Academic Senate Sub-Committee on the
Institution-Set Standards for Student Achievement

Tuesday, December 9, 2014
1:30-3:00pm
Academic Senate Office

Meeting Minutes
Discussion points, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Members present: Diana Bonilla, Patricia Chow, Myriam Levy, Sarah Master, Leslie Milke, and Bob Smazenka

According to the procedures set forth by the Research and Advisory Task Force (RATF), the Academic Senate, in consultation with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE), annually evaluates the College's performance on the measures in its Institution-Set Standards (ISS) for Student Achievement and sends its conclusions and recommendations to the Educational Planning Committee (EPC) and Council of Instruction for review and feedback prior to submission to College Council and the College President for approval.

In fall 2014, a sub-committee of the Academic Senate was provided with data from the OIE regarding the College's performance on each of the student achievement outcomes (successful course completion, course retention, fall-to-fall persistence, degrees, certificates, and transfers) for the last five years. The data were disaggregated by different student characteristics and by program (where appropriate). The OIE also provided the committee with data from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Data Mart regarding the performance of the other LACCD Colleges, the District as a whole, and the State averages for related student achievement outcomes so that trends and performance levels could be compared. The OIE met with the committee on December 9, 2014 to review the data and evaluate the College's performance with respect to the ISSs, draw conclusions about College progress and reasons for any identified trends/changes in performance, and make preliminary recommendations regarding the standards themselves, goals for improvement, and actions that may be taken to bring about improvement in student achievement. Below is a summary of that discussion.

1. Approved Institution-Set Standard for Successful Course Completion: 64.0%
- Definition: number of students who receive a successful grade (A, B, C, or P) divided by the number of students who were enrolled in the course at census.
- Benchmark met/exceeded in fall 2013 (66.6%).
- The committee finds the benchmark to be appropriate.
- The committee set a target to be at or above the LACCD District Average in five years (currently, LAMC is 1% below the District average).
- The inclusion of students who withdraw in the category of "unsuccessful" is seen as unfair by some faculty; however, it was discussed that this is how the State defines this metric. The committee recommends that the College, through the Council of Instruction, encourage students to drop before census if planning to drop.

2. Approved Institution-Set Standard for Course Retention: 85.0%
- Definition: number of students who remain in the course after the no-penalty drop date (i.e., did not drop the course) divided by the number of students who were enrolled in the course at census.

- Benchmark met in fall 2013 (85.2%).
- The committee finds the benchmark to be appropriate.
- The committee set a target to maintain the current course retention rate.
- The committee recommends that the College, through the Council of Instruction, encourage students to drop before census if planning to drop. This is of particular concern in DE courses.

3. Approved Institution-Set Standard for Fall-to-Fall Persistence: 48.0%
- Definition: number of students who completed a course in the fall and enrolled in a course the following fall term divided by the number of students who completed a course in the fall.
- The committee discussed how the persistence rate is affected by students enrolling in multiple colleges within the District. Because it is so easy to enroll at any of the Colleges in the District by only filling out one admissions application, some students only attend a college briefly (e.g., to get one needed course) – this may be one explanation for why LAMC's and the LACCD's persistence rate lags behind the State rate on the State's Scorecard persistence metric. Identifying a student's "home school" within the District would be helpful.
- Benchmark met/exceeded in 2012-13 (52.4%). Data for fall 2014 is not yet available.
- The committee finds the benchmark to be appropriate. It recognized that the College has exceeded the benchmark by more than 4% the last two years but did not feel comfortable changing the standard without seeing a longer-term trend.
- The committee did not set a target for this measure and discussed that a higher persistence rate is not always a good thing because it may be due to students taking an unnecessarily long time to complete their programs. The Committee recommends that the College encourage students to complete their programs and move on.

4. Approved Institution-Set Standard for Degree Completion: 450
- Definition: number of degrees awarded from July 1 through June 30 ("duplicated").
- Benchmark met/exceeded in 2013-14 (840).
- The committee finds the benchmark to be appropriate.
- The number of degrees awarded significantly outpaced the number of students attaining degrees in 2013-14, which the committee discussed is mostly due to the creation of the General Studies and Liberal Arts degrees. Also, a couple years ago there was a policy change such that students must complete 18 *new* units to attain a second Associate's degree if they already have one – a consequence of this is that it encourages students to hold out and instead apply for their degrees all at once.
- The committee sees this as a negative development and recommends that the College (EPC, Academic Senate, Counseling Department and Curriculum Committee) attempt to limit the number of students attaining multiple redundant degrees. This is important because students will lose their priority registration if they acquire too many units (100) while pursuing multiple degrees, and they are taking the seats away from other students.
- After review of additional data on the number of students receiving degrees, the committee also sets a new standard for the number of students attaining degrees ("unduplicated") of **385 students** (which is consistent with the average of the number of students receiving degrees from the past five years).
- The committee also sets a target of decreasing the average number of degrees per student from 1.75 (current ratio) to 1.5 in five years.

5. Approved Institution-Set Standard for Certificate Completion: 214
- Definition: number of certificates awarded from July 1 through June 30 ("duplicated").

- Benchmark met/exceeded in 2013-14 (450).
- It was noted that reporting issues in the past lead to under-reporting of earned certificates and thus the lower certificate numbers because of this. Given that certificates are now being entered accurately, the committee finds the benchmark to be too low and **revised the standard to 350**.
- A target was not set for this measure because of the lack of enough accurate historical data and because certificate offerings at the College are constantly being revised.
- The committee also sets a new standard for the number of students attaining certificates ("unduplicated") of **350 students**. The reason the duplicated and unduplicated standards are the same is because most students only attain one certificate each year (the ratio of duplicated certificates to unduplicated students is 1.03).

6. Approved Institution-Set Standard for Transfer to Four-Year Institutions: 205
- Definition: number of transfers to the CSU and UC systems.
- Benchmark met/exceeded in 2012-13 (213). Data for 2013-14 is not yet available.
- The committee finds the benchmark to be appropriate.
- Outside factors (such as CSUs not accepting transfers in the spring in some year(s)) can affect the annual totals. Because of these factors outside of our control, and because the transfer numbers do not show a consistent trend from year to year, the committee decided not to change the standard or set a target at this time.
- The committee recommends that the OIE study the length of time it takes students to transfer and disaggregate the data based on student status (new out of high school, etc.) and on student placement scores and how long they wait to take their first math and English class.
- The committee recommends that the College encourage students to use transfer resources and that the College prioritize resources to encourage transfer.

The committee made a final recommendation to modify the "Evaluation and Improvement of the Institution-Set Standards for Student Achievement" process document that was adopted by the RATF on February 25, 2014. The modification is to indicate that the process will be initiated each fall and to take specific dates out of the document.