

Los Medanos College
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Progress Report

January 2006

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STATEMENT ON REPORT PREPARATION

At its meeting on June 28, 2005 the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC/WASC) accepted Los Medanos College's Focused Midterm Report, with the requirement that the College complete a Progress Report to be submitted by March 15, 2006. The Commission requested that the Midterm Report address the following:

Recommendation #2: Implement plans to enhance effectiveness of Student Services through improved coordination among the units and expanded outreach efforts.

The Senior Dean, Student Services, was assigned primary responsibility for preparing the progress report. The Senior Dean compiled the report in collaboration with the:

- Vice President of Instruction and Student Services
- Student Services managers (Director of Admissions and Records; Director of Special Programs; Director of EOPS; Director of Enrollment Management; and the Outreach Coordinator)
- Instructional administrators (Senior Dean of Instruction; Dean of Brentwood Center and Special Programs)
- Classified staff representatives from the Student Services Advisory Council
- LMC Academic Senate and Classified Senate
- LMC Shared Governance Council

I have reviewed and approve the report which accurately reflects the progress the college has made toward meeting the recommendation from the 2002 accreditation visit.



Peter García
College President

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This progress report has been prepared in response to the 2002 accreditation visit findings and subsequent Focused Midterm Report. The report demonstrates that the college has met the requirements of Standard Five: Student Support and Development, as well as Recommendation #2 from the visiting team.

In summary, in order to enhance the effectiveness of student services and expand outreach efforts, the college has:

- Hired its first Senior Dean, Student Services (2002)
- Established a student services leadership team (2002)
- Expanded outreach efforts throughout the service area (2002)
- Set up a Student Services Advisory Council (2003)
- Coordinated office hours among services (2003)
- Begun work on student learning outcomes that crosses traditional organizational boundaries (2004 and on-going)
- Created new outreach materials, including materials specifically focused on support programs such as EOPS and financial aid (2004)
- Organized a new Counseling Department which integrates counseling functions in general counseling, DSPS, CalWORKs, EOPS, and Puente (2005)
- Developed partnerships in support of key student activities (on-going)
- Organized an annual Student Success Celebration (2005)

By focusing on continuously improving services, the college has met the accreditation standard and aggressively responded to the recommendation from the visiting team. The following report describes LMC's responses in more detail, providing an overview of where the college has been, where it is today, and where it is headed.

RESPONSE TO THE REQUEST OF THE COMMISSION IN THE ACTION LETTER
(DATED 6/28/05)

Improved Coordination in Student Services

Background

In recognition of our need to review the organizational structure, including a strategy for student services, Los Medanos College (LMC) hired KH Consulting Group (KH) in 1996 to conduct a thorough organizational review of its management structure. In its final report, KH observed:

“The college does not appear to have established student services as an institutional priority to meet student needs ... Student Services requires an integrated organizational structure that is understood and supported throughout the college.” (Page 18)

In addition, KH noted that while some functions in student services reported to an Area Dean, the Director of Admissions and Records reported directly to the College President. The management structure offered the advantages of a “flat” organizational hierarchy, yet led to service “silos” that did not overlap and dispersed responsibility for student services across four Area Deans who also had responsibility for instructional programs. The result was that while a wide array of services were offered to students, they were not well integrated. The KH study concluded that “unlike other community college environments, the college lacks a formal structure that nurtures an intense commitment to and championing of *community based* student needs.” (Page 18; emphasis in original)

In response to the KH study, the College President at the time reorganized the management team and created two “lead” student services positions: Director of Enrollment Management and Director of Instructional Support, reporting to a newly-created position of Vice President of Academic and Student Services. As a result, student services at LMC achieved a somewhat higher profile, but there were still issues of coordination among the various services and with instructional programs. For example, Admissions and Records and Financial Aid reporting relationships were shifted to Business Services but were not directly connected to other student services. A second reorganization occurred in 2002 that created the Senior Dean of Student Services position. The Institutional Self-Study for the Reaffirmation of Accreditation (Spring 2002) acknowledged this re-organization and described an expected outcome of the new structure:

“From an organizational standpoint, the student services unit is in a state of flux. One of the anticipated outcomes of hiring a Dean of Student Services is the expectation for a more integrated approach and a move away from the individual department focus...[T]he new position will

bring more concentrated attention to the development of and advocacy for student services as a unified program.” (Page 99)

The Senior Dean of Student Services was hired in August 2002, affirming the College’s commitment to overcoming a history of fragmentation and developing an integrated model of student services. Prior to fall 2005, the physical layout of Office of the President was changed to co-locate the Vice President, Senior Dean of Instruction, and Senior Dean of Student Services with the President. This new arrangement has offered increasing opportunities for collaboration among executive staff, which includes shared responsibilities for key support activities including Honors, Puente, tutoring, and developmental education.

Progress

The Senior Dean, Student Services arrived at LMC during a time of significant organizational change: the existing Director of Learning Support accepted a promotional transfer to Diablo Valley College, the Vice President became the Interim President, and the Executive Dean became the Interim Vice President. The Interim President and Interim Vice President, who were later selected to fill the permanent positions, have consistently supported efforts to streamline and integrate student services at the college. Due to budget reductions, the Director of Learning Support position remains vacant; position responsibilities have been assigned to the Director of Enrollment Management and the Senior Dean of Student Services.

Current work in student services at LMC should be considered with the understanding that “student services” as a comprehensive, integrated unit is also a young organization that is still creating its role and identity. The philosophy of the new organization moves LMC away from being transaction-based to a focus on student development and outcomes. Prior to 2002, the quality of student services was determined by the ability of the units to efficiently handle student transactions. The program reviews at the time reflected this approach -- the questions posed dealt with each unit’s ability to deliver a service and students’ satisfaction with the services.

Beginning in fall 2002, the student services managers worked together to consider the college’s shared approach to services and committed to a new model that focuses on student development and outcomes. The new philosophy was shared with the College community in a position paper published in January 2003. The paper outlined the new direction for student services, including the philosophy and mission of the organization, as well as elements of effective services at LMC. This paper served to illustrate the emerging identity of integrated student services at the college. (See Attachment A)

Since that time, the Student Services Advisory Committee (SSAC) -- which includes the student services managers, faculty, student representatives, and classified staff representatives -- has agreed to reconsider the philosophy/values statement for student services. The current statement does not fully encompass LMC’s beliefs, commitment to student development, and passion for promoting student success. During

summer 2005, the SSAC began the initial work of re-creating the philosophy/values statement. Since the Committee meets once a month, work on this initiative is moving slowly; however, it offers opportunities for all members of student services to participate and provide input.

Student services' initiatives have resulted in changes that continue to improve access to services and the college's ability to meet students' needs. For example, while it may seem like a small step, office hours for student services units are now coordinated across campus. The college also coordinates enrollment activities as a system of services rather than as discrete services. For example, the student services managers and the Director of Marketing meet to plan all aspects of a registration cycle, including orientation schedules, registration dates, assessment schedules, and publication distribution. As a result, LMC has linked services in new ways, thus improving student access to programs and support services. In addition, the relatively new Information Center is the basis for a future "one-stop" service center designed to welcome students to LMC, assist them with their enrollment, and provide on-going support services. Finally, in fall 2002, the student services managers worked together to write a proposal for an "internet incubator" designed to provide kiosks and staff support for students who were learning to use on-line services. As a result, a strong proposal was developed and fully funded to successfully link staff, resources, and services across several units.

On a broader scale, working on student learning outcomes has brought together staff and faculty from all areas of student services. During three half-day retreats, the senior dean introduced the concept of student learning outcomes to all programs and faculty and staff developed an initial learning outcome for a pilot study that crosses all areas of student services. LMC's work in this area looks at student services as a *whole* rather than as discreet units. Student services personnel strongly believe that holistic learning outcomes for student services brings employees together in support of student development and will create opportunities for further collaboration at all levels of the organization.

Other evidence of increased integration of student services includes the recent merger of the Counseling Department and Categorical Programs Department. The *new* Counseling Department, established in spring 2005, reflects a commitment to providing students with comprehensive academic counseling and support services. While individual programs, such as DSPS and EOPS, maintain their identity, the counselors are working together to ensure a shared approach to academic counseling. Counselors are identified as professional counseling faculty first, each with specializations that link to services. For example, the Transfer Center Director is also a counselor who is a liaison for all counselors and students regarding transfer issues; other areas of specialization include DSPS, EOPS, Puente, Honors, CalWORKs, and crisis intervention. Members of the new department recently developed guidelines that reflect their commitment to providing a comprehensive counseling program that supports students from their initial enrollment through the completion of their goals. The college community has supported these efforts by authorizing new positions in the counseling department: a new full-time counselor (growth position), a full-time counselor specializing in the PUENTE program, and a full-

time EOPS counselor. These positions will allow the college to continue expanding retention efforts, while providing additional opportunities for counseling and teaching faculty collaboration. An organizational chart illustrating the new structure is included as Attachment B.

During fall 2004, under the leadership of the EOPS Director and a student-led planning committee, the college hosted its first Hip Hop Summit. The summit reflected the shared intention of providing culturally and socially relevant activities for students while broadening understanding of the community of Hip Hop. Speakers from major universities, such as UCLA and San Francisco State, offered a history of Hip Hop while providing the theoretical framework for understanding Hip Hop as a social movement. The summit was attended by members from all areas of the college community, even those who were initially skeptical of the concept. The summit resulted in better understanding the generation and a movement that is part of students' collective conscience. In addition, the Curriculum Committee recently approved a new experimental seminar course, Create2Change, which is an outgrowth of the summit. The Create2Change seminar is designed to develop critical literacy through the examination of popular culture, "structures of oppression" and media.

Other collaborative projects among student services departments and instructional areas have resulted in bringing notable speakers to LMC, including: The Women at Ground Zero Project, Dr. Carlos Muñoz (Constitution Day – "The Constitution and the Struggle for Democracy in a Multiracial Democracy in the 21st Century"), the annual New Leaf Conference (sponsored by EOPS in collaboration with other programs and local agencies), academic conferences (sponsored by the Associated Students), and Nobel Laureate Rigoberta Menchú Tum. In addition, student services staff and faculty collaborate in key programs on campus, including developmental education, Puente, Honors and learning communities.

During spring 2005, two other major efforts reflected the transition from silos of service to more integrated services. First, the Student Success Celebration solidified the shared commitment to students by combining several individual celebrations (such as, EOPS recognition ceremony, scholarship ceremony, transfer ceremony, service learning celebration, and Honors Transfer Program recognition) into a single college-wide recognition of student success. Initial concerns that the individual ceremonies might be diluted if combined evaporated as members of the planning committee saw the ceremony's potential. The combined ceremony not only reflects new levels of program integration, it also reflects the college-wide commitment to students. The spotlight on success was noted by students who invited family members, teachers, counselors, and staff to attend and share the celebration.

The second event that marked a shift in service delivery occurred when LMC redesigned the orientation sessions for high school seniors. The change involved reconsidering the sessions in light of students' learning styles (based on research about "Gen Y" students) and the intended student learning outcomes for the sessions. Representatives from all areas of student services participated in planning the event and

assisting throughout the day. The commitment to continuous self-improvement was demonstrated by the willingness to collaborate after the first session to address things that could have gone a little more smoothly and immediately institute changes for the second session. The senior dean reported that the college made great strides in the first attempt at a more comprehensive orientation session *and* there is more work ahead.

While other colleges may have already developed systems that offer a comprehensive approach to programs, it is important to note that the planning and implementation of programs, such as the new orientation and Student Success Celebration, have not traditionally involved a high level of collaboration at the LMC. Work during the 2004 – 05 academic year reflected an organization that is young and still learning to work together. The high levels of enthusiasm that resulted from both these initiatives illustrate how a cohesive student services organization can positively impact the college community.

Next Steps

LMC's student services organization will continue to improve its effectiveness by strengthening cross-functional partnerships. While managers meet regularly and collaborate on projects, these efforts need to be expanded to promote additional interaction with staff and faculty. Faculty and staff are beginning work to better integrate and streamline the process for updating a student's major and education plan. Based on student feedback, it appears that the process does not always go smoothly for students and may result in confusion. In addition, the college can build on the strength of individual relationships among department members and create additional opportunities for staff to work together to improve systems that will reduce barriers and streamline services.

The new Counseling Department is poised to take leadership responsibility within student services and throughout the academic community. Department faculty play key roles on several critical college- and district-wide committees, including the Shared Governance Council, District Governance Council, Faculty Senate of Contra Costa, Teaching/Learning Project, Curriculum Committee, Matriculation Steering Committee, and the Developmental Education Committee. Their presence on these committees helps ensure key issues are not overlooked since counselors offer a broad perspective on how decisions affect students' ability to meet their goals. The new department has made a commitment to the professional development of all counselors, both full- and part-time. Collaborative professional development activities for all department faculty will include regular department meetings, training events, and participation in the UC/CSU counseling conferences. Department members are also finalizing "counseling protocols" to help ensure a consistent approach to counseling, regardless of a student's program affiliation.

Student services at the Brentwood Center continue to develop as the enrollment at the off-site location grows. The primary services are provided by front-line staff members who assist students with their initial college enrollment and on-going support while at

LMC. While LMC will increase counseling and financial aid services, the college needs to develop a specific timeline and plan to expand other services, such as EOPS, CalWORKs, and DSPS in Brentwood.

The new philosophy/values statement developed by the SSAC will be presented to all staff and faculty in student services. By the end of spring 2006, the college will have developed a new statement that better reflects LMC's current values and commitment to students. The successful development of a philosophy/values statement will require a high degree of collaboration in student services; such collaboration marks a continued shift in how employees work together and will likely lead to additional opportunities for collaboration, and ultimately, further integration of services.

Expanded Outreach Efforts

Background

Prior to 2000, LMC did not have a centralized, coordinated student outreach effort to respond to the needs of the community. Part-time hourly employees conducted the student outreach services, which at times, made the efforts seem fragmented and inconsistent. The lack of coordination and stability made it difficult to establish continuity or build lasting relationships with high schools and community agencies. Workshops and outreach activities were provided at the high schools, but not on a consistent, timely basis. LMC counselors were assigned to specific schools, as strategic outreach staff, but the interactions and contacts were limited and often did not address the needs of the schools. Other vital student services, such as financial aid information, were offered but at times on a "hit or miss" schedule. The lack of centralized student outreach coordination made it difficult to establish long-term plans and relationships with the local high schools.

Lack of funds and staff also limited the student outreach contact with the community and middle schools. Individual staff, faculty and administrators were often engaged in their own personal and professional commitments to the community, but not as part of a coordinated college effort to address student outreach to the community at large. Neither schools nor the community at large had a permanent contact person or office to call to inquire about student outreach services. Student outreach opportunities were often missed because of the lack of coordination. The lack of centralized student outreach efforts gave the college the appearance of being inaccessible and having a fragmented approach to student outreach.

Progress

Beginning in academic year 2001-02 and continuing through 2003, LMC established a network of outreach efforts throughout the service area, including a Student Outreach Office. This office has expanded services at the high schools and solidified the relationships with the schools. At the same time, LMC began outreach efforts aimed at students at middle schools in order to establish early connections and interventions with

younger students. Similar efforts have been implemented to reach the community at large.

During the 2002-2003 academic year, still more comprehensive student outreach services were provided to area secondary schools, including continuation and alternative high schools. Since that time, workshops for prospective students include information and materials necessary to become students at LMC, as well information about the different academic majors and programs offered by the college. Financial aid workshops are provided to local high schools during school hours, evenings, and on Saturdays in order to allow for parent participation. In 2002, high school counselors at three local high schools entered in to a partnership with LMC. These counselors promote the college as a viable higher education option for high school students and strengthen the relationship between the high schools and LMC. Starting in spring 2002, the Student Outreach Office began coordinating all assessment testing at the local high schools in an effort to facilitate the transition to the New Student Orientation for graduating seniors.

In order to expand its service base, LMC also provides outreach workshops at the local middle schools. The presentations are designed to motivate students and inform them of the many opportunities available at LMC and higher education in general. LMC hosts the Summer Math Institute sponsored by Pittsburg Unified School District, where 150 Pittsburg middle schools students take pre-algebra and algebra classes at LMC during the summer. Students improve their math skills while familiarizing themselves with a college setting. The Antioch Unified School District is exploring a similar collaborative effort with the college.

LMC has also expanded outreach efforts to the community at large. During the academic year 2000-2001, LMC outreach staff attended local city and county fairs and summer festivals promoting the college. Starting in 2001-2002, LMC concentrated its outreach on educational settings. The Student Outreach Office is a member of the Contra Costa College Consortium, a local informal network of colleges and universities that participates at career fairs and employee educational fairs throughout the county. LMC participates in school-sponsored college and career fairs throughout the service area. The college has also expanded services to continuation and alternative schools, as well as educational centers, social agencies and after school programs in Pittsburg and Bay Point. Outreach is provided at the biannual career fair at Delta High School at the Byron Ranch Detention Center for Boys. The college invites the community to the campus with its many music, art, sports and theater productions. An annual Open House has been established to inform the community of the many educational programs and services available at the college; the Open House event was recently merged with the Annual College Night held at LMC. These combined events attract approximately 2,500 local high students and their parents who are considering college options.

Since 2001, Los Medanos College has actively participated in the “Narrowing the Gap” Educational Conference sponsored by the Concord Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The annual conference provides 250 students from over 10 high schools

throughout the county with the many options available to them at community colleges, four-year colleges and technical schools. The next conference will be held at LMC.

The outreach coordinator has also worked closely with the Marketing Director to create new materials to help tell the LMC story to potential students. These efforts have as resulted in set of materials with a consistent look and “identity”: a college “view book,” a financial aid handbook, and specific program brochures on EOPS and CalWORKs. These materials are mailed to potential students and distributed at outreach events.

Next Steps

Coordinated efforts have improved the effectiveness of college outreach efforts. Consolidating and funneling all outreach requests into one office has improved LMC’s ability to handle multiple requests by schools, educational centers, industry and community groups. The ground work has been established so that the Outreach Office coordinates with EOPS, DSPS and other special programs’ outreach efforts, financial aid presentations and assessment testing.

Alternative ways to deliver services and materials online are also being investigated to take advantage of new technologies – for example, during spring 2006, the college is piloting an on-line orientation program for “special admit” students (students who are enrolled in high school and at LMC). Finally, LMC anticipates further expanding outreach efforts as part of the recent Hispanic-Serving Institutions grant (Title V); the proposed activities in the grant include strengthening partnerships with local schools.