

## Learning Assessment Committee

Friday, March 27, 2009

1:00-2:30pm, T-750

Members Present: Vina Cera, Cheli Fossum, Evelyn Lord, Ann McMurdo, David Mitchell, Connie Portero, Louis Quindlen, Linda Sanford,

**1. Meeting Dates for rest of semester were confirmed:** 4/10, 4/24, 5/8, 5/22. Cheli reported that the Assessment Workshop on Professional Day was moderately attended and that most came for the information, rather than staying for the work session after.

**2.** We unanimously approved our Assessment Philosophy statement. It will now go before the next Academic Senate meeting. The philosophy statement is meant to keep us in focus and on track.

“Assessment practices at Laney College ensure quality educational opportunities that respond to the needs of the local and global community. Assessment is an ongoing process that improves student learning and institutional effectiveness through dialogue based on evidence. We value honesty, integrity, curiosity, and the courage to ask deep and interesting questions about student learning, our teaching practices, and our effectiveness as a learner-centered college.”

**3.** The major part of the meeting was spent in critically reviewing and discussing Laney’s Assessment Plan Draft. Our co-chair alerted us to several areas we should pay close attention to, plus posed questions to consider as we reviewed it. It was also pointed out that there were some critical items left out and some mistaken statements. We will send our remarks to Dr. White, the consultant, and will review all revisions before the plan is finalized.

General Dialogue and Specific Issues:

- One item consistently stated in the draft was the need for research resources, specifically, two full-time research positions (most colleges have at least one research coordinator for learning and assessment practices). These positions would be in addition to the current college research office. It was suggested that a good strategy would be to make the positions full-time faculty hires, which would bolster our requests for more full-timers. We also felt that the half-time chair position did not allow enough time to do all required, and should be full-time.
- We felt we should continue to pay stipends for SLOs, assessment plans, rubrics, and assessment reports – particularly to part-timers. At present there isn’t a vehicle to pay classified for this service. We need to make the effort to seek one out and make it transparent so that more classified staff will become involved.

- Even though we recognize that there are now very limited financial resources, we have to urge the college to recognize the importance of our charge, and that the college, as a whole, must set its priorities in order to enable us to meet the requisite standards.
- TaskStream can easily generate the assessment reports once faculty is trained in its use.
- The question of accountability was raised for compliance, and was answered by the fact that the results would appear in Unit Plans and Program Reviews, which all Deans receive and review. We agreed that we should hold the deans responsible to keep track of which of their constituent departments are, or are not, keeping up with their assessment cycles, and be involved in urging unresponsive departments to comply. The President should also be vocal in this scheme. As well, results will be made public. It was agreed that assessment is an ongoing process, with no specific timelines, except for the reporting that goes into the Unit Plans and Program Reviews.
- Along the lines of accountability, we feel that there should also be a set of administrative unit outcomes and assessments.
- The need was raised for assessment of the effectiveness of the committee's methods, to get a better picture of when we could move beyond the "training stage" and advance to the next level of development.
- We briefly discussed ways to incorporate assessment into our regular practices. Some examples brought out were regular Flex Days workshops, routine department meetings with enough time set aside for discussion and review of assessment results and activities.
- Missing from the draft were assessments of degrees and certificates, and institutional outcomes. (GE is a program and doesn't represent a large chunk of college activities). These are uppermost on the accreditation hierarchy and need to be included. It should not be difficult to draft ILOs, which can be taken directly from the new College Mission Statement, which is broad enough to allow mapping of all college segments. Also, Basic Skills at Laney, is not a program (except for ESL), but is addressed by other discipline-embedded outcomes. We will ask the Basic Skills Cte. to come up with an assessment plan that meets with the rulings decided by the State Senate. And also, since some of the statements are inaccurate, we think that Basic Skills be held back from the plan for now.
- Student Services are not adequately represented in the draft. Dean Vasconcellos will fill in the blanks.
- The question was raised, "Why are we doing this anyway?" Answer: because the accreditation team asked about such a plan and want to see evidence of some plan that describes our process.
- LAC Purpose: we don't need the long list of various details and commitments outlined, and feel that a simple statement something akin to our ensuring the implementation of the practices outlined in our Mission

Statement (which is included), should suffice. Also, we are not a “joint” cte., but a “sub” cte. of the faculty senate.

- The timelines should be removed, because as stated earlier in the notes, we feel that report-out dates should be ongoing. We are already committed to a specific timeline for our Unit Plans and Program Reviews.
- There’s too much emphasis on indirect methods of assessments. We prefer the emphasis to be on direct methodology.
- Evelyn will review the library section and Linda will take on the Basic Skills issues.

4. We were saddened to hear the resignation of Louis Quindlen. It’s necessary for him to focus on important department issues, and we’ll all miss his critical contributions.