

Instructional Planning Council Feedback on Funeral Services Education Program Improvement and Viability Report

- This feedback was approved at the March 21, 2025 Instructional Planning Council.

Feedback on Recommended Future of the Funeral Services Education Programs of Study and Discipline

The Instructional Planning Council made three recommendations regarding the future of the Funeral Services Education discipline:

- 1. Discontinue the A.S. Funeral Services Education (FSE) Degree**
- 2. Discontinue Certificates of Specialization**
 - The certificates do not lead to living-wage jobs in the Bay Area, and entry-level funeral service roles (e.g., funeral arranger, crematory operator) do not require certification. According to the industry advisory board, the certificates, on their own, were not very helpful.

Explore Alternative Pathways

- Labor Market Gap: While embalmer demand is low, there may be unmet needs for licensed funeral directors or niche roles (e.g., grief counseling, green burial specialists).
- Develop **not-for-credit “upskill” certificates** focused on high-demand, non-licensed roles (e.g., funeral director)

General Comments related to the Funeral Services Education Discipline

The Instructional Planning Council provided two general comments related to Funeral Services Education discipline:

- The real blow to this program came from the ABFSE accreditation board’s new standards, which was instituted after our program had gotten the go-ahead based on different accreditation criteria. The college could not have anticipated such a problematic development.
- It is problematic that among the ABFSE’s criticisms of our program was that our SLOs don’t align with the ABFSE’s student learning outcomes. That seems like a major oversight on our part.

Comments on the Program Improvement and Viability Process

The Instructional Planning Council provided the following comments on the Program Improvement and Viability Process as a whole:

- Kudos to the committee who did all of this work. It's exemplary.
 - Great work from the PIV Taskforce! This was not an easy task. I appreciated everyone's thoughtfulness that is reflected in the report.

 - Once the Program Improvement and Viability (PIV) process is complete, the **Academic Senate** should facilitate a **comprehensive feedback review** with all stakeholders involved in the process. The following are for your consideration:
 1. **Individuals:**
 - Faculty members (e.g., the program initiator, adjunct instructors).
 - Administrators (e.g., program director, deans, VP of Instruction).
 - Students (current and former).
 2. **Committees/Councils:**
 - PIV Task Force members.
 - Curriculum Committee.
 - Counseling and Student Services teams.
 - Strong Workforce Program representatives.
- Purpose of Feedback:**
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the PIV process.
 - Identify lessons learned.
 - Ensure transparency and accountability in decision-making.
- Next Steps:**
- Organize a **post-PIV debrief session** or survey to gather input.
 - Compile findings into a report for the Academic Senate and college leadership.
 - Use feedback to refine PIV policies and procedures for future reviews.

Comments on New Program Development

The Instructional Planning Council provided the following comment on New Program Development at Cañada College:

- It was pointed out that for future new programs, we should make sure that there is solid college support to build and sustain any new program, so something like this doesn't occur again.