

STANDARD IV

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The Los Angeles Community College District, although only just over 35 years in existence, is one of the country's, if not the world's, largest community college districts. Its complexity and operation are understandable in light of its nine-college responsibility, even with local governance in operation. Both the district and Los Angeles Southwest College cannot function well without effective leadership at both entities. Active participation by district and campus leadership, faculty and staff collective bargaining agents, the District Academic Senate, and all the individuals who make up the district's employees creates a constituency-based partnership for dialogue in ideas and decision-making. Eighty-three percent (83%) of LASC faculty and staff who completed a recent survey stated they had participated in campus meetings during the previous 12 months. In addition, 68 percent of the respondents felt their participation in campus meetings helps to improve the college. Thus, integrity and honesty with internal and external agencies of the campus and district will assure the common goal of effective student learning. The college meets this standard. However, in order to comply more fully with some subsections of this standard, the college proposes a planning agenda to improve communications among the campus and throughout the community.

IV.A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

The institution recognizes that ethical and effective leadership throughout the organization enables the institution to identify institutional values, set and achieve goals, learn, and improve.

IV.A.1. Institutional leaders create an environment for empowerment, innovation, and institutional excellence. They encourage staff, faculty, administrators, and students, no matter what their official titles, to take initiative in improving the practices, programs, and services in which they are involved. When ideas for improvement have policy or significant institution-wide implications, systematic participative processes are used to assure effective discussion, planning, and implementation.

DESCRIPTION

Los Angeles Southwest College (LASC) has expended a great deal of effort in creating a collegial environment and has had positive, productive results. The 2000 accreditation visit left a recommendation that the college must work toward creating an environment of trust and looking forward. The accreditation team suggested that the college develop a mechanism of trust. Following this visit, the college held a series of campus-wide forums and workshops and developed its core ideology: "Enriching Lives." By spring 2001, the college had developed the following strategic values:

- Serving Student Needs
- Quality Education
- Commitment to Students and Community
- Leadership

Part of the effort to create a more positive environment was to encourage and ensure

that faculty, administrators, and students are part of major campus committees. One of the major achievements was the creation of the Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee (SPBC), which leads the college through the planning process, recommends annual and strategic goals, and formulates resource recommendations to the President. The planning process led by the SPBC enables all college units to participate in planning, tie the various planning processes together (program review, unit plans, division plans), and outline their respective goals and resource needs for the following academic year. In May 2005, the SPBC held a one-day retreat to discuss and finalize the *Strategic Plan*. This plan was built on the strategic values created in 2001. The *Strategic Plan* will guide the college's course for the next two years.

EVALUATION

The college has had a challenge with putting in place a centralized decision-making committee model such as the traditional College Council or a President's Advisory Committee. Although the college outlined the College Council purpose and this council met for over two years, it was not able to realize its potential. In an effort to move the college forward, the constituencies' leadership agreed to rename the council to the Constituency Council, change the committee membership composition to the constituent's leaders rather than having appointees, and recommit to the purpose of "sunshining" issues and presenting items that impact the college, such as recommendations that need college-wide input. Despite the name change and the membership composition, the council's purpose remains uncertain.

Increased collaboration between faculty and administrators has reaped great benefits for

the college. Faculty worked with college administrators and developed a more inclusive program review process that increased the faculty participation and self-study completion rate. This innovation had college-wide implications as it provided the foundation for higher-level planning. The development and implementation of a revised program review process is one of the tangible demonstrations that the college is moving towards utilizing the tenets of commitment, open communication, respect, collaboration, and inclusiveness.

Although the college has made a great deal of progress in this standard, much work remains to be done. The most recent survey asked the faculty and staff on a scale of one to five (one being least positive and five being most positive) if they have the opportunity to provide input into the campus-wide decision-making process. The average score of 2.7 indicates the need for further improvement in this area. The processes for input are in place, yet some of the challenges are that faculty and staff members do not fully participate in the processes, information from the participatory governance committees is sometimes incomplete or the reporter may provide only one perspective, and the outcome is not accepted if it does not reflect a committee member's view or a constituency expectations. The college partially meets this standard and a planning agenda is included to enhance the college's efforts.

PLANNING AGENDA

- Increase college community's awareness of committees and their members' roles.
- Evaluate the participatory processes and make necessary modifications.

IV.A.2. The institution establishes and implements a written policy providing for faculty, staff, administrator, and student participation in decision-making processes. The policy specifies the manner in which individuals bring forward ideas from their constituencies and work together on appropriate policy, planning, and special-purpose bodies.

IV.A.2a. Faculty and administrators have a substantive and clearly defined role in institutional governance and exercise a substantial voice in institutional policies, planning, and budget that relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise. Students and staff also have established mechanisms or organizations for providing input into institutional decisions.

DESCRIPTION

The college faculty, students, staff, and administrators have designated roles in the decision-making processes. The college provides numerous mechanisms and venues for input into college-wide decisions through its committees, constituency groups, task forces, and through the college reporting structures.

Four designated participatory governance committees and other committees and task forces provide avenues for faculty, staff, and administrators' participation. The goal is to encourage broad representation and participation that leads to the discussion and recommendation of ideas for improvement of programs and services. The *Planning Handbook*, developed in 2001, provides defined roles and activities for the designated participatory governance committees:

- Constituency Council which was formerly College Council
- Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee (SPBC)
- Technology Steering Committee
- Facilities Planning Committee

In an effort to reaffirm the committees' and their members' roles, the *Planning Handbook* requires each committee to review its respective purpose at its first meeting each fall to determine who will take minutes, plan how the minutes will be distributed, determine a process on how to operate if a quick response is required and there is not time for the regularly scheduled meeting, create a guest protocol, and the committee's ground rules. Each committee reviews its attendance, active participation, and reporting processes to ensure that the recommendations forwarded to the President reflect the whole committee.

EVALUATION

Faculty and staff were asked on a scale of one to five (one being least positive and five being most positive) if administration encourages staff/faculty to share in the decision-making at the college. The average score of 2.7 indicates the need for further improvement in this area. In order for a college, such as LASC, to be a fully participatory, decision making institution, it needs more time and training to affect its goals. Although the written framework is in place, some areas still require more attention, such as proactive and committed committee participation and attendance at some non-voting meetings is not as robust as at voting meetings, which causes a breakdown in the process when critical information is discussed at meetings leading to a committee vote.

The college has made a lot of strives in improving communications. The President reviews committee recommendations and makes a final determination in writing if a recommendation is or is not accepted. In addition, the President disseminates information on decisions to obtain campus input through additional channels. The President sends regular email updates, for instance, on construction, parking, and other college-wide issues to the entire college community, with emails typically outlining an issue and its potential impact on the college. These communiqués are in addition to the president's weekly online newsletter *Tuesdays at LASC*.

In an effort to improve committee activities, the college is piloting a program in fall 2005 that provides a \$20 stipend for committee members willing to take minutes, distribute the draft minutes to the committee members for their review, and prepare the final draft for the next meeting. Another mechanism that is being tested is having the four participatory governance committee chairs attend the Constituency Council meetings, report on the committees, and pass their recommendations to the President. In addition, each constituency group will share what is happening in its group, and *Tuesdays at LASC* will distribute this information. The college partially meets this standard and a planning agenda is included to enhance the college's efforts.

PLANNING AGENDA

- Create a handout outlining all college-wide committees, their charge, their composition, frequency of meetings.
- Promote constituency participation and attendance at meetings.

- Provide mechanisms to facilitate how information is disseminated from committees to constituency groups; for example, publish this information on college website.

IV.A.2b. The institution relies on faculty, its academic senate or other appropriate faculty structures, the Curriculum Committee, and academic administrators for recommendations about student learning programs and services.

DESCRIPTION

The college relies on faculty to develop, revise, and recommend instructional programs and services through the Curriculum Committee, which has 11 voting faculty members representing each department and non-voting members including an academic affairs dean. All Curriculum Committee members receive the *LASC Curriculum Committee Handbook*. The committee meets monthly to review curriculum and proposals for new courses and programs.

In addition, Academic Affairs and Student Services work on other issues of planning for student learning programs and services and regularly bring the issues to department chair and unit manager meetings, Council of Instruction, student services director meetings, and the Enrollment Management Task Force.

EVALUATION

Faculty has primary responsibility for the curriculum. There are various college structures, comprised mainly of faculty, that work collegially to enhance student learning programs and services. A predominant faculty-led structure is the SLO Committee, co-chaired by a faculty member and

administrator. The college fully meets the standard.

PLANNING AGENDA

- None

IV.A.3. Through established governance structures, processes, and practices, the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the institution. These processes facilitate discussion of ideas and effective communication among the institution's constituencies.

DESCRIPTION

Several governance structures, processes, and practices for the various entities to work together for the good of the institution are in place at the district level and at the college.

At the district level, these structures include the district governing board meetings, district board subcommittee meetings, district-wide budget committee, several district-wide committees for the oversight of the Prop A and AA bond project, district-wide administrative meetings for academic affairs, student services and administration, district-wide academic senate, and several collective bargaining agencies. Various meetings help ensure consistency and quality.

At the college level, these structures include the senior staff and administrative meetings, Council of Instruction, Council of Student Services, Administrative Council, Associated Students Organization, four participatory governance committees, faculty, other committees, various task forces, and the collective bargaining units.

EVALUATION

All of these committees encourage communication regardless of titles or any hierarchal organizational structure. The college fully meets the standard.

PLANNING AGENDA

- None

IV.A.4. The institution advocates and demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies. It agrees to comply with accrediting commission standards, policies, and guidelines, and commission requirements for public disclosure, self-study and other reports, team visits, and prior approval of substantive changes. The institution moves expeditiously to respond to recommendations made by the commission.

DESCRIPTION

The college has complied with the accrediting commission standards, policies, and guidelines. In terms of disclosure, the self-study is available for individuals both on and off the campus.

EVALUATION

The college moved quickly to address the commission's recommendations left in 2000. Overall, the college feels that it has made marked progress toward each of the past recommendation and, as part of the self-study process, widely circulated the document that included narrative about the outcomes of each of the previous recommendations. The college fully meets the standard.

PLANNING AGENDA

- None

IV.A.5. The role of leadership and the institution's governance and decision-making structures and processes are regularly evaluated to assure their integrity and effectiveness. The institution widely communicates the results of these evaluations and uses them as the basis for improvement.

DESCRIPTION

The premise of the college is that it is a learning institution, not only for the students but also for the staff; thus, the college leadership is constantly looking for ways to improve services and efficiency. When a decision results in dissention, the appropriate leadership reviews what occurred and puts in place mechanisms to minimize a repeat instance. In some cases, the issue simply may be the result of a communication error. Strategies used to correct the problems are the President taking leadership and involving others through an email survey, taking the issue to the constituency council, meeting with the constituency group involved with the issue to explore alternatives, and reviewing any related documents, such as participatory governance agreements or union agreements. On the other hand, if the issue is a lack of role clarification, then the leadership provides training for those persons unfamiliar with the structures. Recent training sessions include workshops on governance, administrators training in writing evaluations, supervisors' review of contracts, and sexual harassment policies.

EVALUATION

At the committee level, the college leadership review is ongoing but not systematic. As indicated earlier, the College Council was perceived as not working and, after an evaluation, it was restructured into the Constituency Council. Recommendations for improvement within the committee are easier to implement, as they do not require approval between the administration and faculty. The college partially meets this standard and a planning agenda is included to enhance the college's efforts.

PLANNING AGENDA

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the college's decision-making structure and processes.