

Follow-up Report Visit

Los Angeles Trade-Technical College
400 West Washington Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90015-4181

A Confidential Report Prepared for the Accrediting Commission
for Community and Junior Colleges
This report represents the findings of the evaluation team that visited

Los Angeles Trade-Technical College
on

April 19, 2010

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DATE:

TO: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

FROM: Peter Garcia

SUBJECT: Report of Follow-Up Visit Team to Los Angeles Trade-Technical College,
April 19, 2010

Introduction:

On April 19, 2010, as a result of a comprehensive visit to Los Angeles Trade Technical College (LATTC) in March, 2009, Mr. Peter Garcia, Dr. Arvid Spor, and Mrs. Christine Fithian conducted a follow up visit to LATTC. The primary purpose of the team visit was to verify through interviews and the examination of evidence that the Follow-Up Report prepared by the college on Recommendation 1, 2, 6 and District Recommendations 1,2, and 3 was accurate.

The team was unanimous in its opinion that the visit was successful. The college was well-prepared for the visit, and completely addressed the team's previous concerns about the college's lack of preparedness for its comprehensive visit by efficiently and effectively arranging for all of the team's requested meetings with the individuals and groups. In addition, the appropriate and necessary documents were made available in a highly organized evidence room along with a well-executed web site. The evidentiary documents, clearly referenced in the Follow Up Report were also posted on the website and made available electronically prior to the visit.

During the one-day visit, the team spent six hours at the college and met with the President, Interim Vice President of Academic Services, Vice President Administrative Services, Vice President Workforce Development, Vice President Student Services, Accreditation Liaison Officer, the Accreditation Steering Committee co-chairs, the College Council, the faculty chair of the Council, the Academic Senate President, the faculty representative to accreditation, union leaders, the AS President, classified leadership, the college researcher, and other staff and students. Leaders from all constituencies were accessible, engaging, and helpful. Team members were impressed with improvements in campus processes, procedures, climate and facilities since the comprehensive visit in March 2009.

Immediately following the March 2009 Comprehensive Visit, the president and college leadership met to formulate plans for addressing areas that might result in

recommendations that would be delineated in the coming report. Simultaneously, the district assisted the college by contracting with outside consultants from Professional Personnel Leasing (PPL) who possessed significant accreditation and community college leadership expertise. The college effectively used them to improve communications and working relationships among all constituencies and eventually had them provide an analysis of the recommendations and suggested approaches for resolution.

In early July 2009, the college was officially notified of its probationary status and the six college recommendations and three district recommendations. The college staff and faculty appeared determined to focus their collective energy on creating an environment in which students could achieve their educational goals and employees could work collegially and productively to support student success.

Upon receiving the official recommendations, college leaders immediately established three cross constituency workgroups to begin developing ideas to address the recommendations. Since the initial visit and in preparation for the Follow-Up Report and visit, the college's leadership successfully agreed to and implemented a number of governance decisions and accreditation response approaches that have been included in the Follow-Up Report and verified in the recent visit.

The Follow-Up Report and visit were expected to document resolution of the following recommendations:

College Recommendation 1: Theme – Institutional Integrity. In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the campus leadership (cross-constituent) create venues, forums, and a sense of permission to the practice of dialogue to strengthen and sustain the high quality programs, relationships and sense of pride that LATTC's students and community deserve.

College Recommendation 2: Theme – Evaluation, Planning & Improvement. As cited in previous accreditation recommendations (1997 and 2003), the team recommends that in order to meet the standards, the college develop and fully implement an integrated planning process that clearly links program review, all aspects of human, physical, technology and fiscal planning, and resource allocation in a cohesive and inclusive manner. Development of the model should be based on prevailing best practices that include a clearly established and calendared cycle, use of current and relevant internal and external environmental data, analysis of data to inform planning, a committee review process, linkage to resource allocation, and evaluation of the implemented plan.

College Recommendation 6: Theme – Participatory Governance. To meet standards, the team recommends the college evaluate its participatory governance process(es) to ensure that all constituent groups actively participate in the college's planning and decision making.

District Recommendation 1: Financial Resources and Board Administrative Organization. In order to improve, the post-retirement health liability should be carefully monitored for the potential fiscal ramifications that could arise over the next few years.

District Recommendation 2: Board and Administrative Organization. In order to improve, both the district and the college need to evaluate the consistent adherence in practice to the recently developed delineation of operational responsibilities and functions.

District Recommendation 3: Board and Administrative Organization. To meet standards, develop and implement methods for the evaluation of role delineation and governance and decision-making structures and processes for the college and the district. Widely communicate the results of the evaluation and use of those results as the basis for improvement.

College Responses to the Team Recommendations:

College Recommendation 1: In order to meet standards, the team recommends that the campus leadership (cross-constituent) create venues, forums, and a sense of permission to the practice of dialogue to strengthen and sustain the high quality programs, relationships and sense of pride that LATTC's students and community deserve.

Findings and Evidence:

The visiting team was impressed by the depth, breadth, and number of collegial dialogues and information sharing opportunities created by LATTC since the last visit. It was evident that the college has increased its cross-constituent dialogue, improved communication across the campus, and improved the collection of evidence to demonstrate this. The team found that LATTC has used broad email distribution, Twitter, the President's Newsletters, State of the College Report, LATTC Report to the Community, the Accreditation Newsletter, College Council News, accreditation kiosks, the college website, and improved committee agendas and minutes to increase the volume of information available to the college community. Broader and more effective dialogue has resulted from committee and senate decisions to double their meeting frequency, committee and senate retreats, and multiple public forums.

The following is a representative list of some of those opportunities that were supported by clear and unequivocal evidence:

- Public Forum on July 8, 2009 - following receipt of the letter from the ACCJC placing the college on probation, a town hall meeting was held to discuss the findings of the site visiting team and the meaning of the college's probationary

status. This led to initial brainstorming and planning in early July for response by three workgroups.

- A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) sheet was developed to provide written documentation for anyone who inquired about the college's accredited status. This document was posted on the college website, sent to the entire college community via email, and printed copies were available on campus in a number of locations.
- On July 15, 2009, the Board of Trustees was updated on the college plans for addressing its probationary status. The Planning and Student Success Committee of the Board of Trustees was briefed regarding the college's action to address its probationary status.
- Two cross-constituent work groups met throughout the month of July to begin analyzing current processes, modifying those processes to address the recommendations, and preparing the discussion items for an agenda for a two-day College Council retreat to be held on August 6-7, 2009.
- July 28, 2009, Joint workgroup meeting to prepare the agenda for the August 6-7, 2009 College Council retreat. August 6-7, 2009 College Council Retreat.
- August 15, 2008 Student Services Division Retreat.
- The results of the August College Council retreat were shared with the college community during the fall convocation, which took place on August 27, 2009. The college president gave a state-of-the-college address to nearly all LATTC faculty, about 250 attendees, which was followed by a keynote speech from the PPL consultant on building a healthy culture of participatory governance. The Academic Senate President fully participated and presented as well.

Further college actions that demonstrate the ongoing commitment to rectify the issues leading to this recommendation were also verified and include:

- Public Forum on September 17, 2009 – seventy members of the AFT Classified Staff Guild invited the college president to deliver an accreditation status report with questions and answers. The meeting was videotaped.
- September - District-wide surveys are conducted to seek input from all December 2009 stakeholders regarding district governance.
- Public Forum on September 29, 2009 - sponsored by the Associated Students Organization. The college president and senior management team answered questions for an hour.

- September 29, 2009 - First meeting of the Accreditation Steering Committee.
- October 27, 2009 - Faculty Accreditation Representative assumes his duties as co-chair of the Accreditation Steering Committee.
- Public Forum November 16, 2009 – the College Council sponsored a meeting to address governance and consultation matters, and moved its regular meeting to a larger meeting space to accommodate greater attendance and participation.
- Beginning on December 10, 2009, administrators started attending the ASO executive committee meetings to ensure that students in leadership are updated on the college's accreditation efforts. A permanent assistant dean of Student Activities who works directly with the ASO leadership was hired and began working on February 8, 2010. The new assistant dean will also assist in keeping students informed about the status of the college's improvement efforts.
- February 17, 2010- Draft Follow-Up Report available for college-wide review and comment.
- February 22, 2010 - Draft Follow-Up Report presented to LATTTC College Council and Academic Senate; formal constituency review occurs.
- February 25, 2010 - College-wide Convocation to present draft Follow-Up Report for final public comment.
- February 25, 2010 - Final draft Follow-Up Report presented for approval by LATTTC College Council.
- February-March - Preparations for Follow-Up visit, including physical evidence collection and organization.

Conclusion:

There was ample evidence that the college has seriously and significantly committed to a new engagement and dialogue. Minutes from numerous accreditation and governance groups, interviews with campus leaders from all constituencies, a plethora of new newsletters and written communications, all confirm that the campus has entered a new level of collegial communication. During our visit, this expanded to public campaigning by student leaders in a newly opened quad area. Attendance at the regular college council meeting April 19th, the day of the visit, was an occasion to witness significant and warm collegial dialogue about governance, planning and accreditation. All constituencies were well represented and engaged in the dialogue. The college has met this recommendation.

College Recommendation 2: As cited in previous accreditation recommendations (1997 and 2003), the team recommends that in order to meet the standards, the college develop and fully implement an integrated planning process that clearly links program review, all aspects of human, physical, technology and fiscal planning, and resource allocation in a cohesive and inclusive manner. Development of the model should be based on prevailing best practices that include a clearly established and calendared cycle, use of current and relevant internal and external environmental data, analysis of data to inform planning, a committee review process, linkage to resource allocation, and evaluation of the implemented plan.

Findings and evidence:

The college made immediate and tremendous strides to address this recommendation in a process that involved constituent groups across campus, through focused retreats, committee meetings, and public forums. These multiple activities lead to the creation of an “Integrated Program Review, Planning, and Budget Process” that has been documented and shared at presentations and in discussions throughout the campus.

This integrated process informs faculty, staff, and managers of the flow of information starting with program review. Program review at the college has been reconfigured into a series of modules rather than as a one-time comprehensive event occurring every set period of years. As a stop gap measure, all programs at the college have completed a program review update prior to engaging in what will be an Annual Program Review process that begins in the new fiscal year. The new program review process appears to have greater support from the faculty and management compared to the online process that was presented during the March 2009 team visit.

Beginning in 2010 -11 all programs will complete an Annual Program Review that contains the following modules: Department Mission and Outcomes; Validation / Recommendations; Reflection (Accomplishments, External / Internal Changes); Student Learning Outcomes; Vocational Programs; and Planning. Programs will provide additional information to their Annual Program Reviews regarding Institutional Planning during years where the following information is calendared - Strategic Master Plan (2010), Matriculation Plan (2010), Educational Master Plan (2011), and Student Equity, Facility, and Technology Plans (2012).

Other calendared program review modules include: Grants, Programs, Clubs, Organizations, Special Activities, and Departmental Engagement (2010); Enrollment Trend Effectiveness, Curriculum, Environmental Scan, and Staffing Trends (2011); and Effectiveness - Students and Student Success, and Professional Development (2012).

Recommendations flowing out of program review are placed into an Annual Unit Plan. Recommendations requiring resource allocations continue through a series of prioritization processes that must make their way through Department and Division plans and on to the Planning and Budget Committee (PBC) for review, discussion, and funding consideration. PBC recommendations are then forwarded to the College Council for a final review and recommendation to the College President. College and committee plans are prioritized and sent directly to the PBC and then to College Council for review, discussion, and endorsement to the President.

Starting this year, the planning process will follow the Los Angeles Trade Technical College - Approved Planning Calendar. The calendar lists the type of plan, frequency of plan creation or revision, the campus committee charged with the evaluation of the plan, and the cycle for meta-analysis evaluations up to the year 2022. Most of the plan reviews/updates are scheduled to occur on a four-year cycle with the exception of Annual Unit Plans and the Enrollment Management Plan. The Matriculation Plan and the Student Equity Plan are on a five-year cycle.

It is evident to the visiting team that tremendous progress has been made by the college in the form of implementing an integrated cycle of program review, planning, resource allocation, and evaluation in a somewhat limited period of time since the 2009 team visit. This shortened period of time was sufficient for the college to gather program review information in the form of updates but not quite enough time to roll out and complete Annual Program Reviews. Unit plans were created with funding requests prioritized. Resources were allocated but the results of the plans and funding decisions are not known at this time. Sufficient data would hopefully be compiled and assessed by the time of the college's Midterm Report to the Commission.

The college has not yet reached the level of Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement for program review or planning on the Accrediting Commission's Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness.

Conclusion:

Team members found a high level of engagement by all campus constituencies in the development of various planning processes including program review. The development of a new model that includes evaluation/validation of program review findings is an improvement over earlier failed start-ups. In addition to a promising process, there was evidence of buy in and energy. A new planning handbook demonstrated both the depth of thinking and commitment to establish a sustainable process. While the time frame has not been sufficient for the college to reach the standard of continuous improvement, the signs are that they are on the right track and in the next year, if they are able to use data for improvement and tie in SLO findings, the college will experience a significant improvement in its overall practice.

The college has partially met this recommendation, and it did all that was possible in this time frame to demonstrate its commitment to fully meeting the recommendation.

College Recommendation 6: To meet standards, the team recommends the college evaluate its participatory governance process(es) to ensure that all constituent groups actively participate in the college's planning and decision making.

Findings and evidence:

The team found that the college has energetically embarked upon an aggressive review, clarification, and refresh of its governance practices and communication. The public posting of minutes, agendas and recommendations, and the movement to track and standardize the format of recommendations coming from committees to other committees and the president are verifiable improvements to the college's governance activity. Numerous examples of this new practice were found on the college website, on campus bulletin boards, and in the evidence room.

A significant new resource, the *LATTC Participatory Governance Handbook*, that clarifies and ensures rightful participation by all constituencies appropriate to the issue and forum was created, distributed, and approved by the College Council on March 8, 2010. It can be found on the web site as well. It, along with other minutes, agendas and reports, clearly identifies that all constituent groups at LATTC are actively involved in collegial dialogue and the governance life of the college.

Evaluation processes, procedures, and forms have been codified and distributed. The internal evaluation of committees by those who serve on them has begun, and the college has initiated the first steps of an external, non-participant evaluation with some early success. The agreement among constituents to the process and form is an indirect positive evaluation of the new approach and commitment. Many of the dialogue opportunities noted in the first recommendation also contribute to encouraging all constituents to actively participate in the college's planning and decision making activities.

The team found that while conflicts and disagreements may continue to exist among members of the college community, sometimes across constituencies, they are consistent with what occurs at any healthy, engaged college – and the governance changes are channeling the conflicts to the appropriate governance and decision making structures for consideration and resolution.

Conclusion:

A major accomplishment in the evaluation and improvement of governance is the recently approved (3/10/10) LACCD district governance and functions handbook. Campus management, the college council, the academic senate, and representatives of the classified, management and faculty bargaining groups have used the college council meetings and other public venues to clarify their decision making roles and responsibilities with one another. Committee members are engaged in a self-evaluation of the committees on which they serve, and the Participatory Governance External Evaluation Committee, as evidenced by the

2009/2010 College Council sub-committee evaluations report, has initiated a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the various governance committees' effectiveness. The College Council and the college president are committed to using the evaluation and the ongoing dialogue to refine and improve the governance committee structure.

While the college will need to maintain and sustain its commitment and adherence to these new practices of continuous improvement in governance, the college has met this recommendation.

District Responses to the Team Recommendations:

District Recommendation 1: Financial Resources and Board Administrative Organization. In order to improve, the post-retirement health liability should be carefully monitored for the potential fiscal ramifications that could arise over the next few years.

Findings and evidence:

The current unfunded liability for retiree health care in the LACCD is \$623M. The district took significant steps to address this issue in fall 2006 by negotiating with its six unions to begin pre-funding a portion of this obligation. As of December 31, 2009, the balance in the irrevocable trust was \$17,728,778.09. It is expected that the liability will be fully funded in 30 years.

The district's Joint Labor-Management Benefits Committee (JLMBC) took action in 2009 to reduce the cost of health care coverage for both active and retired employees which resulted in further reducing the unfunded liability. LACCD expects to reduce the obligation by approximately \$100 million as a result of this renegotiation of health benefits. A new actuarial study is underway. When the results of this study become available, the exact amount of the district's reduction in liability will be known. This recommendation has been met.

Conclusion:

The vice president of administrative services confirmed that the district has made it a priority to communicate and act on the post-retirement health liability on a regular basis at public and operational meetings.

Recommendations:

None.

District Recommendation 2: Board and Administrative Organization. In order to improve, both the district and the college need to evaluate the consistent

adherence in practice to the recently developed delineation of operational responsibilities and functions.

Findings and evidence:

At the time of the March 2009 comprehensive visit, the document delineating the roles and responsibilities of the District Office and the colleges was complete, the district having participated in the Commission's pilot program in 1999 on this issue. Very serious about complying fully with the recommendation, the District developed a multi-layered process for evaluating its consistent adherence in practice to what it had put in writing.

The LACCD District Planning Committee (DPC) assumed responsibility for monitoring and addressing this recommendation. The DPC initiated activities to engage faculty, staff, students, and administrators across the district in a dialogue on the mutual roles and responsibilities of the colleges and district systems and conducted a survey to assess the accuracy of the district/college relationship as documented in the 2008 functional map. In all, 185 responded to the survey. Based on comments and specific suggestions received, the district has produced a 164-page document, *LACCD District Governance and Functions Handbook, 2010*, an appropriate expansion of the 2008 District Functional Map. This document includes descriptions of the functions and memberships of 56 district-wide governance committees. Service outcomes, roles and responsibilities for each district office are also included as well as flow charts documenting District and college participation in administrative processes.

Conclusion:

The *Handbook* will be re-assessed and reviewed on a two-year cycle beginning in 2012. At the same time, a formal survey will again be conducted on the accuracy of the delineation of the functions and roles. The District Office will review the district's budget planning process, but action on all district/college administrative operations are "on hold" waiting for the transition to a new chancellor. As an ongoing process, the district will continue to work with the colleges to look at efficiency, centralization and decentralization issues.

The District has exceeded the requirements of this recommendation. Senior administrators report that communication about, and adherence to, the recently developed delineation of operational responsibilities and functions are going well. District wide vice president meetings around particular functions are venues for informal evaluation of operational efficiency and clarity.

Recommendations:

None.

District Recommendation 3: Board and Administrative Organization. To meet standards, develop and implement methods for the evaluation of role delineation and governance and decision-making structures and processes

for the college and the district. Widely communicate the results of the evaluation and use of those results as the basis for improvement.

Findings and evidence:

To address this recommendation, the DPC took steps to implement a new cyclical process to assess decision-making. These steps have included several different measures. One has been a review of the district's website. Plans include the regular review and update of the website to ensure currency and accuracy of information. Another is the biennial publication of a newsletter, *District-wide Governance Assessment Report*, to summarize assessment efforts and to plan for improvement of decision-making processes. The DPC also implemented the institution of a biennial survey of stakeholders to assess district-wide decision-making. The survey, conducted in the fall of 2009, yielded results on which the District has already begun to make improvements. In addition, the DPC has designed an assessment template to guide the self-evaluation process for district-level shared governance committees. Finally, in January 2010, the LACCD Board of Trustees adopted a "District Effectiveness Review Cycle" to assure district-level goals and Board priorities are monitored and to guide district-level decision-making.

Conclusion:

In regard to this recommendation, the District developed and implemented evaluative processes for role delineation and governance and decision-making structures. After the evaluation was conducted, the results were reviewed and developed into a four-point detailed action plan for continuous improvement. Procedures have been established to regularly assess the effectiveness of district shared governance decision making. Steps have been taken to improve communication across the district through updates to the district's website, biannual newsletters and visits to the colleges.

As the district completes the hiring of a new chancellor, transitional plans are already in place to ensure district administrative functions continue uninterrupted for the next 6 to 9 months. The District has exceeded the requirements of this recommendation.

Recommendations:

None.