

DAS President's Report to the PCCD Board of Trustees for June 28, 2011
Karolyn van Putten

Thank you, Mr. President. Good evening trustees, chancellor, all district administrative center staff, college presidents, colleagues and anyone else who's paying attention.

Looking ahead to the fall semester, we anticipate having long-awaited access to the first comprehensive phase of smart classrooms implementation district-wide. I won't take the time now to explain to you why this is important and has the potential to revolutionize how we teach. That will come in a future DAS president's report. What you do need to know now, however, is that using these 21st century tools effectively will require training, not just in their operation, but (as Trustee Guillén just noted) in the pedagogical possibilities and improvements that can result from enhanced student engagement that is facilitated by using interactive white boards, document cameras, lecture capture, video conferencing and more. Without training that addresses changing how we teach, the investments made in technology will be wasted, and training requires additional resources of time and money.

Earlier this evening, Professor Bajrami and I spoke to you about the status of student learning outcomes and assessment at the Peralta Colleges and part of our presentation was focused on institutional learning outcomes (ILOs). Essentially, ILOs are a set of statements about the knowledge and behaviors we want our students to leave with, to carry into the world, their communities, and the rest of their lives.

Because the possibilities for and the circumstances in which this demonstration occurs are so broad and unpredictable, it can be quite challenging to develop meaningful assessments of them. Last week, while attending the Ella Baker Center's Heal The Streets Fellows Graduation I observed that three of the cohort fellows were attending Laney College and Merritt College. It occurred to me that these students were exhibiting behaviors and demonstrating skills and interests that are congruent with and expressive of institutional learning outcomes. Had I not been in attendance at that event, I (and probably you) wouldn't have known about this particular demonstration of civic engagement and social responsibility.

In addition, these youthful Fellows were using critical thinking, communication, cultural awareness and information literacy skills to create their participatory action research report examining the causes and effects of racial profiling and proposing remedies. Each of those skills is an institutional learning outcome for two or more of the Peralta colleges.

By implication, I am suggesting that we would be benefited by expanding our focus on how to assess ILOs by connecting with community-based organizations doing the kind of work that provides a platform for these demonstrations. This is an approach that warrants more attention at all levels of assessment, from the district administrative center to the classroom.

Meaningful assessment is comprehensive, all-inclusive, and holistic. We already assess and make revisions to our district-wide shared governance practices, using the still-(relatively) new Planning and Budgeting Integration Model. With the now-departed Director of Enterprise Services, Dr. Tony Hale, we also began creating a framework for evaluating portions of our enterprise infrastructure. For the most part, however, we are not yet assessing the institutional effectiveness of the district service centers. The chancellor and I have discussed this need and he has given a verbal go-ahead for Drs. Budd and Bielanski to begin developing a plan and structure for how the entire district will be included in our assessment activities. You will be hearing more about this, and the resources it will require, in the months ahead.

That concludes my report for tonight. Thank you for receiving it.