Follow-Up Visit Evaluation Report

Los Angeles Southwest College
1600 West Imperial Highway
Los Angeles, CA 90047

A Confidential Report Prepared
for the
Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited
Los Angeles Southwest College

on

April 14, 2014

Follow-Up Visit Team

Dr. Pamela Luster
President
San Diego Mesa College
Team Chair

Dr. Lori Bennett
Executive Vice President
Moorpark College
Team Member

Follow-Up Visit Report

DATE: April 28, 2014

TO: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

FROM: Dr. Pamela Luster, Team Chair

SUBJECT: Report of Follow-Up Visit Team to Los Angeles Southwest College-

            April 14, 2014

Introduction

A comprehensive visit was conducted to Los Angeles Southwest College on March 12-15, 2012. At its meeting of June 26-28, 2012 the Commission acted to impose Probation immediately and to require that Los Angeles Southwest College submit a Follow-Up Report by March 15, 2013 followed by a visit of Commission representatives.

Last year, the visiting team, Dr. Pamela Luster, Dr. Lori Bennett, and Mr. Mark Clair conducted a follow-up site visit to Los Angeles Southwest College on Tuesday, April 16, 2013. All members of the team were on the March 2012 visiting team. The team found that the college and district had made significant progress on the previous recommendations; however, they had not met all of the standards at the time of the visit. The Commission acted to remove the college from Probation, placed the college on Warning, and to require that the college submit a Follow-Up Report by March 2014 followed by a visit of Commission representatives.

This year, the visiting team of Dr. Pamela Luster and Dr. Lori Bennett conducted a follow-up site visit to Los Angeles Southwest College on Monday, April 14, 2014. The purpose of the team visit was to verify that the 2014 Follow-Up Report prepared by the College was accurate through examination of evidence, to determine if sustained, continuous, and positive improvements had been made at the institution, and that the institution had resolved the recommendations made by the comprehensive evaluation team and now meets the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies.

The focus of Los Angeles Southwest College's follow-up visit was on four (4) college recommendations. The team divided its time at the college between reviewing evidence and interviewing individuals/groups at the college. The team found College representatives prepared for the visit with a well-organized evidence room and appropriate interview schedules allowing the team to conduct its assessment in a timely, organized manner. Over the course of the day, the team met the President of the College, The College Council, and Strategic Planning Council and with a number of LASC faculty, staff, administrators, and students directly involved in meeting the recommendations made by the commission.

The Follow-Up Report and visit were expected to document resolution of the following four (4) College recommendations.

College Recommendation 3

In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the College review the availability of appropriate, comprehensive and reliable services to all students. In particular, the team urges the College to review the parity of services provided to students in distance education as compared to students on campus. (IIIB.3.a)

College Recommendation 4

In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the library regularly update its print and online collections in consultation with discipline faculty. (IIC.1.a). The team further recommends that, to meet the stated Institutional Student Learning Outcome in Information Competency, the College implement a cycle of instruction, assessment, and program improvement through the appropriate learning resource and instructional areas of the College (IIC.1.b). Finally, the team recommends that a sustainable funding source be identified for the acquisition and maintenance of learning resource materials. (IIC.1, IIC.2, IIID.1.a)

College Recommendation 5

In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends the College reviews all aspects of professional development, including key elements of peer review, self- reflection, and continuous review of appropriate pedagogy for the student population. In particular, the completion of faculty evaluations systematically and at stated intervals; engagement in dialogue addressing staff and faculty professional development on various teaching pedagogies and strategies to meet the diverse learning styles of its diverse student population. (*IIIA.1.a*)

College Recommendation 6
In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends the College fully utilize the established consultative committee structure by documenting actions and recommendations in agendas, minutes, and other official tools to ensure that dialogues and decisions affecting the College are communicated widely and clearly across the campus constituencies. (*IVA.3*)

College Response to Recommendations

College Recommendation 3
In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the College review the availability of appropriate, comprehensive and reliable services to all students. In

particular, the team urges the College to review the parity of services provided to students in distance education as compared to students on campus. (IIIB.3.a)

Findings and evidence:

The College has continued to use qualitative and quantitative measures to research and assess student need, use, and satisfaction of its services, with a specific emphasis on their online services. It has used this data to design, implement, and improve a variety of services offered in Counseling, Online matriculation Processes, Academic Services, Business Services, Services to Student Athletes, and Career Services. The College has institutionalized the student services survey process by automating the surveys where possible, including survey assessment as part of their on-going department work, and including data analysis in their annual program review process.

The College heavily promotes their online and on-ground services through a variety of promotion and communication methods, including faculty announcements, emails, flyers, campus computer screens, an automatic services link in all Etudes online course shells, and classroom visits by Student Success Center staff.

All of the online services are easy for students to locate on the website, with an "LASC Online" navigational link button on the home page and specific online services grouped together on an "About Online at LASC" page that only takes one click to reach. With an additional click, students can reach any of the specific online services, such as Ask-A-Counselor, Registration or TutorTrac.

Counseling

In spring 2013, the College began providing online counseling and advising available to both online and face-to-face students. Students can make counseling appointments online (E-SARS), send emails to an online counselor through Ask-A-Counselor, or contact their own counselor through e-Advising. These services allow students to make appointments, ask questions about courses, pre-requisites, and procedures. Students are advised to make an appointment for more detailed counseling information. Counselors are able to send forms and respond to students quickly, without having to require an in-person visit.

The College has conducted a variety of student surveys to assess these services. The College has developed a regular, on-going evaluation schedule to assess student satisfaction for their Ask-A-Counselor program. Survey results were reviewed in March 2013, July 2013, and again in spring 2014. More than 300 students participated in the last two surveys. Based on the assessment, the College noted several common themes for improvement and made several to changes to improve the service, such as adding the ability to create online educational plans (in process), extending counseling evening hours, implementing E-SARS to allow students to schedule appointments online, and offering a new online career assessment tool.

The College implemented E-SARS in September 2013 and conducted a student satisfaction survey in November 2013, with over 300 students responding. Students gave positive feedback related to the ease and convenience of scheduling an appointment with a specific counselor without having to come to campus.

During December 2013 and January 2014, the College also surveyed students regarding the E-Advising system, with over 300 students responding to each survey. Based on student feedback, the college is working to increase marketing of online counseling services. Results of the Ask-a-Counselor survey uncovered an issue related to counselor messages going to student spam message boxes, so the College is discussing a variety of options to address the spam issue, including directing more students to E-Advising.

Matriculation

The College has reviewed and updated its matriculation process to provide consistent services for both on-ground and online students. The LASC website homepage includes several clear pathways, with minimal number of clicks, for students to access student services and class information online. The College offers the following matriculation procedures both on-ground and online: apply to the college, register for classes, apply for financial aid, seek counseling, drop classes, review grades and unofficial transcripts, request official transcripts, contact library staff and use online library resources, pay fees online, and buy bookstore merchandise. Service areas report reduced lines since implementing online services. Satisfaction surveys show students appreciate the convenience of not having to come to campus for these activities.

Academic Support

The College provides online tutoring through Smarthinking. The College conducted student surveys during spring 2013 and fall 2013 to assess the effectiveness of the online tutoring program. Since this is a relatively new program (two years), survey results show positive feedback on the service, but low usage and awareness. Based on analysis of this survey data and monthly student usage data reports, the College focused more effort on promoting awareness of this service via faculty email, student email, flyers, class syllabi, and classroom visits by Student Success Center staff. The College also added Smarthinking notices to the computer screens on all computers in the labs and a link to student services in all Etudes online course shells. During fall 2013, student usage increased by 362 students versus prior year.

The College offers Student Lingo to provide interactive online workshops, with several workshops provided in Spanish. These workshops are also offered in the Student Success Center. The College also conducted ongoing research for this program to assess its effectiveness. Based on the survey results, the college developed new Student Success workshops for spring 2014.

The College is also developing an online orientation and online educational plans.

Student Athletes

The College continues to provide supplemental academic support to its student athletes through tutoring, mentoring and a variety of support services. The College designated an Athletic Counselor beginning in fall 2012 and this support is ongoing. The College also provides student athletes a variety of workshops to teach academic and life skills.

Eureka Online Career Services

In January 2014, the Career Center created an online program to allow all students to access and complete an online career assessment. Currently, land-based students are able to complete the career assessment in the Career Center. Online students will be able to access *EUREKA.org* which includes the following career information areas: Dashboard, Self-Assessments, Education, and My Planner. The College added an optional questionnaire as part of student log out of EUREKA to assist with the assessment of this service. The department also receives monthly usage reports.

Consistent Student Service Hours

In response to student satisfaction survey results, the College extended service hours for several departments, including Counseling (open until 7:00pm M-TH), Library (open until 7:00pm M-TH), Math Lab (open until 6:30pm with online tutoring available 24/7), and the Student Success Center (open until 7:00pm Mondays and 6:00pm T-TH). Departments have reported fewer lines and more time for individual customer service since extending the hours.

Conclusion

The team found evidence to support the availability of appropriate, comprehensive and reliable services to all students. In particular, the team finds that the College has made a significant effort to develop, implement, assess, and improve a variety of online services to ensure parity between online and on-ground student services. The College has tied data analysis to program planning to ensure sustainability of their assessment process.

The college meets the standard.

College Recommendation 4

In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends that the library regularly update its print and online collections in consultation with discipline faculty. (IIC.1.a). The team further recommends that, to meet the stated Institutional Student Learning Outcome in Information Competency, the College implement a cycle of instruction, assessment, and program improvement through the appropriate learning resource and instructional areas of the College (IIC.1.b). Finally, the team recommends that a

sustainable funding source be identified for the acquisition and maintenance of learning resource materials. (IIC.1, IIC.2, IIID.1.a)

Findings and evidence:

The College has implemented an annual process to update and assess their Library collection. It has also allocated significant resources for print and electronic books and other library materials. The new Library/Learning Assistance Center is almost complete and is set to open in fall 2014.

The College has implemented a full cycle of instruction, assessment, and program improvement related to the Institutional Student Learning Outcome in Information Competency. In addition to completing their own course and program SLOs, the librarians have collaborated with the English Department to teach and assess the Information Competency ISLO.

Library Collection

During 2011-2012, the Library faculty and staff began updating and de-selecting its collection of outdated materials as part of the campus facilities improvement process. During 2012- 2013, the Library completed a 2-year materials acquisitions plan and revised the collection development policy to help ensure a sustainable library collection model. The College recently completed an updated strategic plan; in 2014-2015 the Librarians will develop an updated 2-year materials acquisitions plan that ties to the new strategic plan.

As part of their 5-year budget plan, the College has committed $50,000 per year to update the print and online library collection. During fall 2013, the Library Advisory Committee reviewed the materials selection process and recommended revisions to improve efficiency and communication flow. During 2014-2015, as part of the annual review process, the Library Advisory Committee will again review the collection selection process for effectiveness.

Based on the 2013-2014 Acquisition Plan for Library Remodel, the College allocated $250,000 as one-time bond money to purchase electronic and print books, multimedia, and other library materials. The College used a collaborative approach, which included input from faculty in many disciplines, to determine which books and materials to purchase. The order has been developed and is currently working its way through the district approval process. The acquired resources will arrive during the summer and fall. Additional staff hours will be allocated to accept, catalog, and shelve the books in the new library.

The College has also allocated additional funds to provide part-time librarians to supplement full time librarian schedules in order to eliminate library closures due to lack of staffing, and to expand library hours to meet student needs.

Information Competency

The College implemented a cycle of instruction, assessment, and program improvement relative to the Library Science courses and the information competency instruction orientations to meet their ISLO for Information Competency. The College has engaged in a variety of Information Competency activities, including offering Library Science Courses, Librarian Liaison Model, collaborations with the English Department and First Year Experience programs, library research skills orientations, and incorporating information competency skills into the SLOs for English courses.

The College has developed several methods of assessment to maintain a regular cycle of assessment. They have also begun to integrate information competency into the overall college curriculum rather than relying solely on one department to meet an ISLO. During fall 2013, English faculty assessed information competency SLOs in English 101 and 103. Based on the assessment, librarians will continue to emphasize citing and documenting sources. At the end of spring 2014, the English faculty and Librarians will participate in a debriefing to analyze the SLO assessment data from the English and Library Science courses. As part of program improvement, they plan to focus on aligning assignments and grading in upcoming semesters.

The information competency assessment test was also administered to 116 students in English 21 and English 28. As a result of this assessment, librarians will focus more effort on helping students to develop effective search strategies and will collaborate with discipline faculty to improve the issues related to plagiarism.

In the Library Science courses, students completed pre-tests and post-tests to assess course-level SLOs that aligned with PLOs and ISLOs. Based on this data, Librarians will continue to teach core information competencies, including how to cite and document sources. The Librarians have taught and assessed course level SLOs for three semesters (spring 2013, fall 2014, and spring 2014). Based on a review of the first two semesters of data, the Librarians found an overlap in Library 101 and 102, and adjusted the course content. They also developed a rubric to assess the Information Competency SLO as part of the final research paper in English 101. In addition, the Library Science course final exam will also assess an SLO related to the developing an annotated bibliography. The full and part-time faculty have planned an end of semester de-briefing to review SLO assessment data for spring 2014.

The Librarians also gave pre-test/post-test assessments during the information competency instruction orientations. These assessments were developed to measure outcomes of classroom orientation visits. Once the new library is open, the Librarians plan to revise the course level SLOs to measure potential increases in learning due to the new technology and facility. As part of the ongoing assessment effort, the faculty agreed on a standard rubric and survey questions and all orientations focus on these key SLOs. The Librarians invite faculty input regarding topics to cover prior to each classroom orientation. Faculty can also submit an instruction request form that itemizes the list of skill sets they want the Librarians to cover during their visit.

At the end of spring 2014, the Library Advisory Committee will evaluate the components of the Information Competency Program.

Conclusion

The team found evidence that the College has implemented an annual process to update their Library collection, and the College has allocated significant resources to support this effort over the next five years. The Library has also implemented a cycle of instruction, assessment, and program improvement related to the College ISLO in information competency. The Librarians have assessed SLOs and/or PLOs in support of the ISLO in the Library Science courses, specific English courses, and during Library Information Competency Instruction Orientations. Each area has documented specific actions and program improvements based on these assessment results.

The College meets the standard.

Recommendation 5: Professional Development & Faculty Evaluations

In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends the College reviews all aspects of professional development, including key elements of peer review, self-reflection, and continuous review of appropriate pedagogy for the student population. In particular, the completion of faculty evaluations systematically and at stated intervals; engagement in dialogue addressing staff and faculty professional development on various teaching pedagogies and strategies to meet the diverse learning styles of its diverse student population. (IIIA.1.b)

Findings and Evidence

The team found that the College has devoted significant efforts and time reviewing all aspects of professional development with particular focus on ensuring that faculty evaluations are completed. Additionally, evidence provided shows a deep and systemic shift in faculty participation that significantly enhanced professional development offerings of the college.

Faculty Evaluations

The team found evidence of multi-step clearly defined process for ensuring that all full-time and part-time faculty evaluations are completed systematically and on time.

The Office of Academic Affairs maintains and monitors a database that documents the completion of faculty evaluations. At the beginning of each major term, the Office of Academic Affairs notifies each department chair and the respective department dean of the evaluations that need to be completed during the term in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the LACCD and AFT Faculty Guild. The chairs review the scheduled basic, comprehensive and probationary evaluations.

Evidence provided by the college documented that by the conclusion of the spring 2013 semester, and the fall 2014 semester, all adjunct evaluations were 100% complete and have been kept current. In addition, all evaluations of contract and probationary faculty were up to date or underway per the schedule.

Peer Review and Self-Reflection

The team found evidence of significant focus on the peer review and self-reflection process, with evaluations that are designed to provide all employees with an assessment of their work performance. The College incorporates peer review and self-reflection of teaching effectiveness into the faculty evaluation process. Each faculty member has a Peer Review Committee that is tasked with giving feedback to instructors based on a self-reflection submitted by the faculty member, classroom observations such as knowledge of subject matter, course syllabi, sample class assignments, etc., and student evaluations. Also evident is the college's focus on faculty development in the area of pedagogy, specifically for under-represented students.

Professional Development

The team found multiple forms of evidence to showcase the college's efforts to promote staff and faculty professional development on various teaching pedagogies and strategies to meet the range of learning styles of its diverse student population. New and continuing efforts to promote teaching and learning were spearheaded by the Staff Development Committee (SDC) and various college departments and programs. The college did offer a number of these opportunities previously. However the team found little evidence during its last visit of faculty taking advantage of the training and workshops. This visit revealed rosters of multiple events with significant participation and outcomes assessments completed.

Staff Development Committee

The team reviewed the minutes of the Staff Development Committee (SDC) and found evidence of review and assessment of its programs and activities to be more responsive and proactive in meeting the needs of LASC students. The college has used Achieving the Dream (ATD) as of spring 2013, to focus on campus culture. The SDC partnered with the ATD Core Team to develop and implement activities related to the culture of teaching and learning, resulting in a comprehensive set of activities which were completed to engage the campus community, in particular the teaching faculty, in student success and improving teaching practice and student outcomes.

Evidence of multiple opportunities for professional development are available, an overview of the major events are as follows:
- Two one-day **Great Teachers Seminars** during the spring 2014 semester. The seminars are open to both full- and part-time faculty.

- The college organized and conducted a **Community Tour** with group of faculty, staff, and administrator of the LASC service area. The goals of the tour were to give the participants a better sense of the community served by the College and develop a deeper understanding of its student population and the barriers they bring to the classroom. The group visited a number of locations, including community centers and schools, and spent time talking with personnel at those locations. In addition, a debriefing session was held over lunch at a local restaurant.
- A **Monthly Speaker Series** was held from February to April 2013. The goal of the series was to make faculty aware of the importance of their roles, provide new teaching and learning strategies to employ in the classroom, and explore how to address the diversity of learning styles found in the student body.
- **Campus Reader:** A campus reader was used to broach the topic of equity and student success and start a dialogue about what the College needed to do to have a larger impact on student success. The book *Them* was used as this vehicle. Through the characters and storyline of the book, a campus dialogue began about race, class, ethnicity, and privilege and the roles that college and professionals play in the lives of our students. This activity took place from March to April 2013.
- The college sponsored participation at the **Men of Color Institute:** On November 3-5, 2013, four faculty and administrators traveled to San Antonio, Texas to attend the Kresge Foundation's Men of Color in Community Colleges Institute. The purpose of the annual institute is to deepen colleges' work in improving outcomes for Latino and African American males. To expand the efforts, the colleges Spring Flex day participants were given the web-based resources at the Great Teachers Seminar and participated in the development of the college's action plan to promote academic success for our men of color .
- The LASC SDC **assessed the efforts of the committee** administered a survey of faculty and staff during Spring Flex day on January 31, 2013. A number of staff development activities were scheduled based in part on survey results. Another survey was conducted at the beginning of the spring 2014 semester to help guide professional development activities for the next academic year. Three specific topics have been identified for the spring semester. A fourth topic will be added during the semester.
- The College has also purchased a subscription to the **20-minute mentor series** presented by Magna Publications. These are short presentations on a variety of topic groups related to pedagogy and other topics that help Faculty and staff improve instruction and student success.
- The College has also provided online training for faculty and staff who want to receive their Microsoft Office Suites certification.
- The College has also revised its three year professional development plan which is integrated into the College's new Strategic Plan. (2014-2020)

Conclusion:

The College has performed a comprehensive review of all aspects of professional development, including peer review, self-reflection, and continuous review of appropriate pedagogy for the student population. The faculty evaluations process is being implemented systematically. The College demonstrated multiple efforts for engagement in dialogue addressing staff and faculty professional development on various teaching pedagogies and strategies to meet the diverse learning styles of its diverse student population.

The college meets the standard.

Recommendation 6: Documentation of Actions & Recommendations

In order to meet the Standard, the team recommends the College fully utilize the established consultative committee structure by documenting actions and recommendations in agendas, minutes, and other official tools to ensure that dialogues and decisions affecting the College are communicated widely and clearly across campus constituencies. (IVA.3)

Findings and Evidence

The team found a plethora of evidence related to the colleges improved efforts to utilize the established consultative committee structure. All committees within this structure have a common format for reporting and documenting actions in agendas, minutes and summary notes. This format allows for the recording of fundamental discussion points, dialogue and decisions in a uniform manner across all committees. The note taker captures the meeting dialogue and works with the co-chairs to ensure that information is consistent and accurate. Additionally, the college held training for all shared governance committee meeting note takers who attended a professional development workshop to improve their note taking. Draft meeting minutes are posted on each committee's website by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness within one week of the meeting. At the committee's next meeting, these actions are checked for accuracy, approved by committee members, and reported in meeting minutes. Within one week after this approval, the final meeting minutes are posted on the committee's website by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness in place of the previously posted draft minutes. This process ensures that all campus constituencies have regular, up-to-date access to committee dialogues and decisions.

To publicize the decisions made in committee meetings, the Public Information Officer sends out regular notices to all college employees that summarize action items from committee meetings. These notices include links to updated minutes on committee websites, as well as meeting highlights from the meeting minutes. Additionally, the College President sends out regular updates to the campus highlighting governance actions and decisions.

The college has also now implemented a liaison model. Under this model, each member of the Strategic Planning Committee regularly attends the meetings of at least one committee that reports to the Strategic Planning Committee. During each Strategic Planning Committee meeting, each "liaison" provides the committee with an update on the major items that occurred in the meeting(s) they attended. In addition, liaisons report on meeting attendance so that, if

necessary, the Strategic Planning Committee can act to improve attendance at specific committees. This set of actions assures that the Strategic Planning Committee members have a comprehensive view of all college committee actions, recommendations, and attendance that they can communicate directly to all campus constituencies.

To evaluate the effectiveness of college committees, each committee is required to submit a written operating agreement and self-evaluation of their work to the Strategic Planning Committee, College Council, and College President at the end of the academic year. This self-evaluation includes the committee's action items, completed annual objectives, information on meeting dates and attendance, and recommendations for the following year. These actions have resulted in widespread dialogue about issues discussed in college committee

College-Wide Participation in Governance Process

The Follow-Up Visiting Team noted that "major college committee meetings are cancelled with limited communication, and that quorums cannot always be met due to poor attendance at meetings." A number of actions have been taken to address this issue, most notably the identification of overlapping responsibilities among college committees. The Strategic Planning Committee performed an assessment to determine where these overlaps existed in its December 6, 2012 meeting. This assessment was framed by the 2012-2013 LASC Functional Map document, and resulted in approved SPC recommendations to restructure, combine, and eliminate specific campus committees. These recommendations were approved by the Academic Senate and the College Council in the spring of 2013. Assessments of the effectiveness revised committee structure will be completed at the end of the spring 2014 semester.

Faculty and staff leadership have also taken action to increase the number of faculty and staff who participate in the consultative committee structure. A formal agreement was created between the AFT 1521A Classified Staff Guild President and the College President to ensure that classified staff are provided with opportunities to participate in the development of policies, procedures and recommendations that have significant effect on staff by releasing them to serve on decision making committees.

In addition, during the fall 2013 Faculty Professional Development Day (i .e . Flex Day), the Academic Senate leadership strongly solicited faculty participation on campus committees. As a result, many faculty signed up to regularly attend at least one campus committee meeting. In addition, Academic Senate leadership provided training to all college committee co-chairs early in the fall 2013 semester. This training fully described the responsibilities that co-chairs have in ensuring that committees regularly meet their quorums and the requirements to regularly communicate all committee dialogues and decisions to all campus constituencies

The College developed a College Committee Meeting Master Calendar in an effort to ensure that the entire campus community is aware of committee meeting days/times . This calendar is posted on the LASC website.

Conclusion:

The College has fully implemented an established consultative committee structure, and as so has increased participation in governance matters significantly across the college. The college website hosts all documenting actions and recommendations in agendas, minutes, and other official tools. Evidence shows that dialogues and decisions affecting the College are communicated widely and clearly across campus constituencies.

The College meets the standard.