PLANNING SUMMARY

The purpose of this section of the self study is to direct the major work efforts in the next accreditation cycle to those findings that will help the college address the standards in an even more exemplary way. The self-study team anticipates that these planning directives will be readily incorporated into the curriculum and planning processes of the college since they are already in alignment with priorities established by the planning process, or will be incorporated into department and program plans. The following topics are the result of the reflection of the Steering Committee in its review of themes across all standards. The following planning summary parallels the topics from the 2002 self-study report; however, their order reflects a shift in priorities for this period.

Planning and evaluation

The college has a well-documented, ongoing process for evaluating itself in all areas of operation, analyzing and publishing the results and planning and implementing improvements. The Academic Council will monitor the new planning process for improvement in communication between planning and the institution. The yearly evaluation of the planning process will include evaluation of how well the college is meeting the objectives of the new Educational Master Plan. The results of these yearly evaluations will be shared with all college constituencies and feedback elicited. This yearly evaluation process will emphasize whether the planning process is directly linked to resource allocation and whether institutional planning is focused on the development and assessment of student learning outcomes. The results of these yearly evaluations will be shared with all college constituencies and feedback elicited. Finally, the college will provide leadership training for all college constituents, especially on the newly established planning structure and process to the college community.

The College Planning Committee will continue to monitor the progress of the Program Plan/Program Review Task Force and implementation of the recommendations that result from the task force’s work. In fall 2008, the Program Plan/Program Review Task Force will complete its study of ways to link outcomes and assessments with budget allocations. Implementation of a process and tools to support this integration will begin in 2008-09.

The proposed reorganization will be thoroughly vetted in a series of college-wide forums to take place in fall 2008. Based on feedback from these forums, the Academic Council will determine a way to assess the effectiveness of the plan for reorganization of the administrative structure. The college will need to determine whether the reorganization that is ultimately adopted advances institutional goals. The implementation of the Student Success Plan will be evaluated for each of the strategies contained within the plan, with special emphasis on effectiveness of the multidisciplinary and discipline-specific success centers in improving student learning and achievement. Whatever the decision on the administrative centralization of technology functions and services, the adopted model will be evaluated as to whether it meets student, faculty, administration, and staff needs and effectively supports teaching and learning. The Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Associate Vice President of the Pacific Coast campus, in consultation with constituent groups, will continue to pursue their analysis of the college’s two campuses in terms of program offerings and attendant issues related to resources, equity, diversity, and facilities. The Vice President of Academic Affairs will continue to oversee efforts to evaluate the success and relevance of the college’s vocational programs.
Student success and access

The college has taken a deliberative approach to understanding the magnitude of the challenges presented by its largely underprepared student population. Part of this approach involved the development of the plan to face this challenge with new strategies not previously utilized at the college. One of these strategies has involved the addition of required supplemental directed learning activities to key gatekeeper courses. Another strategy is to deploy faculty trained in developmental education in the new success centers. These new strategies and methods will be evaluated for their effectiveness in improvements in student success, both at the pre-collegiate and transfer level. The College Planning Committee, in conjunction with the Student Success Committee, will oversee implementation of the Student Success Plan and find improved ways to communicate with and involve the entire college in this initiative. The College Planning Committee, as part of it monitoring of the implementation of the Student Success Plan, will ensure that the Success Centers be evaluated in terms of their effectiveness in improving student success.

The steady expansion of the college’s distance learning offerings is, in and of itself, evidence that the college is responding to a new generation of students wired to the internet and engrossed in work, family, and other obligations that compete with the limited time students can come to campus. The Distance Learning Task Force created in spring 2008 was charged to develop a Distance Learning Plan for the next five years. The task force was charged to address in the plan technology support needs, standards for access, legal compliance, accreditation, policies, curriculum considerations, professional development needs, marketing within and outside the district, instructional design support for online delivery, student services support for online students, staffing, and other resource considerations. The proposed Distance Learning Plan was presented to the College Planning Committee at the end of spring 2008. The CPC will sponsor the presentation of the plan to the college community and provide feedback to the Distance Learning Task Force regarding any modifications needed.

One important element of the proposed Distance Learning Plan is the standard that requires all department heads to ensure that all instructors assigned to teach or update the Web components of this course follow the accessibility guidelines provided by the Instructional Technology Development Center (ITDC). The instructors of each distance learning course must take the ITDC Web accessibility training and verify that the e-learning environment they use for each course and all content and activities included in the course are accessible to students with disabilities and in compliance with the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office Access Guidelines and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

The Curriculum Committee in conjunction with the ITDC will address requirements for distance learning delivery as it relates to accessibility.

The institution is aware of the need to achieve a more balanced curriculum offering at both LAC and PCC. While a two-college solution was not justified by the study conducted early in this evaluation period, the designation of PCC as an “educational center” has brought additional resources to the site and has informed the 2020 Unified Master Plan. Still, the college recognizes the need for continued efforts toward achieving a more robust and comprehensive curriculum for students enrolled at PCC. The Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Associate Vice President of the Pacific Coast campus, in consultation with constituent groups, will continue to pursue their analysis of the school’s two campuses in terms of program offerings and attendant issues related to resources, equity, diversity, and facilities.
Learning outcomes

The college has made great strides in the assessment of student learning outcomes and has moved well beyond the awareness stage early in this evaluation period and decisively into the development phase in the last three years. There is a series of challenges remaining for the institution to reach the proficiency stage of student learning outcomes implementation. The first challenge involves the need to bring alignment between course student learning outcomes with degree student learning outcomes. Facing this challenge begins with faculty addressing the disagreement concerning whether the student learning outcomes documented in the course outlines are indeed outcomes or content-level learning objectives (see the staff professional development discussion below).

At the level of program student learning outcomes, the college has allowed significant latitude in the development of SLOs so that departments and programs have defined program SLOs in a manner that makes sense to the individual departments. This latitude has allowed the college to make significant strides in identifying and assessing learning outcomes at the program level (see the Annual Update on Student Learning Outcomes, 2007-08 submitted by LBCC to ACCJC). On the other hand, this approach has made the college less effective in advancing the development of SLOs that are at a level that more directly determines the basis upon which certificates and degrees with particular emphases are awarded. The majority of college catalog curriculum guides do not include student learning outcomes that would result from a program of study. This challenge can be met by first attempting to define a “program” for purposes of student learning outcomes assessment. Next, the college will need to discuss the relation of program-level SLOs with the basis upon which the institution awards degrees and certificates.

The ASLO committee has developed a long-range plan for assessing the institutional core competencies, which, in its original formulation, forecasts completion in 2020. This assessment puts processes in place for agreed-upon college-wide ongoing assessment, faculty development, curriculum change, and reassessment in each of the core competency areas. Although this plan is continuously being reviewed and revised, both faculty and administration have concerns that the 2020 plan for completing the assessment will not meet ACCJC expectations for reaching proficiency by 2012. In response to these concerns, the ASLO Committee conducted a survey of the faculty in spring 2008 to solicit feedback on the core competencies about whether to merge or eliminate some of them in order to complete a full assessment in a more timely manner. Survey results show that 64 percent of the faculty who responded to the survey favor retaining all eleven core competencies. In addition, the ASLO committee has discussed the possibility of finding ways to condense the process and timeline. Clearly, the desire to engage in quality assessment must be balanced with timely advancement of the SLO initiative. The danger of this in-depth approach to core competency assessment, given the number of competencies the college identified for itself, is that the approach has hindered effective progress in closing the loop and generating data that informs change and improves student learning. College leaders must come to the recognition that scope and process have imposed significant cost on the institution’s ability to move expeditiously. The college will revise its assessment plan so that it can complete authentic assessment and begin to use the results of assessment to improve student learning within the expected ACCJC timeframe.

The goal of meeting the ACCJC timeframe is further complicated by the continuing evolution of the scope of the student learning outcomes assessment project. Currently, the plan focuses on the institution’s core competencies but does not address closing the loop of assessment for course-level outcomes, although some faculty are assessing outcomes and making changes to their learning environment in response to assessment data analysis. This approach has resulted in uneven advancement of student learning outcomes assessment at the course level. Part of the scope of the SLO assessment plan must include a process that ensures that the loop of assessment is closed for all course-level outcomes.
In addition to addressing closing the loop of assessment for course, program and institutional level outcomes, the college must also more effectively integrate Student Services and Instruction. Meeting this challenge requires the institution to determine what integration across areas will mean. Recognition of this need has been raised at Academic Council. Discussions among the SLO Coordinator, the Vice President of Student Support Services, and the Associate Dean of Institutional Effectiveness have begun to define what integration will mean. This may include shared principles of assessment, a shared vocabulary for assessment, the common set of core competencies, a shared framework or template for documenting SLO assessment progress, and a body that will oversee learning outcomes assessment institution-wide. The college needs to quickly establish the charge and membership of this college-wide body.

As noted above, the college has already identified a potential vehicle for integrating student learning outcomes assessment across all areas of the college. The College Planning Committee created the Program Plan/Program Review Task Force, which is charged with providing recommendations that will integrate the processes of planning and evaluation, previously separate processes. In the context of student learning outcomes evaluation, the key to the integration of planning and evaluation is to make information about the results of evaluation on the improvement of student learning available to decision makers and planners. The key to proficiency in student learning assessment involves widespread institutional dialogue about the results. Transparency of student learning assessment results and student achievement data is important in guiding the allocation of resources in a way that purposefully supports and advances efforts that improve student learning. The Program Plan/Program Review Task Force will recommend a uniform system of tracking progress on student learning outcomes assessment for each program or area of the college and making SLO assessment results readily available.

An important element of the proficiency phase of student learning implementation involves the use of assessment results for improvement and further alignment of institution-wide practices. The Student Success Plan states that “the college is now committed to implementing the LBCC Student Success Plan to address the needs of students who are unprepared to successfully complete a sequential curriculum and reach their goals. The LBCC Student Success Plan seeks to improve student retention and persistence and enable all students to succeed in occupational, degree, and transfer programs.” Each of the strategies contained in the Student Success Plan includes an assessment component that includes student learning outcomes as one of the measurements of effectiveness and success. The college needs to specify how student learning outcomes assessment will be fully integrated with the work set forth by the Student Success Plan.

The purpose of student learning outcomes assessment is to enable students to demonstrate awareness of goals and purposes of the courses and programs in which they are enrolled. The college must provide students with clear and current information about the purpose and content of its degree and certificate programs. The college needs to begin documenting student learning outcomes in the principal documents that students use, including the college catalog, curriculum guides, and course syllabi, to convey expected student learning outcomes consistently at the appropriate level.

Every phase of the implementation of student learning outcomes assessment involves faculty and staff in a learning process. Faculty and staff must learn the vocabulary of student learning assessment, develop rubrics, determine appropriate assessment methodologies, gather and analyze data, and implement changes in the learning environment that result in improved student learning. Given the daunting nature of the training that is needed to carry out all phases of student learning assessment effectively, the college should not be surprised that not all faculty exhibit the same willingness to become participants in the SLO initiative. Achieving higher rates of participation in SLO implementation across the faculty will ultimately determine the success of the college in advancing the development of its SLO assessment work. This means that the college must provide comprehensive and sustained faculty and
Staff professional development. Although the faculty handbook addresses student learning indirectly, it must be revised to guide faculty more explicitly in all aspects of student learning outcomes assessment. A revised faculty handbook or other publication that serves to support faculty with this work should be made available to both contract and adjunct faculty. The comprehensive and sustained professional development should extend to staff and administration, with faculty serving as leaders.

To meet these challenges, the college will ensure adequate funding for its student learning outcomes initiative. The district needs to allocate additional resources once Title V Cooperative Grant funding concludes in 2009.

The college will continue to address the ACCJC standard that states that “faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving stated student learning outcomes have, as a component of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing those learning outcomes.” The evaluation of faculty performance has been conceived up to this point only in terms of individual faculty evaluation. In fact, the rationale for taking this position stems from the concern that linking evaluation and student learning outcomes will lead faculty to disengage from authentic SLO development. There is now greater recognition that a dialogue is necessary to conceptualize in other ways the relationship between student learning outcomes assessment and faculty evaluation. The Academic Senate will facilitate a dialogue between academic and administrative departments to design a procedure that supports and encourages employees and departments to develop student learning outcomes, assess those outcomes, and improve student learning. Part of this process includes evaluating the extent to which these activities lead to improvements in student learning and providing opportunities for faculty professional development that support ongoing improvements.

**Staffing**

While the District has experienced progress in diverse hiring among management and classified employees, there remains a gap between the ethnic diversity of the full-time and part-time faculty and that of the community. The Staff Hiring Diversity Task Force was formed to address this issue and identified three pertinent areas, including information and dialogue, recruitment and selection processes, and district policies and procedures. The task force was also charged to develop a staff equity plan. The plan calls for a dialogue that creates an “ongoing intellectual campus-wide training agenda on the topic of equity as it relates to students and staff, the purpose of which is to educate staff and inspire the leader in everyone to move progressively toward an equitable and inclusive environment for applicants and staff which promotes the success of our students.” The plan also calls for the review and revision of hiring policies and regulations to maximize equitable hiring. In the area of recruitment, the plan calls for the conduct of a broad-based outreach “to ensure equitable recruitment practices in support of appropriately diverse pools of applicants.” The College Planning Committee, Human Resources, and the Academic Senate will monitor the progress of implementation of the Staff Equity Plan, including the establishment of a standing Staff Equity Committee.

Professional development is needed in the areas of leadership, student learning outcomes, diversity and equity, basic skills, technology, and enrollment management, in addition to the traditional training used to maintain content-expertise. The Staff Development Coordinator, in conjunction with the Faculty Professional Development Committee, will partner with those areas of the college in need of specific training to develop a comprehensive professional development plan. One of the critical areas in need of ongoing professional development, as identified in the Learning Outcomes planning summary above, is training on the multiple
aspects of student learning outcomes assessment. The Faculty Professional Development Committee and the Budget Advisory Committee will reexamine the sufficiency of funding for off-campus faculty professional development activities.

**Technological Innovation, Infrastructure, Support and Maintenance**

The college will implement operational aspects of the existing Technology Master Plan, especially equipment replacement and software upgrades. The Technology Planning Task Force will complete the Technology Master Plan 2006-2011 by formulating strategic features and a vision for the technological future for the college. This plan will be ready for adoption by the College Planning Committee and the Board of Trustees in fall 2008.

**Facilities**

The Facilities, Maintenance and Operations Department will monitor and ensure completion of projects needed to address noncompliance findings in those facilities not included for upgrades in the LBCC 2020 Unified Master Plan.

**Governance and college community**

The college recognizes the need to foster greater participation among all constituent groups. The President’s Leadership Council, with representation from all groups, will consider the effectiveness of the college’s attempts at inclusive dialogue that produces a well-informed team of administrators, faculty, staff, and students. The college community needs to better understand and respond to diverse perspectives and needs in working toward shared institutional goals and objectives. More specifically, the President’s Leadership Council will examine the processes of participation and communication involving students and classified personnel, whose voices are often missing from the dialogue, and implement changes to improve communication to constituent groups and to receive input from them.

Authentic participation in achieving shared institutional goals is built on relations of mutual respect and a respect for college policies, procedures, and processes. At the close of the spring 2008 academic year, the Superintendent-President acknowledged in a letter to the faculty continued practices that undermine the progress towards college-wide goals. The Superintendent-President called for an ethic whereby everyone is treated with respect and encouragement. The capacity to work with others and make evidence-based decisions is the foundation of such an ethic.

This self study has reached the same recognition as that identified in the Superintendent-President’s letter: that is, the college needs to establish an institution-wide code of ethics. Thus, the President’s Leadership Council, the Academic Senate, Vice President of Human Resources, and the Professional Development Committee will initiate a dialogue regarding the development of an institution-wide code of ethics.