Los Angeles Mission College Faculty/Staff Survey-Fall 2013

CONTENT ANALYSIS

I. Introduction

During the Fall 2013 term, the Los Angeles Mission College (LAMC) Office of Institutional Effectiveness conducted a comprehensive faculty/staff survey of campus services and employee experiences/opinions regarding topics such as institutional effectiveness, campus climate, student needs, and services provided to students, faculty, and staff. 133 valid responses were received from classified staff (33 percent), regular faculty (32 percent), adjunct faculty (26 percent), classified management (four percent), unclassified staff (two percent), and academic administrators (two percent).

This report summarizes the comments and suggestions made by respondents in four open-ended questions on the survey regarding: (1) institutional effectiveness and planning at LAMC (including information and training needs, data needed to more effectively serve students, and general comments on institutional effectiveness and planning); (2) the previous accreditation cycle and the Accreditation Steering Committee; (3) student support services; and (4) additional general comments. Each topic will be discussed in detail in the following pages.

The main areas for improvement identified by respondents include:

- More staff and resources for student support services, particularly tutoring, counseling and support for underprepared students;
- More transparency regarding resource allocation, particularly with regard to class section cuts;
- Better feedback to departments after submission of program reviews;
- More professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, including training for faculty on how to be an effective department chair, and for staff on general policies and procedures at LAMC and on Federal and State laws and regulations.

While this report focuses on areas for improvement, it is important to bear in mind that the majority of faculty and staff responding to this survey reported satisfaction with existing programs and services and, in fact, many respondents were complementary of recent efforts at improvement and the progress that has been made over the past year.

II. Institutional Effectiveness and Planning

This section discusses faculty and staff comments on institutional effectiveness and planning, including (a) information and training needs, (b) data needed to more effectively serve students, and (c) additional comments not covered above.

A. Information and Training Needs

Over half (56 percent) of respondents indicated on the survey that they are interested in trainings regarding outcomes assessment (e.g., SLOs, SAOs, etc.). Additional topics requested by respondents include: customer service training; emergency procedures and CPR; new technologies (including online instruction, Prezi, etc.); Federal and State regulations; and LAMC policies and procedures. The lack of a mandatory general new faculty and staff orientation may be responsible for the high number of ad hoc training requests on basic topics. Figure 1 summarizes all of the training topics requested and the number of requests.

Figure 1: Training Requests

Type of Training	Number of Requests
Customer service skills	3
Emergency Preparedness and CPR	3
Technology	3
Email etiquette	2
Federal and state laws and regulations	2
LAMC policies and procedures	2
Leadership and management training	2
LAMC phone system	2
Active listening and conflict resolution	1
Overview of LAMC programs and offices	1
Total	**21**

B. Data Needed to More Effectively Serve Students

The majority of respondents (61 percent of 114 responses) indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "The College provides data that is relevant for effective program decision-making in my area." However, 11 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. Figure 2 shows the distribution of responses. Employee groups that disagreed or strongly disagreed included regular faculty (52 percent), adjunct faculty (five percent) and classified staff (43 percent).

Figure 2: "The College provides data that is relevant for effective program decision-making in my area."
(N=114)
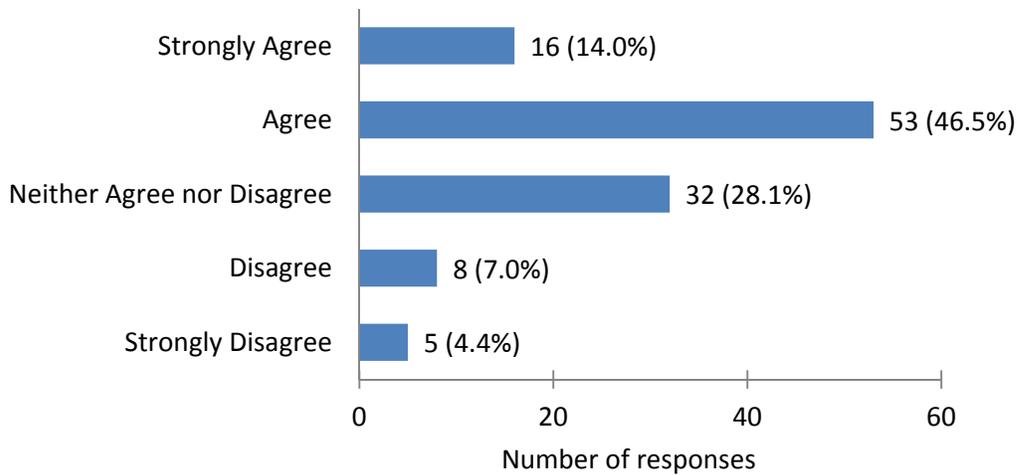
Suggestions made by respondents regarding data that would be useful to them in determining ways to more effectively serve students include:

- "how many students *actually* have regular access to computers at home and how many must rely on the (limited) access to computers/printing at LAMC Library" - Adjunct Faculty;
- "demographics of the students in our program" - Regular Faculty;
- "demographics on student success" - Regular Faculty;
- "online student success/completion rates vs. in class student success rates per class" - Adjunct Faculty;
- feedback on unit/department assessments and requests for additional resources - Department Vice Chair.

One department chair noted that giving department chairs more access to data about students in their department would eliminate the need for each department to request the data from Dean of Institutional Effectiveness.

C. Other Comments/Suggestions Regarding Institutional Effectiveness and/or Planning

Additional comments and suggestions about institutional effectiveness and planning clustered around three main themes: lack of transparency and resource allocation; student success; and program review. Selected representative comments in each area are given below.

i. Lack of transparency and resource allocation

- "Classroom cuts are done behind closed doors, so some departments are cut more than others. No accountability or transparency for that process." - Department Chair;
- "There are no reports on the outcomes where sections were lost or gained. There is a lack of strategic enrollment management and a lack of transparency." - Department Vice Chair;
- "The college has not yet managed to link resource allocation to an impartial and objective review of unit effectiveness." - Regular Faculty;
- "LAMC's planning and resource allocation process is clearly defined. It might be beneficial to fully implement and evaluate the process." - Adjunct Faculty;
- "I believe that the data is there but decisions are not always done based on such data; especially when it comes to budget allocation for the much needed academic support (tutoring) for all areas." - Unclassified Staff.

ii. Student Success

- "There does not seem to be a focus on student success when the college wants to cut sections and increase class sizes. We have long wait lists of students who can't get the courses they need… Students cannot get the attention they need for success when the class sizes are so large." - Regular Faculty;
- "Why is it that there is a lot of talk about excellence and service to students while at the same time class sizes are experiencing upward creep?... As class size creeps up, instructors must compromise…" - Classified Staff;
- "More resources should be diverted into addressing our supposed mission of serving the needs of students who still need to work on basic academic skills." - Adjunct Faculty.

iii. Program Review

- "Once program review is turned in, all communication to the department or discipline ends." - Department Chair;
- "The program review process is far too involved. It should be simple. Keep the process SIMPLE." - Regular Faculty;
- "Faculty has input into resource allocation via program review. However, there is little feedback regarding the status of resource requests or the process by which resource requests are filled. If the Chairs receive such information they do not inform their faculty." - Adjunct Faculty.
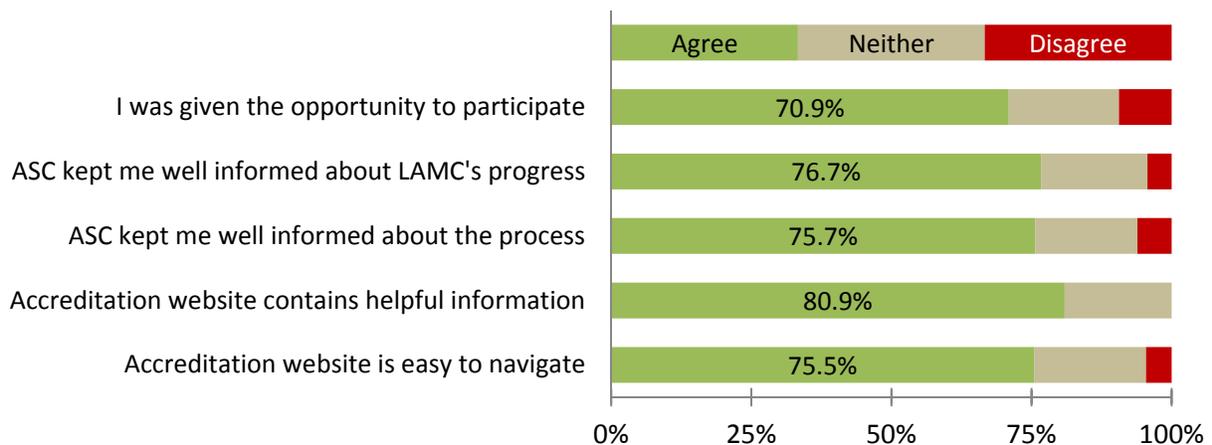
III. Accreditation

This section discusses faculty and staff comments on the previous accreditation cycle and the Accreditation Steering Committee (ASC). Seven comments were received in three areas: praise for the team; participation in the accreditation process; and lack of communication about the result.

Three respondents (all regular faculty: one department chair, one department vice chair and one committee chair) left positive feedback about the "excellent and informative" accreditation report and excellent job done by "the team as a whole". Overall, 81 percent of respondents agreed that the accreditation website contained helpful information. No respondents disagreed - the remaining 19 percent neither agreed nor disagreed.

Three respondents commented on participation in the accreditation process. Two classified staff commented on not being given the opportunity to participate in the accreditation process despite wanting to. In addition, one adjunct faculty member reported that the Academic Senate President showed favoritism in the selection process. Overall, 71 percent of respondents reported being given the opportunity to participate and nine percent reported not being given the opportunity.

One adjunct faculty member reported not having seen "a detailed report on the status of AIPS or AACJC recommendations. Reports in these two areas seem to be reported at a general level." In general, the majority respondents felt that the Accreditation Steering Committee kept faculty and staff well informed about the accreditation process (76 percent) as well as on LAMC's progress in the accreditation (77 percent). Figure 3 summarizes responses to questions on accreditation.

Figure 3: Responses to Accreditation Questions

	Agree	Neither	Disagree
I was given the opportunity to participate	70.9%		
ASC kept me well informed about LAMC's progress	76.7%		
ASC kept me well informed about the process	75.7%		
Accreditation website contains helpful information	80.9%		
Accreditation website is easy to navigate	75.5%		

IV. Student Support Services

This section discusses faculty and staff comments on student support services. Over half (59 percent) of respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that "The College provides sufficient student support services to meet student educational needs." Just under one-fifth of respondents (19 percent) disagreed or strongly disagreed. Figure 4 shows the distribution of responses.

Figure 4: "The College provides sufficient student support services to meet student educational needs." (N=130)
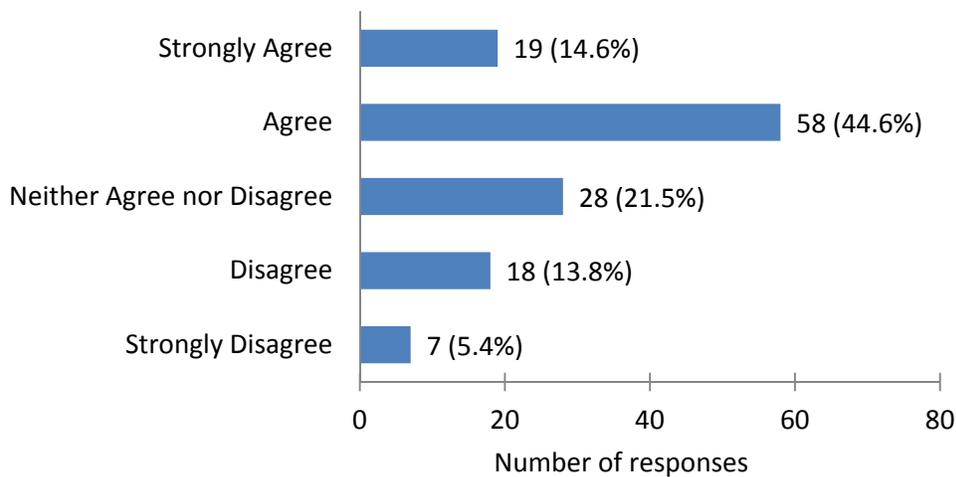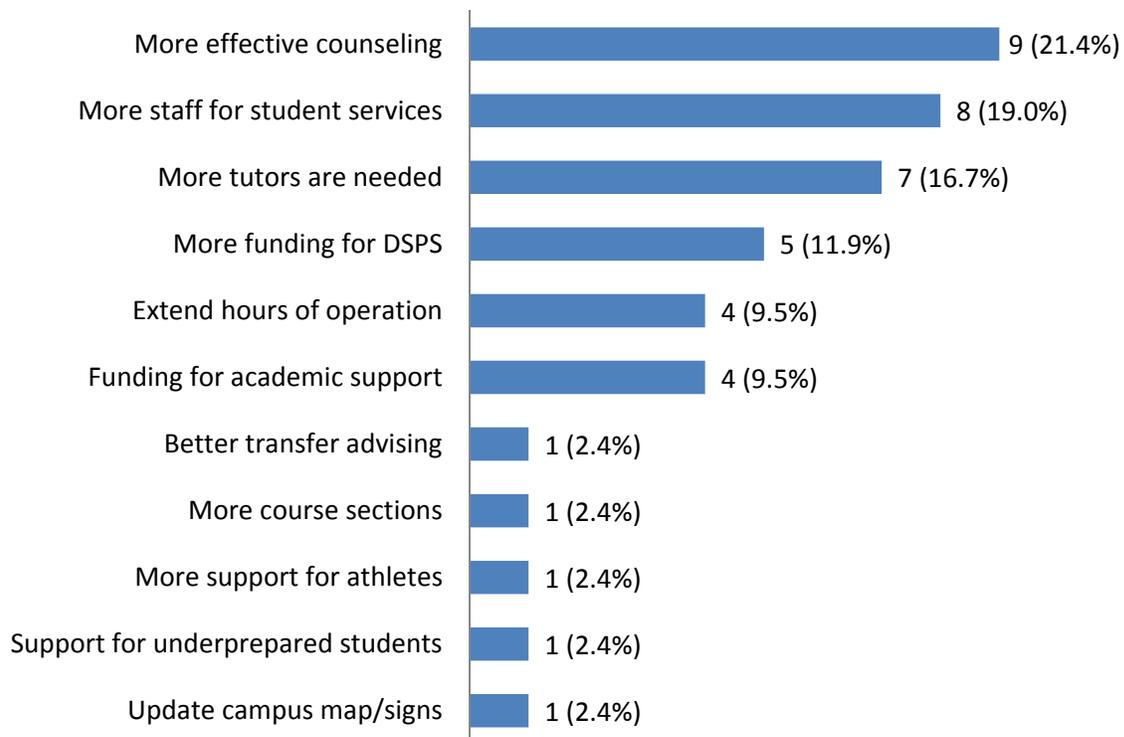

Figure 5 summarizes the comments regarding areas of improvement for student support services made by respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed that the College provides sufficient student support services for students. The most frequently mentioned areas were staffing (more counselors, tutors and other support staff); extended open hours for students on evenings, Fridays and weekends at the library/Learning Center (tutoring), counseling office and other services; and more funding for DSPS, including counseling and tutoring.

Additionally, respondents made the following representative general comments regarding LAMC's student support services and programs:

- "There is no coordinated program to support underprepared students, and since almost all of entering LAMC students are underprepared, the lack of a coordinated program to support them undermines institutional effectiveness overall." - Adjunct Faculty;
- "Students need tutoring resources and have a counselor educate them on different topics such as financial resources, academic planning, career planning… Many of my students are the first in their family to attend college and they need someone to mentor them." - Adjunct Faculty;

- "The college offers sufficient support services but we need to do a better job in communicating with students/community that the services are available." - Classified Staff;
- "The student services office is disconnected from other campus service areas when it should be in close collaboration with all areas on campus to make sure appropriate services are rendered to students." - Unclassified Staff;
- "LAMC really needs to prioritize and be able to sustain tutoring programs when grants end." - Department Vice Chair.

Figure 5: Student Support Services Reported by Faculty as Needing Improvement

Category	Value
More effective counseling	9 (21.4%)
More staff for student services	8 (19.0%)
More tutors are needed	7 (16.7%)
More funding for DSPS	5 (11.9%)
Extend hours of operation	4 (9.5%)
Funding for academic support	4 (9.5%)
Better transfer advising	1 (2.4%)
More course sections	1 (2.4%)
More support for athletes	1 (2.4%)
Support for underprepared students	1 (2.4%)
Update campus map/signs	1 (2.4%)

V. Additional Comments

The final section of the survey allowed respondents to provide additional feedback on any area of the College. 11 respondents commented on the following topics: (i) the College climate, (ii) faculty, (iii) quality of instruction and services and (iv) communication. Selected comments in each area are given below.

i. College Climate

- "I believe from my experience, especially during the last year, that the College climate has improved significantly. I also believe that the majority of my faculty colleagues, administrators, and staff care about the students and work diligently in their respective positions for students' success." - Adjunct Faculty;
- "One thing that has happened for as long as I have been here is that certain people choose to work very little and they get away with it. The cost is not just about wages of those that do not work. The cost of the demoralizing effect it has on others has to be taken into account." - Classified Staff;
- "Staff and faculty unions run this campus and always have, so there is NO accountability for people who don't do their job. PERIOD. We have a problem keeping administrators because the "good ones" get run out of town when they actually do make people accountable. So we are always missing good leaders." - Department Chair.

ii. Faculty

- "Faculty require more training specifically on how to be an effective chairperson. Faculty are in need of a professional development space to share ideas and support one another." - Regular Faculty (did not indicate that they were a Department Chair, Vice Chair or Committee Chair);
- "We should have more full time staff and less adjuncts." - Regular Faculty;
- "Adjuncts definitely need at least one voting position on the Academic Senate to have more of a 'voice' and impact on campus decisions." - Adjunct Faculty.

iii. Quality of Instruction and Services

- "I am embarrassed when out AV equipment does not work. I am horrified when we are unable to provide our customers with what is promised. I am saddened when our standards degrade over time I am disappointed when our community college class sizes grow to the point where students are herded like cattle through the system. I believe that we should provide our customers with the highest level of learning -- no compromise." - Adjunct Faculty.

iv. Communication

- "Communication on campus could be improved -- those who attend meetings need to be sure to disseminate the information from those meetings to their departments/units." - Classified Staff.

VI. Summary

According to the 2013 Faculty/Staff Survey conducted by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness in Fall 2013, the following themes emerged in faculty and staff responses to four open-ended questions regarding institutional effectiveness and planning, accreditation, student support services and general comments:

- More staff and resources are needed for student support services (in particular for English and Math tutoring at the Learning Resource Center (LRC), the Math Lab and DSPS), for counseling services, and for a coordinated program to support underprepared students across the College;
- The lack of transparency regarding resource allocation and the lack of transparent strategic enrollment management cause frustration for faculty and staff who are struggling to maintain standards of excellence despite increases in class size due to course section cuts;
- Departments would like better feedback from the administration following the submission of program reviews and requests for resources;
- Faculty and staff would like more professional development opportunities, including training for faculty on how to be an effective department chair, and training for staff on general policies and procedures at LAMC and on Federal and State laws and regulations.

While this report focuses on areas for improvement, it is important to bear in mind that the majority of faculty and staff responding to the survey were satisfied with existing programs and services.

Appendix A: Additional Open-Ended Responses

A. Facilities and Operations
- Poor communication regarding emergencies, security issues, etc. and no advance notice regarding construction and fulfillment of work requests. (8 similar comments)
- Campus areas are not well maintained, dirty or littered with trash. (4 similar comments)
- "Campus lighting on many paths is minimal or nonexistent in certain areas." (3 similar comments)
- "Work requests not completed in a timely matter." (3 similar comments)
- "The stall spaces in the parking structure are much too small, making it difficult to get in and out of a car, and making it more likely cars will be damaged."
- "There are no food service areas in the CMS building."

B. Other Campus Services
- "When I occasionally call the switchboard operator, no one answers." (4 similar comments)
- "College website needs to be updated more often" and " is NOT user friendly." (3 similar comments)
- "Too often books are not in stock by start of class." (2 similar comments)
- "Sheriff's Office: I have experienced different officers giving me different policies for the same situation." (2 similar comments)
- "Purchasing office orders science equipment from suppliers other than those requested, resulting in equipment which is non-compatible with existing equipment and inferior, even unusable."

C. Governance and Leadership
- "We need deans in academic affairs." (4 similar comments)
- Lack of communication: "Communication is not filtered down from administration to the departments." (2 similar comments)
- Lack of transparency: "There has been a disconnect between program review and how policy is made and budget is planned", "more explanation of why decisions are made, and more shared governance with regards to what classes are added or dropped." (2 similar comments)
- "Students have seats on many committees but are often unable to participate. Shared governance structure is clearly defined, but not all committees are able to function as planned." (2 similar comments)
- "While adjunct faculty may have a representative on the department level, more representation with voting rights are needed - the Academic Senate, for example. Adjunct faculty also can contribute expertise and an established, adequate fund for ancillary pay and a simple procedure for the process would be beneficial."

D. Library/LRC
- "While recognizing that the college has limited resources and cannot purchase library materials to the extent it has in other years, it should be noted that much of the print material in the library is increasingly out of date." (2 similar comments)
- Longer open hours: "Students need the Library and LRC to remain open longer in the evenings and on weekends", "More hours are desperately needed especially around midterm and final exams." (2 similar comments)
- "Lack of tutor availability remains a serious problem." (1 similar comment)

- "Need more tutors for lower level ESL, Dev Com, and Engl. Have plenty of tutors for ESL 5, 6, 7...but none for ESL 1,2,3 etc." (1 similar comment)
- "More workshops that go to the end of the semester for research projects; students are not savvy enough to realize they need to attend before mid-term to get in all workshops needed."

E. Technology, Financial and Physical Resources
- "New buildings feature great technology; older buildings (CSB & INST) have fair-to-weak presentation technology." (3 similar comments)
- "Training about technology available to teachers" is needed, "divided into Beginner/Intermediate and Advanced" levels. (3 similar comments)
- "Campus needs more electronic training rooms for instructors to use." (2 similar comments)
- "Plant Facilities needs more staff and a larger budget in order to meet the college's needs." (1 similar comment)
- "IT response to problems and requests is inconsistent."
- "Online support services are still lacking. No online orientation video available to students yet."
- "The library is increasingly insecure. The security gates at the entrance/exit are only partially working, resulting in students having to navigate through a confusing and ugly passageway. Also, the elevator cannot be locked, resulting in unauthorized access to the library when it is closed. This could potentially lead to theft of equipment/material, and harm to staff."

F. Human Resources
- "We should have more full time staff and less adjuncts." (5 similar comments)
- "We are understaffed both in service areas and full-time faculty." (2 similar comments)
- "We do not have enough support staff and there is not an institutional process for requesting classified staff. Requests for classified staff in program review are not institutionally reviewed."
- "Again, I believe that the structure and the intent is clearly stated, but follow through is sometimes lacking. There is a need for more administrators, academic deans in particular. Recruitment for faculty and administrative positions needs to be more extensive."
- "The hiring process is initiated much too late to be competitive for the best candidates. In my opinion the hiring of faculty based on a single interview is not sufficient. An additional round of interviews as was done previously would allow for a better screening of candidates."
- "Staff and faculty unions run this campus and always have, so there is no accountability for people who don't do their job. PERIOD. We have a problem keeping administrators because the "good ones" get ran out of town when they actually do make people accountable. So we are always missing good leaders."