



**DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL
STATE FIRE TRAINING**

P.O. Box 944246
SACRAMENTO, CA 94244-2460
(916) 902-9738
Website: www.fire.ca.gov



Date: July 12, 2024

To: Statewide Training and Education Advisory Committee
State Board of Fire Services

From: Caryn Petty, Deputy State Fire Marshal

SUBJECT/AGENDA ACTION ITEM:

Southwestern College, Accredited Regional Training (ARTP) Reaccreditation

Recommended Actions:

Recommend Southwestern College remain a Accredited Regional Training (ARTP) in the State Fire Training (SFT) system for the reaccreditation period of five (5) years.

Background Information:

A Reaccreditation Site Evaluation was conducted on June 6, 2024, at the Southwestern College training facilities at 8100 Gigantic Street in San Diego, CA. The Accreditation Site Evaluation was conducted by Deputy State Fire Marshal Caryn Petty, State Fire Training, with Chief Lorraine Hutchinson, Fire Technology Coordinator, serving as site host and representative. Battalion Chiefs Dennis Clay and Stephen Bowlin, Adjunct Instructors, were on-site for the duration.

The Southwestern College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) was reviewed and discussed, with requirements for supplemental documentation noted. Said documentation has since been received and has met the requirements as set forth by State Fire Training policies and procedures. The review of the SAR was followed by an evaluation of all classrooms and training facilities with opportunity to review training course records and equipment compliment.

Analysis/Summary of Issue:

An evaluation of the training sites and facilities indicated sufficient classroom space with a fully functioning and compliant training facility complete with all necessary props, tools, equipment, and vehicles to accommodate a fire academy training program. The College utilizes the Fire Fighter (2019) curriculum and possesses all necessary materials for

successful Certification Examination delivery. The training grounds exhibit appropriate a California Fire Code-compliant classrooms equipped with enhanced audio/visual equipment and necessary learning aids. All Academy recruits are provided sufficient study materials, devices, and equipment for applicable success within the Academy training. Several Registered Instructors and Evaluators participate in the Academy and Certification Exam delivery making the entity self-sustaining and the College will focus on hosting additional State Fire Training courses in conjunction with cooperating and neighboring agencies. All student records are maintained in a compliant and confidential manner in accordance with State Fire Training requirements.

Since 1991, Southwestern Community College has maintained steady and robust Fire Science Technology certification and Associate of Science degree programs. In 2007, the College's Higher Education Center was expanded to include all public safety programs at the new Otay Mesa location. In 2018, College leadership committed to \$21.5 million to design and build a Joint Public Safety Training Facility including the EMT/Paramedic programs, the Police Academy, and the new Fire Fighter Academy. The new facility includes new classrooms as well as a four-story training tower and simulator.

Area(s) of focus for growth and improvement:

- Consistent participation at technology directors meetings is recommended to continue fostering the growing relationships in the region for enhanced networking and partnership opportunities.
- The current staffing is at its capacity with workloads beyond the Academy delivery that would be offset with additional resources and personnel. The College has identified a specific need for additional personnel to lessen the workload of existing staff and ensure the thorough delivery of the Academy free of peripheral assignments, tasks, and duties.
- The facility is now operational and construction deficiencies have been noted during its early use. Personnel have identified specific areas of concern that should be addressed in a timely fashion to ensure sustained longevity of the facility and its structures.
- With the implementation of the Fire Fighter 2 curriculum, props specific to the skills and topics should be procured for seamless instruction delivery and SFT compliance.
- Ongoing outreach via fire camps and community events is recommended for continued diversifications efforts.

Program personnel recognize the underserved student and small agency populations in the southern areas of San Diego and have an expressed desire to bridge the regional fire service training and education gap. This focus on providing education for all student types is indicative of the training devotion serving as the foundation of this growing program. Coordination personnel possess an energetic approach to program development with a strong focus on maintaining diversified student populations while adhering to the standards set forth by State Fire Training. Southwestern Community College possesses a strong dedication to comprehensive student development from entry-level firefighters to career advancing leadership. The College is proactively building cooperative relationships founded on producing strong, well-rounded fire service professionals.

State Fire Training recommends continued recognition of Southwestern College as an Accredited Regional Training Program in the State Fire Training system for a Reaccreditation period of five (5) years.