

Laney College
Learning Assessment Committee
Meeting Notes for February 3, 2006

Members present: Tracy Camp, Vina Cera, Cheli Fossum, Evelyn Lord, Ann McMurdo, Mae Frances Moore, Louis Quindlen, Linda Sanford, Ed Wright.
Absent: Jackie Graves, David Mitchell, Karolyn van Putten

1. Karolyn set up a yahoo group for the committee members.
2. Discussion of whether to move the March 8 Brown Bag discussion to accommodate ESL book fair. Committee decided not to change the date of the Brown Bag discussion. (Later, Linda approved moving our meeting to T-750 for March 8.)
3. Handout distributed: “Take the Poll – what is your top concern about learning outcomes assessment?” Louis commented that the top concerns indicate a lack of knowledge about what assessment is.
We have a lot of work to do to help instructors here at Laney understand what assessment is. (student-centered vs. teacher-centered). When some people hear the word “assessment”, they assume it means assessing them as a teacher.
4. Discussed the need to disseminate information to the Laney community. Need to disseminate definitions, outlines, basic information. Discussed making a newsletter. We need to develop a knowledge base. We’ll have to bombard people with information to get them started. We should focus on the lack of knowledge. We should emphasize that we’re talking about assessment of students, not teachers.
Linda would like us to develop our own set of terms, and call it something other than SLO’s. We should focus on language that’s most important for Laney to get a big picture idea. Linda is concerned because the large departments are not the leaders in this (assessment). At most schools, the large departments are the leaders.
Louis brought up that since we already have an assessment center, maybe people think that the Learning Assessment Committee has something to do with the assessment center.
Discussed how to get the large departments to be involved. Vina suggested that we meet with the large departments to get them to focus. Mae Frances suggested that in ESL we could target some hourly instructors who are interested and encourage them to do assessment because it looks good on their resume.
Another point: maybe we haven’t used the “hammer” of accreditation enough – a lot of people don’t seem to take accreditation seriously. Our next accreditation is in two years. We need to ratchet things up. Next steps: analyze survey and get the results out, develop our vocabulary, do an example type activity, inundate people with information (via hard copies in mailboxes), develop a newsletter with a monthly or bimonthly update including information, definitions, and examples. We need to continue to push it. We should also ask the Office of Instruction to be more interested. Each dean needs to get on

board and this should be part of each dean's planning. We should provide lots of opportunities for people to learn about assessment.

Louis asked if we could make outcomes part of the hiring criteria for the new president and vice president.

Linda mentioned that the schools that have been the most successful have been ones where the leadership came from the faculty. The administration is important for coordination and support. We need to make sure there's nothing punitive about it.

Mae Frances commented that the large departments have to move forward with us, or we'll just get more fragmented. If they don't, it will be blatantly obvious when the accreditation team comes to visit.

Cheli mentioned that we should incorporate more questions on assessment into our program review process. Linda said that this will happen but it will take a while and we can't wait for that to happen.

Linda gave a little overview of the kinds of planning that has been going on at Laney since 2000. The previous district-wide program review schedule and process was started in 2000. We did a mini program review at Laney as part of strategic planning in 2004, but it didn't get connected to budget.

Tracy mentioned that she'll try assessment in one of her classes and then share what she learned with the rest of the math department, and maybe then they'll be receptive. Mae Frances suggested that Tracy work with one of us to develop outcomes.

Linda mentioned that a lot of institutions use "student engagement" as an outcome for assessing student services. There are survey "instruments" that measure student engagement.

Tracy, Louis, Cheli will work on surveys: tally responses, type up comments, then we can summarize the information. Goal: have the survey results completed by the end of the month and disseminate the information. Send out a newsletter with the results.

Discussed upcoming Brown Bag discussion – objectives vs. outcomes. Cheli will make copies of definitions for the meeting.

Discussed a "Principles of Assessment" document – Linda commented that it should be a fluid document. We'll discuss it in the Brown Bag and bring it to the faculty senate.

Someone mentioned that we should start providing examples of course level outcomes from different departments.