Laney College

Welding Department

Instructional **Program Review**



Revised version, October 2, 2012

Peralta Community College District

The Instructional (Academic Affairs) Program Review Narrative Report

1. College: Laney College

2. Narrative Description of the Discipline, Department or Program:

The Welding Department is growing faster now than any other time in the last 20 years. There has been a shortage of welders in our nation that is just getting bigger and bigger. Over the last 3 three years, besides teaching the core classes for the welding program, the department has continued to develop and teach, (1) special class for students in the ECT Program, (2) special classes for students in the Industrial Maintenance Program and (1) special high school class. The High School class is held each year, only during the Spring semester, in partnership with the Machine Shop.

The Welding Department is very excited to announce, that recently, PG&E has now chosen the Laney Welding Department, between three welding programs in the Bay Area, to partner, assist and support them in doubling their work force of Pipe Line Welders. PG&E is expecting to be busy working on pipe line inspection, repair, and replacement until 2025. Because PG&E has such a high need for welders and can't find or train them fast enough, the Laney Welding Department has recently agreed to develop and teach a set of classes which will help prepare interested welding students to take and pass the PG&E written employment tests and practical pipe welding tests. Interested students will need to take, or test out of, two welding classes and a written test/math class, taken over two semesters. This program is supposed to start up Spring 2013 and should be able to provide a couple of new apprentices, every semester, to PG&E in less than a year.

Achieving a successful partnership with PG&E has now become the Number One Primary Goal and Objective for the welding department. Classes need creating, equipment needs ordering, meetings with PG&E and modifications to the facility, all need to be done before the classes start. All other goals, besides teaching and evaluating student outcomes, have been put on "temporary hold". The Second Primary Goal is to develop and start teaching a Pipefitting class for the Industrial Maintenance program. The Pipefitting class will focus on the math, methods, and techniques used to fabricate and build pipe assemblies. The Third Primary Goal of the welding department is to totally update and modify its curriculum. The Department would like to start using a new set of textbooks created especially for the trades, with lots of input from experts and professionals. These "new books" include; a set of new standards, established by groups of professionals, in all the trades, from all over the country. Pearson, the publisher, has developed this series to compliment and support other books in the series. Separate and custom text books can be created for all of the classes we teach so that students don't have to buy extra chapters they don't read or more than one text book for a class. Instructors can pick and choose only the chapters they want to cover and every chapter has all the Goal and Objectives listed clearly for students and instructors to see and use.

3. Curriculum:

a. Is the curriculum current and effective? Have course outlines been updated within the last three years?

The Curriculum of the Welding Department needs updating in order to keep the program current and up to date. I believe that our core classes continue to be evaluated, but that none of the departments courses have been updated in the last three years and that only about 50% of classes have been updated in the last 5 years. (weld203abcd & weld221abcd)

Currently the Department has decided to start switching to a new series of text books. These books are written by Pearson, and specially designed, with help from professionals in industry. These books conform to set of "new standards" created by professionals in unions and organizations like the American Welding Society that are spread all over the country. Companies and organizations from around the country want schools around the country to start teaching students to a "set standard of skills" learned per level of accomplishment. (Example: A "Level I Welder" should learn/know "X,Y & Z,) If all schools comply, a Level I welder, taking classes in Florida, will learn the same things as a welding student in California.

Currently the Department is working on curriculum for two new welding classes that will be used to teach students to pass the PG&E Pipe Line Welder test and the curriculum for one new class that will help students to pass the written employment test.

After completing the Pipe Line Welder classes, the department plans on 1st, creating a Pipefitting class for the Industrial Maintenance program, 2nd updating it's SMAW series of classes (weld211abcd), and 3rd its GMAW series of classes (weld204).

b. Please indicate how many active courses are in the department inventory.

The Welding Department currently has 18 active classes,(listed below). Over the next semester, the department has plans to add 3 classes and take away one class, which will bring the total to 20 classes active next Fall 2013. The classes we are thinking of adding is; a Pipe Welding class and math/written test class for PG&E Pipe line jobs, along with a Pipe Fitting Class to be used by students in the Industrial Maintenance Program.

Weld 200	Special Projects
Weld 201	Welding for Other Majors
Weld 203abcd	GTAW (4 Levels)
Weld 204ab	GMAW (2 Levels)
Weld 205	Introduction to Welding
Weld211abcd	SMAW (4 Levels)
Weld215	Welding for ECT Technicians

Weld221abcd OAW (4 Levels)

1 How many of those have been updated in the last 6 years?

In the last six years, 9 of 18 classes have been updated. Weld 203abcd Weld 205 Weld 221abcd

2 If courses have not been updated within the last 6 years, what plans are in place to remedy this?

Currently the curriculum for two classes are being updated, (weld 211a and weld 211b) and three classes are being created, (weld 229, weld 230, weld 235). Once the three new classes and current two updates are completed, the two GMAW classes, Weld204a and Weld204b, will be updated, followed by, Weld211c, Weld211d, Weld215, Weld200, Weld203abcd, and Weld221abcd.

3 Has your department conducted a curriculum review of course outlines? If not, what are the plans to remedy this?

The department is currently in the process of reviewing its curriculum and changing most of it to match a new set of text books used for training welders and other trades workers to standards agreed upon by representatives in industry. Once this major transformation is completed, the department learning outcomes should be easier to assess and report on. Pearson has created these text books to help instructors address the need for SLO's, PLO's, in curriculum development and assessment.

4 What are the department's plans for curriculum improvement (i.e., courses to be developed, updated, enhanced, or deactivated)? Have prerequisites, co-requisites, and advisories been validated? Is the date of validation on the course outline?

The Welding Department plans on deactivating Weld 201, (welding for other majors) this next semester. This class is no longer needed since the Weld 205, (Intro to welding) was created about 3 years ago. The class has only been taught during the summer session for the last two years and used mainly by the Automotive students at Alameda College. The Welding Department is currently working on developing three new classes. Weld 235 is a Pipe Fitting class for the Industrial Maintenance program, and Weld229 and Weld230 is two classes we are adding for students wanting jobs as PG&E Pipeline Welders. The two PG&E classes will not only instruct students on passing thepipeline welding test but will also work with students to successfully pass the PG&E written test.

5 What steps has the department taken to incorporate student learning outcomes (SLOs) in the curriculum? Are outcomes set for each course? If not, which courses do not have outcomes?

All classes in the Welding Department have SLO's. Instructors have now incorporated SLO's in to the classes they teach and have assessed most of the SLO's in department's core classes. Even though much of the SLO information has been gathered, much of the information has not been analyzed, compiled and entered into Task Stream yet. One of the departments primary goals is to continue to enter this information into Task Stream. The Department is starting to transition to a new set of books that should help instructors to develop all of the Goals, Objectives, SLO's, Course Outlines, and Assessment Methods, used in each of the classes we teach.

6 If applicable, describe the efforts to develop outcomes at the program level. In which ways do these outcomes align with the institutional outcomes? (Note: <u>if your</u> <u>department has no certificate or degree offerings and does not offer a course as part</u> <u>of one of the College's associate degree programs, then skip questions 3.h. and 3.i.)</u>

The Program has been working on but has not fully developed it's Program Level Outcomes yet. It is a difficult one because of all the programs we serve and services we provide to the community. The Department not only has its own CA and AS Degrees, but also has several classes that serve other programs degrees. On top of teaching welding, department also serves the community as a testing center, where welders can take many of the weld tests needed for some employment.

7 Provide one program level outcome (PLOs), and the assessment tool that will be used to measure the program level outcome this fall 2012 and spring 2013.

PLO: Students will show that they can work safely with Oxy-fuel bottles and equipment used for Cutting, Heating, Welding, Soldering and Brazing of metals.

Assessment Tool: (With Instructor in lab and quizzes in class)

1st.Students will select the correct cutting tip size from a metal thickness chart.

 2^{nd} Student will hook up of regulators, hoses, and a cutting torch to a set of Oxygen and Acetylene bottles held in a portable bottle cart.

 3^{rd} Student will safely light a cutting torch and adjust the flame to Nuetral.

4th Student will make a three to six inch straight line cut.

 5^{th} Student will make a one to three inch circle cut through mild steel.

 6^{th} Student will turn off torch flame and break down the equipment for safe storage.

8 How are the SLOs and PLOs, if applicable, mapped to the college's Institutional Learning Outcomes? (See Attachment B for copy of the Laney College Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

It is clear by looking at the Colleges ILO's that all of the departments SLO's and PLO's can be mapped into one of the colleges ILO's. Mapping SLO's and PLO's to ILO's is one our Priorities, but no paperwork has been created yet to show this.

9 Recommendations and priorities.

1. Develop new curriculums, SLO's and Course Outlines.: Weld211a, Weld229 and Weld230, (for PG&E Pipeline Welders).

2. Develop new curriculum, SLO's and Couse Outline to: Weld235 (Pipefitting) (for the Industrial Maintenance program).

- 3. Enter existing but missing SLO and PLO information into Task Stream.
- 4. Assess and update SLO and PLO statements as needed.
- 5. Map SLO's to PLO's and ILO's

4. Instruction:

a. Describe effective and innovative strategies used by faculty to involve students in the learning process. How has new technology been used by the department to improve student learning?

One of the innovative strategies incorporated, more and more, over the last couple years, is to help students learn by letting them help teaching other students. Many times, a 2nd semester students believe they know and have remembered everything they learned during their 1st semester, until they try and explain it to a new student. By explaining something previously taught to them, returning students get a chance to see if they have forgotten anything, and the new student gets some "one on one" attention from an experienced student in the program while learning important and new information.

b. How does the department maintain the integrity and consistency of academic standards within the discipline?

The staff at the Laney Welding Department has had a long and strong involvement with our local chapter of the (AWS) American Welding Society. The society meets once a month from September to May and usually has a professional speaker at each meeting to educate and entertain the members with interesting welding topics. Local AWS meetings are one of the places were welding educators and professionals from all over Northern California get together to learn compare, and talk with each other.

Besides AWS involvement, the department helps to maintain program integrity by talking to and working with companies in our area that hire welders. Having relationships with local companies is important to the welding department. Not only do they help to ensure integrity, but they helps to validate what topics are taught and gives us direction on where to develop our department in the future. The welding department not only looks to local companies for program direction and integrity, many of these companies hire our students send employee to us for training and supply us with scrap metal for weld practicing.

c. Discuss the enrollment trends of your department. What is the student demand for specific courses? How do you know? Identify factors that are affecting enrollments.

Enrollment in welding classes is strong now, and has been strong for many years. (F'09=283, F'10=253, F'11=239) There is shortage of welders in America! The problem is not new and it's not expected to go away for a while. Each semester, instructors have to turn students away who want to ADD. Almost all trades use welding to, fix, build, or maintain, equipment, buildings, and structures, but there are not very many places to learn and practice welding. Infrastructures all over our state and county are getting old

and need or will need replacement soon. Many new students have heard of the shortage for welders, the demand for welders, and the good pay they can make with skills and certifications in welding. This demand and extra pay is usually what drives students to come down to the college to try welding out. It used to be working on the Bay Bridge that excited students. Currently, students are excited about welding pipes for companies like: PG&E, EBMUD, Shell, and Chevron.

As companies automate or get newer, more sophisticated, equipment, companies need a bigger work force that can take care of them. The Long Shoremen's Union along with many other unions and companies, are now looking at mechanics and maintenance workers as their future work force/membership. Once the Port of Oakland's cranes and other equipment used to load and unload ships become automated, workers with welding skills will still be needed to maintain and repair the equipment.

PG&E is expecting to be busy fixing and installing pipelines in California until 2025. Because of this, PG&E wants to double their work force of pipeline welders but can't find enough people can do the work. After looking inside and outside the state of California for welders, without much luck, PG&E has turned to the Laney Welding Department to help them create enough welders to fill all the pipeline jobs needed. The Welding Department is in the process of adding a pipe welding class to the program to help address the most recent needs and demands of our students, and companies in our area.

Once the PG&E set of classes start in 2013, the department is expecting enrollment to significantly go up. Besides the local students we normally get, PG&E plans of directing military veterans and others looking for welding jobs to our college. This addition of new students could be more than the department can handle at first.

d. Are courses scheduled in a manner that meets student needs and demand? Please describe the criteria and considerations used in the scheduling process.

The Welding Department has all of its core classes during 4 days of the week, (Monday to Thursday). During this 4 day week, most classes meet just twice for 3 hour each day, (Usually Mon-Wed or Tue-Thur). There are no classes in the morning, but the department does teach core classes in the early afternoon (2-5pm), and night (6-9pm). Besides the departments core classes, the department teaches classes for, High school Students, the ECT Department, The Machine shop, and The Industrial Maintenance Program. Most extra classes (Non-Core) are scheduled during the day, before and during the other classes we teach Mon through Thur. The ECT department is too busy to meet during the work week and is provided with a special class on Saturday twice a year for 9weeks. The department has plans to teach the Pipeline Welding class on Tuesday and Thursday nights from 6-9pm. If more time for instruction during the week is needed, to facilitate a shorter semester, Friday evening from 6-9pm is being explored. After adding this PG&E Pipeline Class to the program, Mon, Tue, Wed, and Thur afternoons and evenings will be so full of classes that only mornings, Fridays and Sundays will be available to add more.

e. Recommendations and priorities.

The welding department wants to switch to one set of textbooks to teach as many classes as possible. Using one set of books will help to ensure program integrity by minimizing duplication of topics covered from class to class while ensuring all important topics are covered by the time a student completes the program

5. Student Success:

a. Describe student retention and program completion (degrees, certificates, persistence rates) trends in the department. What initiatives can the department take to improve retention and completion rates?

Student Retention over the last three years has remained very constant, (2009=210, 2010=209, 2011=210). It is interesting these retention numbers are so constant given the numbers of students varied by 44, (2009=283, 2010=253, 2011=254) If you look at the amount of sections offered though, (2009=9, 2010=8, 2011=8) it does make a little bit more sense. The 44 drop in total students can be accounted for by a loss of one of our sections between 2009 and 2010. I am not sure, exactly why the retention numbers did not drop to match the class lost in 2010. I have seen this before in the past and believe that maybe instructors retain a certain amount of students no matter what their load is. If a section is dropped these students just take the other classes instead of quitting school. Teachers have a capacity to help out a certain number of students and I think this number might be fairly constant. Maybe if we change the way we teach we can reach and retain more students, but I believe there will always be a max or ceiling. I think the Welding Departments instructors are operating close to if not already at this limit. With out changing what we teach and the way we teach, I don't think these numbers will change much.

Persistence Rates for the last three years has shifted between, a high of 66% in F09-S10, to a low of 52% in F10-S11 and then back up to 57% in F11-S12. This is not as high as we would like it, but is fairly normal for the Welding Department. We are looking at how we can raise these numbers without preventing students from leaving school to take jobs. The low completion rates over the last three years, (2009-10(CA=2), 2010-11(AS=1, CA=3), 2011-12(CA=1)) make the department look bad. These numbers are misleading and don't show the real successes happening to students. Not many welding jobs require students to have an AA/AS degree or even a two year CA. A lot of students know they can get jobs without completing the program and leave ASAP. What most welding employers are looking for are welders that can work right away. Many of these jobs require Welders who have been "Weld Test Certified" and the college is a place where people from the community can come to get many of these types of certifications. Many students come back to the college after getting jobs and working to upgrade their skills and acquire more Weld Test Certifications. Getting students Weld Test Certified and jobs is where the department shines. The Port of Oakland is the biggest employer in Oakland and many of our students either come from there to learn welding or go there to work after getting certified. Last semester, I alone certified over 50 weld tests for students and of those, over half of them were for Port of Oakland jobs.

b. Identify common challenges to learning among your students? What services are needed for these students to improve their learning? Describe the department's

efforts to access these services. What are your department's instructional support needs?

A common challenge many welding students have, is their lack of Math and English skills. Specifically the types of math and English skills needed to take and pass written entrance exams given by high end companies like PG&E, and EBMUD. These are typically union jobs that pay welders the highest rates, have the most benefits, and the highest levels of job security. These companies typically test all applicants looking for employment to weed out the best. High end companies select applicants with the highest scores to interview and test further. Not scoring high on that first test can eliminate good welders before they can even interview. These companies pay well, and want smart welders that can figure things out on their own, and can work independently to complete jobs that require expertise in welding. At Laney, the department mainly works with students to perfect their welding skills, but not so much on taking these types of written tests. Without addressing this need for passing employers written tests , many of our students will not be ready when these types of job opportunities come around. They will be forced to settle for lesser jobs at lower wages.

The Welding Department is currently working, thanks to our new relationship with PG&E, on developing a class that is designed to help prepare students for the written tests given by many of the better paying companies. This class will be targeted for students who want to be Pipeline welders with PG&E, but will be available for all interested students, including ones from other departments.

c. Describe the department's effort to assess student learning at the course level. Describe the efforts to assess student learning at the program level. In which ways has the department used student learning assessment results for improvement?

The Department has left the assessment of SLO's at the course level to the individual instructors who teach the classes. Many of the department's classes, currently have similar outcomes, but at this time the method of assessment has not been standardized between instructors. In the future the department thinks that its instructors should standardize the methods of assessment so as to make it easier to map SLO's to the PLO's that support all the classes under them. Currently, most SLO's "method of assessment" are still being changed and figured out. By instructors trying different methods of assessment, and then sharing what went right and wrong with other instructors, maybe the department can come up with a "best method" ways to assess each outcome.

d. Recommendations and priorities.

The Department would like to standardize SLO and PLO methods of assessment. The Department feels that instructors assessing similar SLO's should probably be doing it in the same way or in a very similar way. By doing this standardization, the data collected from several instructors will mean more and be able to be used better.

6. Human and Physical Resources (including equipment and facilities)

a. Describe your current level of staff, including full-time and part-time faculty, classified staff, and other categories of employment.

Currently the Welding Department has: (2) Full-Time Instructors, (1) Full-Time Classified Employee, and (2) Part-Time instructors. One of the part-time instructors is currently used for the High school class only.

b. Describe your current use of facilities and equipment.

The Department currently uses the facilities Monday through Thursday from around 11:30 to 9:00 at night. The lab is also used on Saturdays to teach welding to ECT Technicians for 9 weeks two or three times a year. Typically, there are two times during the day that students can take core welding classes, (2-5pm and 6-9pm). Most classes meet twice a week on Mon-Wed or Tue-Thur. Usually two instructor and sometimes three, can use the lab at the same time. The department two classes for the Industrial Maintenance program in the afternoons every semester. During the Spring semester each year, a high school welding class is also taught in the afternoon. In the future, the department has plans to use the lab to teach a pipefitting class for the Industrial Maintenance program and a Sheet Metal class for the ECT department.

c. Are the human and physical resources, including equipment and location, adequate for all the courses offered by your department (or program)? What are your key staffing and facilities needs for the next three years? Why?

The welding facility needs more ventilation for welding in the back of the shop. The PG&E pipe class will use this part of the shop to "stick weld" large pipe sections lying 12 inches off the ground. This is the type of weld joint they will have to complete for employment. More space is required than a normal welding booth, so the welder can lay down and weld to underside of a pipe.

- d. If your department experienced a reduction in resources, describe the impact of that reduction on the overall educational quality of your unit and the College. The Welding Department has not gotten General Funds for a couple of years now. The department is only able to survive because of VTEA funds. Without VTEA funds these last couple years, the departments would not be able to operate.
- e. How does the department plan to sustain the quality of instruction and/or services offered through your department in the current environment of reduced resources? The department will most likely cut classes to save money, if any more funding is cut from the program. The department is currently growing without an increase in funding and I am not sure if we can sustain this type of growth. Currently, instructors are trying to cut costs and sustain a high quality of education, by spending more time lecturing and explaining things verbally. This means less time practicing, but the department feels the students are still learning the required skills.
- f. What does the department recommend that the college do to maintain quality educational programs and services?

The Welding Department recommends that the college assess all students, maybe online, when they first register for classes. Students who score low should be encouraged to take the needed math and English classes before entering into classes that require math and English skills. Instructors should know what scores students have taken the tests and what kind of score they achieved. With students entering the CTE programs better prepared to do the work, instructors can be more effective, and spend less time going over things students should already know. The prepared students won't feel like they are being held back and the under prepared students won't feel lost.

The welding department recommends that the counselors and CTE departments meet and talk about their programs at least once a year. It is important to keep counselors up to date on changes to Courses and programs.

g. Please provide any other recommendations and priorities. (Use the appropriate request forms within Attachment D.)

7. Community Outreach and Articulation

For Career and Technical Education Programs:

a. Describe the department's connection with industry. Is there an Advisory Board or Advisory Committee for the program? If so, how often does it meet? Is the program adequately preparing students for careers in the field? How are you assessing this?

All of the department's instructors are active members of the local American Welding Society (AWS) chapter. The AWS meets once a month from September to May. Instructors get to talk to other instructors and professionals from the welding industry. Some of the members of the local AWS chapter serve as Advisory Board members.

Besides a strong connection with the AWS, one of the department's instructors works outside the college and connects with companies and industry around the Bay Area on a regular basis. Another instructor is in the Pile Drivers Union and connects with many folks in industry also.

The department does have an advisory board which has a meeting twice a year. Most of the members are made up of Port of Oakland workers, and AWS members. Most members talk with each other on a monthly basis.

The department is adequately preparing students for most of the welding jobs in our area. We know this is true because our students are getting jobs and keeping them. Many are using there welding skills to even get high paying union jobs. Welding has many levels of skill and knowledge and currently we have been focusing on preparing students for entry level jobs with private companies.

b. Have students completing the program attained a foundation of technical and career skills? How do you know? What are the completion rates in your program?

Most welding students get a good foundation of technical and career skills before they finish the program. Many students get enough of these skills in one semester that they can find employment easily. Because of the shortage of, and demand for, welders in the work force most students leave to get jobs before completing the program. If a student can get such a good foundation of skills after a couple classes, completing the program will ensure this set of learned skills is solid. Over the past 3 years the department has awarded 6 CA and only 1 AS degree. These low numbers are typical and understood.

c. What are the employment placement rates? Include a description of job titles and salaries. What is the relationship between completion rates and employment rates? The Welding Department does not have the means to track employment placement for all of its students. Welding jobs are plentiful and welders are in short supply. Many of my students get jobs as Mechanics in the ILWU down at the Port of Oakland. These Mechanics make about \$45 and hour with benefits. Other students have gotten jobs at companies like Bay Ship and Yacht in Alameda and make between \$15 and \$25 an hour plus benefits. At the EDD website, the Hourly Mean for a Welder/Cutter is \$19.59

What are the employment projections (numbers of replacement and new positions) for these job titles over the next 10 years using the California Employment Development Department Labor Market Information?

Welding is used by many type of workers in many job titles.

At the EDD website, I found: SOC Code: 51-4121 (Welders, Cutters, Solderers, Brazers) Under this Code, the 2010-2020 Projected Demand is 24,100. This report also lists Annual Average Openings as 820.

d. What industry trends are most critical for the future viability of the program? What are the implications of these trends for curriculum development and improvement?

Welding is needed by industry and is not in jeopardy of going away anytime soon. The industry trend that probably threatens welding jobs most is he outsourcing job to China. Many parts of the new Bay Bridge were welded in China and then shipped to the Bay Area. The implications of this threat mean that American welders will have fewer jobs to choose from in the future. As many welding jobs go over-seas, American welders will need to upgrade their skills and educate themselves to a higher level. The Laney welding department is partnering with PG&E to help train students to be Pipeline Welders. This type of welding job requires a higher level of education and skill. This type of job pays more than most and will not be outsourced to China anytime soon. Just think of the thousands of miles of old water, sewer and Natural Gas pipes that need repair and/or replacement in the Bay Area. Curriculum changes are already being made to begin to address the need for higher skilled welders. Besides developing a new Pipe Welding class for PG&E, the department is also developing a Math class help students pass the series of written tests used by higher end companies to screen applicants for jobs. Upgrades to the curriculum will probably continue until the shortage of skilled welders ends or China starts sending jobs back to America.

For transfer programs:

- e. Describe the department's efforts in meeting with and collaborating with local 4-year institutions. How is the program preparing students for upper division course work? N/A
- f. Has there been a Transfer Model Curriculum identified for your program? Has it been implemented? If not, what are the plans to do so? N/A

For all instructional programs:

g. Describe the department's efforts to ensure that the curriculum responds to the needs of the constituencies that it serves.

The welding department has been asked to develop 4 classes, by 2 different departments over the last couple years. The department has created all of them but 1 as of now. The department was asked to help PG&E train Pipeline welders and we developed 2 new classes and modified one existing class to make it happen.

h. Please indicate how many of the full and part time faculty have been evaluated in the last three years. For faculty that have not been evaluated in the last three years, what are your plans to become current.

The Department has two full-time and two part time faculty. One of the part time instructors has been evaluated in the last three years. The Department plans on evaluating the remaining faculty in February 2013.

i. Recommendations and priorities.