

LAC Minutes – Final

Friday, 6/5/2015, CLIMB 306

Meeting: 1:30-3:30

Attendance:

Chris Brooks	X	Wayne Hooke, Chair		Julie Romey	
Kendra Cawley		Gabe Hunter-Bernstein	X	Laura Sanders	X
Sally Earll	X	Jessica Johnson		Julianne Sandlin	X
<i>Shirlee Geiger, Chair Emeritus</i>		Priscilla Loanzon		Torie Scott	X
Marc Goodman	X	Hannah Love	X	Doug Smith	
<i>Sylvia Gray, Chair Emeritus</i>		Michele Marden, Vice Chair	X	Nora Stevens	X
Allison Gross		Linda Paulson	X	Susan Wilson (Recorder)	X
Anne Haberkern		Davina Ramirez	X	Ralf Youtz	X
Dana Harker		Linda Reisser			
Guest: Chris Chairsell	X	Guest: Charles Pace	X		

ACTION ITEMS

- Michele: Type and circulate notes from statewide Learning Outcome & Assessment group about their General Education reform efforts
- Linda P./Mbrshp Subcomm: Create survey for candidates who inquire about LAC membership
- Susan: Send Chris B. the contact information for this year's LAC coaches
- Michele: Send the group today's Google doc with bullet points re Montgomery College process
- All: Respond to Michele by June 18 with revisions to bullet points re Montgomery College

BUSINESS UPDATES

Timekeeper and Chair

Chris B. volunteered to be timekeeper. Wayne was at an AAC&U conference in Oklahoma and couldn't chair today. As per the LAC by-laws, vice chair Michele Marden led the meeting.

Introductions

Most folks knew each other, so Michele asked for only casual introductions and for each person to answer this question: "As we end the school year, what gives you the most gooey and happy thoughts about your work at PCC or PCC generally?"

A Visit from Chris Chairsell

Chris Chairsell, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, stopped by to say thank you and to remark on the group's accomplishments this year and in every year since the dawn of assessment. She confessed the Year of Inquiry (2008-2009) was her favorite. It isn't easy work, she acknowledged, and though assessment is the responsibility of the full-time faculty, she is gratified when part-time faculty are included in the process. To that end, she noted the stipend paid to adjunct for participating in SAC inservice days has been increased.

In a nod to the ever-evolving role of faculty, Chris said she left the teaching arena before institutional assessment came about and, looking back, she admits her course-level assessments probably paled in comparison to current standards.

Before leaving, she read a few excerpts from the NWCCU visitation report—a document that would become public in the coming week. The passages essentially praised PCC for its work surrounding NWCCU Standard 4.A.3 and for its faculty-led assessment process.

Minutes from Last Meeting

The minutes from the meeting held May 22, 2015 were approved as presented.

Quick Sub Committee Reports

Membership – With the recent addition of Jessica Johnson, the LAC is 19 members strong. The breakdown by campus looks like this: 3-CA, 2-RC, 4-SE, and 10-SY. Six members teach CTE and the remaining 13 come from LDC-DE. Linda P. said a recruitment plan is needed—one that accounts for growth while ensuring balanced representation. The process for approving new members changed from an in-person hand count to an electronic ballot method this year. This has worked well and Linda would like to continue using Survey Monkey to solicit votes. She asked the group to send her names of nominees along with the candidates' contact information, SAC/subject area, and campus affiliation. She will build into the polls the choices of "Approve" and "Not Approve," and provide a place for comments. The group is comfortable with this proposal.

For new candidates who self-select the LAC, it was suggested they fill out a survey about their background with assessment in addition to providing contact information. The survey could be posted at the LAC web page, or it is something Linda could mail to individuals when they inquire.

A number of ideas for member recruitment were shared:

- Reach out to the New Faculty Institute. The LAC will have a breakout session at NFI this year. Because new faculty are required to do college service during their probationary period, this may be a good place to recruit members.
- Ask the deans to nominate faculty for LAC. This might work well in conjunction with the college service requirement, as many deans will hand pick faculty and suggest different committees.
- Send a bulletin to the all-faculty list serve. Pro: May catch the eye of faculty who have assessment experience at other institutions. Hannah said this describes her. She worked some with assessment at her last college, but when she came to PCC she didn't know about the LAC or how to get involved in assessment efforts. Con: A districtwide announcement may solicit novice candidates when the LAC traditionally seeks individuals with assessment experience.
- Recruit by way of the new SAC chairs. Kendra holds an inservice workshop for new and returning chairs each September.
- Seek members from the annual assessment class.

Templates – Chris B. sent a simple email to all SAC chairs late this week asking for feedback on the 2014-2015 templates. No response as of yet, but that is probably due to the end-of-term craziness or because most SACs haven't finished their assessment reports yet. A few members suggested Chris send the survey again when the term is over, and Michele agreed. In a workshop on facilitating meetings, Michele remembers the trainer suggesting surveys be sent at least twice. A certain response level is achieved in the first attempt, and the second round tends to garner good response as well. Third rounds tend not to yield much at all. Susan will send Chris the coaches' contact information so he can get their input, too.

LAC DISCUSSION

One hour was devoted to a review and discussion of an innovative approach to general education reform undertaken by a college in Rockville, Maryland. Michele shared a slideshow Montgomery College presented at an AAC&U conference in February 2015 attended by Kendra and Shirlee. Leading into the PowerPoint, Michele provided some background information:

- Montgomery College is one large campus (350 FT, 1100 PT, 16K FTE)
- Directive from provost was to “fix gen ed” in 1.5 years
- Two faculty were given release time to lead (one was a communications faculty member)
- Their process used facilitation activities and incorporated multiple modes of communication (such as visuals) and a variety of methods for collecting feedback. As the process developed they intentionally moved from a broad “values-centered” overview to a more micro focus (this was to prevent getting mired down too quickly by focusing on the details of “how” up front).
- At each stage, they went back to their list of barriers before they moved forward
- They intentionally took in negative feedback with a “good heart” and were not dismissive of it. They used this to shape the work. They understood it would be emotionally challenging and because of this, they were emotional supports for each other during the process.
- They took care to balance efficiency and transparency the entire time.
- They developed 2 models and at the time of the presentation were about to have a FT faculty vote. They did not have PT because they have a union for FT and for PT. They did include PT voice in the process because a shift in general education will affect PT work. They have a professional development model where faculty (FT and PT) are required to accumulate “points.” Attending the conversations counted for professional development points. By the time the vote happened, the leaders felt everyone was knowledgeable about general education and the models.

What follows is an edited outline of the Montgomery College (MC) slideshow titled, “Creating a Shared Vision and Consensus for General Education Reform—A Multilevel, Inclusive Approach Toward Institutional Consensus.” Most remarkable was MC’s ability to do this in 18 months.

1. Begin with the end in mind

- Envision where you want to go
- Form and organize team
- Communicate

2. Identify your challenges

- Identify obstacles and areas of potential resistance up front
 - Timeline?
 - Governmental pressure?
 - Level of faculty engagement?
 - Structural/administrative changes?
 - Accreditation demands?
 - Change fatigue?
 - Previous reform efforts?
 - Perceived competition between courses and programs?
 - Institutional pressure to reduce the scope of course options?

3. Engage your stakeholders

- Who are the stakeholders?
- What would be appropriate participation?
- What would be considered a “win” or “wins” for each stakeholder group? Where do those “wins” overlap? How do they contribute to overall vision of the institution?

4. Getting started

- Iterative process (very intentional--with information gathering and review at every phase)

- Convene workshop
 - Plan community-wide engagement activities
5. General education transformation and restructure process
- Four phases: Discovery, Education & Design, Development, and Presentation & Vote
(*Feedback was sought at every stage before moving forward*)
6. Discovery Stage I Roundtables (*lots and lots of roundtables were held, with built-in emotional support for the team that inevitably would face some resistance from stakeholders along the way*)
- Set goals based on...
 - institutional values
 - essential skills students should learn
 - vision of an ideal 21st Century general education program
7. Creating an aspirational focus (*shoot for the stars at first—we can always scale back later*)
- Framing our vision and values as they apply to competencies/proficiencies, credits, transfer, assessment, student needs, degrees, distributions, foundations, and other issues
8. Discovery Stage I – Structure
- Keep sessions small (20 people max), relatively short (60 min), interactive, and staggered
 - Use paired facilitators from wide spectrum of backgrounds
 - Involve Teaching & Learning Center
 - Offer professional development (at MC faculty earned credits for degree of participation)
9. Discovery Stage I – Internal Research Process
- Ask faculty why their course is a General Education course
 - Survey students as to what they think makes a course “General Education”
 - Provide session materials that permit a range of participation styles
 - Provide opportunities to voice questions/concerns
 - Keep conversation aspirational—avoid getting into the “weeds”
 - Develop content maps to express ideas (use charts and post-it notes to capture all ideas and group into themes)
10. Develop your vision
- Have individuals create their own concept map around the core values of their institution and the essential skills students need
11. Stage I - What we learned
- Participants identified 7 core values for MC:
 - Open access
 - Empowerment of students and active learning
 - Integrative learning
 - Lifelong learning
 - Diversity
 - Innovative quality/rigor
 - Ethical Responsibility—in academics and in life

- Participants also identified 11 essential General Education skills for students to be successful in academics, work, and life. (We are not 100% certain, but we believe those in bold were the new ones that came out of MC's recent work.)
 - Critical thinking
 - Communication skills
 - Quantitative reasoning
 - Technological competency
 - Information literacy
 - Personal, social and civic responsibility
 - Arts and aesthetic awareness
 - **Creative problem solving**
 - **Independence in thinking and in work—self awareness**
 - **Leadership—including vision and confidence in decisions**
 - **Life skills—including financial literacy, managing personal and academic challenges, collaboration, and professionalism**

12. Discovery Stage II Focused Workgroups

- Goals set:
 - Expand faculty, staff, and student involvement
 - Access expertise beyond the committee
 - Break down the large restructure task into more focused segments
 - Conduct additional, more narrowly focused external research
 - Develop recommendations for the committee to consider

13. Discovery Stage II – Structure

- Limit workgroups to 10-15 participants
- Identify participants with appropriate personal/positional expertise
- Develop charge and timeline for each workgroup
- Use neutral facilitator when possible to maintain workgroup focus
- Maintain focus on aspirational yet achievable recommendations

14. Discovery Stage II – Process

- Stagger workgroups if time permits to identify initial research that would benefit subsequent workgroup efforts
- Hold workgroups concurrently if time is tight with specific interim and final reporting deadlines
- Schedule joint interim/final presentations for all workgroups to share ideas and directions
- Maintain focus on aspirational yet achievable recommendations
- Develop final recommendations report to be posted on reform committee website

15. Identify focused workgroups needed

- *(This slide depicted MC's Core Philosophy and Outcomes in a center circle with spokes branching out to each workgroup to illustrate how they tied in to the CP&O)*

16. Education & Design Stage

- Goals set:
 - Develop a common language
 - Ensure everyone is starting from same place

- Discover where individuals see themselves and their courses/areas fitting into the restructured General Education program

17. Education & Design Stage – Structure

- Set larger (25 people max), somewhat longer (90 min), structured, and staggered interactive sessions (including some online)
- Assign questions to groups for structure
- Provide opportunities for groups to record comments/questions
- Use the same facilitators for consistent message
- Involve Teaching & Learning Center
- Offer professional development (at MC faculty earned credits for degree of participation)

18. Education & Design Stage – Process

- Survey participant knowledge of (current) program and key elements of potential models
- Summarize current program
- Identify drivers for change – internal/external forces identified during Discovery
- Introduce potential program elements derived from Discovery process
- Invite verbal and written participant feedback
- Re-survey participants at the end of the session to gauge program understanding and interest in potential program elements

19. Development Stage (Slide featured a flow chart showing the 12 steps from initial research to ultimate faculty vote. By the end of this iterative process, MC's reform committee believed there was no one who was unaware of the project.) The 12 steps:

- Conduct internal/external research
- Draft institutional vision and essential student skills
- Present information to restructure committee for feedback
- Develop initial model
- Establish focused workgroups to expand participation and to generate feedback
- Develop revised model
- Present revised model to restructure committee
- Develop educational workshops for college community
- Conduct educational workshops to college community
- Develop draft model options for review
- Present draft model options to college community
- Develop revised final model options for faculty vote (though PT faculty were involved, only the FT faculty voted)

20. Lessons learned

- Attempting to get buy in at the end of the process is too late
- Creating multiple opportunities for faculty, students, and administration to get involved in development process builds interest and incremental “buy in”
- A balance needs to be struck between efficiency and transparency
- An iterative process allows for the development of meaningful feedback from a full range of participants
- An open/continuous/transparent process helps build trust among stakeholders

After the last slide, Michele noted PCC's looming challenge of restructuring its own General Education model. We have around 370 Gen Ed courses offered up to students in a 'candy box' approach, and there is no assurance that graduating students walk away having met all six core outcomes. Defining what Gen Ed is and looking at the process through which a course is approved as Gen Ed needs to be included in the reformation process at PCC.

The attendees took turns in their table groups saying what they liked, disliked, or observed about MC's process. After about 10 minutes, Michele brought the focus back to the front of the room and gave each group a chance to share one thing their table came up with, recycling through each group numerous times until all ideas had been captured (Chris B. served as the recorder for this segment). Michele promised to send the generated list to everyone present immediately after the meeting. She asked the group to add to the list or make modifications as they deemed necessary by June 18.

Core Outcome Review – Issues in Focus (continued from May's meeting)

Information Literacy (IL) – Torie opened her presentation and short slideshow with a definition of IL and the rhetorical "Should outcomes be visionary, aspirational, or practical?" She shared this nugget: 120 PCC CCOGs in 48 disciplines (CTE and LDC/DE) list information literacy as a course outcome. Does that level of frequency justify institutionalizing IL as a core outcome, she wondered? If it was up to her, the answer would be yes.

Showing how IL looks within Alcohol and Drug Counselor courses, Torie brought up a web-based guide for AD 102 (http://guides.pcc.edu/AD102__CSRS) created by fellow reference librarian and former LAC member Pam Kessinger. As noted at the very top of the broadcasted screen, the "purpose of this page is to link curriculum requirements for developmentally-appropriate and discipline-specific research skills, to matching library instruction and information literacy support outcomes. For AD 102, Pam's guide plotted the cognitive domains and research skills outcomes for academic inquiry and the students' ability to do directed searching in discipline-specific contexts and to connect sources and integrate them. The whole page featured "Course Specific Research Support for AD 102."

Chris asked if IL was on Wayne's crosswalk document for JBAC and LEAP. Sally said it's included in LEAP, for sure. Davina noted that information is the one thing we will never run out of, and when you have a deluge of something, knowing how to determine what's credible is all important. Ralf concurred that IL certainly seems to fit the idea of a critical skill for the 21st Century. Nora said IL means different things to different groups, but there is a VALUE rubric for IL and it can be adapted for a variety of disciplines.

Sustainability – Torie also advocates for adding Sustainability as a core outcome because it is important in a big-picture way even if it isn't closely tied with the curriculum. When contrasted with Information Literacy which *is* embedded in the curriculum, Torie said it raises the question as to whether core outcomes reflect what is *core in the curriculum* or *what is more of a core value?*

Next Meeting / Adjournment

This concluded the 2014-15 series of LAC meetings. Next year's meetings are not yet set, but Wayne will be in communication after the start of fall term with the slate of meeting dates.