*In order to increase effectiveness and respond fully to the previous team recommendation, the team recommends that the college implement an integrated professional development plan to ensure that employees have regular structured training on information technology and instructional design.*

**II.A.1 - The institution demonstrates that all instructional programs, regardless of location or means of delivery, address and meet the mission of the institution and uphold its integrity.**

1. The institution identifies and seeks to meet the varied educational needs of its students through programs consistent with their educational preparation and the diversity, demographics and economy of its communities. The institution relies upon research and analysis to identify student learning needs and to assess progress toward achieving stated learning outcomes.

Descriptive Summary:

Los Medanos College collects student data in order to better understand and serve its student population. The data, generated by the Office of Institutional Research, is used in several ways, including:

* To track students currently enrolled;
* to prepare profiles of their personal characteristics;
* to identify their educational goals;
* to conduct a zip code analysis of them in order to better understand the degree to which the college is serving the community.

The office generates data on the demographics of the feeder community on a regular basis. Also, before each semester, the senior dean of instruction meets with new faculty to review community and student characteristics as part of a discussion on how best to serve student needs.

The Teaching and Learning Project’s “Next Steps in Institutionalizing Assessment” (2.1) describes the empowerment of five committees to coordinate the assessment of institutional-level student learning outcomes in Developmental Education, General Education, Occupational Education, Student Services and Library and Learning Support Services. Each committee is responsible for gathering:

1. Direct measures of student learning, e.g. holistic assessment of final exams or papers in capstone courses in order to measure student achievement of program-level student learning outcomes.
2. Indirect measures of student learning. Work is underway with the Office of Institutional Research to establish an on-going research agenda that provides indirect measures of student achievement of program outcomes, addresses research needs specific to program initiatives and provides information pertinent to making decisions for program improvement.
3. Qualitative measures – the use of surveys, focus groups, etc. in order to document students’ perceptions of their learning.

Self Evaluation:

To date, only the Developmental Education Committee has worked with the research office to define an on-going research agenda. The other committees are moving to establish similar research agendas. Preliminary work in this direction includes:

* The General Education Committee, in conjunction with the Curriculum Committee, has requested an English prerequisite validation study for two classes that meet the Ethical Inquiry requirement.
* The Occupational Education Committee has discussed research that will track student achievement in course sequences connected to locally approved certificates.

Planning Agenda:

None.

1. The institution utilizes delivery systems and modes of instruction compatible with the objectives of the curriculum and appropriate to the current and future needs of its students.

Descriptive summary:

LMC offers a variety of scheduling options to serve its students, including traditional semester-length face-to-face courses, short-term classes, weekend classes and off-site classes. Some departments also offer specific options in modes of instruction for students, i.e. self paced or lecture for some math courses. LMC also offers online classes, both as “hybrids” that meet partially online as well as in the “brick and mortar” classroom and completely online classes (2.2).

Regardless of the delivery mode, the Curriculum Committee must approve each course before it is offered. The committee’s evaluation process includes examination of the delivery of instruction, whether lecture, lab or online – or in combination.

Self Evaluation:

The primary dialogue concerning delivery currently centers on online instruction. The college’s Shared Governance Council, the Curriculum Committee and the Distance Education Committee are engaged in ongoing discussions. These discussions have resulted in:

* A supplement to the Course Outline of record addressing how student learning outcomes will be addressed in online classes and how direct student/instructor contact is defined in each course (2.3).
* A position paper from the Distance Education Committee on online instruction (2.4).
* A three-member advisory committee drawn from the Distance Education Committee as a whole that reviews course outlines and assists faculty with online course development.
* A “policies” document that outlines responsibilities and expectations for online instructors (2.5).
* A “best practices” document that outlines how courses should be set up (2.6).
* A “Blackboard Handbook” document on how to function technically in the online classroom software environment (2.7).
* A three-year plan for online instruction (2.8).
* A Curriculum Committee member drawn from the Distance Education Committee.

Planning Agenda:

During the 2008-09 academic year, the Distance Education Committee and Research Office will engage a study to evaluate effectiveness, retention and success rates of online courses at LMC; the committee will investigate the feasibility of an entirely online associate degree.

1. The institution identifies student learning outcomes for courses, programs, certificates and degrees; assesses student achievement of those outcomes; and uses assessment results to make improvements.

Descriptive Summary:

*Identifying/Writing Student Learning Outcomes:* The Teaching and Learning Project – a collaboration between the Academic Senate, Student Services and administration – was charged with coordinating college-wide assessment efforts in September 2004. The TLP began by defining “degree level” outcomes to be attained by students in five broad areas: general education, occupational education, developmental education, student services, and library and learning support services. All of the above, except library and learning support services, had an existing committee which took on the task of writing student learning outcomes for its respective area. A committee was formed for library and learning support services and it too wrote learning outcomes. The outcomes were written and approved by the members of those committees and reviewed by the Academic Senate in a document entitled “Next Steps in Institutionalizing Assessment Efforts at LMC.” (2.1) The senate approved this document in October 2006 (2.9). The document includes these “degree level” outcomes, and specifically defines the membership and charge of each of the committees. It expressly gives them the responsibility of assessing learning outcomes in their respective areas, as well as responding to assessment results with targeted professional development.

At the program level, the fall 2006 program review process required that all programs write program-level student learning outcomes and develop a plan for assessing them. Since this was the first time for this requirement, during spring 2007 the TLP then reviewed the program level SLOs and assessment plans. It provided feedback to each program in September 2007 (1.55), using a rubric that assesses both the SLOs and the assessment plan. Every program needs to do an annual update to its program review and the TLP continues to monitor progress toward assessing program level outcomes and responding to the assessment results.

At the course level, the Curriculum Committee worked for a year on revising the official course outline of record (COOR) form to incorporate learning outcomes and assessment criteria. The COOR now includes the degree level and program level outcomes, and requires the course author to write course level outcomes that align and integrate with the other levels (2.10). Curriculum “coaches” (the current chairs of the TLP) are available to work with faculty on an individual basis to rethink their courses and rewrite their COORs from the perspective of assessing student learning relative to the stated outcomes for the course. All course outlines are reviewed by the Curriculum Committee, and, where appropriate, by focused subcommittees, such as general education. The committee conducts a rigorous review and course outlines are not passed if the learning outcomes are inadequate, not aligned or not deemed to be college level. Since all course outlines are supposed to be updated every five years, theoretically all courses will have stated student learning outcomes by 2011. (See District report to the Board for actual numbers of courses that already have written student learning outcomes.) (2.11)

In general, LMC has elected to use course-embedded assessment as the overall approach to assessing student learning outcomes.

*At the degree or institutional level:* General education initially chose to assess one of five student learning outcomes for the GE program: “Students will think critically and creatively.” To this end, “teaching communities” were formed in ethnic/multicultural studies, social sciences, creative arts and humanities and biological science. Faculty volunteered to join the teaching communities and met over the course of two years to hone assignments and assessments of critical thinking in their courses. Student work on these assignments was collected and holistically scored in the teaching communities. Reports on these teaching communities and the results of these assessments will be available on the assessment website.

In developmental education, student work is assessed in “capstone” courses – the last English and math courses before the transfer level. Faculty in English and math collaborated on “template assignments” (English) or final exam questions (math) that were holistically scored. Flex workshops offered a forum for discussing results and sharing ideas about how to respond to the assessment. Reports on these assessments are available on the website.

In occupational education, a pilot assessment was completed in nursing. Nursing faculty assessed the effectiveness of a technological innovation on their students’ learning using a direct pre/post test design. They also collected qualitative feedback from their students. Results were shared in a flex workshop and faculty trained in the use of the new equipment (2.12).

In student services, a preliminary assessment of student use of online services was conducted in fall 2006. As part of program review, each Student Service unit defined more specific SLOs for the unit, some of which are aligned with the two broad outcomes. Current work is focused on identifying the best tools to use to assess student progress on unit-level SLOs. Units continue to receive feedback and technical support from the Student Services SLO Committee.

In library and learning support services, two assessments were conducted, one of the Reading and Writing Center and one of the Math Lab. In both cases, results were used to revise curriculum and pedagogy (2.13).

*At the program level:* Programs were required to write student learning outcomes and assessment plans in fall 2006. Outcomes that have actually been assessed were reported as part of the first annual update during fall 2007 (2.14).

*At the course level:* Instructors are responsible for assessing student learning outcomes in the courses that they teach. However, there are some instances of course-level assessment that look at student achievement of outcomes across sections; for example, the assessment of capstone courses in developmental education and an assessment project conducted by biology instructors.

As indicated above, there has been extensive institutional dialogue on student learning outcomes. Forums include: the Teaching and Learning Project, Curriculum Committee, Distance Education Committee, Academic Senate, Shared Governance Council, College Assemblies, and specific committees – General Education, Developmental Education, Occupational Education, Student Services and Library and Learning Support.

# Self Evaluation:

The college has gauged its progress in implementing Student Learning Outcomes Assessment by using a rubric advocated by the Research and Planning Group of California (RPGroup). What follows is a summary of progress based on the criteria in the RPGroup rubric:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| RPGroups criteria | Assessment of LMC progress |
| Implementation of a complete SLO Cycle framework | Between Stage 2 and Stage 3: LMC has a complete framework for SLO development at the course, program, and degree levels. SLOs have been defined for all academic programs and the five major “institutional” programs in Developmental Education, General Education, Occupational Education, Student Services, and Library and Learning Support Services. Preliminary assessment plans have been developed by all but a few academic programs, with approximately 25% of academic programs already implementing plans and using assessment results for program improvement.  |
| Meaningful Dialogue | Between Stage 2 and Stage 3: Dialogue about assessment is embedded within structural practices across the college. For example, Student Learning Outcomes has been a recent focus for the following committees: Curriculum, Planning, Developmental Education, General Education, Occupational Education, Student Services, and Library and Learning Support Services, Teaching and Learning Project. Faculty and staff are engaged and aware of SLO Cycle framework. |
| Alignment of SLOs with Organizational Structures | Stage 3: The SLO Cycle Framework is embedded within and supported by the Teaching and Learning Project, a committee which coordinates assessment efforts at LMC. Student Learning Outcomes have been incorporated into program review, curriculum processes, resource allocation, and staff development. We have a timeline that is updated and followed. |
| Institutional Commitment | Between Stage 2 and Stage 3: Appropriate resources are being allocated to implement assessment through release time for faculty leadership and money to support on-going professional development. Professional development in the form of flex activities, Friday retreats, Teaching Communities, and departmental meetings have focused on the assessment of student learning. |
| Alignment of Practice with SLOs and Assessment | Stage 2: Our SLO Cycle framework includes processes for integrating SLOs and assessment findings into classroom practice and pedagogy. We use course-embedded assessment based on existing class assignments, though we analyze student work across courses and programs to develop action plans for improvement. Course-embedded assessment does not place additional demands on students and produces evidence of learning that is authentic, relevant to our SLOs, and useful for making improvements. Though we have processes set-up for aligning practice with SLO assessment, in many programs, broad-based integration is in an early stage. For example, GE faculty are encouraged by the Office of Instruction to include GE SLOs in their course syllabi and the college provides on-going professional development for GE faculty on designing assignments and grading criteria that reflect GE SLOs, but participation needs to be increased. |
| Evidence | Stage 2: SLOs for courses, programs, and degrees are documented in course outlines. Institutional SLOs will be included in the 2007-08 catalog, college website, and student handbook. We are currently developing a link to assessment information and the work of the Teaching and Learning Project through the LMC intranet. |

# *What is the evidence?*

The Teaching and Learning project conceives of evidence as an “institutional portfolio” which will be available on our assessment website. It will include:

Agendas/minutes from the Academic Senate, Minutes from Teaching and Learning Project meetings, Minutes from General Education and Occupational Education meetings, Developmental Education Research Agenda and research findings, Next Steps in Institutionalizing Assessment at LMC (10/06), Documenting the Institutional Dialogue, Holistic Assessment in English – a two-year cycle, TLP Assessment Reports, Course Outline of Record and Handbook and Program Reviews (2.15).

Planning Agenda:

The Teaching and Learning Project will develop and implement processes and professional development activities to ensure that the assessment cycle is completed – that is, that assessment results are used to make improvements at the course, program and institutional levels.

**III.A.5.b. With the assistance of the participants, the institution systematically evaluates professional development programs and uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.**

Descriptive Summary:

LMC regularly assesses its professional development activities by soliciting informal and formal (evaluation forms) (3.18) feedback from participants, which is then shared with the presenter(s). Surveys of the college community have also been used to solicit input on professional development needs.

As indicated in the previous section, the college evaluated the entire professional development program and, on that basis, is in the process of redesigning the program.

Self Evaluation:

As dictated by good practice, the college assesses its professional development activities and program and uses the results for improvement.

Planning Agenda:

Under the direction of the college president, LMC will adopt, implement and evaluate its newly redesigned professional development programs.