

*Excerpts related to assessment and evaluation, from:
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities*

LANE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

EUGENE, OREGON

Comprehensive Evaluation

October 6-8, 2004

*A confidential report prepared by the Evaluation Committee for the
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities*

Standard Two – Educational Program and Its Effectiveness Overview

Lane Community College's educational program is strong.

...Library faculty outreach is universally lauded across campus, although there is uneven evidence that faculty make library assignments in their courses.

...Some areas are in need of improvement; of most concern are the lack of consistent outcomes assessment in many divisions and an identified systematic approach to program review. Details on these points are included in the appropriate sections of the report.

Programmatic Offerings

Arts Division

...Advisory committees assist in evaluating the graphic design and multimedia design programs to ensure currency.

...Learning outcomes are published in the college catalog for graphic design and multimedia design, but not for art history/studio art, music, dance, and theatre arts. It is not evident that a systematic, documented program of outcomes assessment is in place for most programs within the Arts Division. *Note: An exception is graphic design, which produced an extensive career survey in 1999 and now utilizes a comprehensive set of program competencies and assessment tools.*

Advanced Technology Division

Automotive Technology Records indicate task lists are being followed, student evaluation of NATEF tasks appear to be taking place. Documentation of mid-program assessment is lacking evidence. End of program assessment did not follow the course "skill assessment" process. Evidence indicates that the task /skill assessment is done throughout the course (lab assessment), but final testing consists of a written test (theory). Documentation was unclear of outcomes between theory and lab. What would be the process if a student were to pass all tasks in the lab, but fail the written final, or conversely, does not complete tasks to standard but does well in the written final.

Aviation (Flight Technology, Aviation Maintenance, Avionics) ...Documentation of compliance to FAA standards is in place. ...Library use for research is in place with information available at the airport classroom and at the college library.

Manufacturing Technology ...Committee involvement in the program is documented. ...Skill levels are documented during the course. ...Mid program assessment is not evident in documentation. Library use for research is not clear in curriculum.

Diesel Technology Curriculum and instruction have recently been approved by an independent inspection. Documentation and inspection show the program to be of a higher quality than college information indicates. ...Mid program and end of program assessment are not clearly evident in documentation. ...Skill assessment during the course and their interaction with a written final are not clear and evident. Library use for research or for information does not appear to be documented.

Construction Technology ... curriculum is at standard and approved by the advisory committee. Lab skills are approved in (real world) construction projects with

documentation of completion and city and state inspection approvals. ...Mid program assessment and end of program assessment are not clearly evident in documentation. Library use for research or information does not appear to be in place.

Auto Body / Paint & Refinishing ...Instruction and curriculum follows I-CAR guidelines for skill sets and instruction. Community involvement in committee meetings is an asset to the program. ...Library use for information or research does not appear in curriculum. Mid program and end of program assessment documentation is not clearly evident.

Electronics ...curriculum materials appear to be at standards. ...Skill sets were evident and documented. Advisory Committee involvement is questionable, documentation shows several meeting cancellations? Library use by students for research or information is not clearly evident. Mid program and end of program assessment methods were not clearly understood.

Welding ...A commendation is recommended for the excellent organization of the lab, skill sets, and learning environment. Instructors are determined to see that students have the opportunity to perform at industry standards, which will enable them succeed and gain employment. ...Mid program assessment and end of program assessment is not clearly evident. The Library assignments to enhance research program information needs to be more clearly defined in the curriculum.

Drafting Technology ...Curriculum appears to be current. Drafting programs do not appear to be centralized in the department. Interdepartmental instruction of CAD and blueprint reading courses are not clear. Course offerings on the same subject appear to be different in every discipline. The duplication of courses with a different emphasis in each discipline makes it unclear. Who has the responsibility to teach and to what depth? Why is the equipment and instruction duplicated so many times?

Business Technologies

Faculty has a major role in the design presentation, integrity and implementation of their curriculum. Additionally, they have developed course outlines and syllabi to reflect a student-centered approach that focuses on student learning. These outlines and syllabi reflect the use of library materials, and in particular the use of the Internet for research. To build linkages with local employers and to assist with the program review process the department uses advisory committees for continuous curricular updating. The evaluator found evidence of educational assessment being carried out at the course and program level. However, there was little evidence of institution –wide assessment activity for college educational programs, or for systematic assessment of general education outcomes. Nor is there evidence that assessment is integrated into the overall institutional effectiveness plan.

Computer Information Technology (CIT) To build linkages with local employers and to assist with the program review process the department uses advisory committees for program review and continuous curricular updating. The evaluator found good evidence of educational assessment being carried out at the course and program level. However, there was little evidence of institution – wide assessment activity for college educational programs, or for systematic assessment of general education outcomes. Nor is there evidence that assessment is integrated into the overall institutional effectiveness plan.

Culinary and Hospitality

Culinary Arts and Food Service Management Program

The Culinary Arts and Food Service Management Program offers a two year A.A.S. program whose outcomes and competencies conform to the accreditation guidelines of the American Culinary Federation.

...For some time the program suffered from high attrition rates exceeding 50% in some years; the retention of second year students increased dramatically with the addition of

admission requirements of reference letters attesting to student exposure to the industry as well as reading, writing and math computation placement requirements. Placement is based in part on minimum scores of reading—68; writing—64 and a prerequisite of MTH 020—Basic Math Review. Retention rates in 2004 rose to 39 returning students of a class of 50.

Hospitality Management Program

The Hospitality Management Program is in a period of transition to accommodate changes in the hospitality industry. The program, heavily weighted towards hotel management, no longer reflects the increasingly diverse nature of the industry. With advisory board guidance, input from potential and current students, program alumni and local employers, Lane hopes to broaden and refine the direction of the program to reflect an evolving economic sector. Examining the disparate components of the industry, from tourism to recreation and leisure to convention and meeting management, program participants will consider potential student audience, community and industry input, and current LCC resources in pursuing accreditation from the Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration in the near future. Assessment and program review of the Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management Programs takes place regularly. The Advisory board provides monthly input to insure the curriculum is in concert with current field practices. Program review is facilitated through the Professional Technical Education Coordinating Committee, which evaluates on a three-year review cycle. Strategic Planning at the program and College levels well beyond the unit plans is in progress.

English, Foreign Language and Speech Division

...Department members are deeply involved in innovative teaching and learning projects such as the Strategic Learning Initiative, and they worked carefully during the recent budget cuts to protect the diversity of course offerings available to students. The department has proposed a project intended to assess how well students write after completing the required writing sequence, and a decision regarding this assessment study is pending.

...The foreign language department has developed a detailed system for tracking student abilities from one level of instruction to the next.

...Another workload consideration involves the attempts to articulate this division's transfer curriculum with the Oregon University System. This is a necessary to ease transfer difficulties for students. However substantial curriculum revision will be required to bring about these changes. The division also needs to increase their focus on the assessment of learning outcomes as those are outlined in the core abilities. Doing this will allow division members to participate in evaluating the effectiveness of the general education program and make changes that will improve student learning.

Family and Health Careers Division

...Curriculum in Respiratory Care, Nursing, Dental Hygiene and Dental Assisting programs are being revised based upon findings from program assessments.

Child Development Center Program ...The CDC engages in regular assessment of its program. Through employer feedback, advisory committee recommendations, student evaluation of program and high retention of clientele, the CDC measures service effectiveness and quality of instruction in the ECE program. These valuable informal methods of evaluation indicate that students graduate from the ECE program well-prepared and highly-employable. However, it appears that no formal process for periodic program assessment is in place.

Health and PE Division

No comments related to assessment and curriculum development.

Human Development Program

...All human development instructors provide for student evaluation in every class; such a policy exceeds Lane requirements, and all part time instructors must first complete a class before being assigned to teach it. Though informal means of program evaluation are followed periodically, no formal program review process appears to be in place.

Mathematics Division

...Assessment activities include item analysis of common exam questions, tracking retention in developmental education courses and compiling graduation rates for students entering 4-year engineering programs. While this indicates that assessment has progressed beyond the measurement of individual course objectives, the department and the institution have not reached the standards of regular program evaluation in those programs associated with math, namely developmental education, general education and transfer degree distribution areas.

Science Division

...Both departments maintain high standards in curriculum design and delivery. Curriculum proposals undergo careful peer scrutiny before being forwarded for institutional review. The science course offerings show innovation and a desire to promote student success. All 3 General Biology courses are offered with a variety of emphases to meet student interests. BioBonds is a learning community combining life and physical science prerequisite courses for Anatomy and Physiology, and was designed to improve student success. The division, however, has not developed assessments to the standard of program level assessment with evaluation tied to planning. ...**Energy Management Technician** ... As with the other science offerings, assessment is not in evidence at the program level with evaluation tied to planning.

Social Science Division

...Program assessment is facilitated by the use of retention and grade distribution studies.

...The division has developed a comprehensive unit plan linking course outcomes to the college mission. The unit plans would comprise an important component of a formal program review process when put in place.

Human Services ...Program review takes place under the purview of the Professional Technical Program Coordinating Committee on a regular basis.

Continuing Education

Employee Skills Upgrading Biz Center/Contract Training

...This unit works in harmony with the Workforce Development unit on campus to provide technical training to displaced workers who need new careers. Biz Center is a full-service unit that admirably serves the Lane county community.

Workforce Development Workforce Development creates courses for dislocated workers, using specially contracted faculty who design curriculum based on individual and employers' needs. This unit is working hard to repair an earlier schism with Contracted Training, as both programs need to complement each other.

Apprenticeship

Because industry representatives are very involved in this program, assessment is ongoing and skill-specific.

Developmental programs

Adult Basic and Secondary Education (ABSE)

ABSE recently completed the unit planning process and its state basic skills program review. This program is faced with an extensive accountability process to maintain state and federal funding. In spite of this challenge, it is a model to assess student learning outcomes.

Literacy The college has a literacy volunteer program that trains volunteers from the community to tutor adult literacy students at the Downtown Center. ... Many programs within this unit have very good examples of course outcomes and assessment. ...If a goal of the program is to prepare students for success in college classes, how does the program know they are or are not achieving that goal. Do students move into college programs? How many do? Are they successful? Is this increasing or decreasing over time?

Academic Learning Skills (ALS) Policy 2.C.6. There are clear policies concerning the process and clear information about credit status. In addition, there is a program for students who need to improve reading skills in order to gain ability to benefit. This "Guided Studies" program requires mandatory placement in classes designed to build reading skills, restricts them from certain classes during their initial term, and re-evaluates their readiness for college classes at the end of the first term.

Policy 2.1 General Education/Related Instruction Requirements

...A purpose statement of general education requirements and core abilities defining what students should know and be able to do was approved in February 2001. Faculty identified written criteria to qualify courses used for liberal arts courses and clarified expectations for the Human Relations requirement in applied degrees and certificates. In a 2002 graduate assessment of general education core abilities 99% of the students rated very important or important, the importance of general education core abilities. Similar percentages were documented on the effectiveness of the courses in developing core abilities. The expected general education outcomes relate to Lane's mission, providing educational opportunities that include professional/technical and transfer programs.

Related Instruction Since the 1994 self study report, the college has developed stand alone related instruction courses for all professional/technical programs. All related instruction course offerings are taught by qualified faculty from the English, Math and Counseling departments. Evidence was found in reviewing course syllabi as well as viewing the course requirements listed for each professional/technical program in the college catalog. Math faculty work with professional/technical faculty to design college level course work customized to their area of specialization. The planning sheets in the catalog document the specific general education/related instruction requirements.

Policy 2.2—Educational Assessment

The college currently has elements of an educational assessment plan in place. Information is gathered on the characteristics of incoming students, and the committee also reviewed studies providing aggregate data on student performance after graduation. A number of technical programs undergo detailed review and assessment by accrediting agencies specific to their fields. In addition, a number of small, focused research studies have been conducted in order to analyze issues specific to certain courses. While these pieces are in place, however, the requirement for systematic assessment of effectiveness of educational programs seems to be poorly understood across general education and certain professional technical programs. The core abilities appear in the catalogue and are listed on course outlines, but it is unclear how student learning gains abilities are assessed as students progress toward graduation.

Assessment of professional technical programs seems driven by the needs of specialized accrediting agencies, and the college lacks a plan for systematic program assessment and improvement. Outside of anecdotal evidence, only limited information exists that shows assessment being used to “close the loop” and apply the information gained to improvements in programs and in student learning.

Policy 2.6 Distance Delivery of Courses, Certificate, and Degree Programs

...While faculty are responsible for the assessment of student outcomes, the Distance Learning Department is developing and plans to institute a survey in the coming year that will provide feedback on the effectiveness of distance learning procedures and systems.

...Concerns: As online courses become the preferred distance learning option for more students pursuing the AAOT degree, the college will be challenged to develop a full set of requisite courses.

Standard Four: Faculty

...A comprehensive faculty handbook would be useful for orienting new faculty hires, but committee members could not locate such a document during their visit.

...Faculty already lead such activities as the curriculum process, and this process seems to have almost universal understanding and acceptance among instructors.

...The college relies on part-time faculty to a far greater extent now than at the time of the last self-study. Part-time faculty are praised for their qualifications and commitment to the college, and they are included in such activities as the Faculty Connections program.

...Some of the problems endemic to a heavy reliance on part-time faculty are also in evidence in some areas. The addition of increasing numbers of part-time instructors, for example, is cited as a cause of increased coordination responsibilities that affect workload for faculty, staff and management.

...Faculty evaluation processes are outlined in both the negotiated agreement and in the *Faculty Evaluation Handbook*. The full-time process includes both developmental and corrective evaluations, and this process appears to be well understood and systematically conducted. The recent change to using on-line student evaluations has lowered the student response rate on that index, and faculty and management are addressing possible causes for decreased student participation in the process. The part-time evaluation process is applied differently across divisions and departments. While many part-time faculty are evaluated using both student, administrative, and peer evaluation tools, many others receive only periodic student evaluations, and some were reported not to have been evaluated in any way in recent years.

...During the visit, committee members met with large numbers of faculty from all major disciplines. The morale of faculty as a group was impressive. Several faculty discussed the concept of academic freedom and praised the amount of control they and their departments have over their courses. Equally impressive was the faculty involvement in scholarship, research, artistic creation, and entrepreneurial efforts. Though no such activity is mandated by the college, numerous faculty have willingly taken on such tasks, in this way giving evidence of their feelings for the college and their students. This creative spirit ranks among Lane's greatest resources.

Policy 4.1 Faculty Evaluation

Policies on full time faculty evaluation are in place and practiced. There are two types of substantive evaluations of faculty. The primary type is the Developmental Evaluation, which is initiated by time of service. A Corrective Evaluation is only initiated in response to indications of inadequate performance requiring significant intervention. The

procedures are clear, concise, measurable and manageable. Evaluation data is distributed to the faculty member, the appropriate division chair, and the Vice President. As a result, improvement plans appear to be a joint effort of the administration and faculty member. Part time faculty evaluation is fragmented and lacks a concise administrative effort. Some divisions or departments use student evaluations and observations others utilized only student evaluations. A number of part time faculty relied on their own self appraisal using student evaluations and made individual improvement changes. It is not clear that there is a clear and concise procedure for administrative review or feedback to the part time faculty. This disparity in methodology leads the evaluator to conclude that there is not a standard formalized practice for part time faculty evaluation at Lane Community College.

Standard Five: Library and Information Resources

The planning and goal setting processes of the library are comprehensive, involve staff at all levels, and are clearly understood and supported by all the staff. The planning process has resulted in a number of recent institutional efforts to support the library. The library performs a variety of assessments including surveys of students and faculty and assessments of library instruction. Changes have been implemented as a result of these assessments, but the college and the library could benefit from a systematic documentation method detailing both the assessments and changes resulting from the assessments.

Information Technology Resources and Services Planning and Evaluation

...As evidenced in the exhibits for this area, Information Technology has undertaken a number of assessment efforts concerning, for example, student computer labs, the campus website, and helpdesk services. These efforts have been in the form of focus groups and surveys. The feedback has been extensive and has likely had a good deal of impact on how Information Technology provides services. However, a systematic annual method of evaluation using the new unit planning process has yet to be fully employed and specific evidence of changes that have been implemented as a result of evaluation was not clearly documented. Concerns: Expansion of demand for services in all areas may warrant appraisal of staffing levels before support services degrade.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. While the committee found evidence that full time faculty are evaluated in a manner that meets Policy 4.1, this practice does not consistently extend to the part time faculty. The Committee recommends that the College implement evaluation of part-time faculty throughout the college at least once within each five year period of service and that the evaluation consistently employ multiple indices. (Policy 4.1)
2. The assessment of program and course outcomes is inconsistent across the college. The committee recommends that Lane Community College evaluate the effectiveness of the educational program in terms of the change it brings about in students and make improvements in the programs as dictated by the assessment process. (Policy 2.2)