ESL Department Program Review
Report to the Educational Planning Committee
February 9, 2009

1. Please highlight any changes since you submitted your unit assessment.

The ESL Department has experienced two significant changes since Program Review (formerly Unit Assessment) was last conducted. First, in July 2008 President Valles made the decision to split ESL off from English into a separate department. A chair election was held at which time I became Chair of ESL. Second, the department has experienced the loss of two of its four full time faculty members. One transferred to the English Department in July, 2008 and the other retired in February, 2009.

These changes created a period of some uncertainty and anxiety amongst the faculty in the department. ESL is one of the college’s highest-enrolled disciplines, and it is difficult to provide the support services to the students which are necessary for their academic success when 83% of sections (as of Fall 2007, and not factoring in the recent full-time losses) are taught by adjuncts.

Throughout this transitional period, however, Mike Climo and I have been pursuing options to revitalize the ESL curriculum, increase enrollment, replace lost faculty, and provide much-needed Basic Skills support to our students.

Enrollment, which had been in decline over the period 2002-2007, has begun to increase. Some of this increase may be attributed to the overall growth the campus has been experiencing. Healthy class size has been maintained in most sections. As of today, ESL-Lower is at 73.10% capacity with an average class size of 28 and 3 of 16 sections closed; ESL-upper is at 85.71% capacity with an average class size of 33 students and 5 of 14 sections closed.

2. What do you see as the strengths and challenges of your unit(s)?

The major strength of the ESL discipline is the commitment of its faculty, especially its large cadre of adjuncts, to providing the best educational experience possible for
the students, often under less-than-ideal conditions.

Average class size, completion rates, and retention rates are consistently higher than the college averages.

There are two major challenges facing the ESL Department. Firstly, full time faculty need to be replaced, and more hired after the current freeze is lifted, in order for the department to operate at an optimal level. Secondly, the department has lagged in its assessment of Student Learning Outcomes.

3. How does your unit planning support the mission of the college?

The ESL Department clearly believes that “Our Mission is Your Success”. ESL faculty have taken on key roles in the implementation of the district-wide and state-wide Basic Skills Initiatives and Student Success Initiatives. The ESL Department Chair currently co-chairs the campus Essential Skills Committee, the other full time faculty member plays an active role on that committee, and the department’s adjunct faculty are committed to the revitalization of the discipline.

The ESL Department is committed to the full implementation of the goals and objectives identified in the college’s 2004 Educational Master Plan.

4. What are your visions for changes, revisions, and growth?

During the Fall 2008 semester the ESL Department laid the groundwork for a major overhaul of its curriculum. Discussions with representatives across the content areas have shown a strong desire to collaborate on the development of paired classes and core content course outlines. This curriculum work will commence this semester.

The ESL Department has been consulting with the Dean of Noncredit to develop a plan that most effectively utilizes the college’s resources and most efficiently delivers ESL instruction to our students.

Through the Basic Skills Initiative and Student Success Initiative the department
will continue to explore opportunities for enrollment growth and optimal delivery of instruction.

5. What resources are needed to support and build the programs in your department?

As stated earlier, the administration needs to replace lost full time faculty and commit to hiring new full time faculty in the discipline.

As the campus continues its build-out with bond funding, we hope the ESL Department will finally get a dedicated language lab. This would enable us to take advantage of the latest instructional technology for language acquisition.

6. What is the status of SLO assessments in your department.

As mentioned in the section on challenges, the ESL department has fallen behind in the assessment of its course and program SLOs. This deficiency will be addressed in the current semester.

7. What is the status of course outlines of record and course updates in your department?

All ESL course outlines, prerequisites, and corequisites are current. The update cycle will begin again in Spring 2010.