

CONTINUING THE DATA DRIVEN DIALOGUE

ASSESSMENT, PROGRAM REVIEW & PLANNING AT ASCC

“The visiting team recommends that the college develop a document that fully describes the relationship between the assessment of SLOs, program review, and planning. It is further recommended that this document be shared throughout the campus community and its content presented to various constituency groups.”

ACCJC/WASC Visiting Team Report, Fall 2008

Background Information

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes and Program Review were both formally introduced at ASCC in 2001. Institutional Student Learning Outcomes in Communication Skills, Life Skills and Job Skills, were identified as ASCC priorities and the task of explaining and assessing outcomes began. At the same time, ASCC began identifying elements of the academic program that could be measured and would serve as indicators of both progress and areas of need. At this same time, there was an institution-wide effort to develop a Five Year Master Plan. The Master Plan was completed and approved by the Board of Higher Education. As so often happens, the Master Plan began to gather dust as the primary annual planning vehicle became the formal statement of Board Priorities, which guided program development and operations for each year. The Board Priorities were at first a focus drawn primarily from the Master Plan, but then became the *de facto* Annual Plan.

The first cycle of Academic Program Review began in 2002, within the framework of a curriculum grid that provided initial data. The process was refined over the next two review cycles and, by 2008, the Fourth Cycle of Academic Program Review fully implemented and used as the model for institution-wide Program Review.

The first attempt to assess Student Learning Outcomes began in 2004 and, in 2005, the Assessment Planning Committee was formally organized as a task force within the Curriculum Committee to guide the College's efforts.

The 2008 ACCJC Visiting Team called attention to ASCC's lack of integrated planning. A core planning committee was formed, with representatives from all ASCC faculty, staff, administration and students, and committed to producing a new five-year strategic plan that would guide the College's future. The *ASCC Institutional Plan 2009 – 2014* was completed in July and approved by the Board of Higher Education in August 2009.

During this time period – from 2004 to 2009 – ASCC's enrollment grew from 1550 to a record high of 2280 by Fall 2009. Such rapid growth changed the nature of communication and decision-making at ASCC, as systems needed to become more formalized and decisions were guided better by data than by collective conventional wisdom.

Current Status

ASCC has identified Student Learning Outcomes for all individual courses, for all departments and programs and aligned these with the institutional SLOs. The College has data from targeted courses and programs since 2006 and comprehensive data from all departments since 2008. Department SLO presentations during Fall 2009 shared assessment data and recommendations among the faculty and promoted an institution-wide dialogue.

The Academic Affairs Division began Program Review in 2002 and has completed four cycles of comprehensive review, and a mini-review that added necessary data for the 2009 Planning process. Between February and April of 2009, the College completed an institution-wide program review which included Student Services and all non-instructional divisions and departments of ASCC. The schedule for continuing program review has been established and coordinated with the biennial catalog revisions.

Two phrases dominate the current discussions at ASCC regarding assessment, program review and planning: "Closing the Loop" and "Data Driven Decisions". These apply equally to all three areas.

Closing the Loop in Assessment means that ASCC's next task is to review the data that has been collected, to weigh the merits of the recommendations made by the academic departments for ways to improve the quality of student learning, and to make sure that all of the assessment activities and results can be aligned with the ASCC Mission. The need for "Data Driven Decisions" requires that ASCC organize the existing data by

asking appropriate questions and making sure that recommendations are grounded in evidence.

Each academic department has been given a charge to answer three questions related to assessment:

1. What data do we have at the department/program level? (Refer to all data collected from 2008 – 2010 from rubrics and other forms of assessment used by the department.)
2. Where do we want to go as a department/program? (After interpreting and carefully analyzing your data, what recommendations will help sustain and improve/restructure your department's or program's operations toward Program Learning Outcome achievement?)
3. How do we get there? (What actions need to take place, what impediments or challenges prevent your program/department from achieving its goals?)

These questions will be answered with a focus on linking SLO Assessment to the College Mission.

Historically, the problem with ASCC's planning documents has been that a five year plan was created and approved, referenced periodically throughout the first year or two, then let to gather dust until it was time to create a new five year plan. This is not to say that no planning or evaluation took place in those intervening years, but the planning focus shifted to Board Priorities, financial realities or other initiatives that were never formalized as part of the plan.

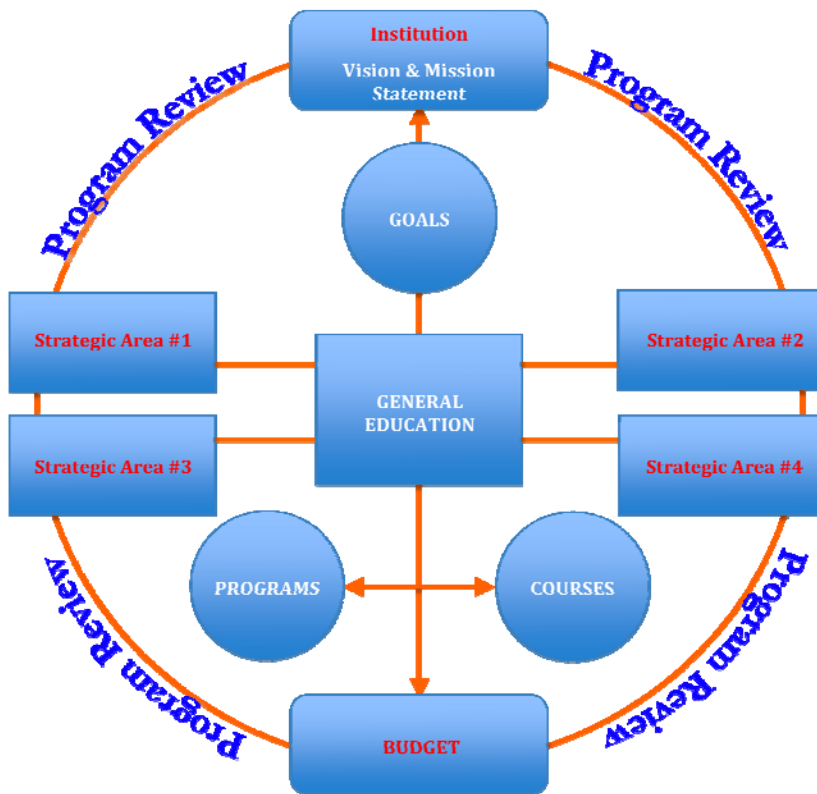
The integrated planning process that began with the March 2009 institution-wide Program Review, has several features that will ensure that the *ASCC Institutional Plan 2009 – 2014* remains a viable and living document. At the beginning of each academic year, each department and division has been required to select annual goals and objectives and to provide quarterly reports to the President based on these goals and objectives. The difference in 2009 was that the goals and objectives had to be drawn from and aligned with the *ASCC Institutional Plan 2009 – 2014*. Quarterly reports from the departments and divisions then become quarterly evaluations of the Institutional Plan.

In June and July of each year the Institutional Planning Committee will convene for a review of the reports from the first, second and third quarters. Three outcomes are expected from this review. The first is a formative evaluation of what can be done during the remainder of the fourth quarter to achieve the goals and objectives of the plan. These "quick fixes" might include documentation of work already completed or a last push to complete an objective before the start of the Fall Semester. The second outcome will be a summative review of the plan for the upcoming year, with an eye to

making necessary adjustments to the time line, reviewing available resources, and modifying the plans for the coming year based on current conditions. The third outcome is a strategic review to develop a new “fifth year” for the plan. Rather than wait five years and then create a totally new five year plan, the new quarterly and annual review process gives the College a “rolling” five year plan with a new fifth year created each summer.

In support of the annual planning review will be the quarterly reports, the assessment recommendations and, every two years, the institution-wide program reviews.

IPC Map B



Institutional Planning Committee 3/02/09

The Dialogue Continues

The need for integrated planning, on-going program review and assessment of student learning outcomes will continue at ASCC. ACCJC/WASC has established expected outcomes (“sustainable continuous quality improvement”) for each of these areas:

Program Review:

- *Program review processes are ongoing, systematic and used to assess and improve student learning and achievement.*
- *The institution reviews and refines its program review processes to improve institutional effectiveness.*
- *The results of program review are used to continually refine and improve program practices resulting in appropriate improvements in student achievement and learning.*

Planning:

- *The institution uses ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning to refine its key processes and improve student learning.*
- *There is dialogue about institutional effectiveness that is ongoing, robust and pervasive; data and analyses are widely distributed and used throughout the institution.*
- *There is ongoing review and adaptation of evaluation and planning processes.*
- *There is consistent and continuous commitment to improving student learning; and educational effectiveness is a demonstrable priority in all planning structures and processes.*

Student Learning Outcomes:

- *Student learning outcomes and assessment are ongoing, systematic and used for continuous quality improvement.*
- *Dialogue about student learning is ongoing, pervasive and robust.*
- *Evaluation and fine-tuning of organizational structure to support student learning is ongoing.*

- *Student learning improvement is a visible priority in all practices and structures across the college.*
- *Learning outcomes are specifically linked to program reviews.*

As ACCJC representative say, “Theses goals are not aspirational.” Continuing accreditation requires that ASCC meet these standards and be able to provide evidence of continuing compliance and improvement.

Among the questions and issues the ASCC will continue to address are the following:

1. In this year of catalog revision, can we demonstrate that SLO and student success data leads to academic improvement? Will the presentations done by each department use data on student success, pass rates, job placement, transfer and other information to support recommended program and catalog changes?
2. What are the next steps toward closing the loop? The institutional review is complete and now it is time to focus on programs and alignment with the institutional mission.
3. Does the current system of quarterly reports provide the necessary information for formative and summative evaluation of the institutional plans and processes? How can the system be improved to provide for better planning, improved services to students and increased student success?
4. How are we meeting the ASCC Mission to provide for job entry, transfer, awareness of Samoa and the Pacific, and research and community extension? How can we do a better job of fulfilling ASCC’s Mission?

It is important that ASCC meets the standards set by ACCJC and continues both the dialogue and the documentation of program review, assessment and integrated planning, with a focus on continuing to improvement student learning and fulfill the ASCC Mission.

Assessment, Program Review & Planning*

Inputs	Program Operations	Outputs
Staff # and Capacity completion	Pedagogy	Student Achievement
Facilities	Course Syllabi and Outlines	- course
Equipment	Course Content	- program “ “
Funds	Instructional Support	- transfer
Student Needs	Scheduling	- job placement
Student Preparedness	Other?	SLOs
Available Resources Resources	Use of Resources	Value of Resources

**Given these outputs,
what needs to be changed or improved?**

**What resources are available or required
to achieve this change or improvement?**

Are these changes aligned with the ASCC Mission?

Will these changes improve the quality of student learning?

*modified from Program Review Presentation by Mr. Jack Pond, ACCJC