

DAS President's Report to the PCCD Board of Trustees for March 12, 2012

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Thank you Mr. President, and good evening trustees, chancellor, district administration center staff, college presidents, colleagues and members of the public.

Later this month the four Peralta colleges will be submitting a report to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) on the status of our Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Implementation. Given that, my comments tonight will focus on the increased role that assessment is expected to have in institutional planning and resource allocation decisions. You will recall that all California Community Colleges were to have attained the "proficiency" level of using student learning outcomes (SLOs/SLO) in support of continuous quality improvement by fall 2012. All Peralta colleges got a bit of a reprieve from that deadline in that about 45% of the community colleges, including us, were given an additional six months before filing the report mentioned previously. That six-month extension ended this month.

Not too long ago, my colleague Diana Bajrami delivered a presentation to you on the meaning of "proficiency" and a report on our progress to that point in time. Since then, faculty members have continued to record and document assessment data for more of the thousands of courses and hundreds of programs offered at our colleges.

In brief, for a college to be at the level of "proficiency" with the implementation of student learning outcomes and their assessment, the rubric by which we will be evaluated covers seven essential areas:

1. Outcomes and authentic assessment
2. Widespread institutional dialogue
3. Integrated decision-making
4. Resources allocation
5. Reporting
6. Alignment and
7. Student Awareness

Most of these areas are familiar to those of us who have been paying attention to all matters related to learning assessment for the past decade. What is less familiar, and even more crucial than for all previous SLO reports to the ACCJC, is the emphasis on four of the areas just mentioned: Integrated decision-making, Resources Allocation, Alignment, and Student Awareness. While preparing the Laney College SLO Implementation Status Report I have also been alerting college constituencies to this dramatic change in how we make planning and budgeting decisions. It is likely that we have not fully embraced the different ways in which the ACCJC will be evaluating the colleges in the years to come.

Stated simply, it is the integration of the results of assessment with everything we do that is the major dramatic change. More than dialogue about student learning, we are now being asked to include the results of assessment in institutional planning and all of the decisions we make about how to allocate resources, and to document that this has occurred with a comprehensive range of written evidence. This means that every shared governance body responsible for making recommendations to our administrators is expected to include the results of assessment of student learning as an essential factor in its deliberations.

With these expectations the ACCJC is encouraging us to continually improve what we do, so that we can continually increase and support the success of our students and the development of our communities. This cannot occur unless we also continually assess how we and our students are doing, and make decisions that are focused on filling the gap between what is and what can be. That is the purpose and role of assessment. Our task is to restructure how we make decisions to incorporate assessment fully.

As my colleague James Blake just noted, when we increase course sections for example, thorough institutional planning based on the results of assessment would also include making certain that we have sufficient staff to take care of the needs associated with those increases. We will only be able to do that if we make plans now for correcting the current imbalances that we have carefully documented. That kind of planning and corrective action, based on the results of assessment, will allow us to achieve the level of continuous quality improvement.

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