Academic Affairs Council  
Meeting Agenda for February 24, 2015  

Meeting Time:  3:00 PM – 5:00 PM  

Meeting Location:  LBCC Boardrooms  

Attendance:  Open to all LBCC employees and all are welcome.

Summary of Executive Council Meeting on February 9, 2015

1. We began by debriefing the January 27th AAC meeting. There are still a few lingering questions about the appraisal process, some of which are being resolved in talks between the Faculty Association and the college administration.

2. Minutes of the year’s AAC meetings have not been put up on the website and the question came to AACEC. The Chair will remedy that as soon as he can.

3. We reviewed the report on the use of the AGS degree compiled by Charles Madriaga. We discussed why this question came up in the first place, and there was a memory of a question asked at one point regarding the uses of the AGS at the college. How was it used and what purpose did it serve. Charles gladly took on the task of compiling that information and we believe that his report answers the questions regarding the use of the AGS degree. We agreed that the report was sufficient and would be disseminated to AAC and to the Faculty. It was decided that no further discussion or action was needed.

4. A concern was brought to AACEC regarding the alterations of courses in one department that affect other programs and departments. The concern centered on the communication of those changes between programs, specifically that changes occur without the full knowledge of the affected programs. Sally pointed out that the online workflow process, part of the new online SmartCatalog system, requires the user to check a box indicating that affected programs have been notified. Each person in the workflow must verify that has been checked and has actually been communicated. Then there was also the question of departments that may not be aware of other programs affected by the changes. How do we make sure that everyone gets notified? AACEC decided that this issue should be sent to Curricular Issues for discussion and further investigation.

5. A concern was brought to AACEC regarding perceived inconsistencies in the process for adding and deleting pre-requisite courses to current courses. Different departments have had different requirements for adding and deleting and it is clear that a college-wide policy is drafted and adopted to guide this
Beth reminded the committee of the college’s commitment to “data-driven decisions” and asked us to consider how data is collected to support the addition (or deletion) of a pre-requisite. Are there perhaps other ways that those skills can be acquired, in lieu of a course pre-requisite? What do other colleges use for similar courses? We tossed around the idea of resurrecting the Instructional Standards Committee with this issue, among other ideas. But then it was discovered that a 2008 draft “prerequisite guidelines” document. In further discussions with Bruce, this document was written, then shelved for reasons long-forgotten. AACEC decided that this issue warrants a college-wide discussion at AAC, and then a convening of a faculty committee to finish the draft document and to outline a recommended college-wide procedure for the addition and deletion of pre-requisite courses.

6. The topic of the Instructional Standards Committee was discussed further after the pre-requisite discussion. What purpose does the committee serve? When was the last time it met? Who is on it? Do we need to have it back? We found that there is currently a description of the Instructional Standards Committee that exists in the “Guide to Planning, Decision Making” document that states the following:

The Instructional Standards Committee will act in an advisory capacity to the Academic Affairs Council on all academic rules and regulations for Linn-Benton Community College. Special attention will be given to the review and development of policies and procedures that guide admissions and college academic regulations to insure maintenance of a high level of consistency, fairness, and integrity. The Committee will make recommendations to the Academic Affairs Council on matters pertaining to changing or instituting academic policies, procedures, and regulations; especially those related to the Quality Strategic Goal.

If requested by Academic Affairs Council, The Instructional Standards Committee will also serve as a review panel on academic suspensions, financial aid suspensions due to academic standards of progress and degree waivers and exceptions, CAPA.

That document can be found at http://bit.ly/1E3f1Wm.

The committee did not take any action on the Instructional Standards Committee.

7. AACEC next discussed the draft recommendations of the online course success committee facilitated by Steve Smith. They have recently released a set of principles for the college in regards to online education at LBCC. AACEC decided that we should have a time at AAC to discuss the principles in that forum that will lead Steve’s committee to continue its work on achieving the goals for online courses at LBCC.

8. Lynne Cox has drafted a policy on family member students in courses and AACEC decided that the full council should review that draft.

Comments, suggestions, and thoughts are welcome regarding AACEC. If you have anything you feel that AAC should consider, please contact Jeff Crabill (x4627).
Meeting Goal #1
Discuss and give feedback on the draft pre-requisite document from 2008 and assign an ad-hoc committee of interested faculty to further investigate the issue, and draft a college-wide policy on the addition/deletion of pre-requisites to courses. Bruce Clemetsen will facilitate a discussion.

Preparation:
Please share and read the attached 2008 draft document and collect feedback from staff in your area to bring to the council meeting. Consider the questions:

- How do we justify the addition of a pre-requisite course?
- How do we justify the continued use of a pre-requisite course?
- Keep in mind that this does not generally apply to sequence courses where one course is clearly a pre-requisite of its successor.

Identify interested staff in your area to serve on this committee. This committee will be the opportunity for faculty to weigh in on and shape the policy on pre-requisites at the college. We would like to have a proposal at AAC during Fall 2015.

Meeting Goal #2
Discuss the draft principles from the online success committee and take feedback from the committee. Steve Smith will facilitate a discussion.

Preparation:
1. Please discuss the draft principles from the online success committee (attached) and collect feedback for the meeting.
2. Look at the Faculty Data Zone (http://bit.ly/1KUTOzP) and compare the pass rates for traditional and online courses in your area to familiarize yourself with those results. (If we have areas of the college with success strategies, then we want to share those with everyone!)

Meeting Goal #3
Discuss the draft policy on immediate family members and collect feedback for revision.

Preparation:
Please discuss the draft policy with staff in your area and collect feedback.

Upcoming AAC Topics and Discussions
- Program review discussion and critique (April & May)
This is a complex issue, as our own discussions in Academic Affairs have confirmed. These guidelines are meant to document questions raised as well as offer suggestions for further thinking, and parameters for possible implementation of a more rigorous method of adopting prerequisites.

**Recommended Guidelines for Adopting Pre-Requisites**

The Instructional Standards Committee was asked by the Academic Affairs Council to provide some guidance on when and how to implement prerequisites. To do this, the committee first looked at data and commentary from California community colleges, which have system-wide review of prerequisites. Citations to these studies appear at the end of this report.

The studies the Committee reviewed indicate several areas of concern with respect to prerequisites:

1) Prerequisites may have a negative impact on student enrollment and access to courses and programs;
2) Prerequisites appear not to be a reliable indicator of student success unless there is both supporting data and a clear curricular match between skills and knowledge actually taught in the prerequisite and those needed for success in the target course;
3) Prerequisites in math and science sequences may be more productive of improved student outcomes than prerequisites in social science and in non-sequential coursework.
4) Quickly rushing to assign pre-requisites to address poor performance might cause us to overlook other solutions that could improve student performance more significantly.

**Proposed Process for Establishing a Prerequisite**

The goal in adopting a prerequisite is to improve student outcomes (higher grades and lower rates of withdrawal) in the target course. Another goal is to improve the integrity of the target course, allowing the instructor to focus class time on material and at the level indicated on the course outline.

Upon further review, the Committee felt it important to broaden the question itself from “How do we establish pre-requisites?” to “How do we proceed when we perceive a trend of students being underprepared for our courses?” It is this initial question that we must back up and broaden, realizing that establishing a prerequisite may or may not be the solution to the problem.

The committee suggests that departments consider the following steps:
Step 1: Identify the characteristics the underperforming students have in common. What is the problem? Why are students underperforming?

- **Use a research tool to identify problem.** Before imposing a prerequisite, the department needs to use research and consultation with other departments to identify which students are under performing and why. For example, a department concerned about poor student writing could work with Institutional Research to analyze data on the underperforming students’ CPT scores and writing course levels to see if there is a correlation between scores and performance in that content class.

- **Look for other causes of underperformance.** A rigorous look at the other possible problems that might be causing underperformance in certain students could point to issues with:
  ✓ student motivation;
  ✓ student attendance;
  ✓ students’ lack of follow through on homework assigned in target class;
  ✓ advising issues or other issues affecting students’ choice to sign up for a course he or she is not prepared for (including unavailability of other transfer courses available at the time students need a class).

Discerning among various causes can be done by talking with individual students, with surveys, or with other tools developed with the assistance of Institutional Research.

Step 2: Identify Possible Solutions to Try

Work with your department to identify solutions.

- **Look for informal ways of helping raise student performance.** Again, looking at writing prerequisites as an example, the committee discussed alternatives to addressing the problem of weak writing in content classes. These could include:
  ✓ published recommended writing levels
  ✓ clearer writing expectations stated on the assignment itself
  ✓ use of example papers to show expected standards
  ✓ clear and enforced grading rubrics for your course papers*, and
  ✓ referrals of students to the support services such as The Writing Center.

(* A paper might simply not be ready for a reader; not accepting it by not giving it a grade, returning it to the student and asking her to better prepare it by cleaning up the errors and organization will, over time, help enforce the standards we are trying to get students to become accountable for. You could make the resources in the Learning Center clear, and hold your ground until the document is ready for you to focus on the content.)

- **Contact and work closely with the other departments on campus that can help prepare students for your course.** If you are considering a prerequisite, work closely with the department of the prerequisite course. Together you will carefully examine the outcomes of the prerequisite and that of the target course to determine whether there is a
close match in skills and knowledge taught in the first course with those needed in the second course: Are the outcomes of the prerequisite going to prepare the students for your coursework? Is it a true match?

This reminds the LBCC community of the critical need for consistency in delivering our course outcomes. As we design programs, we need to be able to rely on course outcomes so that we can either require or recommend that certain courses be taken to fit our program requirements. Course outcomes serve as the tool for consistency IF we all make sure that all of us instructors are truly delivering those outcomes from each section of the courses.

It is worth noting that the college has not finished with the assessment piece of the outcomes process; therefore, we are not sure of our exit criteria in terms of making sure students actually leave with the skills taught in that class.

Also, consider meeting with the counselor who advises for your area.

- In addition to looking at LBCC course outcomes to identify a possible match for skills your students need, look to similar programs at other institutions to see which prerequisites are customary in the discipline.

**Step 3: Take Your Request to Curricular Issues; then Use Pre-requisite for Trial Period**
If your research, both formal and informal, suggests that a pre-requisite would improve student performance, propose to Curricular Issues that you assign a pre-requisite for a trial period. Curricular Issues will make sure that your department works closely with our Academic Affairs Specialist to schedule dates by which this pre-requisite takes effect and that appropriate people are notified. Catalogues, graduation checklists, and other binding college documents must be considered at the institutional level before moving forward. Curricular Issues can determine criteria for approving pre-requisites; this will likely include looking at the research methods by which the department drew its conclusions.

**Step 4: Use Data to Analyze Impact of Pre-Requisite**
When you have collected enough data, use the follow-up research template provided in Banner (not developed yet) to determine whether adding the prerequisite is having the desired effect.

**Step 5: Go back to Curricular Issues if “permanent” prerequisite is desired.**

**Recommended Institutional Support**
To offer institutional support to follow these guidelines, Instructional Standards recommends the following:

- Curricular Issues become the advising group to approve or not adding a pre-requisite here at LBCC.
LBCC find funding to have a consultant develop a standardized plan that includes a research template that any department and instructor use to find out what the issue is when students are underperforming. Then the consultant will develop the software that would allow us to plug data in to find correlations between coursework completed and student success in various classes. This would be used to analyze the data in the initial analysis and from the trial period to see if an assigned pre-requisite is having the desired impact on student success.

We would like to support Institutional Research in receiving a decision package for this one-time effort. This would support the Learner component of the College’s Strategic Plan. The goal would be for this to go a long way, have broad use, be a stable support for this effort, and encourage departments to look in a rigorous way at what the problems really are when students seem to be underperforming. It would also allow Institutional Research to focus on other issues and requests for the College.

Studies reviewed:


2) Curriculum Committee, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, Good Practice for the Implementation of Prerequisites, 1997. ERIC document #ED411012

3) Office of Matriculation/Academic Standards and Office of Institutional Research at Chabot College, Establishing Prerequisites and Co-requisites; A Guide for Departments, 1995. ERIC # 393513

4) Office of the Chancellor, California Community College, Sacramento, Office of the Chancellor, Prerequisites, Co-requisites, Advisories and limitations on Enrollment, 1997, ERIC #438879
Problem
Current failure rates for distance learning courses are often higher than F2F courses and the grade
distribution patterns for many distance learning courses are worse than F2F courses. This has a negative
impact on completion, student learning, wasted resources both institutionally and for students, and
increased financial aid debt.

Principle Recommendations

1. The college should set a goal of parity of success rates with F2F courses.
2. Departments/disciplines should have a review process for improving success rates while
   maintaining the course outcomes.
3. The college should review student services for online students and work towards parity.
4. The college should adopt a set of recommendations for a structured development and teaching
   process for online courses. Departments/disciplines innovating outside this process would be
   provided with encouragement but asked to also consult with the departments that might be
   impacted.
***DRAFT POLICY***

Family Members in Credit Classes  (or Teaching a Family Member in a Credit Class)

**Purpose:** This policy is designed to guide fair and equitable education without bias or appearance of bias, while also making all LBCC educational opportunities available to every learner in our community.

**Question:** May an LBCC faculty member teach a credit class in which a family member of that instructor is an enrolled student?

**Policy:** LBCC believes it is best to avoid situations where family members take credit classes from a family member instructor. LBCC wants to ensure fairness and integrity and to prevent even the slightest appearance of bias. In every instance where an alternative instructor is available, the faculty member shall direct the student to enroll in the other instructor’s class. However, when a course is available only from a family member, the student may enroll in a family member instructor’s course when the following steps are first taken:

1. The student and instructor meet with the instructor’s academic dean to document the necessity for granting permission to enroll in a family member's course. The Dean shall be the exclusive determiner of necessity.

2. A written agreement shall be crafted to identify how all conflicts shall be handled and how any and all grade disputes shall be handled and reviewed or appealed to the satisfaction of all parties, prior to the start of the term. Upon decision of the Dean, where necessary, a Dean may direct that a neutral non-related faculty member shall review grading to ensure standards were equally and fairly applied. The faculty member who accepts a family member student consents to grade review by a colleague where determined necessary by the academic dean to ensure LBCC standards.

Submitted for consideration by Academic Affairs (to be included in Faculty Handbook) by Lynne Cox (with support of Bruce Clemetsen)