

Los Angeles City College
Comprehensive Program Review 2008

Learning Skills Department

XII. EPC Validation Review

I. Department Mission

Does the department's mission statement reflect the goals and activities of the department? Is it aligned with the college mission? Explain.

The Learning Skills Department mission aligns well with the college mission and is reflected in the goals and activities outlined in Section IX of this document.

II. Department Overview

Does the department's analysis of trends in enrollment and achievement accurately reflect the data? Have any issues been identified? Explain.

The department has provided a good analysis of the trends for both enrollment and achievement. It seems that the possibility of limiting registration to the middle of the semester, if possible, might be something to consider in order to promote more student success. If students who register in week 12 are still required to put in the same number of hours as those who register in week one, those students are likely to have difficulty meeting the course requirements.

III. Vocational Programs

Does the department's analysis of labor market demand, advisory board activities and accreditation status (if applicable) reflect the data? Have any issues been identified and are they adequately addressed with appropriate action plans? Explain.

Learning Skills is not identified as a vocational department.

IV. Curriculum

Does the department's analysis of enrollment trends accurately reflect the data? Has adequate progress been made in developing and assessing student learning outcomes at the course and program level? Are Title 5 course outline updates current? Has adequate analysis of course scheduling been provided? Explain.

Learning Skills is to be commended for having not just its 20 primary courses updated with identified SLOs for each course, but for doing the updates and SLO identification for modules within those 20 courses. Kudos to the faculty for all their hard work. Let the assessment process begin!

Course scheduling in Learning Skills is quite different from that of other departments. Most courses are individualized and are set up to match student availability rather than the other way around.

V. Departmental Engagement

Has the department provided a full description of departmental engagement? Explain.

Each faculty member in the department is involved in departmental work. In terms of being engaged in college wide activities, several department members are very active in campus committees, but others do not seem to engage with the rest of the campus community on a regular basis.

VI. Professional Development

Has the department provided a full description of professional development? Explain.

The department has provided a description of professional development activities for all members of the department. Included in its new goals is the desire for each faculty member to attend at least two conferences or workshops each year that directly focus on their area of expertise. This demonstrates an ongoing commitment to staying current with new ideas that are developed in pedagogy, technology, or other materials. At this point, a few of the faculty members have achieved or are close to achieving that goal, but most have not met it.

VII. Support and Activities

Has the department provided a full description of support needs of the department? Explain.

The department has justified its need for support staff.

This committee suggests a meeting with the general counselors and other counselors to discuss the reduction in referrals from student services. There may be valid reasons for this, but keeping the lines of communication open is very important.

The department is commended for recognizing the need for clearer course descriptions and working to make this happen in the new catalog.

VIII. Resources: Personnel, Equipment and Facilities

Has the department provided a full description of resource needs of the department? Explain.

The department has provided a very clear description and justification for increased space, furniture, and equipment.

IX. Planning and Budget

Do the planning goals and action plans reflect the issues raised in the self study? Are they aligned with the Educational Master Plan and the College Strategic Plan? Explain.

In the budgeting area of this section, the committee recommends that the reason for the rather sizable expenditure discrepancy for this department be identified.

The new planning goals and action plans reflect most of the issues stated in the self study; however, the stated need for additional support staff is not addressed in the action plans presented.

X. Final Summary by Discipline

Are all items identified as a Major Concern addressed with a goal and action plan? Explain.

Not all areas that have been identified as major concerns are addressed in proposed action plans, specifically staffing and facilities issues.

The committee also has questions about how something can be listed as a weakness in one area of the program review and yet still be identified as a very strong aspect of the department in another area.

We are also concerned that the success and retention rates as well as course outline consistency are listed as N/A areas.

XI. Department Strengths and Weaknesses

Has the department provided an adequate analysis of departmental strengths and weaknesses? Explain.

The department has provided better than adequate analysis of departmental strengths and weaknesses, listing seven areas of strength and four areas of weakness.

The committee had a question with regard to the fourth area of weakness and thought a little explanation might clarify things.

XII. Recommendations/Commendations

What recommendations based on your comments do you have for this department? What commendations do you have for this department? Explain.

Commendations:

1. Updating all courses and modules within courses.
2. Identifying SLOs for all courses and modules.
3. Taking initiative in clarifying course descriptions.
4. Establishing a professional development goal for all members of the department.
5. Flexibility in course scheduling and delivery.
6. Consulting with other departments on campus to identify how Learning Skills can support student success in the content areas.

Recommendations:

1. Communicate with general and other counselors to resolve referral issues.
2. Develop action plans to address staffing, equipment, and space needs.
3. Begin the assessment of SLOs.
4. Follow up on unexplained budget expenditure to discover what the money was used for if not Learning Skills.