

**Pierce College**

**Horticulture Viability Review**

**Committee Report**



**May 21, 2007**

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## Executive Summary

Pierce College's 427 acres and agricultural history are unique in the Los Angeles Community College District. In recent years, the College's Horticulture Department has suffered from a lack of administrative leadership and financial support, and its staffing, enrollment, and facilities have deteriorated to an unacceptable level. During the Spring of 2007, a Viability Committee appointed by the Academic Senate and an external visiting team invited by Agriculture Department Chair Dick South conducted an analysis of the status and future of Pierce College's Horticulture Program.

During the course of its investigation, the Viability Committee obtained input from not only the visiting team (and the community forum of alumni, instructors, and local businesses that were invited to meet with the commission), but also from the department's program review report, consultations with the department chair and faculty members, conversations with instructors from related local high school and university programs, a visit to Fullerton College's program, and a review of employment opportunity data.

As a result of this exploration, the Viability Committee has concluded that the Horticulture Program is an important and valuable component of the Pierce College curriculum. It has tremendous potential not only as a career preparation path for students but also as a critical outreach strategy to the community that can showcase the beauty of the campus.

In order to maximize the potential benefits of the program, the Viability Committee presents the following recommendations to the Academic Senate for consideration.

1. The College should provide strong evidence of its support for the Horticulture Program. This includes not only the authorization of the financial resources for repairs and the hiring of faculty and classified staff, but a concerted effort by the department chair, faculty, and administrators to develop a vision for the program for the coming years. In addition, special efforts should be made to ensure that the program faculty are fully integrated into the academic community of the College, and become active participants in the Academic Senate, Academic Policy Committee, CATE, and other faculty-centered meetings and activities.
2. In the immediate future, the College should replace the broken glass and the deteriorated tables in the greenhouse; repair the irrigation system for the nursery, greenhouse, lathe house, and arboretum; and consult with the department about classroom needs to determine the extent to which the current sharing of classrooms is limiting its ability to offer needed classes for students.
3. The College should proceed with the hiring of a full-time faculty member. The job description for this position must be carefully crafted to ensure that it attracts strong candidates with the appropriate vision for the program, and the necessary educational, planning, and marketing skills to implement this vision.

4. The College should also proceed immediately with the hiring of a full-time classified person to provide assistance to the program, specifically maintaining the grounds, preparing labs, and overseeing student workers.

5. The advisory board should be reactivated, outreach effort should be undertaken to enlist additional alumni, college representatives, and business owners from the local community as members of the board, and a schedule should be established that calls for meetings to occur at least once per semester.

6. Once the new full-time instructor is hired and has had the time to address the most pressing needs related to the curriculum and facilities, the Viability Committee recommends that an effort be made to identify ways to raise money for the program, specifically considering the implementation of regularly scheduled plant sales.

## Purpose of the Review

Program Viability Review is a Senate-directed process meant to assure that the College's instructional resources are used in response to the College's mission, its educational master plan, the needs of its students, and the requirements of the community it serves. The Horticulture Viability Review Committee ("Viability Committee") was authorized by the Educational Planning Committee, a subcommittee of the Academic Senate, and initiated its review process in January, 2007. Committee members were appointed to represent the following constituent groups:

Academic Senate President or designee:	Tom Rosdahl
Two members from the EPC:	Phyllis Braxton, Izzy Goodman
Two department chairs:	Gene Larson, James Rikel
Curriculum Committee Chair or designee:	Sharon Levick
Two AFT reps:	Art Gillis, Anne Gibson-Lott
VP of Academic Affairs or designee:	Carol Kozeracki
Academic Affairs Dean:	Charlotte Doctor

In addition to the investigation to be done by the internal Viability Committee, the Pierce College Council approved at its September 6, 2007 meeting a concurrent review of the horticulture and equine science program by an external commission, the AG/NR Industry Collaborative State Advisory Committee ("State Committee"). The six-member state committee visited the College on March 26 and 27, conducting interviews with departmental faculty, the President and Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Viability Committee, and community members. The recommendations of this state advisory committee are cited in this report.

The Viability Committee obtained input from not only the State Committee (and the community forum of alumni, instructors, and local businesses that were invited to meet with the commission), but also from the department's program review report, consultations with the department chair and faculty members, conversations with instructors from the relevant local high school and university programs, a visit to Fullerton College's program, and a review of employment opportunity data.

The importance of this review is underscored by two significant financial decisions to be made in the near future. In Fall 2006, the Faculty Priority Position Committee approved the hiring of a new full-time faculty member for the Horticulture Program. This Spring, a proposal to obtain state funding totaling \$7.8 million to renovate the horticulture facilities, including the construction of a teaching lab, a greenhouse complex, two storage buildings, an instructional pavilion, and a new soils bin, was authorized for inclusion in the next bond measure. These pending actions require a judgment by the College as to its commitment to the continuation and expansion of the Horticulture Program.

Background Information on the Horticulture Program

Pierce College has no faculty teaching full-time in the horticulture program. There are 65 approved courses in the catalog, which are taught by seven adjunct faculty members and one full-time faculty member with a split load. Enrollment in Plant Science courses, which are primarily scheduled in the evenings, totaled 223 in Fall 2004, 233 in Fall 2005, and 184 in Fall 2006. The program targets both students interested in a full-time career in the horticulture industry as well as homeowners in the community interested in landscaping their own property and gardens.

The program currently offers four associate degrees: General Horticulture, Greenhouse and Nursery Industry, Landscape Installation and Maintenance Industry, and Landscape Planning and Design. In consultation with the advisory committee, the department recently proposed to consolidate their offerings into one associate degree, "Landscape and Environmental Horticulture." This single degree reflects the program's course offerings and recognizes the challenges of offering needed classes regularly so that students can complete their programs in a reasonable amount of time. It is also designed with enough flexibility in its elective options to allow students to pursue a concentration of interest. The program also offers five certificates: Basic Gardening (Basic), Basic Gardening (Advanced), Professional Gardening, Landscape Technician (Basic), and Landscape Technician (Advanced).

Award Title	2003-04				2004-05				2005-06				3-Year Total
	AS	C	CS	Total	AS	C	CS	Total	AS	C	CS	Total	
Gardening – Advanced						4		4		16		16	20
Gardening – Basic			1	1			3	3			23	23	27
Gardening – Professional		1		1		2		2		4		4	7
Horticulture – General	2			2	1			1	1			1	4
Landscape Installation and Maintenance Industry									1			1	1
Landscape Planning and Design	3			3	4			4	4			4	11
Landscape Technician – Advanced		4		4		3		3		10		10	17
Landscape Technician – Basic		2		2		4		4		13		13	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>106</b>

As shown in the chart above, 16 degrees and 90 certificates and skills certificates have been awarded in these areas during the last three academic years.

## Key Viability Committee Findings

### 1. Grounds and Facilities

On March 27, Department Chair Richard South conducted a tour of the Horticulture and Horse Science grounds and facilities for the State Committee members and several members of the Viability Committee. Two central conclusions can be drawn from the inspection of the horticulture grounds and facilities. First, the availability, location, and basic layout of the grounds are tremendous assets to the program. Second, the facilities and irrigation system are substantially underfunded and have deteriorated to an unacceptable condition.

The grounds provide tremendous potential for an expanded and flourishing Horticulture Program. To quote the State Committee final report, “The horticulture unit is situated in a prime location on campus with a large amount of land available for development” and “The existing arboretum and palm collection provides an established base for future growth.”

However, the condition of the facilities, specifically the limited classroom space, the appalling condition of the greenhouse, the dilapidated lathe house, and the improvised irrigation systems created by the members of the Agriculture Department in lieu of adequate college-developed systems, have contributed to a disorderly, rundown appearance that is an impediment to attracting students and expanding the program. Estimates have been obtained for replacing the glass in the greenhouse, but nothing has been done to repair this important structure. In addition, the tables in the greenhouse were never appropriately waterproofed when purchased and are now deteriorating. They should be replaced. According to the chair, the repair of this building, which is now off limits to students due to the dangerous proliferation of broken glass, would allow the department to offer three or four additional courses. Finally, the visibility of the greenhouse from the Winnetka entrance is an eyesore for the entire College, and creates a terrible impression for the thousands of people that drive by that site on a weekly basis.

Most of the horticulture classes are held in a classroom that is shared with other disciplines and is overcrowded with desks and lab tables (used for floral design and soils classes), which have to be rearranged before each class. The chair indicates that limited classroom space is one of the key factors limiting enrollment growth, and has placed a priority on either regaining full control of the existing classroom spaces or gaining access to an additional classroom, perhaps through the availability of a portable “doublewide” trailer to use as a classroom.

The irrigation system for the nursery and the arboretum is old and unreliable. In addition, the chair indicated that Plant Facilities, at times, cuts off the water supply to the horticulture area without notifying the Department, a practice which has resulted in the destruction of a number of plants. The replacement of the irrigation system for the nursery and arboretum were identified as priorities by the chair.

In regard to the fiscal and physical needs of the program, the State Committee recommended in its final report that the College “provide for one-time site cleanup, arboretum irrigation, [and] repair of existing greenhouse.” It also indicated that the College should provide a new or renovated classroom facility for the Horticulture classes.

## 2. Horticulture Curriculum

There are 65 approved Plant Science courses in the catalog, most of which are offered in the evening to accommodate the schedules of working adults. Course outlines of records have not been updated in recent years, and the State Committee indicated a need for the department to review the curriculum and emphasize outcomes that prepare students for careers. They suggested that faculty members consult a statewide database of course outlines of record (available at <http://virtual.yosemite.cc.ca.us/cccgacans/Default.htm>) for updated examples of course descriptions, objectives, and sample texts. Updated CORs should include Student Learning Outcomes. The State Committee also suggested that a greater emphasis be placed on the incorporation of technology into the courses, and that VTEA funding should be accessed to support these innovations.

The State Committee indicated that it would be beneficial for the department to make clear to the industry the purpose of our available degrees and certificates, so the employers know which certificates prepare people for full-time jobs and which are designed to help homeowners landscape their own properties. They also recommended that the College publish a projected schedule of offerings, especially for courses that are offered less than once a year, so students can do advance planning and increase the likelihood of completing desired certificates and degrees.

As with all vocational disciplines in the College, the employment of the part-time faculty who work in the industry provides a valuable link to the industry, and should serve as a resource in identifying employment and curricular trends in the industry. Discussions between the Viability Committee and the State Committee, as well as conversations with faculty from other campuses, revealed the current demand for courses in the area of landscape design and management, and for classes that address the environmental challenges of southern California. The chair of the program at Cal Poly SLO specified that courses which address environmental issues such as water conservation during rainy seasons and prevention of chemical runoffs into waterways would be very helpful to the industry. The State Committee suggests that faculty be involved with the California Ag Teachers Association, Postsecondary Division, in order to stay current on statewide trends in agriculture and natural resources and to enhance the curriculum.

Discussions with the State Committee, as well as representatives from Cal Poly Pomona and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, failed to clarify the potential for our graduating students to transfer to universities’ horticulture programs. The department chair at Fullerton College reported his perception that transfer opportunities have declined. He said that the landscape architectural program at Cal Poly Pomona is impacted, although there are spaces open in ornamental horticulture. The interim department chair at Cal Poly SLO

was unfamiliar with the program at Pierce, but suggested that if we were interested in building a strong transfer and articulation program with Cal Poly SLO, we would do well to really study the lower division course offerings in their catalog for their Environmental Science Program and try to develop new courses that align with their offerings or create articulation agreements using our current course offerings. A review of our course offerings revealed that we have articulation agreements in place for four of the seven recommended lower-division courses for Environmental Horticulture Science, as well as a number of lower-division requirements in other disciplines. The chair of the SLO program indicated a belief that career opportunities in the field for students with a bachelor's degree in the field were growing. At the community forum held on March 26, one of the former students complained that most of the horticulture courses are not transferable. One of the adjunct faculty members expressed a concern that counselors are not familiar with the curriculum and are not able to give students informed input about appropriate courses to take in this area.

A number of conversations took place within the Viability Committee about the potential for collaboration between the Horticulture Program and other departments to create interdisciplinary courses, to enroll students in related classes in Life Science and other areas (such as environmental economics course), or to engage horticultural students in the development and maintenance of the College's Botanical Garden. There was a great deal of excitement about the potential for developing interdisciplinary courses that explore environmental issues in a broader context.

### 3. Horticulture Students and Recruitment

Dick South and Gary Krause told the Viability Committee that approximately two-thirds of the students are career-oriented compared to one-third of the students whose enrollment is primarily avocational. Very few of our students are "traditional age," that is recent high school graduates. As confirmed by discussions with the State Committee, as well as the program director at Fullerton College, the primary student population for horticulture programs tends to be adults, either homeowners or individuals wishing to move into a career in horticulture or advance in an existing career. Therefore recruiting efforts should be more focused on reaching out to employers and local nurseries than to high schools.

The Viability Committee members recognize that many of the potential students for these programs speak a language other than English as their first language. Dick South said that in some of his classes he feels the students are unable to fully understand the course content due to language issues. The chair of the Fullerton program indicated that a bilingual (English/Spanish) course attracted 50 students, and he thinks a bilingual faculty member could be a valuable asset to a program. John Clerx has indicated that the district is considering a proposal to begin offering bilingual sections of courses and even Spanish-language versions of classes, as long as participating students are also enrolled in ESL classes. If such a policy is approved by the district, this could be beneficial both to

the community's Spanish speaking population in the landscape professions and to the horticulture program's enrollment numbers.

A conversation with the director of Canoga Park High School's Agriculture Magnet Program indicated that there was an interest in collaborating with our Horticulture Program. However, he pointed out that student interest in enrolling in Pierce's program was likely to be curtailed by the current state of the facilities. In addition, he indicated that the vast majority of students in the magnet program are more interested in animal science than plant science, with probably only a handful looking to pursue horticulture-related studies.

A few years ago, Dick South applied for and received a grant for \$10,000 to assist the Department in its recruitment efforts. To date, he has not utilized this money, citing the need for someone with expertise in this area to help him create an appropriate brochure to distribute to local nurseries and related businesses. He mentioned that a similar effort in past years was very successful in attracting students to the program, and he would like to proceed with this project. Members of the State Committee expressed the view that the College would be wise to hold off on major recruiting efforts until some basic upgrades to the facilities are undertaken.

The State Committee recommended that the department's web site be developed to include information on curriculum, program activities, faculty, and future plans. The creation of an updated web site will be an extraordinarily useful recruiting tool.

#### 4. Relationship with the Local Community

On March 26, in conjunction with the State Committee's visit, a community forum was held to gather input on the Horticulture and Horse Science programs. Viability Committee members who attended the session were impressed by the support the community and local employers expressed for the program. A number of people present at the forum expressed concern over the decline in facilities, particularly the greenhouse. They said that the availability of internships and cooperative education programs would be beneficial to students and that strong partnerships with the industry should be activated. Forum attendees also suggested that specific business-related courses for agriculture students would be useful additions to the curriculum.

Members of the State Committee indicated that advisory committees should meet 2 – 4 times per year to provide input to the department, and that the department should be more proactive in setting up internship opportunities. With proper cultivation, industry representatives can be called on to act as instructional resources, assist with fundraisers, assist in developing curriculum, and provide problem-solving assistance.

Activities undertaken by the Enterprise operation, including the Harvest Festival, Farm Walk, and the Farm Market, play a valuable role in strengthening the relationship between Pierce and its neighbors. The College should use these events as an opportunity

to showcase and market their agricultural programs. The College's willingness to serve as a place of refuge for animals during the wildfire season has also brought positive attention to Pierce's agricultural history and current operations.

Academically, Pierce has an obligation to provide courses that fit the needs of a range of students, including community members looking to improve their lives without being enrolled in a formal degree or certificate program, as well as underserved populations whose enrollment in classes can have a positive impact on otherwise limited career prospects. The Viability Committee believes that the Horticulture Program can play a very important role in serving both these populations, and that this value is to be weighed against the costs of the program.

## 5. Job Prospects in Horticulture

Information regarding job prospects for individuals enrolled in the field of horticulture was provided by several sources. The department's program review documents indicated that there are a number of relevant employment opportunities in the horticulture field in Los Angeles, and that jobs are available both through governmental agencies and private companies. The specific fields of employment and their future prospects are:

- a. Nursery, crop, and greenhouse workers – salary range is from \$8.39 - \$10.74 per hour, usually with health benefits; projected growth of 26% over the next six years
- b. Landscaping and groundskeeping workers – salary range is from \$8.04 - \$14.66 per hour, usually with health benefits; projected growth of 27% over the next six years
- c. Supervisors – salary range is from \$15.19 - \$25.88 per hour, almost always with health and other benefits; projected growth of 18% over the next six years.

Many of these jobs have experience-related requirements rather than educational requirements, and do not specify the need for a degree or certificate in the field.

The department chair at Fullerton College estimates that graduates of their nursery program earn \$14 per hour, and graduates from the landscape management program who become foremen can earn \$18 and up. The program director from Cuyamaca on the State Committee stated that students can earn between \$15 and \$30 per hour after finishing the program.

James Rikel's conversations with local employers indicate that there is a local interest in programs that can help to produce project managers. These types of programs would incorporate business courses and skills as well as technical courses.

A recent job posting in the California Community College Registry for a "Groundskeeper II" position at College of the Canyons, which required verifiable experience performing grounds maintenance and gardening work, and knowledge of electronic and electro-mechanical irrigation controls, was offering a salary between \$2,811 and \$4,010 per month, with medical, dental, life, and retirement benefits.

For students who use the Pierce program as a stepping stone to a bachelor's or master's degree in landscape design and management, employment for landscape architects is expected to increase faster than average (increase about 18 – 26%) through 2014, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In May 2004, median annual earnings for landscape architects were \$53,120.

## 6. Staffing Issues

The lack of a full-time faculty member in the Horticulture Program is a significant impediment to the potential growth of the program. As indicated early in this report, the FPPC has recommended the hiring of a full-time professor in the Horticulture Program. Members of the State Committee and faculty from other colleges have emphasized the critical importance of finding the right person for this position. Not only must this person have the educational background to teach a range of courses, but he or she must also have marketing and networking skills needed to strengthen ties with the industry and reach out to potential students.

The Fullerton chair recommended that this person be an “experienced generalist” with the widest possible range of skills. He said these people are hard to find and that high school teachers provide a good pool of potential candidates. This individual will also be expected to take on some of the responsibility for the upkeep of the horticulture grounds and facilities. The State Committee recommends that this person “should be an individual with the ability to develop a shared vision for the horticulture program and the ability to bring stakeholders together to establish a plan to implement the vision,” and that this person should have an extended contract of 11 or 12 months to oversee the program year-round and be given release time to allow for facility and program oversight and development and the fostering of industry and community relations. They also mention that a background in the area of landscape design, construction, and management would be advantageous.

The Viability Committee discussed the importance of finding the right person for this position, one who can see the potential of the program in spite of the current conditions of the program's facilities, and can set a direction for the program that takes advantage of the new facilities that are to be built under the next bond measure, probably during the 2008-09 academic year. This individual should be intimately involved in budget decisions for the Horticulture Program, as well as the hiring and evaluation of adjunct faculty. A suggestion was made to give this individual a D-basis assignment for at least the first year or two to allow them to carry out their educational, planning, and marketing responsibilities. After two years, an analysis of the program's development should be made in order to determine whether it is appropriate to request an additional full-time faculty position from the FPPC.

In addition to the full-time faculty member, there is an urgent need for a full-time classified person in the Horticulture Program to assist in maintaining the grounds, preparing labs, and overseeing student workers.

The success of the Fullerton program is linked to the hiring of student interns, whose salaries are funded through the quarterly plant and tomato sales that they help to prepare and staff. Their presence in the department is evidenced by the projects in which they are involved. They are given primary responsibility for growing the plants that are sold at the plant sales, thus making their positions self-sustaining. They work year-round under the supervision of the classified person.

Finally, the State Committee made a strong recommendation to hire a full-time “program manager” at a level above the department chair, who would “focus on the various planning, developmental and management aspects that will be required. . . This person would lead department members in hiring new staff, renewal of curriculum, providing quality student leadership activities, coordinate funding and budgeting processes, applying for grant opportunities, planning/renovating facilities, determining land use, communicating with community and advisory groups, communicating with AG/NR state activities, promotion of the department within the college and to the community.” In Pierce’s structure, this person would serve as an Assistant or Associate Dean specifically for the Agriculture Programs.

## 7. Enterprise Activities

Larry Kraus spoke with the Viability Committee regarding the role of the Enterprise Office in making the farm land self-sustaining (both financially and ecologically). The college has identified several areas on campus (including the horticulture grounds and a strip along Mason and Victory) as “joint venture areas” that are supposed to meld educational and money making opportunities. Larry has not had much success in including the Agriculture program in these ventures – he says he is very interested in an “educational partner.” He has done a great deal of research at other campuses about their enterprise activities, and had entered into discussion with Valley Crest about the possibility of a joint occupancy lease that would allow them to build a home office on our campus that they could use for their training and our classes. This was intended to bring in both money and landscaping services for the campus. This particular arrangement did not come to fruition, and some members of the Viability Committee expressed reservations about the creation of structures (garages or buildings) on our land by outside companies.

The Farm Market has generated \$250,000 in reserves over the past few years, which is intended to support such projects as the Pizza Farm. Enterprise currently uses about 17 acres along Victory to grow produce for the Farm Market; he would like an additional 20-30 acres to make the investment in equipment and labor worthwhile. It is clear that there needs to be a better partnership between the Agriculture department and the Enterprise operation regarding the utilization of some tracts of the farm land. The department should play the lead role on determining any activities that might take place on the horticulture lands near the Winnetka entrance.

At a number of community colleges, plant sales play a large role in generating funds for the Horticulture Programs. Conversations with the department chair at Mt. San Antonio College indicated that revenues from these activities approach \$100,000 per year. The State Committee member from Cuyamaca's Horticulture Program indicated that his supply budget has not increased for over 25 years, and the proceeds from plant sales play a large role in supporting the program. During the visit to Fullerton College, the chair described their ability to support three or four student interns per year with \$50,000 in funds raised from four plant and tomato sales. The students are recruited from their classes, work approximately 15 hours per week, and are paid \$7.50 per hour. The students work year round under the supervision of the classified staff person.

### Conclusions Regarding Horticulture Program Viability

As stated at the beginning of this report, the goal of the program viability review process is to assure that the College's instructional resources are used in response to the College's mission, its educational master plan, the needs of its students, and the requirements of the community it serves. After extensive investigation, discussion, and reflection, the Viability Committee concluded that the Horticulture Program strongly supports several key elements of the College's mission. First, its courses, and degree and certificate programs, unquestionably support students' efforts to "gain career and technical education proficiency." Of particular importance is that the Horticulture Program provides opportunities to reach out to a group of potential students – namely low-skill workers with limited English language proficiency and an interest in the landscape business – to help them become part of the job market and enable them to progress in their chosen field.

In addition, the Horticulture Program also provides an invaluable opportunity for the College to demonstrate its professed value of "service to our communities." In many ways, the Horticulture Program can play a leading role for the College in a community beautification effort. For local homeowners looking to improve their gardens and lawns, the horticulture classes are an inexpensive and effective means to achieve that goal. For the neighbors who value the College's commitment to land preservation, the Horticulture Program can play a significant role in ensuring that the grounds of the campus are not only free from development but also serve as living models of exemplary horticulture practices. The program could be utilized as a destination for elementary school field trips and as a means to reach out to urban children, introducing them to agriculture and horticulture. Links with the ENCORE program could introduce Woodland Hills senior citizens to the enjoyment of gardening. In addition, through partnerships with the Enterprise Office and the development of regularly scheduled plant sales, the Horticulture Program can raise the visibility of the College in a positive way among members of the community.

Although the Horticulture Program may not ultimately be able to operate on a self-sustaining basis, the Committee feels strongly that the benefits it can generate, in terms of

opportunities for underserved students and goodwill created for the College among community members, justify the continuation of the program.

In order to maximize the potential benefits enumerated above, the Viability Committee presents the following recommendations to the Academic Senate for consideration.

### Viability Committee Recommendations

#### 1. College Commitment and Leadership

The College should provide strong evidence of its support for the Horticulture Program. This includes not only the authorization of the financial resources for repairs and the hiring of faculty and classified staff, but vigorous advocacy for the program when the College's budget and scheduling decisions are made. At this time it may not be appropriate to hire a dean focused exclusively on the oversight of the Agriculture Department, as recommended by the State Committee. However, the existing organization, including the department chair, faculty, and administrators, must work together thoughtfully in the coming months to develop a vision for the program that will allow the Horticulture Program to become the "model program" identified by the State Committee as a realistic goal. In addition, special efforts should be made to ensure that the program faculty are fully integrated into the academic community of the College, and become active participants in the Academic Senate, Academic Policy Committee, CATE, and other faculty-centered meetings and activities.

#### 2. Short-Term Priorities

The College should quickly address the following priorities in order to establish a foundation for attracting a new faculty member and expanding the program. First, the replacement of broken glass and the decrepit tables in the greenhouse must be undertaken immediately. This facility is unsafe, extremely unattractive, and a detriment to the program. Its repair will also result in the department's ability to offer additional classes. Second, the irrigation system needs to be repaired to ensure that the grounds, especially those in the nursery, greenhouse, lathe house, and arboretum, receive adequate watering. Third, the department should be consulted about classroom needs to determine the extent to which the current sharing of classrooms is limiting its ability to offer needed classes for students.

#### 3. Faculty Hiring

The College should proceed with the hiring of a full-time faculty member. The job description for this position must be carefully crafted to ensure that it attracts strong candidates with the appropriate vision for the program, and the necessary educational, planning, and marketing skills to implement this vision. The Committee recommends that one or two faculty members from other colleges' horticulture programs and a Pierce faculty from a related discipline be included on the hiring committee so the College can

benefit from their expertise during the hiring process. The Viability Committee also recommends that this position include a D-basis assignment for at least the first two years so this individual will be compensated for the substantial administrative responsibilities we anticipate will be part of the job, and that he or she be given a primary role in determining the supply and equipment budget for the program, and in hiring and evaluating the part-time faculty in the program. The timing of the hire should be planned to maximize the pool of qualified applicants, even if that means a Fall 2008 start date.

The Viability Committee further recommends that after two years, an analysis of the program's growth and development should be made in order to determine whether it is appropriate to request an additional full-time faculty position from the FPPC.

#### 4. Classified Staff Hiring

The College should also proceed immediately with the hiring of a full-time classified person to provide assistance to the program. According to the chair, the currently used position titles, "agriculture assistant" and "agriculture technician," are not appropriate for the Horticulture Program because people meeting these basic requirements often have greater expertise in the care of livestock and animals than in horticulture, and do not have the specific skills needed to work effectively in the horticulture area. He requests that an effort be made to resurrect the title of "nursery worker," which is much more closely linked to the requirements of the program. Until the new full-time instructor is hired, this person will report to the chair. At that point, the classified person's responsibilities should be determined by the full-time horticulture professor. Depending on the needs of the program, the responsibilities of this person could include maintaining the grounds, preparing labs, and overseeing student workers.

#### 5. Active Engagement of the Horticulture Advisory Board

An active advisory board can serve as a tremendous resource to career and technical programs by providing input on curricular priorities, assisting with fundraising, and offering internships and career opportunities. In recent years, the advisory board for the Horticulture Program has met only sporadically, and the College has not been able to take advantage of the benefits of regularly scheduled interactions and opportunities for feedback on the program. The reactivation of the advisory board, including an outreach effort to enlist additional alumni and business owners from the local community as members of the board, should be undertaken immediately by the department. In addition to the recruitment of community members, the inclusion of campus representatives from areas such as the Enterprise Office, Public Information, and Plant Facilities could be beneficial to the Horticulture Program. Once the Board membership is established, a schedule should be established that calls for meetings to occur at least once per semester.

#### 6. Revenue-Generating Opportunities

Once the new full-time instructor is hired and has had the time to address the most pressing needs related to the curriculum and facilities, the Viability Committee

recommends that an effort be made to identify ways to raise money for the program. One common model that is used successfully at a number of colleges is to hold plant sales throughout the year, perhaps quarterly. Fullerton and Mt. San Antonio College earn between \$50,000 and \$100,000 per year through these activities, and are able to support the salaries of student interns and provide for other purchases as needed through these sales. Pierce College has participated in this activity in the past, and should consider reinstating the practice. In addition, the program should look for opportunities to enter into partnership with the Enterprise Office, which has established a track record of successful activities, including the Farm Market and the Harvest Festival. While it is sometimes difficult to balance the demand for profitability with the educational needs of the students, the potential upside of such a partnership could be extremely positive for the students, the program, and the College.