

# RESPONSES

## TO THE COMMISSION'S 2000 RECOMMENDATIONS

### RECOMMENDATION 1:

**That the college establish timelines, determine responsible individuals and develop accountability methods to ensure the completion of all program reviews by June 30, 2000.**

### RESPONSE:

#### *Timeline, Responsible Individuals, and Accountability Methods*

The college developed an aggressive timeline in line with this recommendation.

**2001** – All outstanding program reviews (13) were completed by July 30. The college agreed in July to a new two-year program review cycle and conducted program review orientations in fall.

**2002** - The college realized that a two-year cycle was not aligned with college planning and resource allocations. The college then agreed to shift from a planning cycle that began in fall and ended in spring to a cycle that began in spring and ended in fall. A second series of program review orientations were conducted in spring 2002.

**2003** – The Program Review Task Force began a review and evaluation of the process.

**2004-05** - Throughout spring 2004, the task force worked to revise the template used by faculty in completing program review. On September 23, 2004, faculty approved a new template and a program review timeline. The approved template was developed into an online document. Each program appointed one initiator who was a faculty member from a discipline

within that program to collaborate with his/her colleagues in the discipline and write the first draft of the program review. Two faculty members then independently performed critical reviews and provided feedback to the initiator about the review document. The initiator then revised the document before sending it back to the reader who included his/her final comments with the final draft sent to the senate by mid-December 2004.

**2005** - Faculty formed seven committees to review the final online documents and approved 36 instructional program reviews by the end of February 2005. The instructional program reviews are on a six-year cycle. In the future, the Dean of Institutional Planning and Research will coordinate with faculty and administration the program review process that includes the following activities:

- training department chairs, faculty, and unit managers in the process
- assisting participants in the process
- recommending the update of review processes and procedures as necessary
- scheduling and facilitating meetings

The current program review process has instilled in faculty a sense of pride and accomplishment. As a result of the success of this unique and inclusive process, other colleges in the state have asked for assistance with their program review procedures. College representatives presented the new online program review process at the League of Innovation in Community College's annual conference held in New York in March 2005.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:**

**That the college develop timelines, determine the responsible individuals and develop accountability methods to implement an effective and inclusive research, planning and budgeting process by June 30, 2001.**

**RESPONSE:***Timeline and Individuals Responsible*

In 2001, the college hired a Dean of Research and Planning as suggested in the prior recommendations. A year later, the dean left to take a job in another state. The college subsequently agreed during 2002-03 to change the leadership for the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee (SPBC) to co-chairs: the Vice President of Administration, and a faculty member.

In 2003, the college hired a Senior Research Analyst. In 2005, the Senior Research Analyst was selected as the new Dean of Institutional Planning and Research whose duties include chairing the SPBC.

During the 2004-05 academic year, the SPBC developed the college's first strategic plan based on the strategic values developed in 2001, the *Educational Master Plan*, *Facilities Master Plan*, *Technology Master Plan*, and division plans.

*Accountability*

In 2004-05, the college successfully completed the first full planning cycle detailed in the *Planning Handbook*. The college fully recognizes the importance of planning and of having a designated dean to provide data to the various entities for planning and decision-making. The SPBC follows the timeline provided in the *Planning Handbook*. Accountability methods are included in planning

documents. Data for planning purposes is accessible on the Institutional Research and Planning college website [lasc.edu/research](http://lasc.edu/research).

**RECOMMENDATION 3:**

**That the college establish timelines, determine responsible individuals and develop accountability methods to ensure that the college is able to successfully complete the selection of a permanent chief executive officer by June 30, 2001.**

**RESPONSE:**

The college selected its permanent chief executive officer, Dr. Audre Levy, in 2001.

**RECOMMENDATION 4:**

**That the college establish timelines, determine responsible individuals and develop a participatory governance agreement by June 30, 2002.**

**RESPONSE:***Timeline*

In 2000-01, the college hired consultants who were instrumental in developing the processes and the formation of the college's participatory agreement along with four central participatory committees:

- Facilities Planning Committee
- Strategic Planning and Budget Committee (SPBC)
- Technology Steering Committee
- College Council

The participatory agreement was signed off by the President and the leadership of the faculty after being sunshined with other constituency groups. In 2001, the college began to implement this committee

structure. These committees have had representation from faculty, classified staff, students, and administrators.

#### *Individuals Responsible*

The consultants worked with faculty, staff and administrators to develop the agreement and the process that encourages college-wide participation. Once the process was developed, members of the committees and the various constituency leaders implemented and monitored the processes. On a yearly basis each committees reviews its charge, membership, and how it conducts business.

#### *Accountability*

Each committee has a written charge the committee members follow and the results are in concert with the written charge and processes. Over the past four years, approximately 75 recommendations have been forwarded to the President through this process. The President has approved, and the college has implemented, the majority of these recommendations.

Institutional leaders support an environment for empowerment, innovation, and institutional excellence through the agreed upon participatory agreement and the various committees. They encourage staff, faculty, administrators, and students, regardless of official titles, to take initiative in improving the practices, programs, and services in which they are involved. When suggestions for improvement have policy or significant implications, individuals use the participative processes to assure that there is input into the recommendation, planning, and implementation.

### **RECOMMENDATION 5:**

**That the college establish timelines, determine the responsible individuals and develops accountability methods to ensure the completion and timely distribution of catalogs and schedules, and the team further recommends that the college immediately develop accountability methods to ensure the timely submission of final grade reports.**

### **RESPONSE:**

#### *Catalog*

The catalog publication is coordinated by a catalog committee overseen by an academic affairs dean. The Catalog Committee consists of department chairs, program directors, an Associated Students Organization (ASO) representative, the Curriculum Chair and the Articulation Officer. This group convenes regularly throughout the year to update catalog information and Curriculum Committee actions for the next publication. Any decision to delay the publication is made by the committee with the advisement of the Curriculum Committee.

The timeline, an important measure of accountability and continuity, is developed in November. The catalog has been published and distributed as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Catalog Distribution</u>
2001-02	June - August 2001
2002-03	July - September 2002
2003-04	July and August 2003
2004-05	July and August 2004
2005-06	September 2005

#### *Schedule of Classes*

An academic affairs dean has direct responsibility for supervising the preparation of the schedule of classes. This dean

oversees a team that works together to develop, monitor, and enforce timelines and preparation for the campus schedule of classes. During the past three years, adherence to the timeline has resulted in a timely delivery of the campus schedules of classes. Each year, the schedules have been delivered to the campus consistently by May 1, for summer and fall schedules of classes and by November 21, for winter and spring schedule of classes. This past year, the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) began using Protocol, a new schedule preparation system. The college anticipates training in the near future to increase participation of input by department chairs in the process.

#### *Final Grade Reports*

The college currently has over 92 percent of faculty turning in grades on time. This high return rate is due in part to educating faculty regarding the importance of getting the grades in on time so that students can register for the next semester. In addition, the Registrar provides the department chairs and deans with a list of faculty members whose grades are not submitted by the deadline of ten working days past the semester's end. This list is followed by a letter and a telephone call to the faculty member.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6:**

**That the college must commit to an environment to which individuals work together, communicate effectively and ultimately shape a common vision for the college. This requires a commitment to one another, an ability to look forward rather than backward, a willingness to listen as well as speak, and ultimately a commitment to develop mechanisms based on trust, collegiality, and common purpose.**

### **RESPONSE:**

Much effort has been made on developing a cooperative environment since the 2000 accreditation visit. Following this visit, through a series of college forums and workshops, the college's core ideology "Enriching Lives" was developed. In spring 2001, LASC agreed upon four strategic values:

- Serving student needs
- Quality education
- Commitment to students and community
- Leadership

As part of the effort to create a more positive environment, the college made several proactive changes to encourage and ensure that faculty, administrators, and students are part of college-wide committees.

The college has had a challenge with implementing a centralized decision-making committee model such as the traditional College Council or a President's Advisory Committee. Although the College Council's purpose has been outlined and it has met for over two years, this council has not been able to realize its potential. In an effort to move the college forward, the constituencies' leadership agreed to rename the council from College Council to Constituency Council, change the membership to be composed of constituency leaders rather than appointees, and to recommit to the purpose of "sunshining" issues that have a college-wide impact. Despite the name change and the membership composition, the perception of some of the constituents in the council is still one of divisiveness. Some constituency groups sense that information is selectively distributed and

that some of the group decisions are not being honored.

The college has made a great deal of progress, but there is still much to be done as some individuals do not fully participate in the processes; information shared is often incomplete or slanted; individuals do not take responsibility for their role or lack of participation in the formulation of a recommendation or to accept the outcomes of the process. To that end, the college will be making the campus community more aware of the committees, committee member roles, and outcomes. Committee processes will also be evaluated to make any necessary modifications.

### **RECOMMENDATION 7:**

**Revise the Mission Statement and tie planning, decision-making and financial resource allocations to the Mission. The Mission revision, if it takes place, should include greater participation of, and input from, the various college constituencies and the community at large.**

### **RESPONSE:**

There have been two revisions to the mission statement since the 2000 accreditation team visit.

In spring 2002, at a college-wide staff development retreat, one of the breakout sessions was centered on the mission statement. This session focused on what the college represents and what it needs to be in the future. The concepts and language that came from this session were passed on to the Mission Review Committee (MRC). Following the retreat, the college moved into the process outlined in the *Planning Handbook*.

In spring 2005, the college developed the current mission statement. The college followed the process outlined in the *Planning Handbook*. The President, assisted by the college researcher, convened the MRC comprised of representatives from administration, faculty, classified staff unions, students, and community leaders. The committee reviewed the college mission, receiving input from various sources, including the previous mission statement, other college mission statements, academic literature, as well as a campus wide ballot.

Based on the input from these two separate reviews, revised mission statements were recommended to the President for approval as follows:

#### 2002-2003 Mission Statement:

*As a comprehensive community college, Los Angeles Southwest College seeks to provide high quality, accessible and affordable educational opportunities, and services including university transfer, technical, and lifelong learning programs that promote individual development and improve the overall quality of life in a multi-cultural community.*

#### 2005 Mission Statement:

*Los Angeles Southwest College is committed to providing an environment for quality learning to enrich the lives of our diverse population.*

Previously, the college did not consistently initiate its activities with the mission statement although it was referenced throughout many processes. This has recently changed. Currently, committees develop program reviews, unit plans, division plans, and the strategic plan objectives in concert with the mission

statement. Furthermore, all resource allocation requests must meet the criteria that requests must be aligned with the college mission.

The mission statement is published in the catalog and the schedules of classes. It is also posted in strategic locations around the campus.

### **RECOMMENDATION 8:**

**Ensure that critical publications (the catalog, schedule of classes, and the student handbook) are published and available to current and prospective students in a timely fashion. In addition, enrollment fees should be included and highly visible in the schedule of classes.**

### **RESPONSE:**

#### *Catalog*

The catalog publication is coordinated by a committee overseen by an academic affairs dean. The Catalog Committee consists of department chairs, program directors, an Associated Students Organization (ASO) representative, the curriculum chair and the Articulation Officer. This group convenes regularly throughout the year to update catalog information and Curriculum Committee actions for the next publication. Any decision to delay publication is made by the committee with the advisement of the Curriculum Committee.

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2003-04	July and August 2003

2004-05      July and August 2004  
2005-06      September 2005

The catalog has been available to new and prospective students on a timely basis. In fall 2005 the delivery of the catalog was delayed as the campus attempted to develop an electronic version and verify the accuracy of the information contained in the catalog. The fall 2005 catalog, normally available before September, was distributed in mid-October.

#### *Schedule of Classes*

Summer and fall schedule of classes are available by May 1. Winter and spring schedule of classes are available by November 21.

Every new issue of the class schedule includes information on college enrollment fees. LASC students have three options to pay fees: by credit card at time of registration, in person in the college business office, or by mail. Information on fee exemption for special part-time students (grades K-12) is also included in every new issue of the class schedule.

### **RECOMMENDATION 9:**

**Publicize widely the documents governing student misconduct.**

AND

### **RECOMMENDATION 14:**

**Publicize widely the documents governing student conduct.**

### **RESPONSE:**

The "Student Code of Conduct" is published in the college catalog, the college schedule, the *Matriculation Handbook*, and the

*Student Handbook*. During the fall 2004 and fall 2005 semesters, faculty had a workshop on student discipline. In addition, the *Student Code of Conduct* is posted on many classroom bulletin boards.

Faculty and staff are familiar with the code of conduct and frequently reference it when working with students. Discussion of the college's discipline guidelines is part of the student college orientation program and in the personal development classes. The Dean of Student Services visits many personal development classes and other instructional classes to explain student behavior expectations.

The college strives to be proactive and this year the policies will be reviewed, the implementation streamlined, policies more broadly distributed and developed, with measurable SLOs related to the student code of conduct.

### **RECOMMENDATION 10:**

**The college should strengthen the college's research component in order to provide the quantifiable data necessary for comprehensive, integrated planning.**

### **RESPONSE:**

The college has enhanced its commitment to the research component since the last accreditation visit by hiring a Dean of Institutional Planning and Research. Personnel who have been hired in the research and planning capacity have had a broad breadth of institutional research responsibilities.

The current Dean of Institutional Planning and Research has assembled a support team to assist with research-related initiatives. The dean provides data to support program

review; conduct research studies related to matters such as curricula, enrollment, retention, matriculation, full-time equivalent students (FTES), staffing patterns, student and faculty characteristics, program viability and evaluation, community characteristics, student achievement, student and staff surveys.

The college's research website has an abundance of information accessible to all campus groups and community members and has been well received.

The responsibilities of the Dean of Institutional Planning and Research include providing leadership, oversight, and coordination of the following areas:

- *Policy and Planning* – strategic planning, policy analysis and recommendation, alternative scenario analysis, and performance assessment.
- *Institutional Effectiveness and Improvement* - regional and professional accreditation, academic and student service program reviews, learning outcomes assessments, and student satisfaction surveys.
- *Data Analysis* – systematic analysis of data to support college decision-making, and preparation of college, state and federal reports, and design and implementation of an interactive data reporting system.

These activities are in response to the work of the SPBC, the Enrollment Management Task Force, the Mission Review Committee, the Curriculum Committee, the program review process, and the data provided in the college website [www.lasc.edu/research](http://www.lasc.edu/research). College research demands are great and the college needs to broaden its ability to have

data available to dispel rumors, provide support to planning, and assist with resource allocation. Using data to do basic tasks is becoming institutionalized. For instance, in planning cycles the schedule of classes was previously developed based on availability of staff; whereas now the schedule is developed based on student demand and enrollment planning. A focus on retention is beginning to create institutional change on the campuses. In the past, most of the campus did not realize the direct relationship between retention and funding. At a fall 2005 campus professional development day, the President outlined that an average of 9 students added to 1 class equals 1 FTES; and that if 2 students each withdraw from 450 sections, the college loses approximately 100 FTES.

The increased availability of data for the general campus is a result of the Dean of Institutional Research and Planning's efforts. Sharing of data is one of the primary focuses of the research dean who prepares an annual *Fact Book*, sends out frequent enrollment updates, provides data for the instructional deans and chairs to make effective decisions, and assists with collection and distribution of information regarding the college budget. The college is better equipped to focus on student learning outcomes and demand as a result of having accessible research.

### **RECOMMENDATION 11:**

**Develop a comprehensive planning and program review process that is tied to budgeting and implement it throughout student services.**

### **RESPONSE:**

Once a year, each department or program completes an electronic unit plan that is

equivalent to program review. The applicable dean or manager responsible for the unit initiates the planning process, convenes the team, and remains involved throughout the entire process. Each team evaluates the unit's progress during the last year. Using the evaluation, unit-specific research reports, and planning input as starting points, each team then discusses and analyzes the unit's characteristics, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges that exist for the unit. Based on those discussions, each team prepares a unit operational plan, which includes a brief description of current unit characteristics and performance including its relationship to other college units with supporting data appended as needed, a summary of the unit's internal strengths and weaknesses, and a summary of external opportunities and challenges that affect the unit. In addition, the unit operational plan includes unit goals and objectives consistent with the mission, strategic directions, and goals of the college.

Additional items that may be included are:

- Items that merit further examination in the next unit planning cycle or by other entities.
- Ideas and issues for consideration in annual and strategic planning at higher levels.
- Unit or program additions, enhancements, reductions, or discontinuance.
- Resource allocations, tied to specific goals and objectives, using existing unit resources (these allocations require no further review in the planning process.).
- Resource allocation requests requiring external support, tied to specific goals and objectives and in priority order (these allocation requests must be reviewed at the next level in the planning process).

The unit goals, objectives, and activities, along with its resource allocation requests, are forwarded on to the division planning team that incorporates the unit's objectives and resource allocation requests into the overall division plan, provided they meet the criteria for inclusion in higher level planning as articulated in the *Planning Handbook*. The division sends its plans, goals, objectives, and resource allocation requests on to the SPBC to be considered in the overall *Integrated College Operational Plan* (ICOP).

### **RECOMMENDATION 12:**

**Develop the capacity to track students and engage in a systematic program of institutional research related to student progress and outcomes.**

#### **RESPONSE:**

The Dean of Institutional Planning and Research regularly researches and analyzes attrition, persistence, and successful course completion rates of LASC students. One of the major concerns is the transition of students from lower level to higher-level courses.

The dean works closely with the Student Learning Outcomes Committee to provide data to assist in the development of measurable SLOs. Deficiencies exist in the college's ability to track students once they are no longer enrolled at LASC. One of the ways to mitigate this, the college has plans to subscribe to the "National Student Clearinghouse" database in spring 2006 in order to track student progress after leaving the college.

### **RECOMMENDATION 13:**

**Create a secure and fireproof location for the archival of academic records and the college seal (used in authenticating transcripts).**

#### **RESPONSE:**

The Admissions and Records office has been housed in temporary quarters for the last 14 years. In November 2005 the office moved to the new Student Services Center, which is better equipped for this purpose. The college has purchased fireproof file cabinets to ensure the security of student records and the college seal. In addition the college began to scan records in 2005. The college's intent is to maintain 100 percent electronic records in the future, and there are future plans to build a fireproof vault in the future permanent Student Services building for securing records.

### **RECOMMENDATION 14:**

Placed with Recommendation 9.

### **RECOMMENDATION 15:**

**Complete program review and an analysis of the organizational structure of the components of Information and Learning Resources in tandem with an analysis of utilization pattern in an effort to improve efficiency and enhance students' learning outcomes.**

#### **RESPONSE:**

Effective July 1, 2005, the Developmental Communications Department along with the Learning Resource Center (LRC) was placed within the English department in an effort to improve efficiency. The English

Department chairperson presented to the President a new proposal for the LRC that is focused on transitioning writing skills across the curriculum. In the most recent faculty hiring committee process, a position was approved for a learning resource faculty position. In addition, a task force in the English Department was developed with a vice chair of Developmental Communications. The goal of this task force is to improve efficiency and increase the transition of students from the basic skills level to the English college proficiency level.

The English Department has been in the forefront of developing department rubrics and student learning outcomes. At the fall 2005 opening professional development day, the chairperson of English presented a best practices workshop to the campus on how the English Department is developing SLOs.

### **RECOMMENDATION 16:**

**Stabilize the budgeting process to facilitate strategic planning.**

#### **RESPONSE:**

In 2004-05, the college engaged in its first full planning cycle utilizing the timeline, as detailed in the *Planning Handbook* created in 2000-01. In spring 2005, the college developed the LASC college-wide strategic plan. In fall 2005, all planning teams participated in orientation and training to guide them in creating goals, objectives, and resource allocation requests for 2006-07. In addition, the Budget Subcommittee of the SPBC regularly meets and works in concert with the Vice President of Administrative Services to manage the budget process in concert with the strategic plan.

### **RECOMMENDATION 17:**

**Update the hiring goals and timetables to improve the diversity of faculty, staff and administration.**

#### **RESPONSE:**

This item was initially related to the establishment of goals and timetables related to race and gender under the concept of “affirmative action.” The LACCD is no longer using hiring goals and timetables based on race and gender.

The following chart illustrates the ethnicity of the current faculty and staff population at LASC. Within the confines of the law, LASC seeks to maintain a representative staff and, despite the lack of any requirement to continue, the college strives to employ individuals who reflect the student mix at the college and in the community that surround the college.

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Asian	7%	6%	-1%
Black	56%	56%	0%
Hispanic	13%	13%	0%
Native American	1%	0%	0%
Pacific Islander	1%	1%	0%
White	23%	24%	1%

The development of a faculty and staff diversity plan for the LACCD is under the auspices of Gene Little, Director of Diversity Programs. Despite the lack of any requirement to continue, the college strives to employ individuals that reflect the student mix at the college and in the community that surround the college.

**RECOMMENDATION 18:****Plan for the staffing of the new buildings and programs.****RESPONSE:**

Planning for the staffing of the new buildings and programs is primarily a function of the strategic planning and budgeting process with input from the unit and divisional plans. The plans completed at the unit and division level include an evaluation of staff needs and requests for new staff. This process is in agreement with the statement from the team report:

“Planning for staffing of new buildings should be part of the normal budget and resources planning process.”

**RECOMMENDATION 19:**

**Develop short- and long-term participatory governance plans for the planning of facilities including the student need for a facility to purchase and eat food, to congregate and to participate in planned student activities. There needs to be a serious review of space utilization and a plan to maximize current square footage use in classrooms and laboratories.**

**RESPONSE:**

The Facilities Planning Committee oversees the facilities master plan for configuring new buildings and classrooms and reviews recommendations on existing space utilization. The facilities are being designed with eating areas either inside or immediately outside a building or complex. The college is reconsidering a large cafeteria since many students are part-timers who

often arrive on campus with little time between classes.

In the meantime, keeping with the campus desire to create small eating areas throughout the campus, there is an outside eating area planned for the students, which will house vending machines, a heating station, and seating. In addition, some existing space has been modified in the Cox building for students to eat.

**RECOMMENDATION 20:****Develop an inclusive process for the purchase and maintenance of equipment.****RESPONSE:**

The unit planning process in the 2002-03 cycle resulted in resource requests, which included equipment and maintenance. The SPBC reviews and ranks the requests and forwards the recommendations to the President for approval.

During the 2003-04 budget planning process, the maintenance department put into operation equipment and maintenance requests. The Administrative Services Division maintains a spreadsheet of all equipment contracts and maintenance agreements to assist the campus departments sustain their equipment. The college contracts with Brown and Davis for asset management.

The Technology Steering Committee has assumed responsibility for developing guidelines for prioritizing equipment purchase and maintenance. As a result of this process, the college began multi-year equipment purchases requesting through the planning and resource allocation requesting. The Technology Steering Committee is assuming the lead with its recent passage of

a comprehensive *Technology Replacement Plan* to ensure the equipment on the campus is state-of-the-art and maintained well. The implementation of this policy began in fall 2005 with the leasing of 400 computers on a three-year replacement cycle. The Technology Steering Committee will be reviewing the other major equipment needs of the campus, including printers and copiers during the fall 2005 season to implement replacement cycles.

### **RECOMMENDATION 21:**

**Develop and implement an interim plan to provide handicapped student access to the following: Counseling Center access as well as restroom access to the attached bungalow until the Student Services Building is complete; student access through the doors on the LL Building.**

### **RESPONSE:**

The college has been proactive in addressing this recommendation. Student services housed in the new Student Services Building have Americans with Disabilities Act approved accommodations for disabled students. In fall 2003, the Lecture/Laboratory Building had new doors installed. The Facilities Planning Committee, which has the disabled student's counselor on the committee, along with California's Division of State Architect, will ensure that all future new and renovated buildings will meet ADA standards.