Los Medanos College

A Report from the Professional Development Task Force

Recommendations for a Professional Development Program at LMC

May 2009

Professional Development Task Force Members

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Background

Charge from SGC

In Fall 2007, the Shared Governance Council (SGC) disbanded LMC's Committee for Staff and Organizational Development (CSOD) and authorized the creation of a Professional Development Task Force to develop recommendations for a Professional Development Program on campus.

The shared governance Task Force, comprised of twelve active members representing faculty, classified staff and managers, met over the last year to develop this recommendation.

The Task Force:

- Identified the need for coordinated professional development on campus,
- Reviewed best practices of professional development programs at other community colleges,
- Developed professional development mission, values and principles and outcomes
- Created recommended guiding principles and organizational structure for a professional development program at LMC.

Identified Needs

Problem

The early work of the task force was focused on identifying the need for a professional development program on campus. Reviewing notes from meetings and focus groups on the topic, we identified several examples of quality professional development and training on campus. However, we also indentified that overall, professional development at LMC was a collection of fragmented and uncoordinated efforts rather than a well thought-out campus-wide program designed to support a dynamic learning environment for all LMC faculty and staff. We found several examples where professional development activities were not clearly linked to the goals of LMC's Educational Master Plan, outcome objectives were not articulated and evaluation and assessment plans were lacking. We also found that most campus professional development opportunities were designed for faculty, with very few opportunities for staff and managers.

Accreditation Standards

The standards of the Accrediting Commission for the Community and Junior Colleges cite three specific standards which relate directly to professional development:

- Standard III.A.5.a – The institution provides all personnel with appropriate opportunities for continued professional development, consistent with the institutional mission and based on indentified teaching and learning needs.

- Standard 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.

- Standard III.C.1.b – The institution provides quality training in the effective application of its information technology to (students and) personnel.

Based on our self-study, it came as no surprise to learn that one of the four recommendations from the Accrediting Commission is for LMC to "implement an integrated professional development plan to ensure employees have regular structured trainings on information technology and instructional design".

The identified needs and the on-going standards set by the accrediting board set the foundation for the task force work.

Review of Community College Professional Development Programs

The task force then turned its attentions toward reviewing professional development programs at other community colleges. We read sections regarding professional development from *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges* (March, 2007), as an introduction to effective structures and practices. Throughout the first several months of our work, committee members conducted on-line research and engaged in e-mail communications and telephone interviews with professional development staff from several community colleges including Pasadena, Chabot, De Anza, Valencia and others. Additionally, we hosted a meeting with past LMC staff development coordinators to learn about the college's professional development history and lessons learned.

Through our study we learned that quality professional development programs encompasses a wide variety of activities for all staff to continually learn and update their knowledge, skills and attitudes to be responsive to evolving student and community needs and trends. As a result of our professional development study, we developed the following recommendations for guiding principles and for program structure.

Guiding Principles: Recommendations

Recommended Mission: The purpose of Professional Development is to strengthen and support a dynamic learning environment that promotes and enhances the personal, professional and organizational development for all LMC staff.

Professional development at LMC:

- Increases skills and knowledge that are valuable to the college,
- Aligns with the mission, goals and priorities of the college,
- Is student-focused – promotes the success and engagement of students.

Values: LMC values and encourages accessible professional development opportunities for all staff , including full and part-time faculty, classified staff, and managers.

Recommended Professional Development Outcomes (PDOs):

The following PDOs, guided by the Master Plan goals, provide a framework for professional development planning, implementation and assessment.

LMC Employees will:

1. Create and sustain learning and working environments that are characterized by these qualities: inclusive, engaging, challenging, relevant, welcoming, purposeful and responsive to diverse cultures,

2. Contribute to and participate in a culture of inquiry and institutional learning that fosters leadership and documents and builds on lessons learned,

3. Effectively assess relevant aspects of college life, such as instruction, programs, services, activities, administration and student services, in order to improve student learning, college services, and institutional effectiveness,

4. Be effective users of current technology,

5. Use instructional and organizational models that are research-based and grounded in sound theoretical frameworks and good practice,

6. Demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning.

Professional Development Guidelines:

The following guidelines were designed as a framework for the prioritization of professional development activities.

Support will be provided for professional development activities which:

- Align with college goals and outcomes of our Educational Master Plan and with professional development outcomes.

- Support the needs of faculty and staff as expressed in program review and unit planning or identified through institutional, program or course level assessments.

- Integrate evaluation and assessment into their design.

Examples of Types of Activities

Professional development encompasses a wide variety of formal and informal approaches to meet diverse needs and learning styles including (but not limited to) opportunities such as workshops, courses trainings, professional conferences, inquiry groups, teaching communities, communities of practice, active learning, consultations, on-line venues, orientations, and mentorships.

It is recommended that the Professional Development Advisory Committee articulate its focus, activities and budget through an annual strategic planning process. This process will be influenced by the goals and intended outcomes of the Educational Master Plan, program review, and input from the Teaching Learning Project (TLP), Academic Senate, Classified Senate, President's Council, Associated Students and the SGC and other groups as appropriate. Each subsequent year's strategic plan will be submitted to the SGC for their approval in the spring.

During our year of planning, members of the task force heard several thoughts and ideas regarding the specific types of professional development being requested on campus. Additionally, the district conducted a professional development survey of all staff and they disaggregated the results by college and by employee group.

Evaluation

It is important to regularly measure the impact of professional development in relationship to the PDO's and programmatic change at LMC, as well as the impact on our students and on the institution as a whole. It is recommended that on-going qualitative and quantitative evaluation and assessment be systematically integrated into the professional development program and coordinated with the assessment of the TLP and that evaluation and assessment of professional development be included in the regular assessment cycle of the college.

All professional development activities will be documented and shared with the campus community in various ways, including reports, web-sites, on-line communications and presentations. Results will be used for continual improvement of professional development activities and assessment of need.

Program Structure Recommendations

Research indicates that the most effective community college professional development takes place at campuses with established programs which are responsible for the oversight, coordination and promotion of professional development at the institutional, program and department levels (The RP Group, 2007).

The Professional Development Task Force is making the following recommendations regarding the organizational structure and staffing for a Professional Development Program at LMC.

Professional Development Shared Governance Advisory Committee

It is recommended that a shared governance Professional Development Advisory Committee be established to oversee the Professional Development Program. This committee will be comprised of faculty, classified staff, managers and students.

Responsibilities of this committee will include:

- Set policy for the Professional Development Program,
- Establish and meet professional and organizational development goals and objectives developed in alignment with college goals through the development of a three-year professional development strategic plan,
- Establish, sponsor, and support Professional Development subcommittees as needed to meet program objectives,
- Recommend resource allocations for professional development program activities to SGC,
- Monitor the professional development budget,
- Develop and maintain professional development guidelines and procedures,
- Evaluate the effectiveness of professional development and make recommendations for improvements.

Professional Development Staffing:

Two classified full-time classified positions are being recommended to staff the day-to-day operations of the Professional Development Program:

- *Professional Development Coordinator:* Provide oversight, administrative support and leadership in the implementation of policy and evaluation of the professional development program as directed by the Advisory Committee; arrange for professional development activities, responsible for the coordination, promotion and dissemination of professional development information and resources for faculty and staff.
- *Technology Training and Development Coordinator:* Provide technical training and support for staff to enhance their understanding and use of technology as it applies to educational instruction and job performance.

Both of these positions were approved and recommended for funding (pending approval of this implementation plan and a related time-line for start-up) through the spring 2009 Resource Allocation Process (RAP). It is also recommended that faculty members, staff or external consultants be hired (through stipends or reassigned time), to lead or to facilitate various professional development activities as appropriate. These facilitators may be hired for short and longer-term commitments. An organizational chart can be found on page 9.

The Bigger Picture: A Teaching Learning Center:

A Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) proposal will be submitted in early summer, 2009, which recommends the creation of a Teaching, Learning Center (TLC) at LMC. This center will house, (a) the professional development program, (b) the Teaching Learning Project (work on learning outcomes and their on-going assessment) and (c) academic support programs such as the Reading and Writing Center and tutoring. These functions may not be physically housed in the same location, but they will be organizationally linked philosophically as an integrated center for the engagement of on-going, campus-wide professional learning and assessment. The grant awards will be announced by September, 2009. It is recommended that this center be held as a vision - with or without grant funds.

Management for Professional Development:

The manager for the professional development program has not yet been determined. It is recommended that the college president determine and announce the organizational home and manager for professional development as part of LMC's management reorganization in fall, 2009.

Physical Location:

There are two adjacent rooms on the second floor of the library being recommended to house a Professional Development Center. The Professional Development Coordinator's office will be situated in room L216. This room will also be used to house a professional development library and to host some of the professional development activities. Room L213, which is equipped with video and conferencing equipment will be used to host professional development activities as well. Professional development program activities will also be hosted throughout the campus and at off-site locations as appropriate.

Financial Resources:

There are currently four funds allocated specifically for college-wide professional development at LMC.

- *LMC Funds:* $9,000 – Allocated annually by the President. These funds are not rolled-over from year to year.
- *District Funds:* $25,000 – Allocated annually by the Chancellor. These funds are not rolled-over from year to year.
- *State Funds:* These were one-time only funds. There is currently $46,225 available. These funds do roll-over from year-to-year. However, the Chancellor has requested that we spend these funds before spending district funds.
- *BSI Funds:* There is $59,000 budgeted for FY 2009-10. These funds cannot roll-over. BSI funds have not been allocated yet for future years, therefore it is not known if these funds will be available in the future.

District funds and State funds must be used directly for professional development activities, while the LMC funds and the BSI funds can be used for start-up and operational costs with the approval of the President.

It is recommended that the Advisory Committee develop professional development allocation recommendations each year in conjunction with their strategic plan. Funding recommendations should be divided into funding categories, allowing for an account to be set aside for conferences, as well as for unplanned needs as they may arise. It will be the responsibility of the Advisory Committee to develop and maintain guidelines and procedures for funding approvals and follow-up.

Additionally, the college receives various grants which include professional development line items within their budgets. It is recommended that the professional development program work in consultation (and in partnership, as appropriate) on the planning and implementation of all professional development related grant activities.

While it is recommended that professional development resources be distributed to in a manner to have the broadest institutional impact, it is also recognized that there will be circumstances when it would be appropriate and beneficial to recognize the value of individual, department and job classification professional needs.

Next Steps

It is recommended that when the report from the Professional Development Task Force is approved by SGC, the task force disband.

It is further recommended that in fall, 2009:
- The president determine the management structure for the Professional Development Program,
- The hiring process for the professional development staff begin,
- A Professional Development Advisory Committee is formed.

Professional Development Program Organizational Chart

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│       President         │───│ Shared Governance Council│
│                         │   │         (SGC)           │
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President

Shared Governance Council (SGC)

Manager
(TBD who this manager will be and where within the organization this manager will report)

PD Advisory Committee
- **Classified**
- **Faculty**
- **Managers**
- **Students**

**Professional Development Center
(Teaching Learning Center)**
(in the library – 2nd Floor)

Distance Ed Committee

IT

TLP

Planning Committee

Professional Development Facilitators
(project-based faculty/other; on rotating basis depending on priorities/needs)

Professional Development Coordinator
(classified position)

Technical Training and Development Coordinator
(classified position)

Facilitators for professional development (PD) opportunities, including (but not limited to:
- Courses,
- Workshops,
- Trainings,
- Consultation,
- Technical assistance,
- Teaching communities,
- Lesson study,
- Mentoring.
- working closely TLP to design PD to close assessment loop,
- Initiating inquiry groups for collaborative knowledge building and learning
- Supportive team building
- New faculty/staff orientation

Works closely with PD Advisory Committee to:
- Provide leadership and oversight of PD,
- Provide a forum for new and innovative PD strategies,
- Plan and develop PD plan and activities that aligns with institutional goals/priorities and supports student success,
- Works to meet institution and department training needs,
- Allocate funds for PD activities,
- Designs and implements Flex with Advisory Comm,
- Selects, works with consultants, LMC faculty & staff to conduct trainings/workshops
- Oversees budget
- Stays current on PD best practices
- Distributes information re: PD activities and resources
- Maintains PD website

- Provide technical training/support for staff to enhance their understanding and use of technology as it applies to educational instruction and job performance; such as use of software, district data-bases, and new technologies for lab and classroom use,
- Supports faculty in use of technology for online/ hybrid courses,
- Provides technology orientations and trainings for all faculty and staff,
- Works one-on-one with faculty and staff, as appropriate.