



August 9, 2024

Dr. Adena Williams Loston
President
St. Philip's College
1801 Martin Luther King
San Antonio, TX 78203

Dear Dr. Loston:

Thank you for submitting the following substantive change:

Substantive change:

**New Program-Approval
Associate of Applied Science in Plumbing Trades**

Submission date:

3/15/2024

Intended Implementation date:

8/26/2024

Case ID:

SC026054

SACSCOC requested additional information via email on March 29, 2024 and July 11, 2024. The institution's responses on July 10, 2024, and July 17, 2024, respectively, were added to the record and are reflected in the narrative below.

The institution proposes the implementation of the Associate of Applied Science in Plumbing Trades with a launch date of August 26, 2024. The 60-credit hour program will be ongoing and will be housed at the Southwest Campus off-campus instructional site. The target audiences are traditional college students, dual credit students, Pathway in Technical Education Early College High School students, and individuals with upskill or changing career paths. The projected number of students is 42 in the first year and increases to 200 students by year five. Students should complete the program in five terms. The program will be offered through primarily face-to-face format, with hybrid and distance education (online) method of delivery utilized when need arises. External practicum hours will be held face-to-face at various plumbing companies and sites. The institution was approved by SACSCOC for distance education on October 22, 2002.

Strengths cited by the institution to offer the new program include a long history of program offerings in workforce training, experienced faculty, and a strong student support system in place. The need for the program was confirmed by industry feedback and advisory committee input.

The institution's mission states in part that the institution *empower(s) our diverse student population through educational achievement and career readiness*. The program will provide graduates to fulfill workforce needs in the college's service area in plumbing trades. Students in the program will be eligible to take their Plumbing Tradesman license immediately upon graduation. In addition,



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graduates will have a foundation to move forward in their educational achievement with a transferable AAS degree.

The program was originally proposed by advisory committee meetings, in which faculty participate. The committee proposed combining two existing level 1 certificates in plumbing to create the AAS. Open communication and collaboration among faculty, administrators, and external stakeholders was key to ensuring the success of the proposed changes. The proposal was reviewed and approved by the Curriculum Committee, followed by the Substantive Change Committee. The institution received institutional approval for the change from the Alamo Colleges Board of Trustees. The institution also received state approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). Documentation was provided for both institutional and state approvals.

The 60-hour curriculum, a program schedule for all five terms, and twenty-six student learning outcomes were provided. A sample of program assessment (three SLOs) was provided which indicated courses, targets, and assessment tools. Course descriptions for all program courses were provided and appear to be appropriate for a technical associate degree program.

Requirements for admission into and graduation from the program were provided and are consistent with higher education practices. The institution stated that the program will follow existing system policies and procedures to grant credit for the courses in the program. The system policies and guidelines align with THECB and the Federal definition of a credit hour.

Administrative oversight of the program will be provided by the Program Director of the program. Responsibilities of the Program Director include review/revision of curriculum, coordination of faculty to complete the internal Instructional Unit Review, course scheduling, and recruitment activities. The Program Director reports to the Department Chair, who reports to the Dean for Academic Success, who reports to the VP of Academic Success, who has total oversight on all academic programs.

The AAS in Plumbing Technology will not be offered in a compressed timeframe.

The institution provided a faculty roster that listed two full-time faculty and one part-time faculty member. The faculty members appear to be qualified to teach the course for which they are assigned. A primary faculty member assigned for each course in the program demonstrates that every course is assigned to qualified full-time faculty. The number of full-time faculty appears to be adequate to offer the program.

Keep in mind that the ultimate determination of faculty qualifications and faculty adequacy is the responsibility of the peer review team who will assess the program as part of the institution's next SACSCOC accreditation review.

The library and learning resources supporting the new program were provided and appear to be adequate. The Library supports the program students with access to more than 40,000 full text electronic journal articles on plumbing trades through two databases and three discipline-specific refereed journals and primary source materials. Electronic resources such as databases, ebooks, electronic full-text journals, and streaming media are accessible via the library's website at all hours.



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The library also has partnerships with other Alamo Colleges District Libraries, Amigos Resource Sharing, TexShare, and the OCLC Partnership Service. Inter-library loan services are available. The library's website serves as a portal or access point from which students may become aware of and use the library's general and discipline-specific resources. The library liaisons have developed subject-specific on-demand research guides tailored to support the researching needs of students. Librarians provide instruction in the use of the library and learning resources. Library instruction is delivered face-to-face in a library computer-equipped room, in-person in a classroom, or remotely. The physical facilities in the Southwest Campus library include computer labs and study rooms. All students can schedule in-depth research consultations face-to-face, by email, text, telephone, chat, or through e-meetings. The research assistance can be held in-person or via Zoom or Microsoft Teams. LibAnswers and *Ask a Librarian* services are also available.

The academic and student support services provided appear to be adequate. Services include enrollment and one-on-one student onboarding, advising, financial aid, online and in-person tutoring (math and writing), counseling, career services, disability services, financial literacy, student advocacy services, and health services. All students who take online courses participate in a required session, OLRN (Online Learning) in order to familiarize themselves with the Canvas LMS. The Center for Distance Learning provides the sessions as well as support for Canvas and Microsoft programs for students enrolled in online courses.

The program will be located in the Industrial Technology Center (Building 1) at the Southwest Campus OCIS. The Center will have a dedicated classroom and labs (7,870 square feet) for instruction and hands-on training. Mockups of bathrooms, kitchens, an area for digging and the rough-in and top-out phases of plumbing are included. The classroom includes a computer and projector. Faculty offices are provided and include computers with current software. Equipment includes all necessary hand tools, water heaters, water filtration systems, toilets, showers, sinks, all pipe and tubing, and manifolds and valves. Facilities and equipment in support of the program appears to be adequate.

The institution appears to have a sound financial base and stability. The institution provided a budget for the first year of operation. The primary sources of revenue at the institution are tuition and fees, state formula funding, local ad valorem taxes, and auxiliary enterprises. The budget expenses included faculty salaries and operating expenses. The budget demonstrates that revenues will not exceed expenses the first year.

A contingency plan was provided should needed revenues not materialize or should costs exceed estimates. Although first year expenditures exceed projected revenue, the program is expected to grow within two years. Should revenues not materialize, the institution will be in the sunset designation process per institutional procedures.

The institutional planning and assessment process was described and appears to be adequate. Instructional Unit Reviews (IUR) are collected on academic programs on a three-year rotating basis. The IUR process consists of two sections: program responsibility for curriculum and student learning outcomes. In addition, programs are reviewed for educational return on investment through evaluation of three areas: Institution Student Learning Outcomes (ISLO) Assessment, ISLO Rubric



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retention/persistence/completion rates, licensure pass rates, job placement, community outreach, and workforce readiness are utilized. Student performance and program performance are reviewed to ensure continued alignment, relevance, performance excellence, and improvement.

The Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges reviewed the materials seeking approval of the Associate of Applied Science in Plumbing Trades. It was the decision of the Board to approve the program and include it in the scope of accreditation.

An invoice for \$500 to help defray the cost of reviewing the prospectus is enclosed with the liaison's copy of this letter.

Should you need assistance, please contact Dr. J. Matthew Melton at (404) 994-6553 or via email at mmelton@sacscoc.org.

Please include the Case ID number above in all submissions or correspondence about this substantive change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Belle S. Wheelan".

Belle S. Wheelan, Ph.D.
President

BSW/TBB:lp

Enclosure (invoice with liaison's copy only)

cc: Dr. Liliana Gutierrez, Dean of Performance Excellence, St. Philip's College
Dr. J. Matthew Melton, Vice President, SACSCOC