

# **Student Learning Outcomes: A new model of assessment**

Proposed Spring 2012  
by members of the  
Teaching and Learning Project:

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*Amended and passed by vote of the  
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# **Student Learning Outcomes: A new model of assessment**

## **I. OVERVIEW**

The Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) assessment initiative has been ongoing at Los Medanos College since 2002 when it was mandated by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). Following a year and a half (August 2010-December 2011) of institutional reflection and assessment of the existing assessment structure, the Teaching and Learning Project (TLP) now proposes to revise and streamline the assessment model into a well-defined, synchronized five-year cycle. We also propose to integrate SLO assessment more fully with the course outline revision, professional development and resource allocation processes by connecting it to the Comprehensive Unit/Program Review and Planning Report and Annual Update.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

The Teaching and Learning Project began in 2004 as a joint undertaking of the Academic Senate and the Shared Governance Council based on a proposal by the Academic Senate Task Force on Assessment. The task force had been established to respond to the 2002 ACCJC mandate to institute student learning outcomes assessment at all community colleges.

The model underwent minor revision in 2006 to situate assessment authority in the five Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLO) committees affiliated with the TLP. During the 2009-10 academic year, the TLP faced a challenge in dealing with the assessment model's leadership structure when no one applied to fill the vacancy after the original TLP faculty co-coordinators completed their terms and stepped down.

As a result of this faculty leadership void, the college appointed a manager to temporarily chair the TLP, and the Shared Governance Council charged the Teaching and Learning Project to:

- Create and implement a college-wide work plan and timeline for ongoing assessment of Institutional-, Program- and Course-level SLOs and related professional development to meet the accreditation timelines.
- Produce an expanded TLP "position paper," including structures, responsibilities and succession plans.
- Report assessment progress through quantitative and qualitative outcome findings related to ISLOs, PSLOs and CSLOs to the campus community each semester.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the TLP.

This proposal and its attached appendices is our response to those charges.

### **III. PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT**

This proposed revision of the current assessment model at LMC is based on the following set of principles of assessment passed by the Academic Senate on May 17, 2010.

Assessment is:

- A way to structure dialogue and reflection about teaching and learning with the aim of improving student learning.
- A way of encouraging wide participation across the entire educational community.
- An opportunity to make observations about student learning over time and in various contexts.
- A way to consider not only outcomes, but the experiences that lead to those outcomes.
- A way for faculty to investigate questions that are of importance to them.
- A way to guide professional development.
- A way to remain a fully accredited college.

Assessment is not:

- A means for evaluating faculty – data will be considered only in aggregate form, and will not be reviewed or used by management to evaluate individual faculty.
- A way to dictate what learning outcomes should be, what curriculum ought to be taught, or teaching methods used in the classroom.

### **IV. ASSESSMENT PLAN: AN INTEGRATED FIVE-YEAR CYCLE**

The proposed revision of the current assessment model at LMC is designed as a five-year cycle to coordinate with the state-mandated timeframe for revising course outlines of record. In addition it attempts to be as simple and sustainable a plan as possible by looking for economies of time for faculty and economies of money for the institution. Highlights of the revised process:

- A five-year cycle integrates assessment, course outline revision, program review and planning, professional development and the resource allocation process.
- Assignment of courses by departments into four course cohorts for purposes of assessment and course outline revision.
- Four years of assessment at the course level, assessing all CSLOs in all active courses in each of the four course cohorts. This achieves assessment of each course once in every five-year assessment cycle.
- One year of assessment at the program level, during year five, assessing all PSLOs in each instructional program. Student Service programs will assess all PSLOs once during the five year cycle as it fits best into the work flow for each of its programs.
- One or more years of assessment at the institution level each cycle, as determined by the General Education Committee, assessing all GE student learning outcomes.
- CSLO and PSLO assessment results, dialogue and improvement plans are documented in program review and planning reports, and posted on the college intranet.
- GE SLO assessment results, dialogue and improvement plans are documented in unit review and planning reports, and posted on the college intranet.
- Needs identified through the assessment process inform the writing of new program objectives through the program review process, and requests for professional development and resource allocation.

## **A. CSLO & PSLO assessment authority resides in departments/programs**

Assessment of course and program student learning outcomes is handled entirely at the department/program level and situated in the program review and planning process for the purpose of planning assessments and reporting results, dialogue and improvement. Individual departments/programs decide how to best assess their own courses/programs based on their specific disciplines and areas of expertise. Department chairs coordinate and facilitate the instructional assessment process. Program leads coordinate and facilitate the student service assessment process.

## **B. Course cohorts organize the instructional assessment process**

The plan requires instructional departments to place their courses into four relatively stable cohorts of roughly 25% each for assessment and course outline revision. Because departments and programs have different numbers of courses that may not be easily divisible by four, they may place courses into the four cohorts in a way that best works for the total number of courses to be assessed over four years. While most programs will place a single course into a single cohort and assess it sometime during a single academic year, some departments/programs may wish a more in-depth approach to assessment. Those that do might, for example, place a single course within two course cohorts to enable a two-year assessment process for that particular course. In such cases, course outline revision would follow the final year of assessment. Placement of courses within cohorts is entirely up to department discretion, keeping in mind that:

- All CSLOs in all courses must be assessed within the first four years of the five-year assessment cycle.
- It is desirable to keep course cohorts as stable as possible to adhere to the Title V course outline revision timeline, so moving courses from one cohort to another should be done only when absolutely necessary.

## **C. Course-level assessment process**

**1. Assess:** CSLO assessment for each course in a cohort would generally happen during one academic year, unless a course has been placed by a department into multiple cohorts for a more in-depth multiple-year assessment. Typically a course would be assessed in either the fall or the spring semester, but department faculty may also opt to assess a course during summer session. Some departments may opt to do a two-semester assessment during the year for depth, or to focus on specific SLOs — for example, assessing half their SLOs during one semester and the other half the following semester. All assessment design and methodology are determined by department faculty, so there may be other permutations that work well for a specific department or program. The goal has been to design as much flexibility as possible into the assessment process while maintaining a sustainable model in which all CSLOs in all courses can be assessed over four years.

**2. Dialogue:** Assessment results are shared with and discussed by faculty teaching course sections, and at department/program meetings where decisions about improvements plans are also discussed. A brief summary of the dialogue is documented in the Comprehensive Program/Unit Review and Planning Report or Yearly Update.

**3. Reporting and planning:** Assessment results, and improvement plans if needed, are documented in the Comprehensive Unit/Program Review and Planning Report or Yearly Update.

**4. Closing the loop:** The model calls for the revision of each course outline of record (COOR) to occur the year following CSLO assessment so that any applicable assessment

results may be used to inform changes in the COOR as determined appropriate at the department level. Such use of assessment data and dialogue in the curriculum revision process is one documented form of closing the assessment loop. Other documented improvements may also include revising course materials and instructional methods, or professional development. Assessment results may also be used as evidence to support funding requests related to professional development, staffing and resource allocations.

#### **D. Program-level assessment process for instructional and student service programs**

For the purpose of learning outcome assessment at LMC, a program shall be defined as:

- A program of study leading to a degree
- A program of study leading to a state-approved certificate
- An organized service or sequence of courses leading to a defined objective

This does not preclude the use of the term “program” at LMC in any way outside the assessment model, but clearly identifies for departments and student service areas what they must assess.

##### **a. Instructional program assessment**

**1. Assess:** Program-level SLO assessment is undertaken by programs during the fifth year of the assessment process cycle. (Departments without programs have no PSLOs to assess and therefore have a year free of SLO assessment responsibilities.) PSLO assessment may be completed using data collected from CSLO assessments during the previous four years and aggregated for program-wide analysis. In programs with capstone courses, a singular CSLO assessment may also be used for PSLO assessment as appropriate. Program faculty may also opt to design, implement and analyze assessments, in addition to or instead of, capstone or aggregated course data to assess their PSLOs, with support as needed from the district’s research office. Any such optional assessment design and methodology is determined by instructional program faculty.

**2. Dialogue:** Assessment results are shared with instructional program faculty and at department/program meetings where decisions about improvements plans are also discussed. A brief summary of the dialogue is also documented in the Comprehensive Program Review and Planning Report.

**3. Reporting and planning:** Assessment results, and improvement plans if needed, are documented in the Comprehensive Program Review and Planning Report.

**4. Closing the loop:** The fall semester following PSLO assessment, programs use PSLO results as the basis of the Comprehensive Program Review and Planning Report. That is also when many of the big changes would be initiated, informed by assessment findings, around redefining program requirements, rewriting PSLOs and creating new program objectives. This is a set of documented evidence of closing the loop. Assessment results may also be used as evidence to support funding requests related to professional development, staffing and resource allocations.

##### **b. Student Services program assessment**

The Student Services SLO Committee is comprised of representatives from most programs within the unit and has the responsibility to provide feedback and support the work of all program assessment. The committee meets regularly, sharing updates about individual SLO projects and information related to assessment outcomes.

**1. Assess:** Program assessment for each program/department is based on themes developed by the Student Services SLO Committee. The themes identify behaviors or proficiencies that are desired outcomes for students as a result of their experiences within

the Student Services programs. Since the formation of the SLO Committee, SLOs have been assessed on an ongoing two-year cycle, but effective with the adoption of this new model of assessment in the Fall of 2012, each program SLO will be assessed once within the five-year assessment cycle.

**2. Dialogue:** The format of the Student Services SLO Committee involves sharing updates about program assessment, making suggestions for direct and indirect measures of assessment, and reporting assessment results. All elements and phases of program assessment are shared internally within each program and, depending upon the size of the department, may involve each staff member.

**3. Reporting and planning:** Assessment results and improvement plans (if needed) are shared with the SLO Committee. Programs may choose to make modifications to the research question related to a specific theme, or to alter the assessment instruments if there is interest in changing the approach. If the results have sufficiently addressed the original SLO, a new project will be identified, again addressing one of the five themes. Student Services SLO projects are posted on the *InSite Portal* page for Student Services and are also highlighted in the Student Services newsletter “In Step with Student Services.” The newsletter is distributed to the entire campus via email.

**4. Closing the loop:** Assessment results are used by the Student Services departments/programs to modify information presented on forms, in workshops, and to strengthen and clarify communication of program expectations and/or instructions for students. The information is shared in the Comprehensive Program Review and Planning Report and the annual Program Review updates.

## **E. Institutional-level assessment process: GE student learning outcomes**

**1. Assess:** LMC’s General Education program is unique in that it integrates GE student learning outcomes at the course level, so CSLOs identified in GE course outlines of record are infused with the institution-level GE SLOs. A benefit of this integrated GE model is that when a general education course’s CSLOs are assessed it also captures assessment information about the GE student learning outcomes, which may then be aggregated and analyzed as desired by the GE faculty. The GE program is, however, currently under review by the Academic Senate, so determining a specific assessment approach is not advisable at this time since the program requirements, SLOs or model structure may change. Broadly, the GE Committee will decide during the first year of each five-year assessment cycle how it will approach the assessment of the GE program’s SLOs during that cycle to ensure completion of GE assessment by year five:

- a. In the current integrated general education model, a streamlined approach to GE program assessment could be completed during the fifth year of the cycle using data collected and aggregated from CSLO review the previous four years without any need for additional assessment.
- b. The GE Committee, in collaboration with GE faculty, may opt to design an assessment instrument or process *in addition to, or instead of*, the streamlined aggregated CSLO course data approach described above, with support as needed from the district’s research office. Any such optional assessment design and methodology is determined by general education program faculty.

**2. Dialogue:** During the first four years of the assessment cycle, the GE Program Coordinator and GE Committee plan opportunities for assessment dialogue and professional development as indicated by interim analysis of ongoing CSLO results and/or requests by GE faculty for professional development around general education SLOs. During the fifth year, when there is no course-level assessment, GE faculty complete GE program assessment and analysis based on the approach selected in year

one, evaluate the effectiveness the GE assessment process itself, and take initial steps in planning the next round of GE assessment, which will be decided in year one of the five-year cycle. At the beginning of the fall of year one of the assessment model, assessment results are discussed with all GE faculty at GE seminars, during Flex workshops and/or at other appropriate venues.

**3. Reporting and planning:** GE assessment results, dialogue, and improvement plans if needed, are documented in the Comprehensive Unit/Program Review and Planning Report of the General Education Committee.

**4. Closing the loop:** Individual GE faculty close the loop by implementing course-level improvement plans as needed, and discuss the ongoing progress of those improvements with other GE faculty. The General Education Committee takes note of common themes in GE assessment results and addresses the needs of GE faculty with professional development opportunities, and requests for necessary college resources. In addition, implementation of any needed GE program revision, and evaluation by GE faculty of the GE assessment process itself, are also documented evidence of closing the loop.

## **F. Program/Unit Review and Planning & Resource Allocation processes**

Program/Unit Review and Planning has long been an institutional priority at Los Medanos College. Several years ago, Yearly Updates were added to make the Comprehensive Program Review and Planning Report a dynamic and living document that departments and units use to guide their work. The program review process has required programs to analyze and comment on indirect measures of student learning, in the forms of persistence, retention and success rates, for example. This revision of the assessment model also houses the results of direct measures of student learning as determined by program and department faculty. The reports are posted on the college intranet for members of the college community to view, so the inclusion of assessment results will make them available to all constituencies, another accreditation requirement.

Programs and units are encouraged to use assessment results whenever appropriate to inform the writing of new program/unit objectives, and as evidence of need to request college resources for program improvement through the professional development, staffing request and resource allocation processes. This also documents “closing the loop” and gives a nod to accreditation standards to tie resource allocation to assessment and program improvement.

In this way Program/Unit Review and Planning Reports, filed online in an accessible electronic format, become a set of living, dynamic documents used for ongoing planning, assessment, review and improvement.

## **V. TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE**

We propose changing the name of the Teaching and Learning Project (TLP), which will continue to coordinate the assessment process, to the Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) for two reasons. First, “project” implies a task with an end, which flies in the face of accreditation standards that require assessment to be ongoing. The TLP began as a task force but has had regularly scheduled, open meetings with planned agenda and minutes since its inception. Second, it is more consistent with the naming convention of other similar assessment groups at other campuses. When the TLP was originally conceived, the Teaching and Learning Center on Level 1 of the Core used the acronym TLC. That is no longer the case now that it has been moved to Level 3 and renamed the Center for Academic Support.

### **A. TLC reporting relationship**

Teaching and Learning Project began in 2004 as a joint undertaking of the Academic Senate and the Shared Governance Council based on a proposal by the Academic Senate Task Force on



Assessment. The Teaching and Learning Committee will continue that role as a permanent ongoing committee with a dual reporting relationship to the Academic Senate and the Shared Governance Council, and will accept charges from both governance groups. While assessment is primarily a responsibility of faculty, and much of assessment relates to assessing student learning outcomes through courses, the accrediting commission also requires the assessment of SLOs for student services programs. The reporting relationship to the SGC underscores the fact that classified staff and management, and even students, have an important role to play in the assessment process.

## **B. TLC membership**

Since student learning outcome assessment is primarily a faculty responsibility, we propose the membership of the committee reflect that by increasing the proportion of faculty:

Teaching and Learning Committee chair, faculty reassigned responsibility  
Course-Program Assessment Coordinator, faculty reassigned responsibility  
General Education Program Assessment Coordinator, faculty reassigned responsibility

Developmental Education/ESL, faculty lead/designee appointed by DE/ESL committee  
Student Services, faculty lead/designee appointed by Student Services faculty  
Library and Learning Services, faculty/lead or designee appointed by LLS faculty

Department Chair representative, CTE voted by CTE department chairs  
Department Chair representative, LAS voted by LAS department chairs  
Part-time faculty at large (appointed by AS/compensated at NI rate with TLC funds)

Curriculum Committee, chair/designee appointed by Curriculum Committee  
Professional Development Advisory Committee, chair/designee appointed by PDAC  
Planning Committee, chair/designee appointed by Planning Committee  
Distance Education, chair/designee appointed by Distance Education Committee

Student Representative, appointed by Associated Students of LMC

Senior Dean, Instruction  
Senior Dean, Student Services  
Dean, Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Dean, Career-Technical Education

## **C. TLC role and responsibilities**

The Teaching and Learning Committee will coordinate college-wide assessment and assessment-related professional development efforts with the goal of improving teaching and learning. The TLC will facilitate the work of instructional departments responsible for assessing courses and programs, student service departments responsible for assessing programs, and the General Education Committee, responsible for assessing GE student learning outcomes college-wide. In this role, it will:

1. Provide consultation to departments and programs to support them in their assessment efforts in writing and revising student learning outcomes, designing assessment plans, and/or responding to assessment findings.
2. Monitor progress made by departments and programs toward assessing student learning outcomes, and improving teaching and learning.
3. Oversee development of the institutional portfolio that documents assessment work on campus, and make this portfolio available as evidence the college is meeting accreditation standards.

4. Coordinate professional development related to assessment in consultation with Professional Development Advisory Committee (PDAC).
5. Coordinate evaluation of the assessment model and processes on campus and make recommendations on effective practices and common areas of need.
6. Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the Teaching and Learning Committee.
7. Address assessment recommendations from, and make assessment reports to, the Shared Governance Council and the Academic Senate.
8. Establish a TLC leadership selection process to recruit and fill vacancies, and make recommendations to the Academic Senate.

#### **D. TLC Leadership Team: terms, succession and support**

The Teaching and Learning Committee leadership team will be comprised of three members: the TLC Chair, the Course-Program Assessment Coordinator and the GE Program Assessment Coordinator. Members of the leadership team will be recommended by the TLC, approved by the Academic Senate and appointed by the college president.

1. Each leadership position will carry a two-year term, and there will be an attempt during implementation of this new model to stagger the terms so that at least one of the three positions will be held by someone with assessment leadership experience. Either increasing or decreasing the length of term by a year at the start is acceptable, depending on circumstances at the time. If the staggering gets out of sync by an early retirement of a leader, the TLC will consider adjusting the length of term of either the replacement or a current leader to re-establish the stagger.
2. Open positions should be announced by Week 4 of the semester and recruited as early in the semester as possible to allow selected faculty to adjust their course load the following semester.
3. Each leadership position will carry reassigned time (load) mutually agreed upon by the Teaching and Learning Committee and the college president. Job shadowing (and commensurate load splitting) at the end of a term to train a successor and ensure a smooth transition is encouraged but not mandatory.
4. This proposal also carries with it the expectation of support from management for the following:
  - a. An ongoing TLC budget with funding to support professional development opportunities in assessment for members of the leadership team and the committee, as well as for faculty and staff engaging in assessment activities.
  - b. A TLC budget line item for hourly coaching as needed beyond the coaching responsibilities of the TLC leadership for times when assessment assistance and professional development is in great demand.
  - c. Administrative support for note-taking during TLC meetings, updating the website and other necessary clerical functions.

#### **E. TLC Chair responsibilities**

1. Chair the TLC, including:
  - a. Convene meetings at least once per month, additionally as needed to complete the charge and responsibilities of the TLC.
  - b. Handle agenda, minutes and posting of TLC information to the website with clerical support.

- c. Convene interim meetings of the leadership team as needed.
2. Lead the TLC in addressing recommendations from the Shared Governance Council and the Academic Senate, and attend meetings as needed to report progress.
3. Act as a liaison with management, the Professional Development Committee and the Curriculum Committee. Attend meetings as needed to report.
4. Provide information on accreditation standards related to assessment and publicize the assessment cycle deadlines.
5. Compile the institutional portfolio that documents assessment work on campus, and make this portfolio available as evidence that the college is meeting accreditation standards, with clerical support as needed.
6. Coordinate evaluation of the assessment process on campus and make recommendations, in collaboration with the TLC, of effective practices and common areas of need.
7. Attend assessment meetings and conferences off campus as time and funding allow.

#### **F. Course-Program Assessment Coordinator responsibilities**

1. In conjunction with the members of the TLC and affiliated committees and department chairs, provide support and coordination for the assessment of SLOs at the course and program level.
2. Provide coaching for faculty, individually and departmentally, as they develop SLOs, assessment tools, proficiency levels, and data analysis for dialogue and feedback to close the loop on assessment.
3. Forward, schedule, receive and disseminate CSLO/PSLO related assessment research requests to the district research office through the LMC planning coordinator.
4. Identify and coordinate professional development opportunities for faculty and staff on course- and program-level SLO development and assessment.
5. Act as a liaison with the Department Chair group and attend department chair meetings.
6. Advocate faculty and staff needs related to assessment to the TLC.
7. Assist the TLC chair in compiling the institutional portfolio that documents assessment work on campus by completing the CSLO/PSLO portion of the assessment portfolio.
8. Attend regular TLC meetings and meetings of the TLC leadership team as needed.
9. Attend assessment meetings and conferences off campus as time and funding allow.

#### **G. General Education Program Assessment Coordinator responsibilities**

1. In conjunction with the members of the GE Committee, the GE chair will provide support and coordination for the assessment of SLOs at the institutional level.
2. Provide coaching for faculty as they develop GE SLOs, assessment tools, proficiency levels, and data analysis for dialogue and feedback to close the loop on assessment.
3. Forward, schedule, receive and disseminate GE related assessment research requests to the district research office through the LMC planning coordinator.
4. Identify and coordinate professional development opportunities for GE faculty and staff on SLO development and assessment.

5. Advocate GE needs related to assessment to the TLC.
6. Assist the TLC chair in compiling the institutional portfolio that documents assessment work on campus by completing the GE portion of the assessment portfolio.
7. Attend regular TLC meetings and meetings of the TLC leadership team as needed.
8. Attend assessment meetings and conferences off campus as time and funding allow.

#### **H. Evaluation of the assessment model and process**

One of the responsibilities of the Teaching and Learning Committee is to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the TLC itself and conduct ongoing evaluation of the assessment model and processes. Since this position paper was commissioned by the Shared Governance Council as a result of issues involving sustainability of the assessment model's structure and processes, and the Faculty Assessment Survey found the assessment process too complicated, evaluation should include analysis of the following at a minimum:

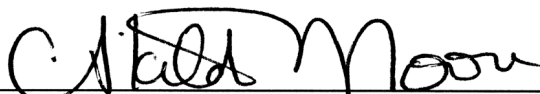
- Structural effectiveness of the Teaching and Learning Committee: leadership, membership and ongoing operations.
- Effectiveness of the assessment process itself: simplicity and sustainability.
- Effectiveness of the use of assessment results: improvement and communication.
- Effectiveness of the model's integration with other college processes: course outline revision, program review, professional development and requests for resources.

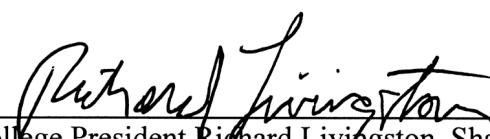
Evaluation of the assessment process should be ongoing and include surveys of those involved in the assessment process. The recommended evaluation timeline is fall of year three (mid-cycle) and spring of year five (end of cycle), with reports issued to the college community the following semesters.

#### **VI. POSITION PAPER APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENTATION**

This proposal is in response to a charge from the Shared Governance Council to write a "position paper" updating the assessment processes on campus. Since the former governance structure for writing and submitting a "position paper" via College Policy Assembly no longer exists, this proposal, "Position Paper 11/12-1," shall be considered accepted and in force when both the Academic Senate and the Shared Governance Council pass it by majority vote, and the college president endorses it. That acceptance will be verified by the signatures of the president of the Academic Senate and the chair of the Shared Governance Council.

Members of the current Teaching and Learning Project will create implementation plans during Spring 2012 for adoption of the new model of assessment beginning in Fall 2012.

  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 5/31/12  
 Academic Senate President Akilah Moore date

  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 5/25/12  
 College President Richard Livingston, Shared Governance Council chair date

## APPENDIX I: Assessment Mandates and Associated Responsibilities

### ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENT

The proposed revision of the current assessment model at LMC is based on the following requirements of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC):

*Excerpts of standards related to Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment*

**Introduction:** The primary purpose of an ACCJC-accredited institution is to foster learning in its students. An effective institution ensures that its resources and processes support student learning, continuously assesses that learning, and pursues institutional excellence and improvement.

**Standard II. A.1.c.** 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.

**Standard II A.2.b.** The institution relies on faculty expertise and the assistance of advisory committees when appropriate to identify competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, programs including general and vocational education, and degrees. The institution regularly assesses student progress towards achieving those outcomes.

**Standard II A.2.f.** The institution engages in ongoing, systematic evaluation and integrated planning to assure currency and measure achievement of its stated student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, programs including general and vocational education, and degrees. The institution systematically strives to improve those outcomes and makes the results available to appropriate constituencies.

**Standard II A.6.** The institution describes its degrees and certificates in terms of their purpose, content, course requirements, and expected student learning outcomes. In every class section students receive a course syllabus that specifies learning outcomes.

### INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR ASSESSMENT

The proposed revision of the current assessment model at LMC reflects one of the college's masterplan goals, and is based on the following list of expectations of support from the college and the district:

#### **Masterplan Goal 6**

Establish a culture of research and planning, implementing, assessing, and improving.

#### **College support**

1. College resources for assessment planning and measuring activities at the course-level, program-level and institutional level improvement as identified by faculty and departments responsible for assessment and documented in program review and planning reports.

**Standard I.B:** The institution demonstrates a conscious effort to produce and support student learning, measures that learning, assesses how well learning is occurring, and

makes changes to improve student learning. The institution also organizes its key processes and allocates its resources to effectively support student learning.

2. College resources for professional development identified through the assessment process and documented in program review and planning reports.

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

3. College resources for course-level, program-level and institutional level improvement identified through the assessment process and documented in program review and planning reports.

**Standard I.B:** The institution demonstrates a conscious effort to produce and support student learning, measures that learning, assesses how well learning is occurring, and makes changes to improve student learning. The institution also organizes its key processes and allocates its resources to effectively support student learning.

**Standard III overview:** The institution effectively uses its human, physical, technology, and financial resources to achieve its broad educational purposes, including stated student learning outcomes, and to improve institutional effectiveness.

## ASSESSMENT RESPONSIBILITY

The proposed revision of the current assessment model at LMC is based on the following assumptions of responsibility:

1. Departments have primary responsibility for direct assessment of student learning outcomes at the course and program level. The following policy actions support this responsibility:

■ United Faculty contract currently in force assigns responsibility for coordinating assessment to Department Chairs in their list of duties.

*6.2.3.2.26: Oversee and facilitate the development and assessment of course and program-level student learning outcomes.*

■ LMC Academic Senate vote May 17, 2010 on TLP Coordinator duties and related policies included language assigning responsibility for course-level and program-level assessment to departments.

Motion is moved, seconded and passed to approve the revised edition of the Teaching and Learning Project Roles and Responsibilities for TLP Lead. Guiding excerpt:

***Leadership. 3.B.** For the course and program level SLOs, the work and documentation will be department driven. The TLP lead(s) will work in conjunction with the department chair(s). Each department will submit documentation of their cycle with possible areas of problematic service or pedagogy identified, changes that are attempted and analyzed for effectiveness, in hope of eventually attaining general student or institutional improvement in these areas. The department will decide what works best for that department's students.*

2. Individual faculty members have primary responsibility for direct assessment of student learning outcomes at all levels. The following policy actions support this responsibility:

- United Faculty contract currently in force assigns responsibility for evaluating student work to faculty in their list of duties.

*7.10 RESPONSIBILITIES: It is agreed that all faculty have within their professional responsibilities, for which no direct load credit is ordinarily assigned, such matters as preparation for classes or conferences, evaluating student work, attending management-called meetings, preparing and submitting required reports, participating in staff development activities, in advising students, and in curriculum development and review.*

- Academic Senate for California Community Colleges adopted the “Guiding Principles for SLO Assessment” paper, Resolution 09.06 Fall 2010 asserting that faculty have primary responsibility for assessment of student learning outcomes:

*Above all, the paper promotes and emphasizes the primary role of faculty in all SLO development and assessment activities and the importance of faculty participation and involvement in the development and implementation of assessment processes.*

3. The Contra Costa Community College District office has primary responsibility to provide Los Medanos College department faculty with indirect measures of student learning that are both regularly gathered and reported by the college, and that are requested by departments and programs to provide context to the direct measures of student learning gathered by faculty at the course and program level. The following supports this responsibility:

- April 19, 2011 memo from District Chancellor Helen Benjamin

*Concurrent with the District Office administrative restructuring, the District as a whole will be consolidating and reorganizing the research and planning functions. The proposed organization chart includes a new District-level senior dean position. Reporting to the new VC/ET, this position will be responsible for coordination, management and administration of both the daily and long-term research and planning needs for the District and all three colleges.*

- The college’s former Office of Research and Planning, which was disbanded July 1, 2011, had the following research program description and mission statement, which we fully expect the new district research and planning office is subsuming as a consequence of the district reorganization noted above:

**Mission statement:** *The Office of Institutional Research is committed in providing information to improve the effectiveness of the institution in the areas of inquiry, assessment, and improving student learning and practices.*

**Program description:** *The Office of Institutional Research provides the college community, including college Departments, Committees, Task Groups, Offices, and/or college personnel with information for purposes of evaluation, planning and improving.*

APPENDIX II

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness – Part III: Student Learning Outcomes

(See cover letter for how to use this rubric.)

Levels of Implementation	<b>Characteristics of Institutional Effectiveness in Student Learning Outcomes Updated May 2011</b> <i>(Sample institutional behaviors)</i>
<b>Awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is preliminary, investigative dialogue about student learning outcomes.</li> <li>• There is recognition of existing practices such as course objectives and how they relate to student learning outcomes.</li> <li>• There is exploration of models, definitions, and issues taking place by a few people.</li> <li>• Pilot projects and efforts may be in progress.</li> <li>• The college has discussed whether to define student learning outcomes at the level of some courses or programs or degrees; where to begin.</li> </ul>
<b>Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• College has established an institutional framework for definition of student learning outcomes (where to start), how to extend, and timeline.</li> <li>• College has established authentic assessment strategies for assessing student learning outcomes as appropriate to intended course, program, and degree learning outcomes.</li> <li>• Existing organizational structures (e.g. Senate, Curriculum Committee) are supporting strategies for student learning outcomes definition and assessment.</li> <li>• Leadership groups (e.g. Academic Senate and administration), have accepted responsibility for student learning outcomes implementation.</li> <li>• Appropriate resources are being allocated to support student learning outcomes and assessment.</li> <li>• Faculty and staff are fully engaged in student learning outcomes development.</li> </ul>
<b>Proficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student learning outcomes and authentic assessment are in place for courses, programs and degrees.</li> <li>• There is widespread institutional dialogue about the results <i>of assessment and identification of gaps.</i></li> <li>• Decision-making includes dialogue on the results of assessment and is purposefully directed toward <i>aligning institution-wide practices to support and improve</i> student learning.</li> <li>• Appropriate resources continue to be allocated and fine-tuned.</li> <li>• Comprehensive assessment reports exist and are completed <i>and updated</i> on a regular basis.</li> <li>• Course student learning outcomes are aligned with degree student learning outcomes.</li> <li>• Students demonstrate awareness of goals and purposes of courses and programs in which they are enrolled.</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student learning outcomes and assessment are ongoing, systematic and used for continuous quality improvement.</li> <li>• Dialogue about student learning is ongoing, pervasive and robust.</li> <li>• <i>Evaluation of student learning outcomes processes.</i></li> <li>• Evaluation and fine-tuning of organizational structures to support student learning is ongoing.</li> <li>• Student learning improvement is a visible priority in all practices and structures across the college.</li> <li>• Learning outcomes are specifically linked to program reviews.</li> </ul>



### **APPENDIX III: Assessment Timeline at LMC**

The Teaching and Learning Project began in 2004 as a joint undertaking of the Academic Senate and the Shared Governance Council based on a proposal by the Academic Senate Task Force on Assessment, established to respond to the 2002 ACCJC mandate to establish student learning outcomes assessment at all community colleges.

#### ***Chronology of major activities***

- Summer 2002            Faculty and administrators attend the American Association for Higher Education Assessment Conference in Boston.
- Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) revises standards and requires all community colleges to respond to new mandate for student learning outcomes assessment in upcoming self-studies. It establishes discrete levels of assessment implementation as awareness, development, proficiency and sustainable continuous quality improvement and expects colleges to reach proficiency in 10 years, by the fall of 2012.
- Fall 2002                Academic Senate passes resolution to form a task force on assessment.
- Spring 2004            Academic Senate approves a proposal establishing Teaching and Learning Project, a collaborative project of the Senate, administration and student services, charged with coordinating assessment efforts at the college.
- Curriculum Committee revises the course outline of record (COOR) form to require course-level SLOs be aligned with Institution-level and Program-level SLOs, and include outcomes, assessment criteria, SLO-based grading, with implementation phased in during a four-year period through spring 2008.
- Fall 2004                TLP begins meeting, working to ensure LMC meets accreditation standards by 2008, monitoring development of “institutional level” student learning outcomes (ISLOs) in the following areas: General Education, Occupational Education, Developmental Education, Student Services and Library & Learning Services.
- ISLO assessment pilots begin, starting with GE; ongoing DE assessment becomes part of ISLO assessment initiative
- Fall 2006                Control over assessment moves to the five ISLO committees which are empowered to negotiate research agendas with the Office of Institutional Research to investigate indirect measures of student learning, coordinate pilots in the direct assessment of student learning, and suggest qualitative measures such as focus groups or surveys to capture student perception of their learning. This shift in committee charge and responsibility was approved by all five committees and the Academic Senate.
- Program-level assessment becomes integral part of program review. Program-level student learning outcomes (PSLOs) and assessment plans are posted on the LMC intranet, and PSLOs are also included in the LMC catalog.

Spring 2007	TLP analysis of academic program PSLOs and assessment plans for accreditation self-study.
Fall 2007	GE Program Coordinator begins as part of assessment leadership team; GE assessment/professional development seminars begin.
Fall 2008	<p>Accreditation team visits and finds college on target with program- and institutional SLO assessment, but deficient in course-level SLO assessment with only 25% of COORs even containing CSLOs. ACCJC calls for development and implementation of CSLO assessment to reach proficiency requirements by Fall 2012.</p> <p>Faculty coaches begin offering support for assessment of PSLOs.</p>
Spring 2009	Accreditation Response Task Force responds to accreditation recommendation regarding course level assessment and plans next phase of CSLO assessment, determining that course outlines will be updated with SLOs by Jan. 29, 2010. Also develops a plan to determine how the assessment cycle will be completed by every program/unit on campus by the mid-term report. These plans were included in the report due to the Commission by Oct. 15, 2009.
Summer 2009	Course-level assessment software system (CLASS) developed in-house and alpha-testing begins with pilot assessments of spring 2009 courses.
Fall 2009	<p>Professional development around the use of CLASS and additional beta testing in its use for assessment reporting.</p> <p>In wake of vacuum of faculty leadership for assessment, college appoints a manager to chair the Teaching and Learning Project. TLP also begins work to revise job description/responsibilities of TLP chair.</p>
Spring 2010	<p>CLASS trainings and assessment coaching for pilot of course assessment; CSLO lead hired.</p> <p>A total of 599 of 608 course outlines were revised by faculty and approved by the Curriculum Committee by the Spring 2010 deadline.</p> <p>New job description for TLP chair sent to Academic Senate, which revises the proposal and passes Principles of Assessment statement. No one applies for the TLP chair position.</p> <p>TLP collaborates on RP technical assistance grant proposal, Bridging Information, Research and Culture (BRIC), which includes an assessment component. LMC receives the grant.</p>
Fall 2010	<p>TLP begins year with interim chair handling limited responsibilities, and begins evaluation of the assessment model and associated reporting processes in response to SGC charges to create an assessment timeline, write and expanded assessment position paper, report assessment progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the TLP.</p> <p>TLP participates in opening BRIC technical assistance workshop.</p>

TLP decides to discontinue use of CLASS at the end of the semester and move to the use of paper forms saved electronically to the college's P-Drive, a public website.

TLP redefines the term "program" for purposes of assessment.

CSLO lead offers coaching and professional development for faculty assessing their courses.

Spring 2011

TLP participates in BRIC technical assistance workshop focusing on assessment; some members also attend other BRIC workshops on college planning and institutional effectiveness.

TLP begins floating for feedback streamlined assessment model with a well-defined five-year cycle that integrates SLO assessment more fully with the course outline revision, professional development and resource allocation processes by connecting it to the Unit/Program Review and Planning Report and Annual Update.

TLP conducts extensive Faculty Survey on Assessment.

CSLO lead offers coaching and professional development for faculty assessing their courses.

Fall 2011

TLP conducts first Flex Assessment Day.

CSLO lead offers coaching and professional development for faculty assessing their courses.

TLP chair offers PSLO coaching and professional development for faculty assessing their programs.

TLP reports results of Faculty Survey on Assessment.

TLP participates in final BRIC technical assistance workshop on communication, and reports summary of progress at meeting open to all members of the college community.

Spring 2012

TLP conducts second Flex Assessment Day.

CSLO lead offers coaching and professional development for faculty assessing their courses.

TLP chair offers PSLO coaching and professional development for faculty assessing their programs.

TLP presents position paper "Student Learning Outcomes: A new model of assessment" to the college community.

## APPENDIX IV: For further information on assessment at LMC

(underlined text denotes hyperlinks to websites and/or document downloads)

### I. Assessment/Teaching and Learning Project Website

<http://www.losmedanos.edu/intra-out/tlp/default.asp>

#### *Home page*

- [Brief History of Assessment at LMC, 2002-2006](#) (two-page document)
- [Institutional Dialogue on Assessment: “Documenting the Institutional Dialogue on Assessment of Student Learning,” 2002-2008](#) (six-page calendar)
- [Timeline for Assessment, Fall 2004-Fall 2007](#) (one-page document)
- Board Reports on Assessment at LMC: [SP06](#), [SP07](#), [SP08](#)
- Progress Reports for Resource Allocation: [2003-04](#), [2004-05](#), [2005-06](#), [2006-07](#)

#### *About TLP*

- [Membership and Charge](#)
- [Bridging Research, Information and Culture Initiative: Technical Assistance Program Application](#) (five-page downloadable document)
  - [BRIC-TLP Retreat 1-28-11](#)
  - [BRIC-TLP Retreat Agenda 3-18-11](#)
- TLP Minutes, Fall 2004-Fall 2011 (individual meeting documents by specific date)

#### *Institution-level Assessment*

1. Developmental Education: [Membership and Charge of the DE Committee](#); [DE ISLOs](#); [DE Leadership](#); [Developmental Ed website](#)

- Direct Measures of Learning: DE Assessment Reports for “capstone” courses  
Math 30: [FA04](#), [SP05](#), [FA05](#), [SP06](#)  
Eng 90: [SP05](#), [FA05](#), [FA06](#), [FA08](#)
- Indirect and Qualitative Measures of Learning  
[DE Research Agenda](#) (aligned with ISLOs)  
[Persistence Study FA03-FA06](#)  
[Survey of “Effective Learning” Habits, FA06](#)

2. General Education: [Membership and Charge of the GE Committee](#); [GE ISLOs](#); [GE Coordinator](#); [11-year assessment plan](#); [General Education website](#)

- GE Assessment Reports from pilot teaching communities  
Biological Sciences, [FA06-SP07](#)  
Creative Arts and Humanities, [SP04-SP07](#), [gallery of assessment projects](#)  
Ethnic Studies, [SP04-05](#)  
Social Sciences, [SP05-06](#)
- SP08 GE SLO Assessment Seminar Worksheets:  
[Seminar 1](#), [Seminar 2](#), [Seminar 3](#)

- ❑ SP08 GE Assessment Reports:
  - Communication/Critical Thinking, SP08
  - Biological/Physical Sciences, SP08
  - Creative Arts/Humanities, SP08
  - Behavioral/Social Sciences, SP08
- ❑ FA08 GE SLO Assessment Seminar Worksheets:
  - Seminar 1, Seminar 2, Seminar 3
- ❑ SP08 GE Assessment Reports:
  - Communication/Critical Thinking, FA08
  - Biological/Physical Sciences, FA08
  - Creative Arts/Humanities, FA08
  - Behavioral/Social Sciences, FA08

3. Occupational Education: Membership and Charge of the Occ. Ed. Committee; Occ. Ed. ISLOs; Occupational Education Assessment Coaches' Job Description

- ❑ Occ. Ed. Assessment Reports
  - Nursing, FA05-06
  - Travel, FA08
  - Auto Tech, FA08
  - PTEC, FA08
  - Child Development, FA08
  - Business, FA08

4. Student Services: Membership and Charge of the Student Services SLO Committee; Student Services ISLOs

- ❑ Student Services Assessment Reports
  - EOP&S, SP07
  - Outreach, FA07
  - Counseling, FA08
  - DSP&S, FA08
  - Information Center, FA08
  - Financial Aid, FA08
  - Career and Assessment Center, FA08

5. Library and Learning Support Services: Membership and Charge of the L&LSS Committee; L&LSS ISLOs

- ❑ L&LSS Minutes: 2.22.08; 4.25.08
- ❑ L&LSS Assessment Reports
  - Reading and Writing Center, SP05
  - Math Lab, FA06
  - Counseling, FA08

### ***Program-level Assessment***

Program-level assessment became an integral part of program review in Fall 2006. Program level SLOs (PSLOs) and assessment plans are posted on the LMC intranet under Planning. PSLOs are also included in the LMC catalog.

- ❑ [Two-year Assessment Cycle for Program Assessment](#)
- ❑ [Program Assessment Plan Grid](#)
- ❑ Program-level assessment reports that are not part of institution-level SLO assessment are included here — Transfer Math Program: Statistics [SP07-SP08](#)

### ***Course-level Assessment***

The Curriculum Committee revised the course outline form to include outcomes, assessment criteria, SLO-based grading in spring 2004, with implementation phased in during a four-year period through spring 2008.

- ❑ [Course Outline of Record Form](#)
- ❑ [Brief History of Instituting Course-Level Assessment at LMC](#)
- ❑ Course-level assessment reports that are not part of institution- or program-level SLO assessment are included here:
  - Bio 21, [SP07](#)
  - English 70, [FA04](#)
  - Math 25, [SP03](#), [FA04](#), [FA06](#), [FA07](#)
- ❑ In Spring 2009, an Accreditation Response Task Force responded to an accreditation recommendation regarding course-level assessment. See below for details.

### ***Progress Gauge***

An online gauge measures department-by-department progress of reaching the college assessment goal of assessing all 611 active courses at least one by the end of spring 2013. The interim goal is to assess two-third of the courses in each department by the end of spring 2012.

### ***Resources***

- ❑ [California Assessment Institute's rubric for assessing institutional progress on assessment](#)
- ❑ [Janet Fulk's website on assessment](#) (*advocate and expert on SLO assessment*)
- ❑ [Examples of rubrics from CSU website](#)
- ❑ [Case studies on assessment](#) (*from the Center for Student Success website of the Research and Planning Group for CA Community College*)

## II. Accreditation Website

<http://www.losmedanos.edu/intra-out/accred/default.asp>

### *Home page information related to assessment*

- [LMC Accreditation Focused Midterm Report October 2011 – DRAFT](#)
- [LMC Follow-up Report October 2010](#)
- [Accreditation Reponse Task Force](#)
  - [Midterm Report September 2009](#)
    - [Midterm Report Evidence](#) (regarding COOR and CLASS)
    - ART agenda and minutes, March – October 2009 (individual meeting documents by specific date)
- [SLO Software Development Timeline](#)
- [Course-level Assessment Implementation Timeline](#)
- [COORs outline update progress gauge](#)

## III. LMC Public Drive (P Drive)

<http://remote.losmedanos.edu> (secure password sign in, then follow link to P Drive)

### *Assessment at LMC folder\*

- [ACCJC Documents](#): Handbook and other documents for reference
- [Articles and Research](#): Documents for learning and support
- [Assessment model](#): New position paper
- [Assessment survey](#): Faculty survey on assessment results and comments
- [Course Level Assessment](#): Department folders with assessment reports by course
- [Forms and Templates](#)
- [PSLO Assessment Reports 2010-11](#): Instructional and non-instructional
- [PSLO Assessment Reports 2011-12](#): Instructional and non-instructional

### *Occupational Education*

- [Occ Ed grid updated 12-9-08](#): PSLO Assessment Projects – Progress & Coaching Grid

## IV. Course-Level Assessment Software System (CLASS)

<http://remote.losmedanos.edu> (secure password sign in, then follow link to CLASS)

Much of the course-level assessment data and reporting for Spring 2009-Fall 2010 was completed in the CLASS software developed in house. As a result of technological issues and faculty concerns about the reporting of data in CLASS, the software system was abandoned and faculty completed assessment reports using Microsoft Word documents instead, and posted them to the LMC Public Drive. For security reasons, results in CLASS are viewable only to the faculty who completed the assessment reports. However, a complete listing of course assessments completed in CLASS is viewable to everyone logging in.

## APPENDIX V: Faculty Survey on Assessment, Executive Summary

The Faculty Survey on Assessment, administered during the Spring of 2011, satisfies both the ACCJC rubric (see Appendix II, p. 1) — under the category of Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement, which calls for the “evaluation of student learning outcomes processes” — and the LMC Shared Governance Council charge (see Background, p. 1) to “evaluate the effectiveness of the TLP.”

The 37-question survey was completed by 168 full-time and adjunct faculty, many of who also took the time to write 821 related comments:

Full-time faculty: 97 (87.4 percent of 111 full-timers)

Adjunct faculty: 70 (24.6% of 285 adjuncts)

Not specified: 1

Of those completing the survey, 53.9 percent reported teaching at the community college level for one to 10 years, and 46.1 percent reported teaching 11 or more years, with 16.2 percent teaching more than 20 years.

Among the notable survey findings:

■ Despite faculty concerns over the years about the accreditation commission’s assessment initiative, a majority of faculty responding to question number 6 reported they found course-level assessment useful in making changes to their instructional methods and/or course structure.

■ Most full-time faculty responding to questions 31 and 32 think the assessment model we have been creating piece by piece since 2004 is confusing and/or complicated, and support revision of the assessment model and its timeline structure. Many comments speak to the need for simplicity and flexibility in a new model.

■ Finding time for assessment is a considerable issue with faculty, and those responding to question 34 support the use of institutional flex time for assessment, as well as integrating the course- and program-level assessment dialogue into regular department meetings.

■ Leadership in assessment at the college level is still an area in which few faculty express an interest. Only 15.7 percent of full-time faculty and 22.4 percent of adjuncts responding to question number 24 are either very interested in, or willing to take a turn at, assessment leadership at the college level. However, many more full-time faculty (37.1 percent) and fewer adjuncts (10.3 percent) are willing to lead assessment at the department or program level.

Those interested in a detailed look at the survey results can find both the raw data (a 41-page PDF of the Survey Monkey results) and the verbatim survey comments (a 58-page PDF of a Word document) on the college’s intranet, the LMC Public Drive. It is located in the “Assessment at LMC” folder in a sub-folder labeled “Assessment survey.”

Here is an abbreviated section-by-section synthesis of the survey and comments:



## **I. ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES AND PARTICIPATION**

Questions 1 and 2 were designed to ascertain work status and number of years teaching at the community college level, since we wondered whether those characteristics might be relevant depending on the nature of each survey question. Interested readers may view the raw data of the survey on the P-Drive to see the part-time/full-time response breakdown of each question, as well as the associated comments.

There is a high level of participation by full-time faculty in assessment, especially at the course level: of those responding, 86.6 percent have written CSLOs and 73.3 percent have assessed them. Given the fact that part-timers often have competing requests for their time at different colleges, it is interesting to note that so many are involved in the assessment process here: 41.8 percent report they have participated in writing CSLOs and 48.5 percent report they have assessed them. While just 25 percent of adjuncts completed the survey, this represents active assessment participation of about 10 percent of the total adjuncts on staff during Spring 2010.

## **II. MOTIVATION IN ASSESSING AND IMPROVING SLOs**

The most important factor, by far, in motivating both full-time (65.3 percent) and part-time (78.8 percent) instructors to assess and improve student learning outcomes in their courses is the opportunity to discover what works and what does not work in the classroom. A close second is measurable improvement in learning, 52.1 and 75.4 percent respectively. Also important to full-time (51.6 percent) and part-time (53 percent) faculty is the opportunity to collaborate with others in their department or program.

A majority of faculty responding to question 6 found assessment useful and made changes in instructional methods and course structure. And many reported that their departments or programs made changes in course outlines, in student learning outcome statements and in the sequence of courses or the program requirements. Still, 31 faculty members who participated in assessment at some level reported the information was not useful at all so they did not make any changes. This is perhaps summed up best in question 7: How useful to you has the assessment process been with regard to what you learned about your own teaching? While 18.4 percent reported it was very useful and 41.1 percent found it somewhat useful, 21.5 percent said it was not useful at all. There were similar results for question 8 that attempted to determine the level of meaningful dialogue with colleagues as part of the assessment process: 25.9 percent found the dialogue very meaningful, 45 percent found it somewhat meaningful, but 16.5 percent reported there was no meaningful dialogue. The comments may shed some light on the issue of a lack of meaningful dialogue: many courses at LMC are single sections, or are specialized and taught by just one instructor, so some reported that there is no opportunity for dialogue in those cases.

Although the response was higher from the full-time faculty (68.9 percent) than part-timers (47.6 percent), a solid majority reported having flexibility in choosing an assessment instrument. That difference is to be expected as full-timers usually take the lead in organizing the assessment processes within their programs and departments.

There are a wide variety of individual comments (49 and 68 respectively) on question 10: What assessment techniques should be available? And question 11: Do you have any suggestions for improving the assessment process? For details see the verbatim survey comments document on the college's P-Drive.

### **III. COMMUNICATION, CLARITY AND SUPPORT**

A majority of faculty responding reported receiving the following types of communication, information and/or support regarding the assessment process on campus:

- E-mail memos and correspondences
- Regular campus-mail memos and correspondences
- Assessment camps/workshops and/or individual coaching
- Presentations, reports and/or Q&As at department or department chair meetings

And full-time faculty members (42.9 percent) are much more likely than part-time faculty (28 percent) to have heard assessment presentations, reports and/or Q&As at Academic Senate, GE, CTE or other campus meetings.

Despite all the avenues of campus communication regarding assessment over the years, only 26.5 percent of faculty reported they feel very informed about the assessment initiative at LMC. A majority (59.4 percent) reported they feel somewhat informed. This may reflect the confusing nature of the assessment model as it has grown in fits and starts since 2002.

Because the assessment initiative has been the subject of concern among faculty since its inception, question 14 sought to assess how comfortable they felt expressing positive or negative feedback to members of the Teaching and Learning Project responsible for its development. While more than half (50.3 percent) reported feeling either very or somewhat comfortable, nearly a quarter of faculty (23.2 percent) reported they were not comfortable sharing their comments. But those who did share their feedback (45.1 percent) reported members of the TLP were either very or somewhat responsive to their concerns. And 57.5 percent of faculty reported they feel very or somewhat included in the assessment process at LMC.

Most faculty report being very or somewhat clear about assessing student learning outcomes at the course and program level, but it is another story at the institutional level. The assessment of ISLOs beyond their own departments appears to be clear to just under 50 percent and unclear to more than 30 percent faculty responding.

The good news is that more than 85 percent of survey respondents reported they are very or somewhat clear on the relationship between assessment and the course outline of record structure. That ties back to the data from section 2 that many faculty members made changes in course outlines as a result of course assessment. In addition most faculty clearly understand the importance of student awareness of course outcomes: nearly 75 percent of respondents reported including CSLOs on their syllabus for every section of every course they teach. Another 13.2 percent include CSLOs on the syllabus for some course sections, and only 12.2 percent reported they do not include CSLOs on their syllabi.

The course outline of record format at LMC includes a section for listing the criteria for A-level and C-level work used to assess student learning outcomes. Despite the high level of CSLO inclusion on course syllabi at LMC, only 36 percent of faculty reported including the rubric information on their syllabi for every course and section. Another 17.3 percent included the rubric for some course sections, but 46.7 percent of faculty reported they do not include assessment rubric information on their syllabi at all. This may be indicative of differences in philosophy that surfaced during assessment workshops about whether a rubric is a grading tool for faculty, a grading guideline for students, or both.

In terms of support for their assessment efforts on campus, a majority of faculty reported a preference for group coaching in their departments or programs, and expressed an interest in assessment activities during flex. Other help supported by a plurality of faculty responding includes individual coaching and professional development.

#### **IV. ASSESSMENT LEADERSHIP**

While a strong plurality of faculty responding (43.8 percent full-time and 42.6 part-time) reported that faculty should be mainly responsible for coordinating assessment efforts on campus, nearly a quarter said it should be a shared responsibility and elaborated in the comment section that it should be shared between faculty and management. Fewer faculty, but still a plurality (31 percent full-time and 35.1 percent part-time), reported that monitoring the assessment initiative on campus should be a faculty responsibility. Almost as many full-timers (27.6 percent) but many fewer part-timers (15.8 percent) said it should be a shared responsibility. But it was clear from the results that, as a whole, faculty do not believe management should take the lead in either coordinating or monitoring assessment.

However, as noted in the opening, leadership in assessment at the college level is still an area in which few faculty express an interest despite the fact they collectively feel responsible to take a leading role. Only 15.7 percent of full-time faculty and 22.4 percent of adjuncts responding to question number 24 are either very interested in, or willing to take a turn at, assessment leadership at the college level. Many more full-time faculty (37.1 percent) and fewer adjuncts (10.3 percent) are willing to lead assessment at the department or program level. This is, perhaps, because CSLO and PSLO assessment leadership has been contractually assigned to department chairs, and full-time faculty are used to taking turns in the department chair role, but adjuncts generally do not get this opportunity.

A solid plurality of respondents reported in question 23 that the assessment leadership responsibilities should be divided among two or more faculty with shared compensatory load, rather than having a single faculty member devoted to the assessment initiative. This reflects the reality that when the Teaching and Learning Project was recruiting a single assessment leader in 2009 and 2010, none could be found, but a few stepped up when the job was broken into more manageable pieces. And respondents did offer a variety of strategies in response to the open-ended question about effective strategies for recruiting faculty to participate in assessment leadership in the future. Among them were load or monetary compensation, professional development, and building a positive college culture around the assessment of student learning.

## **V. ASSESSMENT DATA, REPORTING AND DIALOGUE**

One topic of frequent discussion around assessment has been the kind of data that should be collected. Some faculty reported in assessment workshops that they prefer data gathered using rigorous scientific methods, while others said they believe data gathered informally can be just as effective. Question 26 was designed to tease out those preferences. And while there is still a difference of opinion it was clear from the survey that most faculty respondents believe that a combination of quantitative and qualitative data gathered informally is most effective in assessing student learning outcomes at the course (51-33 respondents) and program (35 to 26) levels. There is, however, a slight preference for a combination of quantitative and qualitative data gathered using rigorous scientific methods at the institutional level (32-26).

Question 27 highlights agreement by most respondents that individual faculty should primarily determine the types of research methods used at the course level, while department chairs should be responsible at the program level. Opinion was split for assessment of institutional student learning outcomes among faculty (25 respondents), the TLP or other college-wide assessment committee (23) and management (22).

One thing the survey attempted to determine was what approach to the reporting and aggregation of student learning outcome data would best provide a platform for engaging in program or department dialogue around the improvement of teaching and learning. A clear plurality of faculty responding (68 of 147 respondents or 46.3 percent) believe that faculty within each program and/or department should determine the method of reporting based on discipline needs. The survey also found that most faculty responding are comfortable reporting data through word processing forms on the P-Drive (34.1 percent) and through an assessment section in the existing Program Review and Yearly Update process (34.8 percent). Other reporting methods garnering support above 20 percent: hard copy paper forms such as Word documents (23 percent), assessment data management systems (25.9 percent), and faculty creating their own reporting documents (25.2 percent).

Dialogue is a key component of assessment as identified in the ACCJC rubric. Most faculty responding believe that the dialogue around CSLO assessment should be held among all faculty teaching a particular course and within the department hosting the course. For PSLO assessment, respondents said dialogue is best within the department hosting the course. And for ISLO assessment, respondents said dialogue is best at college-wide meetings such as a College Assembly or an assessment seminar, or during Flex workshops.

## **VI. ASSESSMENT MODEL**

As noted in the opening, most full-time faculty responding to questions 31 and 32 think the assessment model we have been creating piece by piece since 2004 is confusing (51.2 percent) and/or complicated (31 percent), and support revision of the assessment model and its timeline structure (65.5 percent). Many comments also speak to the need for simplicity and flexibility in a new model.

Because the Program Review process at LMC has traditionally housed indirect measures of assessment, such as success and persistence rates, the survey sought to gauge whether there was support for housing direct measures of SLO assessment — student learning outcomes — there as well. While 32 percent of those responding said they favor such a reporting process, a plurality (44.9 percent) reported they are unsure at this time. Accompanying comments suggest that while some think it might work, it depends on how it is operationalized: “*Probably a good idea, but we shall see.*”

The last three survey questions were open-ended requests for comments from respondents. Despite the length of the survey — 37 questions that took anywhere from 30 to 90 minutes to complete if anecdotal reports are any measure — faculty were liberal in their written comments.

Question 35 acknowledged we have made progress on assessment at the institutional level but are behind at the course and program levels, then sought ideas about what can we do together to ensure we meet the ACCJC deadline for proficiency. Among the 58 responses were these suggestions:

- Simplify the assessment process
- Schedule assessment workshops and Flex days
- Create an assessment calendar, clarify deadlines and post assessment completions on a public gauge
- Find incentives for adjuncts to join the process
- Compensation: provide stipends or integrate ongoing assessment into course load

Question 36 asked respondents to identify the overall strengths and weaknesses of the assessment initiative at LMC. Key points synthesized from the 70 responses:

#### ***Strengths***

- Flexibility in creating and carrying out assessments
- Collaboration, discussion and dialogue with other faculty
- More attention to student learning
- A greater understanding of what works in the classroom
- Professional development and assessment coaching
- Support from the TLP and management
- Making progress toward meeting the accreditation mandate

#### ***Weaknesses***

- Process is unclear, complicated and time-consuming
- Too much emphasis on bureaucracy and paperwork with no real promise of improving student learning
- Lack of buy-in and understanding of the fundamentals of assessment
- Not enough inclusion of qualitative assessment data
- Needs more equitable work flow
- Problematic leadership
- Politics of assessment and threats of loss of accreditation

Question 37 asked respondents for additional comments about assessment that the survey may have neglected to address. Some felt the survey instrument was too long — “*I am exhausted*” — and their frustrations about its length were exacerbated by the fact the instructions did not identify how many questions were included. Other key points synthesized from the 22 final responses:

- Take a minimalist approach to assessment
- Need more information and training
- More focus on community around the assessment initiative
- Schedule an open forum to discuss survey results

There were also a few words of thanks for those actively involved in the assessment initiative.