

ABSTRACT

STANDARD I: INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND EFFECTIVENESS

MISSION: Los Angeles Southwest College (LASC) recently updated its mission statement. One of the goals of updating the mission statement included developing a brief, easy to remember mission statement that could be memorized and recited. The mission statement incorporates the definition of the college's broad educational purpose of "Enriching Lives" and is intended to focus on the reasons the college community accesses various services at the college including student learning. The *Planning Handbook* contains the process for updating the mission statement which the college followed. A continued focus will occur to ensure that the mission statement is considered in all college activities.

IMPROVING INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS: The college has been diligently working on improving the institution through a thoughtful, ongoing dialogue among constituency groups and developing a more comprehensive, systematic planning process. The Strategic Planning and Budget Committee (SPBC) was organized based upon recommendations developed from the *2000 Accreditation Self-Study* and it now leads the college's planning process. The SPBC was instrumental in developing the college's strategic plan with the intended purpose of guiding the college actions.

STANDARD II: STUDENT LEARNING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS: The college's student programs and services strive to meet the needs of its constituencies, and the college is regularly evaluating its progress toward meeting these needs. The use of data collection and analysis on an ongoing basis accomplishes this reevaluation.

Academic and vocational degree programs have a general educational component and include focused study in one area or in an established interdisciplinary core. Vocational programs have external advisory committees to ensure that programs prepare students for employment and/or external licensure and certification.

The college is in the early stages of defining student learning outcomes (SLOs). Institutional SLOs are currently in the process of being developed as are course-level SLOs. In addition, assessment measures, which are inherently a part of the SLOs, will be included. Plans exist for gradual implementation of SLOs across various areas of the college. Faculty are leading this effort.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES: The student services department, under the direction of the Vice President of Student Services, is actively engaged in the steps of the educational process. Student service area personnel firmly believe that student success is based on accurate dissemination of information and engagement of students and staff in college programs. To accomplish this, student services offer many programs and are in the process of assessing the quality of their programs. Student records are permanently, securely, and confidentially retained.

The college catalog is one of the primary tools for communication between the college and students and includes information regarding courses, programs, and transfer. The catalog includes information required by accreditation and is reviewed annually. Information provided is precise, accurate, and current.

LIBRARY AND LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES: The library houses online databases, books, periodicals, and indices to effectively provide for student research needs. Students use the library materials for coursework and for personal or work purposes. Librarians play a pivotal role in ensuring that students learn to use both print and electronic resources to enhance their information competencies. In addition to the library, other learning support services include the Mathematics Laboratory, the Learning Resource Center, the Nursing Laboratory, the Bridges to Success Laboratory, the Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS) Laboratory, and various tutorial services located throughout campus. These services need to be better coordinated. Students are directed to specific services for which they are qualified and for which they demonstrate a need.

The college meets this standard; however, an ambitious planning agenda is detailed to more fully comply with the subsections of this standard that includes development and assessment of student learning outcomes, program development and improvement, data collection and analysis, course and program planning, organizing additional professional development workshops, improved services to students, enhanced student campus activities and improve student involvement, and expand and improve library and learning support services.

STANDARD III: RESOURCES

HUMAN RESOURCES: The college's human resources are a shared responsibility with the district. Recent changes decentralized many of the human resources functions to the individual campuses.

The district and campus are responsible for ensuring that faculty meet minimum qualifications. The responsibility for faculty rests with the chair of each department and the Office of Academic Affairs who must ensure adherence to the requirements of the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges mandates that employed faculty and administrators must meet minimum qualifications.

At the district level, the Personnel Commission, an independent body comprised of three persons appointed for three-year staggered terms, is responsible for maintaining a merit system for classified employees of the district and for fostering the advancement of a career service for these employees.

PHYSICAL RESOURCES: As the college stabilizes its planning processes and works toward better serving its community, new facilities are being built to accommodate the projected increased numbers of students and services. A new Student Services Center opened November 2005 to house student support services together in one building. Construction has started on a new Child

Development Center which will serve as a center for child care and will provide training for the child development program.

Coordination of physical resources planning is accomplished using the *Facilities Master Plan*, a planning document created by the Facilities Committee. The SPBC used this plan as one of the resource documents to formulate the college strategic plan and allocate financial resources of the college.

TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES: One of the primary committees on campus is the Technology Steering Committee. This committee takes a proactive and holistic approach to identifying and assessing the technology needs of the entire college. The LASC mission statement in conjunction with unit plans, division plans, and the college strategic plan guide technology decisions.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES: In the past, the college operated in a reactionary mode with regard to the budget and fiscal health of the college. In recent years, with a commitment to better planning, the college is in the process of correcting this behavior. The current LASC planning process revolves primarily around funding short-term resource needs. As the planning process evolves, long-term fiscal planning should become institutionalized.

STANDARD IV: LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

DECISION MAKING ROLES AND PROCESSES: Since the 2000 accreditation visit the college has focused a great deal of effort to address this standard. A recommendation was made the previous visit for the college to work toward creating an environment of cooperating, looking forward, and developing a mechanism of trust. Through a series of college-wide forums and workshops, the core ideology of the college “Enriching Lives” was developed. In the spring of 2001, LASC developed its strategic values.

The college encourages faculty, administrators, and students to be a part of college-wide participatory committees. Although the college has made a great deal of progress, there continues to be challenges as some people do not fully participate in the processes, information that is shared is often incomplete or slanted, and individuals do not take responsibility for their role or lack of participation in the formulation of a recommendation, nor accept the outcomes of the process.

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION: The Los Angeles Community College District Board of Trustees (Board) exercises oversight over college’s educational programs. The Board establishes policies and sets standards for graduation, curriculum development, and details the faculty’s role in educational matters. The Board recently adopted a series of new board rules mandating program review, biannual review of vocational programs, program viability review, and program discontinuance processes at the college level. The Board is directly responsible for guaranteeing the college’s institutional integrity and financial health. The Board regularly reviews reports from the college.

As outlined in the standard, the President plans, oversees, and evaluates the organizational structure of the college. Although the President has the ultimate authority over the operation of the institution, the President delegates authority and responsibility to appropriate administrators and others at various levels of the institution. In addition, the President gathers input from the various campus constituency groups to ensure there is shared, open dialogue on issues affecting the campus community.