**1.B.1 - The institution maintains an ongoing collegial, self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes.**

Descriptive Summary:

LMC engages in dialogue about improving student learning and institutional processes in multiple forums such as: the Planning Committee; the Shared Governance Council; the Academic Senate; the Classified Senate; the Teaching Learning Project (TLP); the Curriculum Committee; the General Education Committee; the Developmental Education Committee; the Library and Learning Support Services Committee; the Occupational Education Committee; and the Student Services Committee.

These deliberative bodies report their activities and findings to the college as a whole through periodic college assemblies, minutes and agendas placed on the intranet, and hard copies (1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 1.17, 1.18, 1.19, 1.20, 1.21, 1.22, 1.23, 1.24).

A revised Professional Development Program is being developed. In the past, many staff development activities – during FLEX and throughout the academic year – focused on self-reflective dialogue. College management, faculty and staff also attend conferences and workshops. In recent years, the institutional focus has been on assessment of student learning (for example, the AAHE Assessment Conference, RP Group Assessment workshop and “intermediate level” workshop, and the Assessment Workshop for Occupational Educators).

Specific dialogue regarding the improvement of student learning takes place under the umbrella of the Teaching Learning Project (1.18) and its five components: *General Education, Occupational Education, Developmental Education, Student Services and Library and Learning Support.* Each component has developed its SLOs and each has begun developing and implementing assessment of the SLOs with the assistance of the TLP.

After extensive dialogue, the Curriculum Committee researched and developed models for course outlines that integrate SLOs. The resulting revised Course Outline of Record (COOR) (1.25) form requires that course-level SLOs are aligned with institutional-level and program level SLOs. During summer 2005 (1.26) through spring 2006 (1.27), flex workshops and professional development activities were held on assessment pilots and “how to” sessions for completing the new course outline of record form. During the spring FLEX week, the college hired a consultant, Dr. Gerald Nosich, to lead a workshop on “Teaching Critical Thinking in the Disciplines” (1.27). All full- and part-time faculty, managers and staff were invited to the workshop, with about 60 actually attending. Follow-up sessions and surveys on the effectiveness of the workshop were offered. In spring 2008 another critical thinking consultant, Dr. Linda Elder, lead workshops on “Teaching, Learning and Critical Thinking through Reading and Writing” (1.28). Also, in spring 2008, a group of faculty attended a three-day workshop at Berkeley on critical thinking.

The personnel survey (1.29) of spring 2007 indicated that 56 percent of the respondents agreed that “*there is broad participation from LMC employees in planning processes.”* This participation has resulted in improvement and planning initiatives, such as:

* From fall 2002 to spring 2004, the Academic Senate Task Force on Assessment researched assessment models and made a recommendation to the senate that resulted in creating the Teaching Learning Project that was to oversee the assessment of institutional Student Learning Outcomes.
* During fall 2004, a College Assembly (1.30) was held to inform the college as a whole on accreditation-related assessment requirements, the Teaching Learning Project and the new course outline of record form and process.
* The program review process was revised to require each instructional and student services program to develop its SLOs and to propose a plan on how to assess them. The TLP then reviewed all the instructional program reviews and provided feedback to each department or area regarding its assessment plan. Student services SLOs feedback is implemented through the student services group.

Other examples of ongoing dialogue include: An Honors Transfer Program (1.31) and Transfer Fast Track Program (1.32), a number of grant applications focusing on the improvement of student learning, the revision of the Developmental Education Program (English and math), the development and implementation of a new Resource Allocation Process (1.33), in order to better tie college goals and the allocation of resources, the revision of the shared governance process (the College Council was disbanded and replaced by the Shared Governance Council), Transfer Center activities correlated with improvements of transfer rate, and in an effort to address the disparate achievement levels among African American, Latino and students living in poverty, the Institutional Development for Equity and Access (IDEA) (1.34) facilitated, coordinated and organized action to shift the diversity, access and equity discourse from the periphery of the college’s activities to the center of the institution’s mission, programs and policies. There was also a major study on the tutoring model sponsored by the HSI grant.

Self Evaluation:

The TLP has embarked on a plan for implementation of SLOs and their assessment throughout the major academic areas of the institution. The TLP continues to use the knowledge and insight gained from the programs that are already engaged in the assessment cycle to improve on the model for the whole college. The GE Committee has developed an 11-year plan (1.35) to assess the five GE SLOs. IDEA has coordinated action to address diversity, access and equity to the institution’s programs and policies.

LMC managers, faculty, and staff engage in ongoing discussions related to all aspects of the college goals; from student services, to college resource allocations and facilities; from policies and procedures, to pedagogy and student learning outcomes. These discussions take place in more than 30 separate committees and subcommittees at LMC, including SGC, Curriculum Committee, the three Senates, the Planning Committee, the TLP, the Distance Education Committee, etc.

Unlike past accreditation cycles, committee discussions now lead directly and rapidly to implemented policy (for validation, see all the new programs, initiatives, and policies mentioned above). This is due in large part to a much clearer "chain of command" and more well defined reporting relationships between committees, and to the empowerment of specific committees, particularly the SGC and Curriculum Committee, to forward recommendations directly to the LMC President for swift approval.

There are, however, still communication issues that need to be addressed. The college has recently developed an up-to-date master list of all the various LMC committees and sub-committees (1.36). Most committees and subcommittees do not report their minutes and agendas to the larger college community (nor do they post minutes and agendas on the college web site). Some important committees, such as TLP, have not been integrated into the existing shared governance model, and do not have a direct reporting relationship with existing shared governance committees or senates. These communication issues have, at times, led to confusion about approval authority for some new college initiatives.

There are two additional communication concerns, both of which are long-standing. One is the involvement of part-time faculty in ongoing campus dialogue and initiatives. Part-time faculty teach about 40 percent of all class sections at the college, so it makes sense that they should have significant involvement in college governance and academic initiatives. LMC has made some progress toward including part-time faculty in ongoing assessment efforts and governance. For example, the math and English departments have used Title III grant monies to pay adjunct faculty to participate in learning assessment evaluations. The Academic Senate (1.37) has positions reserved exclusively for part-time faculty, and part-time faculty are paid a stipend to become Senate members. Even so, most committees do not have direct adjunct faculty representation. Some part-time faculty do not have access to offices located in their department. Many part-time faculty choose not to obtain an LMC voice mail or e-mail account (although these are offered to all part-time faculty). This problem may be endemic to all community colleges, given that part-time faculty are not normally paid to participate in college governance.

Another long standing communication issue is the lack of collegial interaction between some LMC employees, especially full-time faculty in a few large departments. The minutes and agendas of the Academic Senate and SGC reflect the inordinate amount of institutional energy and time devoted to this issue over the past few years. This problem became serious enough that LMC administrators felt compelled to hire professional mediators to work with faculty in acrimonious departments.

Planning Agenda:

The SGC will develop a process by which there is more regular and continuous communication by institutional groups. For example, all standing committees can publish their agendas and minutes on the college web site, or distribute them to all employees via campus e-mail.

**I.B.4 – The institution provides evidence that the planning process is broad-based, offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness.**

Descriptive Summary:

All campus constituents have the ability to participate directly in institutional planning through their involvement in collegial processes, shared governance and representative groups. Examples of collegial processes included development and revision of the Educational Master Plan; the program review and unit planning processes; Resource Allocation Process requests and grant application activities.

According to the position paper (1.42) that created the Shared Governance Council (SGC), “*Shared governance, in its broadest sense, is participation of, and mutual deliberation by, the college senates, associated students, the president, and the management team.”* LMC’s model requires broad-based participation and provides input from all constituencies.

There are other representative groups on campus. Each “area/discipline” has a department chair (1.43) who performs “management/administrative” functions, including involvement in planning initiatives. All constituents are invited to participate in district-wide and college committees. Committee members can be appointed by the senates, elected or volunteer. For shared governance groups, member representatives attend meetings and “speak for” their constituents.

Crucial to participation is communication. College assemblies (1.30) bring all constituents together in one place several times each semester for updates on key college issues. Members of shared governance committees are asked to regularly “report back” to the constituencies that they represent. Increasingly, e-mail and the intranet are used to report meeting agendas, minutes, upcoming deadlines, survey and research results, etc.

SGC allocates institutional resources based upon the Resource Allocation Process (1.33) (including the previous Financial Planning Model). Standard III discusses this process in depth. A key aspect of the approach is to tie resource allocation to priorities identified in the Educational Master Plan.

Given financial limitations, the Grant Office and others also regularly seek outside resources – corporate and individual donations through the foundation; bond funds; grant funds; increased enrollment of foreign students; and industry partnerships.

Self Evaluation:

To state whether the planning processes have lead to institutional improvement is somewhat subjective as college constituents differ in the support of each initiative and the criteria for improvement varies.

The college’s approach to resource allocation has led to changes that improve institutional effectiveness:

* Facilities – expanded automotive and child development facilities; new buildings for the library, math and science; planning for a student union; bookstore expansion; improved landscaping; renovated classrooms; Brentwood Center expansion; new Reading and Writing Center; solar panel parking project.
* Technology – installation of “smart classrooms”; new computer labs.
* Instruction – identification of student learning outcomes at various levels and numerous assessment pilots; linkage of SLOs and their assessment to course outline format; merger of English and ESL departments; significant develop-mental education improvements, including the development of Basic Skills Initiative (BSI) interventions (1.44); establishment of Honors Transfer Program course rotation and Honors Club; pilot learning communities; new programs in engineering, environmental science and process technology; significant increase in on-line offerings.
* Student support – re-instituted Puente Program, creation of IDEA and UMOJA; additional program-specific counseling; expansion of EOPS; redesigned tutorial services.

There are broad-based opportunities for constituents to participate in the planning and resource allocation processes; however, actual involvement is less than ideal. There is a lack of college-wide participation on committees, especially by students, less than perfect attendance in FLEX and mandatory meetings, failure of some constituents to sit through an entire College Day, minimal feedback responses submitted on college activities and surveys, the same people serving on committees, and uncontested or inability to completely fill leadership positions on Academic Senate, Curriculum, Occupational Education and other committees.

There is also an impression by some that even though all are asked to provide input or participate, that only a select few are heard as evidenced by the comments made at the September 24, 2007 College Assembly (1.45). There is a perception that some processes have become too onerous, are compliance based, or have ignored input. RAP was reviewed as the number of submitted proposals had declined. Some discontent surrounding course outlines, SLOs and assessment is now surfacing based on feedback received at the September 24, 2007 College Assembly.

Information is placed on the Intranet and is sent via email, but true dialogue does not occur uniformly throughout the college. Not all adjunct faculty choose to use the email addresses on Outlook, persons without communicative representatives do not get a voice in the discussion, processes and their accompanying forms are continually being changed before a standard can be understood and assessed, and everyone is given conflict management consultation when a few individual departments cannot work together.

Communication as usual “in the hallways” is in transition as the main campus has grown to six buildings with the recently completed science building, plus a separate offsite location in Brentwood. The college is learning how to implement processes while simultaneously adapting to new communication paths.

Planning Agenda:

SGC, in collaboration with upper management, will more clearly articulate processes, develop ways to motivate constituents to participate in the planning, resource allocations processes and committees in general, enhance trust among colleagues, and improve communication to all.

**IV.A.2 - The institution establishes and implements a written policy providing for faculty, staff, administrator, and student participation in decision-making processes. The policy specifies the manner in which individuals bring forward ideas from their constituencies and work together on appropriate policy, planning, and special-purpose bodies.**

a. Faculty and administrators have a substantive and clearly defined role in institutional governance and exercise a substantial voice in institutional policies, planning, and budget that relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise. Students and staff also have established mechanisms or organizations for providing input into institutional decisions

Descriptive Summary:

The Shared Governance Council Position Paper of March 2003 (4.1), describes the group’s composition: a council facilitator, the college president, the Curriculum Committee chair, two management representatives and three council seats each for faculty, classified staff and student senators. The President appoints managers and the respective senates appoint the others. Only those appointed by the senates are voting members. The SGC is responsible for reviewing proposals and making recommendations to the college president for the Resource Allocation Process, which includes the block grant (equipment) budget, classified staff allocation process and Financial Planning Model. Since its inception in 2003, the SGC has refined the process and continues to evaluate and improve it as necessary, as demonstrated by the inclusion of the classified staffing allocation recommendation in the spring 2007 SGC process. The SGC also reviews tutoring allocation requests and VTEA requests (prior to the Occupational Education Committee’s review and final recommendation).

Included in the resource request process is the requirement to have a current program review and unit plan in order to be eligible to request resources. During the fall of 2006, almost all units complied – 37 instructional areas completed program reviews and 11 student services areas completed program reviews.

Self Evaluation:

The formation of the Shared Governance Council established a mechanism for representative college governance. Each voting member of the SGC represents the voice of his/her constituency and shares information between the council and their respective senates. The cooperative spirit of SGC members to date illustrates the effectiveness of the structure, which brings decision-making bodies of the campus together. However, attempts to have full participation on all shared governance committees have had mixed results.

Planning Agenda:

The college president and Shared Governance Council will develop and implement a plan to promote employee and students engagement with institutional governance processes during the 2008-09 academic year.

* 1. The institution relies on faculty, its academic senate or other appropriate faculty structures, the curriculum committee, and academic administrators for recommendations about student learning programs and services.

Descriptive Summary:

Faculty are represented in the Academic Senate, which is the main governance body on campus for recommendations concerning academic and professional matters. The senate typically meets twice a month (1.30). Faculty are represented based on a combination of departments and large group associations such as at-large full-time and adjunct faculty. Currently most, but not all, of the elected representative positions are filled. The senate has been active over the years in dealing with new programs, curriculum, degree requirements, changes in governance structure, program review, and budget planning.

The Academic Senate and Curriculum Committee provide the mechanism for approving new programs, based on faculty input. All individual courses and college programs are presented for approval to the committee.

The Teaching and Learning Project (TLP) is a group of instructors and managers that provides guidance, initiative and some funding for the professional development revolving around assessment of student learning outcomes. Based on the premise that faculty development is a key ingredient to improving SLO performance, five different groups of faculty have produced program learning outcomes. Each group is at varying stages of creating program, cross discipline assessment and arranging professional development based on an analysis of the results.

There are a large number of distinct initiatives used to improve student learning by providing special services. Examples of these include Puente, the Reading and Writing Center, Umoja Scholars, IDEA, and evolving inititatives such as First Year Experience, MESA programs, ESL counseling, learning communities and the reorganization of tutoring.

Self Evaluation:

At SGC, there has been a consistent consensus and acceptance on major campus issues among senate representatives. According to the most recent survey conducted by the Office of Institutional Research in spring 2007 (1.29), 64 percent of LMC personnel agreed that [their] “*concerns and ideas are listened to in college committees.”* For the last four years there has been a consensus, or at least professional agreement, between the Academic Senate and college governance. Faculty have been directly involved in the creation of new programs (Engineering, Environmental Science and Process Technology, among others). Faculty also spent time discussing larger issues that would effect the college – topics such as moving to a compressed calendar and the statewide change in English and math AA degree requirements. Curricular decisions are being made at the proper levels.

Four Brentwood faculty filed a complaint in May 2007, alleging that the Curriculum Committee had violated the Brown Act (open meeting law) by discussing the curriculum approval process without having it on the agenda. Later that semester, an attorney from the District discussed Brown Act provisions at a meeting of the Academic Senate. Since that time, there have been no allegations of violations.

The institutionalization of student learning outcomes and assessment has been accomplished at LMC, largely due to faculty leadership. During the last four years, the TLP has expanded from a small group of volunteer teachers trying to come up with a complete, closed loop process for creating, assessing and improving program SLOs. The TLP now has plans to encompass most faculty with a comprehensive multiyear, multi-outcome, multidiscipline, complete cycle. The challenge remains to build understanding and enthusiasm among some faculty regarding these new initiatives.

Planning Agenda:

None.