



To: Paula Simone, Structural Fire Science program director

From: APR response team

Re: Academic Program Review

Your Academic Program Review report and presentation did an excellent job of conveying both the complexity of your program and its value to the community. The SWOT analysis in the opening section provided a particularly effective introduction to the Structural Fire Science Program (SFS), making a case for the value of the program, while also stating its needs. The program has many unique properties, including three separate accrediting bodies, a need to use external facilities for some class activities (live fire, etc.), a high level of documentation and student/faculty tracking requirements, and close cooperation with local fire agencies.

A major strength of the Structural Fire Science Program is its many effective, collaborative partnerships. Most of the PT faculty members are currently working with local fire agencies, and many students are working or volunteering with a fire agency while attending school. These fire agencies are also major employers of program graduates. The partnership with COCC's Paramedicine program is another positive attribute. The two programs share a strong Advisory Board, ensuring that both programs produce graduates prepared to be successful in their chosen career. The Paramedicine program draws students from the SFS program since some students leave once they earn their Paramedicine credential. Thus the partnership with Paramedicine helps maintain enrollment, but also lowers the rate of completion. Additional partnerships include connections with Sisters High School offering a dual credit course, and an articulation agreement with Eastern Oregon University, providing a pathway for graduates to earn a BA in Fire Administration.

The curriculum for the Structural Fire Science Program was overhauled in 2015-16 in response to Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education (FESHE) accreditation updates. In addition to changing some course requirements and adding several new courses, all course level student outcomes were reviewed and revised to align with accrediting bodies, and a regular schedule for course assessment was established. Program level outcomes are not as well established, but students are very successful in the program, with success rates of 92-96% compared to COCC average of 78-82%. This success rate is particularly impressive considering the high portion of courses taught by PT faculty (86%) and the challenges inherent in scheduling PT instructors who work full time in fire agencies with shifting schedules.

The Structural Fire Science Program is very student centered. There is a thorough student orientation, and study skills are incorporated into an introductory course. This combination is so effective that students in the SFS program do not have to take an additional College Success class to qualify for Oregon Promise funding.

As part of the Academic Program Review process, you are asked to define program goals for the next five years, and to identify areas where additional support could help you to reach these goals. Please see below for a response to each of these goals and requests:

Goals:

Increase women and students of color – This is a high priority. You have invested a lot of energy into this initiative in the past year and should continue to try to reach out to women and students of color.

Complete program level assessment – This is a top priority. You should have all of your program level outcomes revised and completed by Nov 1 2017, and a plan for assessing the outcomes should be established by this date, as well. Support will be provided to help you meet this goal.

Offer NFPA Firefighter I Academies – This is a desirable long term goal. COCC may be able to provide much of the equipment necessary, but facilities will probably still need to be provided by local fire agencies.

Improve Equipment and Facilities – This is an ongoing process. The SFS program will have extra classroom and activity space once the Paramedicine program moves to Cascades Hall.

Expand partnerships with high schools – In conjunction with Goal #1 (Increase women and students of color) this is a great way to increase enrolment and is a high priority.

Requests for increased support:

Additional faculty position (adjunct or FT) – A request for a FT position in SFS was submitted to the Vice President of Instruction in Spring 2017 and will be submitted to FIAT and the President in early 2018. There is a process in place for requesting new adjunct faculty positions. Please work with your Department Chair to create this request during Fall term 2017, to be considered by FIAT and the President in early 2018.

PT staff to help with administrative tasks – Funds are available for this. Work with your Department Chair and Instructional Dean to hire the necessary support staff. You should also be able to expect a greater level of support from your Departmental Administrative Assistant since she will be providing less support to the Paramedicine program

Increased office space for PT instructors – Extra space will be available in Ponderosa when the Forestry and Paramedicine faculty move to Cascades Hall in December 2017. Work with your Department Chair and Instructional Dean to reserve the space your PT faculty need.

Funding for PT instructors to take HOT or other training – This is an interesting idea that will require careful consideration since faculty already receive a higher rate of pay for teaching online courses.

Budget support for equipment and facilities to offer NFPA Firefighter I academies and IFSAC testing - The 2017-18 budget includes money to purchase turnouts for student use. This is a major step forward in equipping students for firefighting activities. Requests for other equipment that is

beyond the scope of your departmental budget should go through the FIAT capital request process. Work with your Department Chair to submit a request. You may also request funds through the Perkins grant.

Regional training facility – This is a complex, long term goal. Work with your Department Chair, your Paramedicine colleagues, your regional partners, and the COCC grants office to look for opportunities to make this dream a reality. This project is too large for COCC to tackle alone.

The Structural Fire Science Program has been built on a deep commitment to the community and in close collaboration with local fire agencies. Building on these partnerships will be a key component in increasing equipment and facility goals, as well as recruiting diverse students. You have done amazing work in building this program into the dynamic program it is today.

Respectfully yours,



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Vice President for Instruction



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