A Handbook
for the
Administrative Services
Assessment Process

Los Angeles City College

This handbook explains the fundamentals of assessing service outcomes for all our administrative service units. To maintain currency, the handbook is subject to changes and revisions.

Last update 11.30.15

Purpose of Unit Assessment

1. <u>To improve</u> – assessment provides feedback to determine how the administrative unit can be improved.

2. <u>To inform</u> – assessment informs decision-makers of the contributions and impact of the administrative unit on student learning.

3. <u>To prove</u> – assessment demonstrates what the administrative unit is accomplishing.

4. <u>To support</u> – assessment provides support for campus decision-making activities such as unit review and strategic planning, as well as accountability activities such as accreditation.

Each Administrative Service unit is responsible for developing a plan for a regular cycle of assessment of each of its SLOs. Based on that plan, every unit conducts an assessment of at least one SLO each year.

> Outcomes assessment is not a one-time activity.
> It is an ongoing cyclical process leading to continuous improvement.

Characteristics of Effective Assessment

Effective administrative unit assessment should answer these questions:

1. What are you trying to do?

2. How well are you doing it?

3. How can you improve what you are doing?

4. How do you directly or indirectly contribute to student learning and student success?

Timeline of Assessment

The Assessment Timeline gives deadlines for each of the steps in our process. Please review the Timeline and add these dates to your work calendar. As you move through the Timeline, you can refer to this Handbook for detailed instructions on how to complete each step. If you need help, contact the Campus SLO Coordinator, at x1069 or email her at tinbercm@lacitycollege.edu.

Relation of Outcomes Assessment to Fulfilling LACC's Mission

<u>Relation to the Strategic Plan</u>
Outcomes assessment is one way in which your program evaluates how it enhances the college's accomplishment of its mission. Our <u>2014-2020 Educational and Strategic Master Plan (ESMP)</u> details how the college will achieve its mission. The plan consists of four goals and accompanying objectives listed below.

Each of your program outcomes needs to align with one of these goals and one of these objectives. Consequently, when your program assesses its outcomes and makes improvements, you are helping the college to accomplish the strategic plan and the college mission.

ESMP GOALS	ESMP OBJECTIVES
Goal 1: <u>Access</u> - Improve equitable access and help students attain early educational momentum points to assure academic success.	1.1 Efficiently manage enrollment in order to maximize student access to LACC's educational programs for the purpose of attaining degree and certificate completion and transfer readiness. 1.2 Ensure that students build early momentum towards success by accessing key programs, courses, and services in their first year of enrollment. 1.3 Increase the number of first time college students who enroll directly from local feeder high schools.
Goal 2: <u>Student Success</u> - Provide support and guidance to promote student completion of degrees, certificates, and transfer-readiness.	2.1 Increase the number of students who successfully achieve their academic and career goals. 2.2 Improve rate at which students enroll in and complete basic skills English and Math. 2.3 Increase equity in student achievement.
Goal 3: <u>Organizational Effectiveness</u> - Increase institutional effectiveness through ongoing and systematic cycles of improvement that accomplish the college mission and educational and strategic master plan.	3.1 Improve institutional capacity for planning that leads to measureable actions. 3.2 Enhance employee development opportunities so that they are frequent, accessible and effective.

Goal 4: <u>Resources</u> - Increase institutional effectiveness through ongoing and systematic cycles of improvement that accomplish the college mission and ESMP.	4.1 Review and evaluate staffing processes to address college priorities.
	4.2 Ensure campus facilities and technology support priorities of student learning and success.
	4.3 Ensure college budget is balanced and achieves maximum efficiency supporting college strategic priorities.
	4.4 Develop and diversify sources of revenue.
	4.5 Initiate and strengthen internal collaborations among campus programs and external partnerships with business and industry, other educational institutions and community groups.

<u>Relation to Program Review</u>
Each year, your unit engages in the [Annual Program Review Process](#). Part of program review is to reporting on your outcomes assessment results, analyses, and plans, since this is one means by which your program evaluates its quality and demonstrates that its services support student learning. So, each year your program will:

1. Report on which program outcome(s) you assessed.
2. Align that outcome with an ESMP Goal and Objective.
3. Use your outcomes assessment action plan to create at least one new planning objective(s).
4. Update existing planning objectives if you have made improvements

Thus, when your program assess one of its outcomes, you are assessing the college's implementation of our ESMP. When your program makes improvements, helping the college to achieve its mission of empowering students to achieve their educational and career goals.

<u>Relation to Resource Requests</u>
The results of outcomes assessment is one way to establish your program's need for additional resources. Each year, after the completion of Annual Program Review, your program may request these additional resources (over its base budget) by filling out a [Resource Request Form](#). It is required that you align your request with an ESMP goal and one of your unit planning objectives, which could be derived from your assessment process. You also must provide a rationale, which could be result of the SLO/SUO data collection and analysis of results

Preliminary Steps: Write the Unit's Mission Statement and Outcomes

Schedule a meeting with all the unit's staff to review and discuss the complete assessment process, start to finish, and to begin work. You'll need to conduct meetings with staff throughout the process, since assessment is meant to be a collaborative effort.

A mission statement is a 1-sentence, broad statement of the direction and values of the administrative unit. It reflects how the unit indirectly and/or directly contributes to student learning and student success. The mission will be included in various LACC online and print resources.

A mission statement:
- Clearly states the purpose of the unit
- Indicates the primary functions and services of the unit
- States the groups or individuals that will benefit from the unit
- Supports the mission of the college
- Is clear and concise

Sample statement: "The mission of (name of unit) is to (your primary purpose) ……

Examples:

The mission of the *Bookstore* is to continually and consistently provide an assortment of products and services selected specifically to meet the needs of our students, faculty and staff as well as the surrounding community.

The mission of the *Purchasing* department is to provide efficient and timely procurement services that maximize the university's resources and promote its instruction, research, extension, and professional services programs.

Write Administrative Unit Outcomes (AUO's)
The objectives in the Strategic Master Plan are essentially outcomes. When you see the word "objective", think "outcome". An outcome states a fundamental function of a unit and aligns with the unit's mission statement. An outcome statement is one sentence telling either:

(a) what a client will experience, receive, or understand as a result of a given service. Example: 80% of the students surveyed state that the restrooms are clean.

or, the statement tells

(b) an action the unit will take, thereby improving delivery of its essential functions. Example: All employment related tax returns/reports are prepared and submitted by the due dates.

Remember AUO's are connected to planning. The outcome is written and then assessed with a measurement tool. Then, the data is collected, summarized and analyzed. From the results, the unit plans for improvement. Improvements could include increased staff development, equipment purchases, software modifications, and process development.

Questions to guide your brainstorming:

1. Do you have written outcomes (goals, objectives) that already exist, such as in program review?

2. Can you look at another college's publication or website for ideas?

3. Are there professional organizations that have broad outcomes you can revise to become applicable to our unit?

4. What types of things are you striving for?

5. What directions do you want to move in?

6. What would you like to accomplish over the next year(s) and why?

7. Do you need to change the level or volume of an activity?

8. Are you efficient (cost savings measures, turnaround time, processes)?

9. Are you complying with external standards or regulations?

10. Do you know if our clients are satisfied?

11. In terms of outcomes, what would the "perfect" unit look like?

12. How do you know when our unit is effective and efficient?

13. Is there something you want to increase, decrease, provide, or improve?

Checklist for Outcomes

1. ____ Is the outcome central to the unit?

2. ____ Is it aligned with our mission statement?

3. ____ Is the outcome feasible?

4. ____ Do you have the resources (human, time, technology) to accomplish the outcome?

5. ____ Are you curious about this outcome?

6. ____ Will the outcome make a positive impact on your clients and for students?

7. ____ Is the outcome measurable? Can it be observed and tested?

8. ____ What tool will you use to assess the outcome?

9. ____ Do you already have a service check we are using?

10. ____ Is it too complicated? Keep it simple.

Email your mission statement and outcomes to Christine Tinberg, Campus SLO & Assessment Coordinator, tinbercm@lacitycollege.edu

Step 1: Choose an Outcome

You have several options:
a. Reassess the same outcome – if, for the outcome you assessed last year, you created an action plan in the Assessment Report, you could implement the action plan and reassess that same outcome. If the action plan is involved and time-consuming, this may be all that is possible for your program (Go to Step 9) or;
b. Assess an outcome that you have not assessed previously or that hasn't been assessed for some time; or
c. Reassess the same outcome as last year and assess a new outcome. If implementing the action plan from last year's assessment is straightforward and you are curious and ready to evaluate another of your programs, you can have two cycles occurring simultaneously. One cycle will be a continuation of last year's assessment (Step 9 and following). The other cycle will be new, so you will move on to Step 2.

Consult your 5-year Assessment Plan, which is located in the Assessment Plans link on the SLO website. The plan should identify which outcome you intend to measure for this academic year. You can change the plan and decide to measure a different outcome.

Step 2: Determine the Measure

How will you know if your unit is achieving the outcome? You need to have something that is *measurable*, or in other words, quantifiable, to give you this information.

For example, if you gave out a survey, the *measure* would be the responses to the survey's questions because you could count how many clients were satisfied with the service and how many clients were dissatisfied with the service. So, a *measure* is something you can count. Ask yourself, "What can we *measure* (count) that will tell us if our units is achieving the outcome?" These *measures* become

your data. You can speak with the Campus SLO Coordinator and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) to help you determine the measure.

Step 3: Determine the Measure's Target Value

A *target value* is the level you are trying to achieve. Setting a target value for your measure will help you determine whether there is a need for change or improvement. For example, if you are administering a survey, what percentage of clients do you want to be satisfied in order for you to feel like you are being successful? That percentage is your *target value*. It is what you are trying to achieve. You are essentially stating, before any results are collected, that if results fall below your *target value*, that you intend to make a change, an improvement.

Now, if you achieve that *target value*, you may decide you are satisfied with those results and there is no need to spend more time on that outcome looking to make changes or improvements. So, instead, you decide to focus your efforts on assessing another outcome to find an area with a greater need for improvement.

Step 4: Select an Assessment Method

It is recommended that each unit consult with the SLO Coordinator and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) to design a valid, reliable assessment method that will give you useful information. You'll definitely want their help to create surveys and questionnaires.

Examples of assessment methods are:

- Tracking the use of a service
- Satisfaction surveys
- Establishing timelines and budgets
- Tracking complaints and how they are resolved
- Benchmarks set by national or state organizations
- External measures of performance or quality
- Pre/Post Analysis
- Interviews (1-on-1 structured interviews)
- Focus groups (People who use the services)

Step 5: Administer the Assessment & Collect the Data

In order to get a representative sample, you may need to collect a certain number of assessments or administer the assessment at a certain time in the semester or over a period of months. You are encouraged to consult with the OIE office to make these kinds of research decisions. Please do not wait until the last minute to gather your data or you may invalidate the entire process.

Step 6: Analyze the Results and Create an Action Plan

To analyze your results, you need to do calculations on your *measure* if it is a numerical measure. So, calculate your totals, figure out the averages, percentages, etc…. If you need help to compile, analyze or determine how to present the data, please contact the Campus SLO Coordinator or the OIE. Discuss the data with your colleagues.

Now, if you met your target value and have decided that the unit is sufficiently succeeding with this outcome, you may see no need to make changes or improvements. You are satisfied with those results. So, you will state this on the Assessment Report and this outcomes cycle/loop is considered complete. Thus, you will bypass Steps 9-12. You can go ahead and begin thinking about the next assessment cycle.

Step 7: Submit Assessment Report & Action Plan

1. Log in to eLumen with your username and password.

2. Click on the Action Plan icon. Notice the red circle with the number – this is alerting you that there is Action Plan that needs completion.
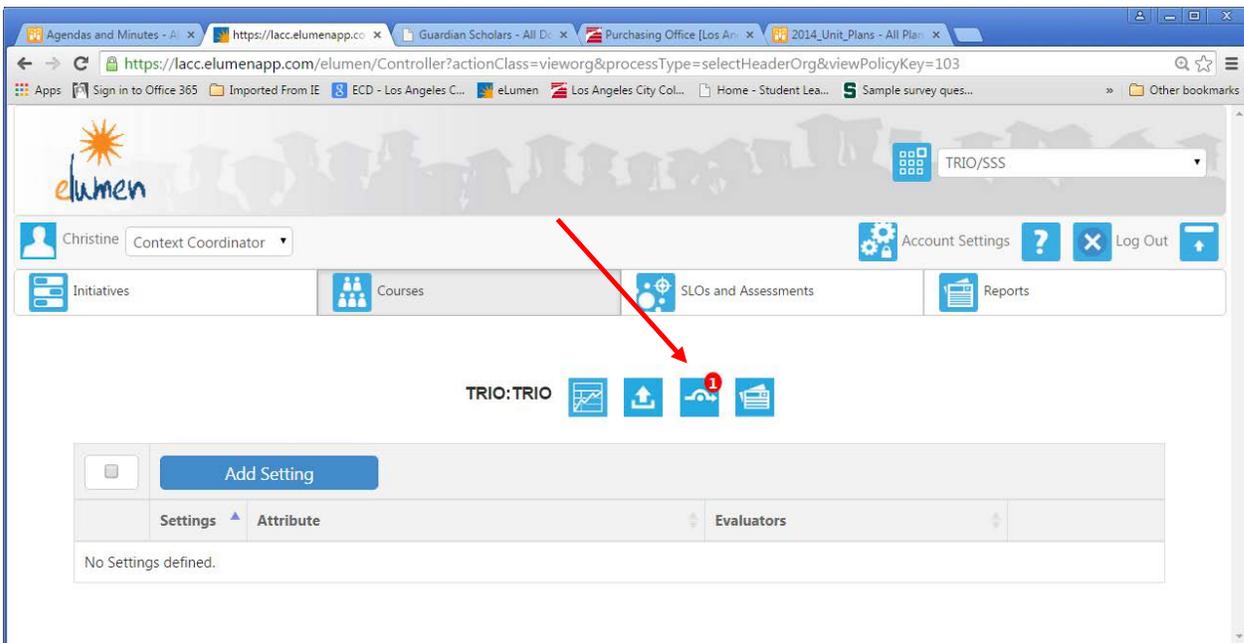

3. Type answers to each question.

4. If you need resources to accomplish your action plan, click on Resource Request. Type in the name of what you need. Use the drop-down arrow to select the Resource Type. These types mirror the types used in the Resource Request form (see p. 6). If you input your intention here, it will be a reminder to you when it comes time to submit a Resource Request form. It also adds

support to the linkage between assessment and allocation of resources. Also, enter Resource Detail. You can enter multiple Resource Requests.
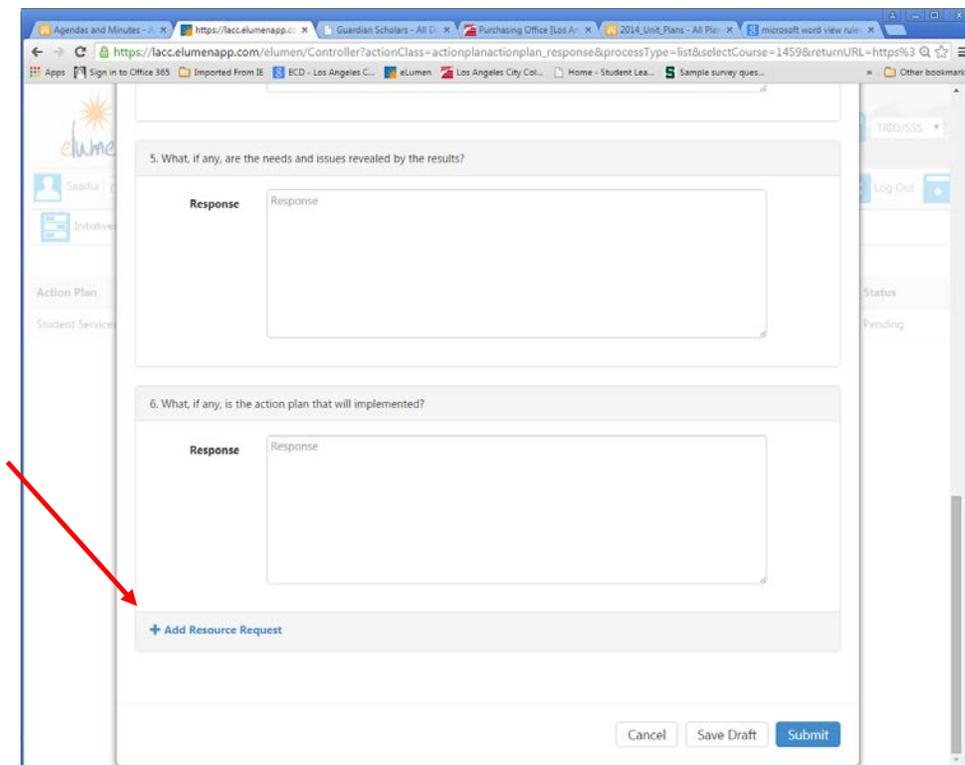
5. Click on Save as Draft. **Do not click on Submit**. First, the Student Services SLO Workgroup and the Campus SLO Coordinator will review the report and give you feedback. You will have a chance to review the feedback, make edits, and submit your final report. The Vice President of Student Services will be notified of each program's participation in this step of the process.
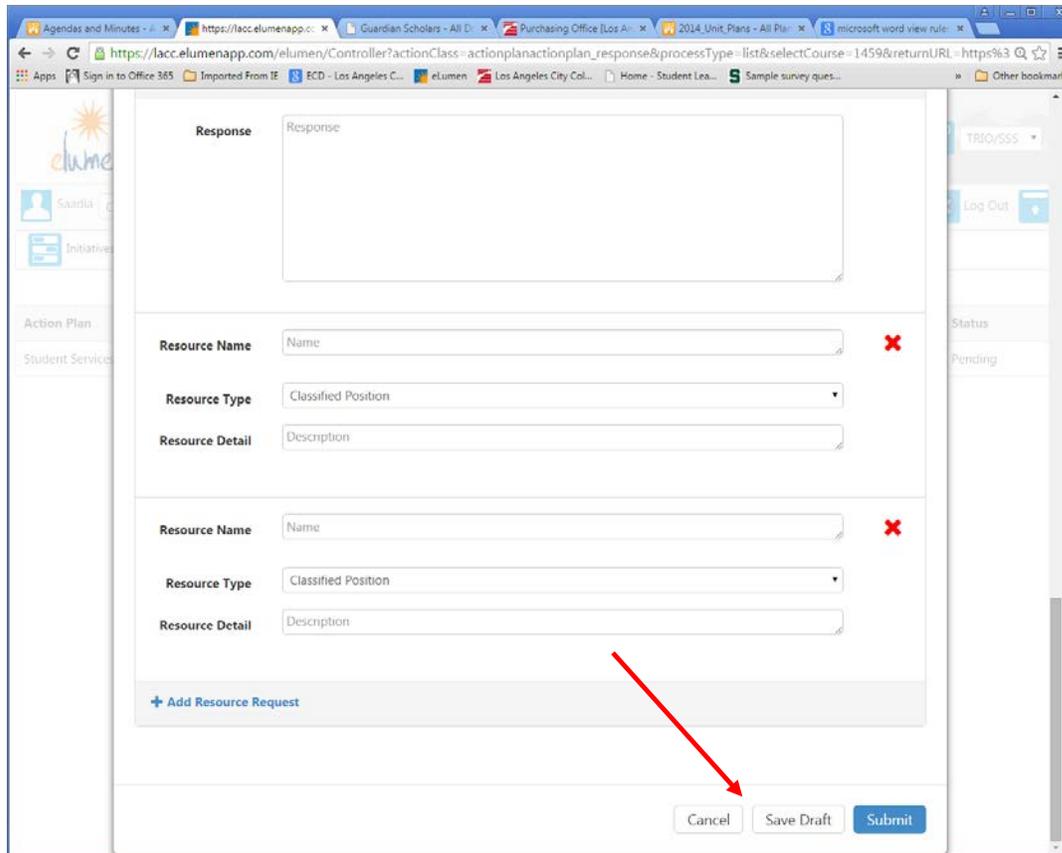
6. Once you have made any revisions necessary to your report, click Submit.

Step 8: Share the Analysis and Improvement Plan

In a meeting of administrative services, units will share their results and action plans.

Step 9: Implement the Action Plan

Now, we come to the part when you need to do something with what you learned through assessment. You need to implement the plan. Some plans may be implemented quickly, some may take months or an entire semester. Start as soon as possible and work steadily.

Keep in mind that in Step 12 you will report on the impact of the improvement plan. So, during the implementation stage, document your experiences and observations. Be on the lookout for how the action plan affects your clients. For example, write about the barriers you encounter, the resources used or needed, and responses received from students, faculty, staff and colleagues. Units are not required to collect data to measure the impact of the action step(s).

Step 10: Reassess the Outcome

Now that your plan has been implemented, you need to determine if it was effective. Use the same methods that you did in Steps 2-5 to collect and analyze the data.

If, after reassessing, the results show that the outcome's target value was achieved, then you are done with assessing this outcome. Plan on assessing a different outcome next year.

But, if, after reassessing, the results show that the outcome's target value was still not achieved, you need to consider the following:

a) Are there still more improvements or changes that can be made? If so, create another action plan, then implement it and assess the outcome again. If this is the case, for Annual Program Review, for this Unit Planning Objective, you would note this plan as being "in progress", not "completed".

b) Is the target value realistic or could it be set too high?

c) Perhaps, there are factors out of your control that determine the outcome.   If so, then it is time to consider this assessment loop closed, delete this outcome from your program, and write a new outcome.

Step 11: Submit an Action Plan Implementation Report

The Campus SLO Coordinator will distribute an Implementation Report to you through eLumen. Follow the instructions in Step 7 to complete this report.

Step 12: Share the Implementation Report

Please be prepared to share your implementation report in a meeting of the Administrative Services units.