Department Configuration Study
Committee Recommendations

Approved by EPC on September 7, 2011

Taskforce Committee membership: Maria Reisch (committee chair, Curriculum representative), Merrill Eastcott (Academic Affairs rep), Dan Wanner (Department Chair Council rep), Barbara Vasquez (Department Chair Council rep), Kim Perry (Vice President of Academic Affairs), Jayesh Bhakta (EPC rep), Rochelle Sechooler (EPC rep), Kathleen Beaufait (AFT rep), Christine Park (EPC rep), Arax Cohen (EPC rep), Kalynda Webber (EPC rep), Shane Poepple (ASO rep)

History

In December 2010, Chancellor LaVista tasked the College with developing 5%, 10% and 15% budget cut scenarios. On February 7, 2011, the Academic Senate President recommended to the Shared Governance Council (SGC) that an Institutional Effectiveness/Viability Taskforce be created:

The Shared Governance Planning Committee shall establish a task force to conduct a campus wide institutional effectiveness study to determine the most effective organizational structure to maximize efficiency, student learning and achievement of student learning outcomes. (SGC Recommendation #36)

The Institutional Effectiveness/Viability Taskforce convened and identified six workgroups that would research and provide data on campus-wide effectiveness; the academic affairs component was charged to the Academic Affairs Departmental Configuration/Staffing workgroup. (The other workgroups were Community Services, Computer Lab Structure/ Efficiency/Cost/Usage/Staffing/Job Responsibilities, Administrative Services Configuration/Staffing, Student Services Configuration/Staffing, and Access/Success –Controls/Processes.)

Membership of the Academic Affairs Departmental Configuration/Staffing workgroup was identified at the March 1 Department Chair Council meeting and included three faculty representatives, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Chair of the Chairs, and an IDWG Dean. The workgroup met throughout March and presented four department configuration scenarios to the Institutional Effectiveness/Viability Taskforce:

Minutes from all meetings and the findings of the committee are available on SharePoint at Academic Senate-EPC-Academic Affairs Viability Study: http://sharepoint.lacitycollege.edu/senate/epc/Academic%20Affairs%20Viability%20Study/Forms/AllItems.aspx
The four scenarios were presented with the following anticipated cost savings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Cost Savings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 Departments</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Departments</td>
<td>$182,887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Departments</td>
<td>$295,084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Departments</td>
<td>$1,126,532</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Process**

On April 6, as a result of deliberations of the Institutional Effectiveness/Viability Taskforce, the Vice President of Academic Affairs requested that the Educational Planning Committee (EPC) undertake an Academic Affairs department configuration viability study. The Department Configuration Study committee was formed and followed the adopted Academic Senate Program Viability Review Process (1997). Membership included one Academic Senate appointment, two EPC members, two Department Chair Council representatives, the Curriculum Chair, one AFT representative, one ASO representative,
the Vice President of Academic Affairs, one academic Dean, and two faculty members in place of additional members from other institutions. The committee met on April 13, 27, May 3, 10, 18, 26, June 1, 6, 15, 22 and 29.

On May 10, the Chair of Chemistry/Earth Sciences presented the “Academic Affairs, Department Organization – Summary,” created in consultation with the Vice President of Academic Affairs, which indicated the following more accurate reorganization cost savings (document available on SharePoint):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Cost Savings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 Departments</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Departments</td>
<td>$37,204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Departments</td>
<td>$26,681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Departments</td>
<td>$330,632</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A subcommittee of the Department Configuration Study committee created a survey to ascertain faculty views on potential benefits and detriments to any reconfiguration of departments. The survey was administered to 21 of the 24 Academic Affairs departments by two member teams of the committee, followed by interviews of the participating department chairs, full-time and adjunct faculty.

Another subcommittee was formed to investigate other colleges that have recently undergone or investigated departmental restructuring.

A student survey was developed by the ASO representative, but survey data was unavailable for review by the committee.

On June 2, a public forum was held during the Academic Senate meeting, providing faculty and staff the opportunity to express their opinions on the proposed department reorganization.

The committee reviewed the survey results, written comments and forum comments on June 6 and June 15. The committee’s observations resulted in several recommendations (see below), which will be forwarded to EPC. On June 16 a subcommittee convened to write a draft of this document, which was reviewed by the committee on June 22.

EPC will review the recommendations and develop any further recommendations to be sent to the Academic Senate. In early Fall, the Academic Senate will review the recommendations from EPC and will take action. Recommendations from the Academic Senate will be forwarded to the President.

If there are recommendations to reconfigure any department, such modifications will be subject to Article 17, A.2 of the LACCD- Los Angeles College Faculty Guild, Local 1521, CFT/AFT, AFL-CIO Contract 2008-2011:

Subject to the limitations specified in this article, departments shall be established and may be modified by the President or his or her designee in consultation with the President of the Academic Senate and the AFT Chapter President. Each college shall establish a procedure under which such decisions are considered and made at the college, but in every case the procedure shall provide some means by which faculty can petition for the establishment of a new department or modification of existing departments.
Any modification to the existing departmental structure of a college that results in one or more disciplines moving from one department to another shall be implemented at the beginning of an academic year and, whenever practicable, at a time that coincides with the expiration of the terms of the Department Chairs involved.

**Recommendations**

The Department Configuration Study committee recommends the following to EPC. These recommendations are based on the faculty survey data and comments, forum comments, our external research and committee deliberations.

1. The current Academic Affairs department structure should be maintained as there are no compelling reasons identified to support changing the current structure.

   The committee does not support the 10 and 17 department scenarios due to minimal cost savings and negative impact on the functioning of departments. Although the six department scenario may save the campus $330,000, the committee does not support this scenario due to the negative impact on the functioning of departments, student service, and campus morale. The survey data shows that faculty members feel any change to department configuration would adversely affect student learning outcome (SLO) assessments, program review, student success (degrees and certificates), course coordination, scheduling and the quality of service to students. External research shows that large departments are not recommended for large colleges as it results in an unmanageable workload.

2. As chairs in departments that are under 8.0 full-time equivalent personnel (FTEP) are not guaranteed release time per the Contract, those departments under 8.0 FTEP are encouraged to meet with other departments/disciplines next year to discuss the possibility of merging.

3. During the survey process certain departments/disciplines expressed a willingness to merge. They are encouraged to meet with other departments/disciplines next year to discuss the possibility of merging.

4. EPC should develop benchmarks for departmental performance in an effort to define an “effective” department. These may include student learning outcome (SLO) completion rates, course/certificate/degree completion rates, timely completion of program review modules, meeting of Flex obligations, meeting of evaluation obligations, WSCH/FTEF, timely submission of textbook orders, timely Career Technical Education (CTE) reporting, campus/committee faculty participation, and contributions to the campus and community, among others.

5. The Department Chairs Caucus and Department Chairs Council should create a mechanism for effective Department Chair succession planning.

6. The Department Chairs Caucus and Department Chairs Council should create a mechanism for sharing resources, including clerical support, among departments.

**Bibliography**
EPC Viability Committee Minutes: April 13, 27, May 3, 10, 18, 26, June 1, 6, 15, 22 and 29.
Survey Data Summary
Survey Results Detailed
EPC Viability Study June 2 2011 Open Forum
Subcommittee report on what other schools have done
Emails Re the Dept Configuration Study
Dept Comments Re the Dept Configuration Study