Long Beach City College - History Program Review 2014-15

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PR 2A - Enrollment Data:
The History AA-T program is committed to offering quality undergraduate training to assist our students to successfully graduate with an associate degree and in transferring to a four-year institution. The program focuses on offering courses that fulfill core lower division general education requirements and specialty courses for history majors. The History wing of the Department of History and Political Science plays a central role in fulfilling the college's mission to enable students to earn the AA/AS degree or to gain general education certification for UC/CSU transfer. Our courses are among the most in demand on campus because they fulfill core requirements in Plans A, B, and C. Using the President's Load Study comparing the past three fall semester enrollment counts, enrollment in history courses has grown from 2632 in Fall 2011 to 2821 in Fall 2013, an increase of 7%. The number of sections offered in 2013-2014 rebounded from a significant decline in sections offered in the previous year, but had not reached the level offered in 2011-2012. Several recent improvements give the historians cause for hope in our ability to enhance student enrollment opportunities in the History AA-T program in the coming years. First, the historians have reactivated several courses that have not been offered for several years; and second, we will be adding two new courses in the coming year, History of the United States since 1945 and Mexican-American History.

PR 2B - Achievement Data:
The history program at LBCC continues to be one of the most efficient on campus, with a program load of 749 in Fall 2012, which was 24% higher than the college wide average for that semester. In Fall 2013, the history program carried a program load of 659 in Fall 2013, or 17% higher than the college-wide index. Both of these figures are considerably higher than where we were five years when the history program load stood at 620. Since our last Program Review, Student Success and Student Retention have both improved. The overall success rate in all history classes for 2013-2014 stood at 57%, compared to 55% at the close of the last Program Review cycle in 2010-2011. The retention rates have increased from 78% to 81%. These success rates lag behind the overall college success rate and is an issue of concern for the history program. The courses offered are rigorous, requiring substantial critical thinking, reading and writing skills. The program is committed, through the SLO assessment process to making improvements in this area. One example of a new effort to address student success rates was the pilot program launched in the spring of 2015 to paired specific sections of Learn 11 with students currently taking a general education history course. The history program initiated this effort in collaboration with the Learning and Academic Resources Department.

PR 2C - HR (Staffing) Data:
The history program is entering a new area with the hiring of two new full-time historians in the spring of 2014, Gilbert Estrada and SuShuan Chen. These were the first full-time hiring of historians in nine years, and will substantially improve our offerings in Latin American and Asian history. There are now nine full-time historians in the Department of History and Political Science, which will help address the worsening full-time/part-time ratio. According to the President's Load Study, in the fall of 2013 there was a full-time FTEF of 5.20 compared to a part-time FTEF of 9.20. This was a reflection of two recent retirements of full-time historians and two department members on sabbatical leave. This imbalance will be addressed, in part, by the addition of new faculty members.

PR 3A - SLO - summary of collected program data:
Outcomes Assessment Report - Program - History AA-T

Putting TracDat back on Track

The Historians of the History and Political Science Department have been diligently engaged in Student Learning Outcomes assessment since 2011. Each semester, they have generated SLO assessment reports for many but not all of the courses actively being taught by our full-time faculty. Unfortunately, the historians have recently learned that not all of these course level assessment reports have found their way into TracDat. In some cases this is because historians were not using a uniform reporting form. In other cases, only some reports that we have submitted to our SLO officer were put into the TracDat database. To cite one example, Humanities 7/Social Science 7 SLO#3 has been assessed according to the data in TracDat. But this data is not accurate. Assessment reports were sent forward to the SLO officer after each semester, but were either not posted to TracDat or posted an inaccurate or repetitious manner for more than one semester. Currently, the historians are in the process of working with the Educational Assessment Research Analyst to remedy these shortfalls and errors. The LBCC historians have also placed a historian into the position of SLO officer for their area to help clean up the reporting process. As a consequence of the problems cited above, composing this report poses a challenge accurately summarize the program data. Our current strategy is to review the existing outcomes assessment reports filed in TracDat since 2011 for those courses that have been assessed. We also note those courses that have never been reviewed. This information is summarized in Table 1: Summary of Results of SLO Assessments 2011-2014.

The historians also recognize there has been an incomplete level of participation amongst both our full time and adjunct faculty. While all History faculty, full time and adjunct, are required to place SLOs in their course syllabi and have done so, it isn’t clear just how many full time and adjuncts have submitted course level assessment reports to the previous SLO officer. This is currently an area being investigated.

A second problem the historians have come to understand is that reporting, to date, has been sometimes sloppily done. Some assessments defined success at 60% completion with an “A,” “B,” or “C” grade, while others used 70% success as the standard, which is the official percentage outlined in the “expected level of achievements column.” The degree of confusion may be seen on one course where the same assessment reported a failure to meet the standard and a success in having met the standard using the same numbers. (See Pg. 44 8A assessment of the Outcomes Assessment Report.) The historians have achieved clarity on the % of students expected to successfully order SLO #1. The expected success level is 70%.
A third problem the historians have recently come to understand is that earlier overall summaries of the work of the historians submitted by the SLO officer did not reflect the historians’ assessment of the information. For example, in the “Action Taken and Follow-Up” column for History 10 dated 10/17/2013, the SLO officer wrote, “the data stemming from our current assessment process for this outcome is not proving to be sufficient to suggest concrete action steps that might be taken by faculty to improve student achievement with this outcome, as well as increase overall student success in the course.” This position is repeated in other summaries and amounted to a completely false understanding of what the historians are doing. A review of the information posted in TracDat (Table 1) demonstrates that nothing could be further from the truth. Instructors posted specific plans of action to address recognized shortcomings in the instructional/testing design. Also, these same instructors identified ways in which they planned to change their courses. Since TracDat does not record all the assessment reports historians submitted, the case for this claim will actually be further strengthened once discrepancies in reporting are resolved.

In full 2014, Lark Zuniga met with the historians to discuss the discipline’s SLO efforts. We were informed that our previous efforts have lacked scientific value because each historian had pursued their own SLO project. The SLO Coordinator made it plain that the historians needed to formulate course wide instruments for our SLO efforts. She also indicated that our SLO #1 was poorly constructed and its language needed to be simplified.

In response, the historians simplified the language of SLO #1 and formulated a new SLO instrument for assessing SLO #1. The instrument, a web-based drag and drop activity involving 12 terms that students must correctly list in chronologically order, was devised for History 10, History 11, and History 27, and implemented in the spring 2015 semester. The data will be reported to the historians at the end of the spring semester. Additional courses will implement the Drag and Drop strategy in fall 2015. This gives the historians our first standard of evaluation for a SLO.

PR 3B - SLO - uses in program improvement:

TracDat Assessment Process in Action: Analysis of the Data

In fact, the assessment process has produced positive results among the participating faculty. Some full-time historians have derived substantial benefits from the process, while others are still evaluating the impact of this initiative on their instructional and testing process. Among full-time LBCC historians who have conducted SLO assessment, they report the following benefits:

1. The pre-test/post-test strategy has generated positive results and verified the advantages of systematically using SLOs.
2. The sample technique in measuring student learning and performance has also generated positive results.
3. Those instructors using "the entire population" as well as those using "the sample" approach report the following:
   A. the degree of success achieved by our students at the end of the course when measured against what they knew when they started was substantial;
   B. the degree of historical literacy gain from the course was equally valuable;
   C. the degree of writing skills acquired has transferred to other classes offered at LBCC as reported by past students;
   D. and the level of historical content they can now command, manipulate, and present in a coherent, organized, and accurate essay also markedly improved.

The LBCC history program is substantially a content and writing skill acquisition program. Historians engaged in the SLO process have honed an instructional methodology that links what is taught with what is tested through an essay writing strategy. LBCC’s historians have striven to make this linkage as transparent as possible in order to address the age-old student complaints: “I don’t know what to study,” as well as “I know what I want to say, I just don’t know how to say it.” LBCC historians have attacked these complaints by developing writing strategies that allow students to achieve greater clarity as to what it is exactly historians expect students to know based on a study of our curriculum. This refined historical consciousness has been linked with writing strategies to help students develop a command of the material. The writing strategies have been embedded in the instructional process throughout the semester, empowering the students with practical experience in working with content. Toward this end, the presence of teaching assistants in the classroom working directly with students on SLO related writing exercises has been particularly effective. The assistants are an “out of pocket” expense paid for by faculty.

The impact of SLOs has added to the ability for our faculty to make both macro and micro adjustments to our instructional design and testing each semester. These adjustments reveal the impact of how well we are achieving our two outstanding goals of 1) commanding historical information accurately, and 2) writing excellent essays. The “Action” column in Table 1 details examples of the specific steps taken by historians to adjust the instructional program as a result of the assessment data.

One of the broader strategies worked up as a result of SLO assessment has been the implementation of a pilot instrument. The historians piloted an affective assessment instrument in History 10 and 11 courses in the 2013-2014 academic year. In Fall 2014, this instrument was shared with the LAR’s staff in the expectation that History faculty could use it and other behavior cues to target at risk students for enrollment into the Learn 11 courses. These conversations have led to a plan to link 2015 history classes with two late starting Learn 11 courses tailored to service students taking history classes.

A good percentage of what the historians are now doing in the classroom is a direct result of participation in the SLO program. The SLO report, however, makes evident that wide holes exist in the application of the assessment model to part of the curriculum taught by the historians. Table 1 is a guide to those courses for which the historians will need to initiate assessments. The historians are ready to undertake this wider initiative. They are also ready to compare and contrast course SLO results. Since the historians are all using the same instructional objectives and outcomes in classes, a conversation about the parallel study of the similarity and differences of results should be most fruitful. These conversations represent the next level of SLO reporting by the historians and they will tell us how to take the history program to the next level of assessment.

PR 3C - SLO - action/ change based on results:

Evidence of engagement in review and enhancement of existing SLOs

Since 2011, Historians have also engaged in a review and enhancement of existing student learning outcomes and their assessment strategies. The historians began with five SLOs in 2011, three were never assessed and were basically dropped from assessment. This decision reflected the
understanding that so many SLOs would be impossible to assess, given staff and resources. The three that discontinued were:

1. Evaluate Historical Causation - Distinguish cause from effect and evaluate the process of historical causation.
2. Analyze Historical Literature - Examine and analyze historical literature; evaluate primary and secondary sources and textbooks, and evaluate non-written sources.
3. Analyze Historical Evidence - Analyze historical evidence to make inferences and form conclusions.

The two SLOs that historians have used for assessing their courses for the period from 2011 to 2014 are:

1. Explain and analyze the processes of historical change and understand the difference between fact and opinion.
2. Organize historical thinking and writing by using facts, ideas, and events to ask questions, assemble evidence, and support conclusions with clarity and coherence.

Even these are undergoing modifications. When assessment officials at LBCC offered suggestions that the language of these SLOs was not specific enough for each course in fall 2013, the historians revised language in fall 2013 and again in fall 2014 on the two active SLOs for California History, the History of the Americas, British History, Women’s History, and Asian History to be more content specific. It is expected that as our remaining courses come up for assessment, language will be further tailored to specific content.

Historians are also lead faculty in two Interdisciplinary courses, Humanities 1/Social Science 1 and Humanities 7/Social Science 7. As was the case with our inactive history SLOs, Humanities 1/Social Science 1 has distinctive SLOs that have never been assessed and are considered inactive. Humanities 7 has distinctive SLOs as well. These are:

1. Analyze historical and current information about the complexity of the American people and their multiple identities.
2. Analyze ethnic and racial identities in the context of theoretical models dealing with the construction and cultivation of personal and public identities.
3. Compare, contrast, and synthesize the historical, literary, and theoretical knowledge, as well as the literary output, related to American diversity and identities in written formats to demonstrate the following skills: complexity, coherence, clarity, consistency of argument, and accuracy.

In all likelihood, three SLOs for Humanities 7/Social Science 7 are too many. At least one will have to be deactivated.

PR 4A - Projects/Strategies - development & change:
The History ADT program is quite new, having only been established in 2012. The historians hope to grow this program in the coming years, and are collaborating together to develop strategies to assist our students. The most recent department plan for the Department of History and Political Science outlines a number of department initiatives. For example, historians are working with Emily Gehrman of the Learning and Academic Resources department to develop a paired Learn 11 course specifically tailored to the needs of students enrolled in core history courses. This program has begun in Spring 2015 and its effectiveness will be assessed in Fall 2015. The historians are planning to revise the History ADT to better meet the needs of majors and to offer greater flexibility in meeting the requirements while retaining academic integrity. Further, historians will be using a new assessment tool to measure student attitudes as part of overall student success assessment. The goal of this affective assessment tool is to accurately make group-focused inferences regarding student attitudes towards course content, learning techniques, as well as students' individual efforts to successfully complete course requirements.

Perhaps the most significant change for the history program has been the opportunity to hire two new full-time historians. These new hires will play an important role in helping us to improve the History AA-T by restoring deactivated courses (such as History 9A, History of China, History 9B, History of Japan and Korea, and History 9C, History of India and Southeast Asia.) We will also be starting a new course, History 50, U.S. History since 1945 and History 33, Mexican-American History.

PR 4B - Projects/Strategies - results:
The History program successfully completed the hiring of two new full-time historians, Gilbert Estrada and SuShuan Chen in the spring of 2014 and both have begun teaching this year.

PR 4C - Projects/Strategies - future plans:
The History Program plans to develop strategies to identify potential history majors at LBCC and to increase the numbers of students completing the History ADT.

PR 5 - Dept - how does it fit into big picture?:
Program Review Section 5: Institutional Goals

The Institution’s Perspective:

In compliance with Long Beach City College’s Board Goals, the LBCC President’s Agenda, the LBCC Educational Master Plan, and the LBCC Annual Institutional Priorities, the historians of the History and Political Science Department align the long-range program goals, course SLOs, and curriculum with the two identified institutional level SLOs assigned to our area of academic expertise: educating our students in 1) citizenship, and 2) ethnic sensitivity and cultural diversity.
According to the Long Beach City College Mission Statement of the Educational Master Plan, the history faculty is charged with one of the stated values, “equity and diversity.” “The Equity and Diversity” portion of the Mission Statement explicitly identifies LBCC’s commitment to “…embracing all cultures, ideas, and perspectives and …striving for equitable opportunities and outcomes.” The history faculty facilitates this educational mission with the wealth of its history curriculum. LBCC history faculty teach a number of courses that address multiculturalism globally as well as ethnic and cultural pluralism within the United States. We also instruct our students in the responsibilities of citizenship based on the principle of equity, which is at the heart of every democracy. Simultaneously, the LBCC history faculty facilitates one of the stated LBCC Annual Institutional Priorities: its top priority of providing course content and skills that satisfies key requirements for

1) the AA/AS degree,
2) transfer to four year institutions,
3) academic preparation for occupational certificates,
4) entry into the labor market.

How the historians satisfy key requirements for 1 and 2 above should be obvious. Perhaps less obvious are the ways in which historians satisfy preparation for occupational certificates. Students enrolled in the nursing program, for example, have a diversity requirement that is satisfied by the Humanities 7/Social Science 7 interdisciplinary offering, American Pluralism and Identity. With regards to entry into the labor market, many employers seek students with the reasoned judgment and well-rounded knowledge of the sort that history curriculum provide. Furthermore, according to the LBCC President’s Agenda, the “Promise Pathways Program” meets LBCC’s students’ needs by opening up avenues of academic success and transfer to four-year institutions and the job market. The LBCC history faculty serves this program by:

1) our AAT history degree;
2) our participation in the requirements for the AA/AS college degree;
3) our courses that meet the LBCC graduation requirements in US history;
4) these same courses also meets the institutional requirements of the California State University [CSU] system), and
5) our contribution to the two General Education [GE] Breadth Requirements required by the CSU and University of California [UC] systems.

Finally, the LBCC history faculty serves the Board of Trustee Goals that commit the college to the above mentioned master plan, its mission statement, promised pathways, and effective employment training.

The Department’s Perceptive:

The history faculty of the History and Political Science Department meets five key curriculum requirements essential to any institution of higher education.

1. The LBCC history faculty services the GE program at LBCC, as well as any other community college in California;
2. history faculty meets the Associate of Arts and Science Degree requirements at our college;
3. history curriculum meets the CSU GE breadth requirement for transfer as well as the UC system’s GE pattern requirements;
4. faculty designed and implemented a transfer degree for history majors that provide LBCC’s students with priority entry into the CSU system; and
5. history faculty developed and teach several courses that meet the graduation requirements in citizenship at all California community colleges and on every California State University campus.

Among the GE patterns that our curriculum services, the LBCC faculty also has developed classes that meet the specific needs of California’s ethnically diverse population, the multicultural mosaic of Long Beach’s local communities, and the need for ethnic studies that empowers minorities in our society.

Future Initiatives:

The LBCC history curriculum’s course-level-SLOs all share two common outcomes that are designed to meet the content of all LBCC courses as well as the skills needed to be successful at four-year universities. The LBCC history faculty designed these common outcomes with foresight, but the implementation of this assessment strategy left much to be desired as outlined in 3a-c above. Those shortcomings are being corrected now.

The goal of this course-level focus was to facilitate our future plans for developing program-level-SLOs that would ensure improved instruction and course development for our department’s future. This goal would allow the history wing of the department to function more effectively at the above stated institutional level. An example of such a future initiative that would meet this goal is the planned development of a more comprehensive ethnic studies program. Some of our history faculty is considering the possibility for future curriculum development of an ethnic studies curriculum that will address the needs of underrepresented minorities on our two campuses today, especially a Mexican-American history course. The goal here would be to help targeted underrepresented students understand how they fit into contemporary US society both as part of its past as well as in potential roles in the present. Such a program would also enhance the underrepresented student’s ability to function as citizens within the city of Long Beach, the county of Los Angeles, and the state of California, and the greater United States.

Other curriculum initiatives include a future course that covers US history from 1945 to the present. This type of class is sorely needed because the current survey courses in US history do not have the time to develop a thorough treatment of the contemporary United States. Hence, several members of the LBCC history faculty are developing the research needed to ensure that this class would articulate with all four-year colleges and universities in California, meet GE requirements in the CSU and UC systems as well as private institutions, and satisfy graduation requirements in the CSU system and at LBCC. Once these and other ideas have been thoroughly developed, the LBCC history faculty will consider what else is needed in the history wing of our department’s curriculum. Finally, the LBCC history faculty will direct its attention to refining the last level of SLOs at LBCC, the one that measures how well our history faculty meets its institutional responsibilities.

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**Projects/ Strategies and Resources Needed**