

Standard I:
institutional mission and effectiveness



meet **elac** people

Lorenzo Briceno

Political Science and English

“(It takes a lot longer to complete an AA degree at night, but I can get all my classes here at South Gate and that is a big help for me. I’ve got about a year and a half to go and then I can transfer. Meanwhile I am getting great experience working for Councilman Parks.)”

Start at ELAC...
Go Anywhere!

STANDARD I: INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND EFFECTIVENESS

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The institution demonstrates strong commitment to a mission that emphasizes achievement of student learning and to communicating the mission internally and externally. The institution uses analyses of quantitative and qualitative data and analysis in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, implementation, and re-evaluation to verify and improve the effectiveness by which the mission is accomplished.

I.A. Mission

I.A. The institution has a statement of mission that defines the institution’s broad educational purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment to achieving student learning.

East Los Angeles College’s Mission Statement

East Los Angeles College is dedicated to facilitating student learning through the highest quality of transfer, career technical, basic skills, and community service courses and programs. We serve a culturally diverse community of lifelong learners in a dynamic urban setting by supporting student success in achieving associate degrees, general education, certificates, and personal development. To develop the potential of each student, the college provides access to innovative teaching methods, alternative modes of course delivery, the latest in educational technology, and comprehensive support services.

I.A.1. The institution establishes student learning programs and services aligned with its purposes and its student population.

Descriptive Summary

As a comprehensive community college, East Los Angeles College offers multiple learning paths to serve the varied needs of its students. A demographic profile of ELAC students, assessment scores, learning outcomes and achievement is conducted regularly and is published annually in the College Profile. **(1.1)** The data in this publication serve as a basis for defining ELAC's intended population, needs, location, resources and role in higher education.

For students on their way to Bachelor's degrees, the general-education transfer curriculum is articulated with the region's public and private universities. Students seeking an Associate's degree can choose among 32 majors. More than 40 vocational (career and technical education) certificate programs directly prepare students for employment within a broad range of occupations. The Noncredit Department offers developmental classes in Basic English and mathematics skills, including English as a Second Language (ESL). Community Services serves community members interested in classes for both recreation and personal development. The college offers credit classes in 10 to 15 off-site locations (the number varies depending on the semester/session) and at the South Gate Educational Center. More than 100 course sections representing over fifty courses are offered online in a "distance learning" format.

Self Evaluation

The college's mission statement guides the development of its strategic goals and plans. The statement defines the institution's broad educational purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment to student learning. Through the Educational Plan Subcommittee, which is a shared governance committee, ELAC fosters the college-wide commitment to student learning reflected in the college's mission statement through dialogue and action via the implementation of the college's Educational Master Plan. **(1.2)**

In the spring 2007 Student Survey, students were asked to respond to 16 questions regarding how much their college experiences both in and out of class have helped/improved their ability to function in a number of areas, including the following: thinking clearly; solving numerical problems; using computers and other technology; working effectively with others; learning effectively on their own; understanding themselves; understanding people of other racial, cultural or ethnic backgrounds; developing a personal code of values or ethics; contributing to the welfare of the community; developing clear career goals; getting a job or advancing in their career; and setting educational goals and monitoring their progress. In all 16 areas, over 50 percent of the students noted that their college experiences had helped them to improve. **(1.3)**

The institution approved college core competencies (1.4) and implemented its Student Learning Outcome process to more directly measure whether it has been effective in reaching its commitment to student learning.

Planning Agenda

In consultation with the college's Academic Senate, the Research and Planning Office will develop an integrated system of measurement that accounts for Student Learning Outcomes and their connection to achieving established College Core Competencies. Research and Planning will then integrate this data along with the ongoing College Profile Data to assess whether the college is fulfilling its mission to its students and community.

I.A.2. The college's Mission Statement is approved by the governing board and published.

Descriptive Summary

The college's previous Mission Statement was approved by the Board of Trustees in November 2003. The current mission statement was approved by the campus in November 2007. (1.5) It will be approved, along with the college Strategic and Educational Plan, by the Board of Trustees in early 2009. Following its approval, the updated Mission Statement will be published (as the previous one was) on the college website, in the catalog, and in various other campus documents.

Self Evaluation

The Mission Statement is appropriately approved by the Board of Trustees. In the Spring 2008 Faculty/Staff/Administrator Survey, participants responded to a question regarding their familiarity with the mission. More than 82 percent agreed with this statement. (1.6) However, it is not published as widely as it could be, especially where students will see it. For example, it is not included in the schedule of classes nor is it posted in areas frequented by students, such as classrooms.

Planning Agenda

The college meets this standard.

I.A.3. Using the institution's governance and decision-making processes, the institution reviews its mission statement on a regular basis and revises it as necessary.

Descriptive Summary

The Mission Statement is reviewed at least every six years during the process of updating the Strategic Plan. The previous Mission Statement was approved in 2003. During the most recent revision (2007), an ad hoc committee was formed by the Shared Governance Council (SGC) which met to consider changes to the campus culture that had occurred since the approval of the 2003 Mission Statement, and to also consider the incorporation of updated

language. The college's new Mission Statement was approved by the SGC in November 2007, after campus-wide dialogue centered in the Educational Planning Subcommittee (1.7) and the Academic Senate. (1.8)

Self Evaluation

The college considers revision of the Mission Statement at minimum every six years. In this day of changing demographics and a global environment, it might be appropriate to review it on a more frequent basis.

Planning Agenda

The college meets this standard.

I.A.4. The institution's mission is central to institutional planning and decision making.

Descriptive Summary

The Office of Research and Planning, headed by the Dean of Research and Planning, oversees the institutional planning process. Many committees or groups influence institutional planning at the college. The committees most involved in overall planning are the Shared Governance Council, the Academic Senate, the Educational Planning Subcommittee, the Facilities Planning Subcommittee, and the Technology Planning Subcommittee.

The mission statement underlies institutional planning and decision making and is used to frame the college plans and the program review processes that guide the college. The mission statement is prominently printed at the beginning of the program review document, and all units are guided to conduct their reviews relative to the mission statement. Further, units have developed their own mission statements that support the college mission statement and guide them in their planning and decision making. (1.9)

Self Evaluation

In the spring 2008 survey, 63 percent of the faculty and staff indicated that they believe the mission statement guides all institutional planning and institutional decision making at East. (1.6)

Planning Agenda

The college meets this standard.

I.B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness

I.B. The institution demonstrates a conscious effort to produce and support student learning, measures that learning, assesses how well learning is occurring, and makes changes to improve student learning. The institution also organizes its key processes and allocates its resources to effectively support student learning. The institution demonstrates its effectiveness by providing 1) evidence of the achievement of student learning outcomes and 2) evidence of institution and program performance. The institution uses ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning to refine its key processes and improve student learning.

I.B.1. The institution maintains an ongoing, collegial, self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and educational processes.

Descriptive Summary

Faculty, staff, and administrators of the East Los Angeles College community work toward the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes through a broad array of campus-wide programs, services, and activities as determined by the college's planning structure, established processes and observable outcomes. The Shared Governance Council (SGC) meets regularly to oversee college operational and planning policies, structures, and processes. The SGC also discusses, shares with, and advises stakeholders about daily operations, upcoming events, and college achievements of plans. **(1.10)**

The Program Review Process, which includes Academic, Administrative and Student Service units, works to evaluate the extent to which departments and units are providing quality services to students and obtaining student learning outcomes. Program review requires the use of both qualitative and quantitative data as a basis for establishing the department's (unit's) future goals and objectives. **(1.11)**

Various committees are part of the oversight process that ensures focus on student learning through substantive dialogue. As part of this oversight process, the ESGC reviews and approves all program review evaluation results, recommendations and commendations made by the program review validation committees. The Program Review Validation Committees are shared-governance committees formed to read and examine completed program reviews and through dialogue and analysis make recommendations for improvement that will ultimately be approved by the ESGC.

The Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Committee formulates policies and coordinates the efforts of the SLO coordinator and two facilitators, who in turn train and support faculty and staff in designing, measuring and evaluating student learning outcomes. Additionally, the college is currently formulating the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee, which will engage in substantial discussion about the quality and appropriate use of methods and tools for assessing student learning across departments. The Transfer Committee and Student Success Committee provide forums for stakeholders and utilize faculty and administrator expertise in planning to support student achievement.

Self Evaluation

The shared governance process provides a foundation that enables student success by basing decisions related to appropriate staffing, hiring, and facilities planning on input from a diverse group of stakeholders. Seventy-three percent of the respondents on the Faculty/Staff/Administrators survey agree that the college has processes that encourage dialog on improving student learning. **(1.6)**

Although the college has made great strides and has widened its inclusion, participation and college-wide understanding of the program review process, the college is transitioning to a higher level of sophistication in utilizing existing planning processes to the greatest extent possible to even further raise the level of understanding, evidence, and accountability surrounding student learning. The effective achievement of this next step will provide a greater level of detail regarding the extent to which we meet our mission and commitment to student learning.

In spring 2009, the “New Faculty Institute” will continue in the form of a series of hands-on workshops to support faculty in implementing what they learned in the fall series. The focus will be on effective practices for active “learner-centered” strategies as recommended in the “Poppy Copy.” The purpose of the Institute, which will be repeated yearly, is to develop a cohort of faculty equipped to lead their colleagues in a cultural transformation toward more effective instructional practices. The state has provided funding specifically for Basic Skills, and there is some pressure to expend the money in a timely fashion. One of the most important responsibilities of the Associate Dean for Student Success will be to exercise leadership in consultation with faculty to assure the funds will be spent effectively in support of a coordinated and holistic vision.

Planning Agenda

It is one thing to create action plans, but another to implement them. Part of the college planning agenda for Student Success and Basic Skills must be to implement the four newly created action plan matrices. The Student Success Committee has formed four ad hoc task forces, one for each matrix, which will identify actions to be taken, implement and supervise these actions, and determine how they will be budgeted for the next one to two years. This will depend on the coordinating efforts of the new Associate Dean.

I.B.2. The institution sets goals to improve its effectiveness consistent with its stated purposes. The institution articulates its goals and states the objectives derived from them in measurable terms so that the degree to which they are achieved can be determined and widely discussed. The institutional members understand these goals and work collaboratively toward their achievement.

Descriptive Summary

The college’s priorities and goals are formally reviewed every six years as part of the strategic planning process. The Mission Statement guides each unit and department in

formulating their individual priorities and goals. Administration ensures that broad policy decisions reflect the college community's shared values as articulated in the Mission Statement.

The college follows the required procedures for Accountability Reporting for the California Community Colleges. The district has recently defined measures of institutional effectiveness that all LACCD colleges must utilize. **(1.13)** The Educational Plan Subcommittee completed and approved the ELAC Educational Plan in fall 2008. This plan names the newly formed educational goals and objectives of the college. Additionally, ELAC is developing new overarching and comprehensive college-wide goals and objectives that will allow various planning committees to assess goal attainment as aligned with state, district, and institutional goals and objectives.

The college as a whole is highly aware of the need to ensure that the goals and objectives for all levels of planning – ranging from classroom student learning outcomes to broader benchmarks for overall institutional effectiveness -- are quantifiable, measured, and reported. The Research and Planning Office is working diligently with the Educational Planning Committee to establish appropriate measures for all educational goals and objectives, as well as a process to continually monitor progress toward meeting educational plan goals and objectives.

College goals and priorities are articulated in the Strategic and Educational Plan Program Review documents. The Office of Research and Planning provides standards and tools for departments and units to develop measures.

The program review process is currently being revised by the Program Review and Viability Committee (PRVC). The PRVC develops program review structures and processes and modifies them as needed following review or their effectiveness. The latest addition to the process is an annual review of departments that have already completed a comprehensive review.

This annual review is overseen by Department Chairs and Academic Deans to ensure that each unit continually assesses how well learning is occurring, and follows these assessments by making appropriate and effective changes to improve student learning. Academic Deans are also working on integrating the annual review process with the budgeting process for each unit.

The next round of college program reviews will integrate the completion and tracking of all student learning outcomes by department, which is currently a separate process, and will establish a method for assessing the achievement of all intended student learning outcomes as well as the efforts made by units to achieve these outcomes. This comprehensive process will be made manageable through the purchase of a new electronic software program to aid in the program review process. This system (TrakDat) is being approved by the district and purchased by the college.

A variety of professional development activities are scheduled for all faculty and staff to obtain the skills necessary to develop and measure student learning outcomes for individual departments. The college is in the process of establishing a Student Learning Outcome Assessment Committee (SLOAC) to oversee the quality of assessment tools, methods, and outcomes. Faculty and staff will use the results of their assessments to establish changes in their departments and units to ensure further progress toward meeting the college's mission. The results of program reviews will be one of several information sources used as a basis for developing future changes in the college's educational and strategic master plans, and will inform the college and public at large about institutional effectiveness in fulfilling its mission.

Self Evaluation

During the last accreditation cycle, the college made great progress in establishing comprehensive and inclusive planning processes and structures. In this current accreditation self-study period, it has focused on developing processes that "close the loop" in the evaluation cycle; assuring not only that planning is taking place, but also that the progress toward implementation of these plans is made, along with the achievement of student learning. This work toward "closing the loop" in this cycle is being achieved.

The district's relatively new Office for Institutional Effectiveness has provided additional methods of support through the District Planning Committee and Student Learning Outcomes Committee's SLOAC to provide cross-institution dialogue and training. The district's relatively new infrastructure (approximately a year old) in this important area will serve us well as we continue to advance in our effort to measure institutional effectiveness in student learning. The college's SLOAC is being formed and will contribute significantly to this effort.

Planning Agenda

The college meets this standard.

I.B.3. The institution assesses progress toward achieving its stated goals and makes decisions regarding the improvement of institutional effectiveness in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation. Evaluation is based on analyses of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Descriptive Summary

The Shared Governance Council is charged with overseeing the development and integration of the various master plans for the college. The cycle of evaluation of institutional effectiveness begins with the program review process, which is overseen by the Office of Research and Planning. Within this process, overall program effectiveness (as aligned with institutional goals and objectives), as well as SLOs (as aligned with College Core Competencies), is assessed. Improvements to this structure and process are currently being

developed, as noted previously in Standard I.B.2. Through the recently revised annual update process, the Deans work with the department chairs to ensure that systematic, integrated planning is a source for justifying, requesting, and allocating department budget needs.

At the college level, recommendations for allocation of discretionary funds, when available, are determined by the ELAC Budget Subcommittee to the ESGC. The Budget Subcommittee uses proposals by units, departments, or divisions as endorsed by college planning committees and Department Chairs. These proposals are supplemented with program review results to best determine the effective allocation of funds.

Self Evaluation

The collaboration between the PRVC and the Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs is well underway toward adopting structures and processes to formally tie Program Review, Annual Updates, and budget allocation together. Although the college had a college-wide process for determining the allocation of college-wide discretionary funds, the current members of the Budget Subcommittee may need to be re-oriented to this process, used years ago.

Planning Agenda

The PRVC, in collaboration with the Vice Presidents of all divisions, will oversee the development of structures and processes that will formalize the use of departmental planning processes and measures of effectiveness through Program Review in budget allocation.

The college Budget Subcommittee will review the college-wide structure and process for the allocation of discretionary funds established in 2005 to assess its applicability toward current budget allocation. Upon full assessment and confirmation of these processes, they will be forwarded to the ESGC for approval.

I.B.4. The institution provides evidence that the planning process is broad-based, offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness.

Descriptive Summary

Each revision of the college's Strategic and Education Master Plan is conducted by the Educational Planning Subcommittee, in coordination with the Office of Research and Planning, with regular reports made to the Shared Governance Council. The Facilities Plan and the Technology Plans are also revised by Facilities Planning Subcommittee and the Technology Planning Subcommittee. The membership on all of these committees includes representatives from across the campus community, who report back to their constituencies on the issues being discussed and plans being contemplated. The representatives also solicit feedback from stakeholders and relay it back to the committee.

In June 2007, the President's Office facilitated a day-long forum on issues pertaining to the creation of a new Strategic Plan; this off-campus forum included a wide range of

representatives from across the college community. Work completed to date on an updated Educational Plan (began during spring 2007) has been circulated for comment to the entire college community.

All stakeholders were invited to an open forum to discuss the proposed goals and objectives of the pending Strategic Planning document. A taskforce of the Educational Planning Subcommittee made final revisions to the plan based on this input, and presented it to the Shared Governance Council for final approval in early May 2008.

The College's Strategic Plan, as well as its Technology and Facility Plans are being revised and integrated with the recently approved Educational Master Plan. The Educational Master Plan has been used to link new building initiatives proposed in the emerging Facilities Plan. The Technology Plan was completed in September 2008, and was approved by the Academic Senate on October 14, 2008. **(1.18)** Upon completion of the Facilities Plan, the college's Strategic Plan will integrate Educational, Facilities, and Technology Plans thus forming the 2009-2015 Strategic and Educational Master Plans.

Self Evaluation

The college is using the Educational Master Plan as a basis to develop other plans that will support the college's mission. However, the advances in facilities and technology have moved into a level of technical knowledge and expertise (not to mention funding challenges) that make it a complex task to develop and execute these plans without additional support. The college hired experts in Facilities and Technology planning to facilitate the development of these plans, which have moved to a greater level of complexity. In the last development of these plans in 2003, the college's needs were basic and were at that time virtually unmet, therefore easy to articulate. At this point in the college's history, we are at various stages of development of these plans with some facility and technology projects currently in the construction phase.

Planning Agenda

The college meets this standard.

1.B.5. The institution uses documented assessment results to communicate matters of quality assurance to appropriate constituencies.

Descriptive Summary

The Office of Research and Planning includes a Dean of Research and Planning and an Associate Dean of Research. These administrators, along with their support staff, access and analyze data to inform decision makers about student success and institutional effectiveness. The office publishes several useful documents that assist in measuring student success and institutional effectiveness: The College Profile; Facts in Brief (between profiles); Academic Internal Scan; Environmental Scan, and Faculty, Staff, and Administrator Surveys. The District Research Committee (DRC) conducts a survey of students every two years.

Additionally, the District provides college data on its website as well as tracking district-wide progress on unified Core Indicators. Additionally, the district has recently completed a Research and Planning website, providing a useful and accessible resource to communicate matters of quality assurance to the appropriate constituencies. **(1.19)**

Information from the state Accountability Reporting for Community Colleges (ARCC) is used to monitor the progress the college makes in achieving higher levels of student success. **(1.20)** This, along with other sources of measurement and program and college effectiveness will be available on the Research and Planning website.

Self Evaluation

The position of Associate Dean of Research remained unfilled for two years (it was filled in early 2008). In addition to this position vacancy, the Dean of Planning was granted extended reassignment to responsibilities falling outside of Research and Planning. As a result, the extent and availability of research was limited for a time. Now that the Research and Planning Office is more fully staffed, more attention is being directed toward achieving the goal of communicating matters of quality assurance to appropriate constituencies.

Planning Agenda

The college meets this standard.

I.B.6. The institution assures the effectiveness of its ongoing planning and resource allocation processes by systematically reviewing and modifying, as appropriate, all parts of the cycle, including institutional and other research efforts.

Descriptive Summary

Assurance of effective planning and resource allocation processes are systematically reviewed and modified by various committees at various levels of college-wide assessment.

The Shared Governance Council (SGC), comprised of representatives from administration and from classified, student, and academic senates, engages in planning efforts and in identifying areas needing improvement. The various shared governance committees participate in planning opportunities to guide the college in its efforts to ensure effectiveness of planning, evaluation, and resource allocation. Discussions also consider the connections between processes such as accreditation, program review, institutional goals, and other accountability mechanisms. In these discussions, areas of improvement are identified and addressed.

The Educational Plan Subcommittee oversees overall educational planning and advocates for resource allocation. The Program Review and Viability Committee ensures that appropriate structures and processes are in place for comprehensive evaluation of college units within all divisions. The Student Learning Outcomes Committee oversees the structure and process for the development of class, program and department measures of student learning and use of

these outcomes for improving teaching and student learning. The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee ensures that the appropriate structures and processes are in place to ensure that all appropriate tools, techniques, and training are available to yield effective measures of learning.

The college is in the process of establishing a Research Prioritization Committee to ensure that all efforts to evaluate effectiveness are provided with the appropriate resources and support. In all of these cases, reflection and dialogue via the use of evidence and input provide the basis for continual modification and revision to improve all parts of the evaluation cycle including research efforts.

Self Evaluation

The most effective committees in evaluating and implementing changes in the evaluation cycle during this accreditation cycle have been the Program Review and Viability Committee and the Educational Plan Subcommittee. The college is positioned to more effectively launch the efforts of the SLO Committee for the purpose of modifying structures and processes (if necessary) for more effective evaluation of progress toward development and implementation of effective SLO's, and is looking forward to initiating the SLOAC and Research Prioritization Committees.

The college Shared Governance Council will ensure that the Educational Plan Subcommittee (in collaboration with the Academic Senate and the Office of Academic Affairs) will facilitate modifications in the current SLO structure and process, if necessary, to improve college effectiveness in measuring student learning. These SLO and PRVC committees will also oversee the initiation and effective use of the new SLOAC and Research Prioritization Committees to provide resources and improvement for the college's cycle of institutional planning and measurement of effectiveness.

Planning Agenda

The college meets this standard.

1.B.7. The institution assesses its evaluation mechanisms through a systematic review of their effectiveness in improving instructional programs, student support services, and library and other learning support services.

Descriptive Summary

The college reviews its institution-wide College Planning Process related to Strategic Plan and Educational Planning every 6 years when it renews or revises these plans. The Program Review and Viability Committee and SLO Committee have met monthly throughout the year, and on an ongoing basis to evaluate the mechanism for evaluation of student learning and meeting the college's mission and goals. **(1.21, 1.22)**

Both the PRVC and the SLO Committee have planned and printed the methods in which they will systematically review their effectiveness in improving instructional programs, student support services, library, and other learning support services. **(1.23)** The newly formed SLOAC and Research Prioritization Committees will meet regularly upon inception to systematically review their contributions to effective measurement and implementation of strategies for improving student learning.

Career and Technical Education (vocational) departments also use advisory committees to evaluate their programs and assist in curriculum issues. Membership on these committees, which are comprised of industry-based professionals, educators, trainers, and representatives from appropriate public and private-sector entities is evaluated and updated as necessary for improved effectiveness. The Curriculum Committee also evaluates its process for review and approval of proposals for new or revised programs and courses. The results of the last review conducted by the committee members became effective during spring 2007.

Self Evaluation

In response to a question regarding the program review process as providing an effective evaluation of academic programs, administrative services, and student services, 65 percent of the college's faculty, staff and administrators agreed that the program review process provides an effective evaluation of said programs and services. **(1.6)**

Planning Agenda

The college meets this standard.