

SECTION 5. LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Please briefly summarize how learning is assessed at the institution at the course, program, and/or college-wide level. In your response, include:

- Approximately what percentage of academic programs establish program-wide learning goals and conduct program-wide assessment towards those goals?
- What types of learning assessments are conducted?
- How frequently are those assessments conducted?
- What percentage of students are included in the assessment(s)?
- If the data apply only to a specific population (transfer track, developmental students, degree-seeking students only, etc.)

Maximum word count: 300

Student learning outcomes are assessed at the course, program and college-wide level. We define college-wide outcomes as our General Education outcomes since General Education requirements are common to all Associate Degrees and Transfer Studies Certificates. Los Medanos College has, since its inception, implemented an innovative and highly integrated General Education program, and has conducted ambitious assessments of student learning outcomes based on required criteria for all general education courses. We are currently conducting an assessment of students' ability to think creatively, communicate orally, and explore diverse perspectives. GE courses were randomly selected to submit videos of students giving a short speech on how the course influenced their views on diversity and global interdependence. These videos were analyzed by our GE committee using rubrics based on the AACU's VALUE rubrics to assess creative thinking, oral communication, and ability to take diverse perspectives. These rubrics brought our assessment in line with national trends in general education assessment. Results will be reported to the college community in Spring 2018, including feedback from a student focus group and faculty survey on General Education outcomes. In addition, 100% of our programs have program level outcomes which are assessed every five years with results published on our website. Program level assessments take into consideration degrees and certificates awarded, aggregation of course level outcomes in a program, and in some cases, feedback from program graduates. All course level outcomes are assessed at least once within a five year cycle tied to the revision of our course outlines of record, making changes based on those assessments. Given on-going assessment at so many levels, it is likely that most students are assessed at one or more of these levels at some point in their education at the college.

2. Describe how the institution works to improve course-level learning outcomes. You may wish to address:

- What supports faculty receive to improve their teaching, and/or how professional development is aligned to goals for improving learning at the course level
- How promotion/tenure and other institutional policies and systems support improvement in course-level learning outcomes
- How adjunct faculty are selected, supported, and evaluated based on student learning outcomes

Maximum word count: 200

Professional development and faculty leadership are the cornerstone of our assessment efforts at LMC. From the beginning, we recognized the need to provide focused support for faculty involvement in assessment. To that end, we have 3 faculty leadership positions for assessment, all of which have reassigned time. Faculty leaders sit on our Teaching and Learning Committee, and actively reach out to all faculty to provide support and professional development for assessing course level outcomes. They provide workshops, one to one assistance, provide models and assist with data collection and analysis. They maintain an excellent website on the services provided by the Teaching and Learning Committee, which is especially helpful for adjunct faculty, who are compensated for their participation in assessment. Under their leadership, we have moved from compliance to inquiry about how assessment results improve teaching and learning. One example of this effort is the random selection of course level assessment reports that are discussed by the committee, resulting in a rich dialogue on possibilities for continued improvement. TLC also offers professional development on a variety of topics, including aligning research questions with data collection methods, exploring equitable approaches to assessment, and choosing meaningful and manageable means of analyzing data.

3. Describe how the institution works to improve program-level learning outcomes. You may wish to address:

- How chairs or department deans are supported in and held accountable for improving program-level learning outcomes
- What structures/processes are in place to engage faculty in aligning their curriculum with program-level student learning objectives or addressing gaps in program-level learning outcomes

Maximum word count: 300

Program level learning outcomes are assessed in year five of a 5 year cycle of assessment and course outline revision; in years one through four, all courses are assessed. This allows course level data to inform program level assessment. Each year, department chairs meet with deans to review and discuss course level data; in year 5, this meeting focuses on program level assessment. Required monthly meetings for all department chairs are facilitated by deans and allow a regular forum for discussion and professional development, including discussions on program level assessment and ways in which data can be used for program improvement.

Faculty leaders have also attended national conferences hosted by the AACU to discuss assessment and teaching, and then host professional development workshops based on the new assessment level research they encounter at these conferences. All of these discussions may inform revision of existing courses or the creation of new courses and programs. Our course outlines of record are fully integrated with assessment, and require both course level outcomes, and alignment with program level outcomes. Curriculum Committee reviews the course outlines and ensure that this alignment is explicitly stated. Program level assessment reports are a required element in our Comprehensive Program Review, which occurs every 5 years in Year One of our cycle. So, programs are assessed in year 5, and the outcomes of those assessments are reported the following year. Programs are asked to analyze their outcomes, describe needed changes to their programs, explain challenges they encountered, and identify resources needed for improvement. Comprehensive Program Review reports are then looked at by our Planning Committee, which reports to our Shared Governance Council. By aggregating program level data, we have the ability to analyze how well we are doing in meeting institutional goals, and identify additional resources needed for improvement.

4. Describe how the institution works to improve college-wide learning outcomes. You may wish to address:

- How the college defines college-wide goals for improving learning outcomes and excellence in teaching
- What are the major gaps in learning outcomes at the college, how are those identified and how are they being addressed

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LMC currently defines college wide outcomes as our General Education outcomes. We have a General Education Committee that meets twice monthly to review any course that is being proposed or renewed as a general education course. Each course outline is examined to ensure that course level outcomes are integrated with five required general education criteria: college level reading, writing and speaking, interdisciplinary perspectives, critical and creative thinking, ethical implications, and diversity/global interdependence. In addition, there must be evidence that these outcomes are explicitly assessed in the course. Over the course of our five year assessment cycle, we assess each of the five criteria and report out to the college community on our findings. Our current assessment focuses on oral communication, creative thinking and diverse perspectives/global interdependence. We chose these in year 5 as a result of previous general education assessments that we felt had not adequately assessed these outcomes, e.g previous assessments of critical thinking, but not creative thinking and previous assessments of reading/writing, but not oral communication. Preliminary analysis indicates strengths in oral communication, but a need for greater emphasis on creative thinking. How to accomplish that will be the subject of future faculty meetings.

5. How has the college tracked and responded to achievement gaps in learning for different groups of students (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, income level, part-time non-traditional, etc.)? Where relevant, include key metrics around the relative scale and impact of specific interventions or programs designed to close achievement gaps.

Maximum word count: 250

Our Program Review process, which has consisted of a Comprehensive Review every five years with annual updates, includes analysis of data for each program on achievement gaps in success and completion rates. Feedback by deans to department chairs is provided in a rubric that explicitly references the extent to which this data is used in formulating program objectives. One example is the feedback provided to our World Languages department that indicated a significant achievement gap for African-American students in Spanish classes. The department responded by setting an objective in 2016 to increase the persistence and completion rates for African-American students. The following year, the department completion rate point gap showed a significant and positive change from the prior year. The department chair reports that the feedback provided spurred discussion in the department about strategies all faculty could implement to focus on success and retention of their African-American students, and this focus appears to have resulted in significant improvement of outcomes. This year, our Comprehensive Program Review data packet for the first time has been expanded to include not only data disaggregated by race/ethnicity, but also gender, disability, low-income status, foster youth and veterans. We anticipate this additional data will allow programs to broaden their perspective on who is and is not achieving desired outcomes, and ways in which faculty can design specific strategies to reach out to those most in need of additional support.