Next Year

Though we have advertised for this position, we have not received applications. I will redouble my efforts to recruit for this position, including with personal outreach, so that we can hire someone and teach this course.

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

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 1.1 - The District will increase FTES 2% from 2021 to 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.

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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: Fire Academy Uniform Vendor

Develop a new vendor for Fire Academy uniform sales to cadets.

Leave Blank:

Implementation Timeline: 2023 - 2024

Leave Blank: Leave Blank:

Identify related course/program outcomes:

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

Rationale (With supporting data): Our primary vendor for Fire Academy uniforms recently retired and the store was closed. I

need to find a suitable replacement, and hope that the new COS Bookstore will be able to fill this role.

Priority: High
Safety Issue: No
External Mandate: No
Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 1.1 - The District will increase FTES 2% from 2021 to 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.

District Objective 3.1 - Reduce equity gaps in course success rates across all departments by 40% from 2021-2025.

District Objective 3.2 - Increase the course success rate by 10% for each disproportionately impacted student group in their transfer level Quantitative Reasoning and English courses by the end of their first year from 2021-2025.

Action: Used Uniform Cache for Fire Academy Students

Establish a cache of used uniforms, donated by graduating students, accessible to incoming students.

Leave Blank:

Implementation Timeline: 2023 - 2024

Leave Blank: Leave Blank:

Identify related course/program outcomes:

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

Rationale (With supporting data): Purchasing uniforms for Fire academy is expensive and prohibitive for some students. This program will help to provide gently used uniforms, free of charge, to students who might not otherwise be able to afford to attend the program.

Priority: High
Safety Issue: No
External Mandate: No
Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 1.1 - The District will increase FTES 2% from 2021 to 2025.

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Action: COS Pantry for Fire Academy Students

Establish a relationship with the COS Pantry to service Fire Academy students.

Leave Blank:

Implementation Timeline: 2023 - 2024

Leave Blank: Leave Blank:

Identify related course/program outcomes:

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

Rationale (With supporting data): Many FIre Academy students struggle with finances. Because they're not on campus during

the times when the Pantry

Priority: High
Safety Issue: Yes
External Mandate: No

Safety/Mandate Explanation: Academy students perform physically and mentally demanding tasks during every single class

meeting. They must be supported by adequate and appropriate nutrition to perform safely.

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 1.1 - The District will increase FTES 2% from 2021 to 2025.

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District Objective 3.1 - Reduce equity gaps in course success rates across all departments by 40% from 2021-2025.

District Objective 3.2 - Increase the course success rate by 10% for each disproportionately impacted student group in their transfer level Quantitative Reasoning and English courses by the end of their first year from 2021-2025.

Action: Wildland fire protective clothing.

Purchase a stock of wildland firefighting jackets for Fire Academy cadets.

Leave Blank:

Implementation Timeline: 2023 - 2024

Leave Blank: Leave Blank:

Identify related course/program outcomes:

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

Rationale (With supporting data): Fire Academy cadets must provide their own personal protective equipment. Structural firefighting PPE is usually rented from commercial sources, but they do not rent wildland PPE, which is very expensive for students to purchase. Last year I was able to purchase 25 wildland jackets; I would like to add 25 more this year.

Priority: High
Safety Issue: Yes
External Mandate: Yes

Safety/Mandate Explanation: Wildland PPE is required by our accrediting authority, national firefighting standards, and OSHA to protect students during wildland fire training.

Resources Description

Equipment - Instructional - Twenty-five wildland firefighting jackets in assorted sixes, to be issued to Fire Academy cadets for personal protection during wildland fire training. (Active)

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

Notes (optional):

Cost of Request (Nothing will be funded over the amount listed.): 4000

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 1.1 - The District will increase FTES 2% from 2021 to 2025.

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District Objective 3.1 - Reduce equity gaps in course success rates across all departments by 40% from 2021-2025.

District Objective 3.2 - Increase the course success rate by 10% for each disproportionately impacted student group in their transfer level Quantitative Reasoning and English courses by the end of their first year from 2021-2025.

Action: Addition of fire training facilities to Hanford Center

In partnershil with Hanford Fire Department, construct a reinforced concrete pad of adequate size to include a portable drill tower and roof prop, and also provide a chain-link perimeter fence and gate topped with barbed wire for security.

Leave Blank:

Implementation Timeline: 2023 - 2024

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Identify related course/program outcomes:

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

Rationale (With supporting data): As previously noted, we are losing access to our current training facility on Houston Avenue as the result of high speed rail construction. This loss has the potential to seriously and negatively impact our program. Though this initial project will not completely replace that facility, it will provide more training opportunities on campus for fire cadets. An additional consideration is that the inadequacy of the current facility was noted in our most recent accreditation, which is due for renewal in 2025.

Priority: High
Safety Issue: Yes
External Mandate: Yes

Safety/Mandate Explanation: A reliable, safe, training facility is required for accreditation.

Resources Description

Facilities - Reinforced concrete pad with a barbed wire topped chain link fence and gate for security. Estimate provided is preliminary until exact dimensions are determined. (Active)

Why is this resource required for this action?: The pad will provide a flat, level surface on which to use and store the portable drill tower and roof prop.

Notes (optional): A roof prop is a roof sstructure, consisting of trusses and roof sheathing, build on the ground. It allows firefighting students to learn and practice roof operations without the additional danger of being many feet above ground.

Cost of Request (Nothing will be funded over the amount listed.): 1500000

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 1.1 - The District will increase FTES 2% from 2021 to 2025.

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District Objective 3.1 - Reduce equity gaps in course success rates across all departments by 40% from 2021-2025.

District Objective 3.2 - Increase the course success rate by 10% for each disproportionately impacted student group in their transfer level Quantitative Reasoning and English courses by the end of their first year from 2021-2025.

District Objective 4.2 - Improve communication practices needed to support organizational effectiveness and continuous improvement across all District units and constituents from 2021-2025.