

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

A Focused Interim Evaluation Report

Linn-Benton Community College
October 16, 2009

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INTRODUCTION

Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC) was established in 1966 as a two-year public institution serving the residents of Linn and Benton Counties in the mid-Willamette Valley region of Oregon. Students enroll for employment training, to begin a four-year degree program, or to participate in life-long learning options.

The main Linn-Benton campus sits on 104 acres two miles south of Albany, Oregon and 11 miles east of Corvallis. In addition to the Albany campus, LBCC provides additional educational access through centers in Lebanon, Sweet Home, and the Corvallis Benton Center. The College is strongly connected to the communities located within its service region and reflects great pride in the accomplishments of its students, faculty, staff, and graduates.

The College completed their last full-scale visit in October of 2007, which the current Focused Interim Report and Visit are a result of.

Following are the concluding observations made by the 2007 Accreditation Team.

It is evident through documentation, interviews, and observations that Linn-Benton Community College is an institution that lives out its mission through a commitment to the students and communities it serves. This important work is accomplished by a dedicated group of faculty and staff who exhibit respect and support for each other, creating a working environment within which creativity and progress are realized.

Linn-Benton is also an institution in transition – transition with respect to leadership and staff changes; transition with respect to employing new methodologies for measuring teaching, learning, and service to students; and transition with respect to the implementation of effective systems of planning and assessment. Progress can be seen, and must continue, in order to ensure the college successfully addresses each of these transition challenges.

The visiting team gave the following Commendations to LBCC. In addition to working on our Recommendations we have reviewed ways in which we can take these externally recognized strong points and make them of even greater value throughout the organization.

GENERAL COMMENDATIONS

1. Linn-Benton faculty and staff are to be commended for demonstrating their strong commitment to supporting the success of all students through quality teaching, effective services, and a broad range of innovative programming and learning options offered throughout the district.
2. Linn-Benton faculty, staff, leaders, and students are to be commended for generating and continuing a commitment to a culture of respect and support for all members of their College community.
3. The Board of Education is commended for their advocacy on behalf of the College, their commitment to successfully fulfilling appropriate stewardship roles, and their engagement in the evaluation, assessment and strengthening of their own performance.
4. Linn-Benton Community College is commended for the wide array of successful partnerships that provide access and services to residents from throughout the service region. Of special note are affiliations with Oregon State University, the Oregon Institute of Technology, and business and industry.
5. The Linn-Benton Foundation and its staff are to be commended for their commitment and energy directed toward adding a margin of excellence made available through the generation of alternative and flexible funding that responds to essential needs of the College and its students.
6. Linn-Benton Community College is commended for their resilient financial practices that position the College by mitigating the impact of economic challenges and responding to emerging program and service needs throughout the district. Of special note is the commitment to maintaining a low tuition and fee structure, thereby affording financially challenged students access to important higher education options.
7. Linn-Benton Community College is commended for their commitment to funding and supporting a wide array of professional development options, working to consistently maintain a margin of expertise and currency for both faculty and staff.
8. Linn-Benton Community College is commended for exceptional design and maintenance of their plant, grounds, and safety programs through the district.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION #1

It is recommended that Linn-Benton Community College continue to more clearly define its institutional planning and evaluation processes and to develop and implement procedures to evaluate the extent to which it achieves institutional goals (Standard 1.B.1).

As part of the Full Scale Accreditation Report, evaluators commented that:

“While there is strong evidence of progress with respect to planning and measurement of institutional effectiveness, systems are still in the early stages of implementation. Additional work is underway to clarify goals, align resources, and measure the effectiveness of teaching, learning, service, resource allocation, and impact to the community.” They further expressed concerns that “Constituents do not readily understand the planning process” and “The timing of resource requests and the availability of institutional effectiveness data do not fully align with the planning process.”

At the time of the accreditation visit, LBCC was beginning its second year of a revised and improved institutional planning and effectiveness process. We were in the evaluation stage and making changes to improve the revised process based on our experience and data from the first year. We had used the previous process for multiple years, with small improvements and “tweaks” as needed.

Some of the major changes that we were in the process of implementing at the time of our visit include:

1. Increased college-wide participation in the planning, decision making and evaluation process. We increased the number of people participating in the upfront planning. We increased the number of people attending the President’s Retreat, where recommendations about direction and associated strategies are developed. We also vetted the resulting goals and strategies across the entire college. The Board of Education was informed of the planning process during fall term. Our planning process is described in a brochure that planning participants receive each year (Exhibit 1A).
2. Stronger emphasis on connections between the institutional effectiveness process, our two-year-old strategic plan, educational assessment, and our budget process. We provided information about results and activities from institutional effectiveness goals, our strategic plan and our assessment efforts during the planning process. This information was summarized in one document that is distributed and discussed in all divisions, Academic Affairs Council and most notably at the President’s Retreat (Appendix 1A).
3. More transparent decision-making processes around resource allocation for strategic efforts. As resources are allocated, they are reported to the entire college and also noted on the summary document mentioned above, as well as in the public budget document.
4. More meaningful data for evaluating the extent to which our planning processes provide positive results for students. Institutional Research has moved from reporting an interesting but rather eclectic array of institutional results to a dashboard of more focused results relating to learners, enrollment, financial health and community connections. This data aligns with our strategic plan and provides both summary and detail level information. This dashboard is still being developed and improved. Following is the web address for this dashboard information: <http://www.linnbenton.edu/go/institutional-research>
This accreditation recommendation has two parts: 1. That we clarify our process and 2) that we develop a more robust evaluation of our achievements. Over the past two years, we have been involved in a variety of activities to both clarify and better evaluate our processes and achievements.

Clarifying our Processes

1. **Communication:** The summary from the President's retreat is distributed throughout the college and discussed at Academic Affairs, at division meetings and at appropriate college meetings. Feedback from these meetings is gathered and used by the budget team in making allocations to specific initiatives. This feedback is also useful to divisions and departments as they set institutional effectiveness goals and activities (Exhibit 1B).
2. **Repetition:** Repetition of a process helps provide some clarity, and we are now in the fourth cycle of our planning process. Although we have made adjustments and small changes based on feedback each year, we have kept the major steps the same each year. We have many employees who have participated in the process at least two or three times, from beginning to end.
3. **Including more people:** We have increased the number of classified and faculty who attend the August planning meeting. We have also increased the overall number of people who have participated in the President's retreat. (Appendix 1B)

Developing More Robust Evaluation

1. **Dashboard:** Our main evaluation tool of our achievement in reaching our mission has been our college wide success indicators. This published document provides very high level college wide information as well as detailed program information to help the college and departments evaluate their effectiveness and set goals for the future. We have moved this document to an online resource that can provide continually updated information and analysis of our performance. The new dashboard is organized around the four elements of the strategic plan as well as key elements of the college's mission. At the August planning meeting in 2009, information about this dashboard was shared. During this meeting, we used data more effectively to set our focus on retention of students during the 2010-11 year.
2. **Setting Targets and Measuring Progress:** The state of Oregon has developed a set of performance indicators that each college is asked to track and report. These indicators measure various elements of a comprehensive community college's mission and will be useful in helping us benchmark our achievements and set appropriate targets for our measures. These indicators are also organized based on our strategic plan elements and reported as part of the college dashboard.
3. **Improved display of and access to information:** Institutional Research has improved its website so that the many data elements are easier to find and are able to be viewed based on college-wide information as well as program specific information, where appropriate. CCSSE and SENSE survey results have been added to the website as well as information about our community sector survey, an on-going community needs assessment related to our strategic plan. By making data more user friendly, we hope to encourage more people to access and use the data. College Council has been introduced to this site, as well as the participants in the August planning meeting and the President's retreat.

Clarifying and improving processes and measuring achievements are never "finished". We still have work ahead of us. Although many people who are involved in our planning processes are more knowledgeable about them and clear about how they work together, other people across the college have not "seen the light". We need to continue to explain the process, identify where we are within the process, and inform the college community as a whole when directions are set and allocations of resources are determined. Making this visible and understandable takes constant communication and repetition. We have processes in place to continue to do this work.

We are looking to data to guide our work. In 2010-11 we will be focusing on student retention because we are not satisfied with our current retention rates. Over 15% of full-time students and 40 % of part-time students drop out in the first three weeks. Our SENSE results give us clues about what we can do to change this. We have a cross discipline group looking at first term/year experiences for students and developing strategies to improve students' first experience at LBCC. These efforts are a direct result of analyzing data and realizing we aren't doing enough to help students get started on the right foot. These efforts are more fully described in response to Recommendation #3, but they provide a good example of how our evaluation of our achievements is guiding our planning, goal setting, and resource allocation.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION #2

It is recommended that Linn-Benton Community College more clearly and consistently identify and publish the expected learning outcomes for each of its degree and certificate programs, and demonstrate, through regular and systematic assessment, that students have achieved these outcomes (Standard 2.B.2).

We recognize that LBCC has been engaged in the building of substantive, ongoing assessment activities. Following the recommendation to more clearly and consistently identify the expected outcomes and demonstrate assessments, the college developed an Assessment Team. The mission of the Linn Benton Community College Assessment Team is to improve student learning by providing support to faculty for learning outcomes assessment. This team continues to meet regularly, at least once per quarter, plus additional time spent over the last two years assisting in the development of Program Outcomes for areas where that had not yet been accomplished, and then monitoring and assisting faculty assessment activities.

The Linn-Benton Assessment Team (White Water Rafting Assessment Team - WWRAT) with representatives from each academic division and supported by the office of Academic Affairs and Workforce Development, recommends, facilitates and supports processes and practices used by the College for assessing student learning. The Team is a resource for faculty and staff who undertake assessment initiatives and a clearinghouse and reporting agent for college-wide data on academic achievement. In collaboration with academic divisions, assessment methodologies are developed and specific requirements of content, form and timing are established to measure student learning. The intent is that assessment data will be used to inform and implement changes, leading to improved student learning. LBCC's commitment to assessment enables the College to realize its core value of creating opportunities for success and pursuing excellence.

Authentic assessment requires the ability to use data in decision making and continuous improvement. In order to help in our research toward continuous improvement in teaching and learning LBCC developed Communities of Learning Inquiry and Practice (CLIP), informal dynamic teams of college faculty whose activities answer important questions they have about teaching and learning. The CLIP process enhances relationships among faculty and helps to build faculty evaluative inquiry skills, knowledge, and attitudes. The CLIP process uses a research-based flexible structure for self-selected groups to collaboratively investigate questions that matter to them. At the same time, CLIPs support, and are supported by, the organization's broader change intentions which lead to changes in professional practice among the participants.

CLIPs complement the formal structures of the college. The inquiry conducted by a CLIP creatively enriches the formal practices of establishing student learning outcomes, student assessment, program review, and related topics. CLIPs provide a way for small groups to test out ideas that then may be brought into the regular practices within the college. In 2008-09 there were five CLIP's underway on our campus, each one with an advisor/facilitator who is a member of the Assessment Team. The findings of these CLIP's will be shared with all faculty during the Fall of 2009 (Exhibit 2A-F).

Each academic division of the college is expected to maintain an ongoing assessment plan for each department and/or program (Exhibit 2F). This assessment plan should demonstrate the planned assessment activities, the collection of data, analysis of these data, and recommendations for improvement based on that analysis. The Assessment Team and the Center for Teaching and Learning have been helpful for assisting program faculty in the development of assessment strategies. The continuing difficulty for faculty is the time involved in the collecting, analyzing, and making recommendations from these data.

At the time of the full scale accreditation Linn-Benton Community College was only part way down the road of systematic assessment of general education. Following is a progress report regarding assessment of general education outcomes:

- Social Science/Social Processes and Institutions: As a result of the assessments done last year to measure the social science outcomes, faculty who teach in this area have been working on improving both the assessment process and teaching and learning in several ways:
 - Adjusted the outcomes to make them better indicators of student learning and to allow them to better fit the types of assignments that are used when assessing outcomes.
 - The faculty in this area have met and discussed how to improve their own assignments in class in order to better reflect the outcomes.
 - Improved both the development of the assessments and the assessment process itself by developing clear, concise, and detailed rubrics to be used when the faculty complete holistic readings to evaluate the “pull-out assignments” used to assess the outcomes.
- Cultural Diversity: The cultural diversity outcomes have been adjusted to better reflect student learning and to allow them to be more easily assessed. Both the assessment process and the creation of assignments have been modified similar to how social science faculty improved upon their assessments (see above). This was done prior to any assessments actually being evaluated and was completed using the information obtained from the assessment of the social science outcomes. This was as a result of the data collected and recommendations from the social science assessment process (above). The faculty have collected assignments the past two terms that reflect the outcome and have begun evaluating those assignments using a holistic reading process. In addition, as part of a research project (CLIP), faculty will be analyzing whether or not meeting the cultural diversity outcome is related to reduced cultural bias.
- Speech: The speech department will be analyzing data they collected this year, which applies to 2 of their 4 general education outcomes. They are currently looking at assessments collected from 120 students to see whether there is a significant difference in students’ ability to decrease their communication anxiety and “increase their communication confidence” after taking a SP111 – Fundamentals of Speech course. In addition, the speech department is also collecting a “pull-out” assignment from their SP218 – Interpersonal Communication courses that will be evaluated during a holistic reading at a later date.
- Mathematics: The mathematics faculty are continuing to evaluate their outcomes and develop an assessment process that will be consistent among all general education math courses.
- Health and Physical Education: The Health and Human Performance faculty are currently analyzing data from their PE231 Lifetime Health and Fitness Courses. They assess student performance in three areas: Behavior Change, Exercise Proscription and Nutrition Analysis. They have been working on aligning this process, so it is more consistent among all instructors and courses.

- Arts and Letters/Literature and Arts: The faculty who teach arts and letters courses have collected assessments in 2007-2008 and evaluated them. They are currently analyzing that data to determine where improvements in teaching and learning can be made.
- Writing/Composition: The faculty who teach writing courses developed a common assessment given to all WR121 students as their final exam. The faculty then evaluate this assessment during a holistic reading at the end of each term. They are currently analyzing data from these assessments.
- Biological/Physical Sciences: Faculty in these areas are in the process of developing assessments for the biological/physical sciences outcomes. They have adjusted the language of the outcomes to better reflect the intent of the requirement.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION #3

It is recommended that Linn-Benton Community College provide a program of academic and other educational program advisement that helps students make appropriate decisions concerning academic choices and career paths. Specific advisor responsibilities should be defined, published and made available to students (Standard 3.D.10).

The college's Advising Delivery Committee has been working on a new definition of what advising consists of, as well as encouraging those departments who regularly engage in advising activities to share these Best Practices & Experiences with other departments (recently done at the Academic Affairs Council). It should be noted that the college is currently engaging in a pilot program around the use of classified, "Academic Planners," to provide functions such as New Student Orientations and helping students create class schedules; duties that have previously been assigned to faculty. Many faculty have felt that scheduling and orientation are not truly part of advising, and if freed of these activities they would have more time to spend giving students the true depth and breadth of learning the requirements of their major, what it takes to be successful within that major, and the career opportunities and challenges that the major would lead to. Following is the resulting definition or goals of faculty advising:

1. Build an engaging relationship so that students will return to faculty advisors for help throughout their time at the college.
2. To help students with long range planning for their academic program.
3. Provide students with career information and advice.
4. To communicate the over-arching expectations of successful student behavior that leads to academic and career achievement.
5. Give students the tools needed to become a self-directed learner.

Given those five goals, faculty advisors might engage in the following activities:

- Review and sign graduation worksheets
- Provide "big picture," major specific to majors information
- Provide waivers and class substitutions when appropriate
- Discuss Career Planning options in specific majors
- Exploration of life goals
- Goal setting
- Work with the Curricular Issues Committee
- Explain academic regulations
- Explain pre-requisites for courses and programs
- Be aware of students' past academic records, i.e. previous transcripts and majors
- Be available to meet with new students
- Keep regular office hours and updated web-sites
- Provide program recruitment as needed
- Communicate with external partners such as Degree Partnership Program advisors at Oregon State University and those in local industry.
- Direct, collaborate and instruct the Academic Planners in initiating interventions with students for the purpose of success and retention
- Work with students in academic difficulty and help them to know the resources and services available to them on campus.

As mentioned above the college is currently engaging in a pilot program around the use of classified, “Academic Planners,” to provide functions such as New Student Orientations and helping students create class schedules; duties that have previously been assigned to faculty. Students in Business and Computer Systems, Arts and Communication and pre-Health Occupations can now see an Academic Planning Assistant (APA) in addition to their advisors. Beginning November 2008, Linn-Benton Community College began a pilot program with three Academic Planning Assistant (APA) positions. The pilot runs through June 2009. This pilot was created to improve the initial and continuous advising with resulting improvements in student retention at the college.

APAs meet with students individually and during group New Student Orientations. Students are referred to APAs by a variety of sources including Admissions, Career Counseling, program assistants and faculty. In addition to students who are seen on a drop-in or referral basis, APAs are following cohorts. The cohorts are specific classes in Business Administration, Computer Science and Social Science and students who attend New Student Orientations. For these classes, students who either withdrew or failed these introductory courses are contacted to find out reasons and to provide assistance or referrals to resources.

APAs assist new and continuing students with understanding degree requirements, scheduling and planning coursework, registering for first-term classes, staying on track for graduation and academic success. APAs develop students’ ability to use available academic planning tools. They explain campus policies, procedures and services. APAs refer students to academic and nonacademic resources when students are in need. APAs refer students to their academic advisors and Career Services when students want to learn about career pathways. Students are also referred to their advisors for detailed information about their degree program, and furthering their education beyond a certificate or associate’s degree.

APAs assist with the identification and intervention of strategies for supporting students who are retention risks. One specific intervention occurred in collaboration with the Diversity Achievement Center to reach out to students on academic probation. APAs also develop academic plans with students for the purpose of supporting academic standing or financial aid reinstatement petitions. In spring term, APAs are contacting students that were enrolled in winter term but did not register for spring classes.

In their first session, students sign an Agreement to Participate and give contact information. The discussion, recommendations and referral resources are recorded in a database. Included in the discussion are a record of classes taken and the plan for future terms. The APAs follow up with the students during the term to check progress, remind them of important dates on the academic calendar, and to assist them in planning their schedules for the following term. In winter term December 15 - March 20, 2009, APAs made initial contact with 492 students. 320 Follow up contacts were made. Contact includes appointments, student orientations, letters, phone calls and email.

At the end of the session the student is given an evaluation that asks about the type and quality of service provided. Students are responding favorably about their experience. Some of the comments are “I’m glad they [LBCC] implemented this program, it’s nice to get a personalized heads up about [graduation requirements].” “I received extremely helpful information today and appreciated the help and advice.” “This was time well spent. We figured out what I need to do to graduate next spring. Thank you!” “This meeting helped me to find direction for my next term and encouragement to keep going.”

During the 2009-10 academic year, despite the drastic budget reductions, the college has set aside the same budget allocation for continuation of the APA structure. Based on early feedback and data, we would ideally like to move in the direction of more APAs so as to increase the amount and level of contact with every student.

Individual departments have also become much more actively involved in trying to help students feel part of a cohort, as well as helping them understand the expectations of students in that individual program. Some programs, such as Social Sciences, have special events to help students develop an understanding of the employment potential in those fields (individualized career fairs). In an introductory business course the dean comes in to visit with students to talk about what business faculty expect from business students. Animal Science faculty meet regularly with their cohort students to talk about ways of working together, further career plans, additional educational opportunities, etc. Physical Education majors, Graphic & Fine Arts students, schedule events early in fall term for students to get to know one another and learn more about their programs. A recent Academic Affairs Council meeting was set aside for sharing of “best practices” around ways to make students feel comfortable and share expectations. This conversation sparked a lot of interest and additional programs are planning for fall activities to assist new students in their acclimation to college, and in the process, increase retention.

To further support students and faculty in improving advising, the Registrar’s office and Information Services have accelerated two projects:

1) WebCAPP (Banner online degree audit)

To enhance advising, the Registrar was charged to more fully develop the degree audit functionality of Banner (CAPP). The functionality had been implemented years ago however, it was only released for use in registration, financial aid, and counseling. Effective April 1, the Registrar activated Web CAPP. This functionality allows students to complete degree audits online within their secure account. The service has not been publicly announced as the system is tested in a production environment. Students are finding the new feature and using it. To date there have not been system errors or complaints. The service will be broadly promoted in the fall quarter.

2) CAS interface install to support access to ATLAS (state hosted online degree audit for university transfer) LBCC has completed implementing an interface that allows students to complete degree audits online for programs at Oregon universities using their personal LBCC academic history. This service is being tested and will be promoted along with WebCAPP next fall.

In order to make advising information more accessible to students, the Advising website has been redesigned. In addition to being given its own drop-down from the main college menu (students used to have to find it through the Counseling web pages) the advising information is much easier to navigate through.

A second effort around this recommendation has been the campus focus on creating a unified approach to student success and first year experience. Over the past several years many departments and individuals were engaged in efforts to support students in their first terms at LBCC but lack of big picture oversight caused duplication and loss of momentum. In addition, an absence of resources contributed to the shortage of sustained efforts.

An early effort in addressing the lack of oversight was the formation of an ad hoc group in October 2007. The Student Success Committee, made up of faculty and staff from ABE/GED, ESOL, Developmental Studies, TRIO, as well as several support services started meeting out of an interest in providing more support and increased success during the first year for:

- Students facing barriers (poverty, first generation, etc.)
- Students who are transitioning from GED and ESOL
- Students who test into developmental Writing, Reading, and Math
- Students with low academic self-confidence

Outcomes of the work of the Student Success Committee included:

- Information around best practices and data points were gathered from exemplary projects and institutions such as the Lumina Foundation, the Kellogg Foundation, the National Association of Developmental Education, and Foundation of Excellence.
- Eight free workshops on technology and study techniques were offered to new students the week before the start of fall term 2008 on including: Word Processing Essentials, Tips to Thrive and Survive, Strategies to Improve Memory and Concentration, Getting Started with Power Point, Computer Resources at LBCC, Notetaking, Preparing for Taking an Online Class, Time Management Strategies.
- An early start Study Skills class was offered the two weeks before the start of fall term 2008 for new students who tested into developmental reading and writing classes. 18 out of 20 students who took the class registered for classes winter term.
- A team of four (3 faculty and one dean) attended a conference sponsored by The National Resource Center of the First Year Experience and a Foundations of Excellence meeting with John Gardner in February 2009.
- With the support of \$10,000 from the college's Strategic Plan Initiative, a 13-credit cohort program for students who placed into RD90 and WR90 was offered winter 2009. The cohort was team-taught by four Developmental Studies faculty and included a College Success as well as 3 credits of Reading and 7 credits of Writing. In addition, the cohort students were supported by peer mentors, a counselor, and an Instructional Assistant. Preliminary data on the success of the cohort shows that, in comparison to other developmental students, students in the cohort feel more like they belong at LBCC (Cohort students = 3.82 GPA, Total of other developmental classes = 3.41 GPA) and that they know where to go on campus if help is needed (Cohort students = 3.73, Total of other developmental classes = 3.52).

The Student Success Committee has recently transitioned into an institution-wide First Year Experience (FyE) Committee that is co-chaired by an instructional Dean and the Dean of Student Services. Membership of the Committee includes instructional and student services faculty, a counselor, the Financial Aid Director, a recruiter, and an Academic Planning Assistant (APA). The purpose of the committee is to provide oversight for first year student efforts across the institution. To guide their work, the Committee is using a four-stage model of first year experience that includes Phase I: Foundation, Phase II: Orientation, Phase III: Engagement, and Phase IV: Integration. (Appendix 3A). The Committee has been given \$10,000 from the college's Strategic Plan Initiative for 2009-10 to support their efforts.

Initiatives the Committee is currently engaged in include:

- Redesign of New Student Orientation
- Development of a First Year Student Seminar that provides an orientation on being a college student
- Delivery of Early Start Study Skills classes and the Developmental Cohort Program again fall 2009
- Review the role of Academic Planning Assistants
- Development and pilot of a College Planning for undecided students class
- Development and delivery of a College Readiness Workshop for underage students

Future initiatives include:

- Review of SENSE data collected fall 2008 to determine where to focus additional efforts
- Conducting an inventory of what instructional departments and student services offices are currently doing around FyE, including orientation
- Development of a faculty cohort focused on FyE and student support in the first term
- Development of a handout for faculty around communicating expectations to students

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION #4

It is recommended that Linn-Benton Community College ensure that facilities assigned to instructional functions are adequate for the effective operation of the function. Specifically, it is recommended that the institution continue to proceed with plans to improve, renovate, and mitigate science teaching facilities at all district locations and to ensure the safe and appropriate management of science materials (Standard 8.A.2, Standard 8.A.4).

LBCC is passionately committed to meeting the educational needs of individuals, businesses, and our communities through learner-centered and life-changing educational experiences. LBCC and other community colleges in Oregon have been identified by the Governor as cornerstones of regional economic development. LBCC has a 40 year history of commitment to meeting the emerging workforce needs of local industry and health care. The projects listed below are logical and timely outgrowths of our efforts over the years.

LBCC's plans to improve and renovate facilities are a part of a larger \$13.6 million investment in science, agriculture and health care at LBCC aimed at enriching the economies of Linn and Benton Counties while meeting emerging workforce needs. Over a two year period, the LBCC Board of Education is directly allocating more than \$5 million beyond regular operating costs to expand opportunities in Science and Health Care. The College President, senior staff, and development director have focused major efforts on securing state, federal and private funding for basic and applied sciences (i.e., Physical, Biological, and Agricultural Sciences and pre-professional science courses that support health care), and the College has committed to continued funding of ongoing program costs related to the growth and expansion of these programs. The 50,735 sq ft project will consist of both a new addition and a remodel of existing facilities. The total project (which will be completed in January 2011) will double the laboratories for physical science and biology (from 3 to 6, and from 2 to 4, respectively), increase the number of classrooms available for instruction, increase prep-space and student project/study space, and expand office and restroom facilities. Furthermore, the project includes the addition of outdoor space for inquiry based education in the form of a Teaching and Learning Garden (5,975 sq ft) and an outdoor laboratory in the form of a Green Rooftop (9,660 sq ft). The total project is expected to serve an additional 3,750 students per year.

Additionally, in partnership with the City of Lebanon, LBCC is currently pursuing federal, state and private funding to site an Advanced Transportation Technology Center in Lebanon, Oregon. This ATTC will provide the Willamette Valley with trained automotive/diesel technicians of the highest caliber in collaboration with multiple industries. The Advanced Transportation Technology Center will train students in automotive and diesel technologies to meet the emerging work force needs of technicians throughout the region. The planned \$7.5 Million, 59,000 sq ft. facility will serve 130-150 auto/diesel students per year (40-60 students above the 2009-10 capacity). This facility will approximately double the sq footage of laboratory and classroom space (30,000 sq ft lab space, 7,500 sq ft classroom space) as well as providing for Industry/Training/Business Development/instruction flex space, tool storage, a computer classroom/technical library, offices, restrooms, and locker rooms.

With the College's investment in additional laboratory facilities in the new and remodeled science buildings, the Albany Campus becomes the primary hub for science facilities for LBCC. The College continues to offer limited laboratory based instruction at the Benton and Lebanon Centers in courses that have minimal to moderate dependence on specialized equipment or facilities (Table 1). The Benton Center possesses a modest storage room for equipment adjacent to a single multi-purpose classroom often used for the science laboratory classes listed in Table 1. During the academic year, the Benton Center also employs one 10 hour/week instructional assistant to aid in the set-up/take-down of science laboratories. This position also assists instructors in the transportation of equipment to and from the Benton Center. Neither comparable facilities nor a comparable support position exist at the Lebanon Center. Faculty teaching at the Lebanon Center are solely responsible for the transport, set-up, and tear-down of science laboratories at the Center. Due to a lack of wet

laboratory prep-space at either of the Centers, materials and equipment for science laboratories that are transported to the centers rely upon Instructional Assistants at the Albany Campus. Thus, as offerings at the Centers expand, so too must the instructional support at the Albany Campus. Procedures for the transport of materials and equipment to the Centers are compliant with all appropriate Department of Transportation regulations and safety guidelines. A complete list of all material and equipment transported to the centers is given in Exhibit 4A.

Table 1. Science Laboratory Courses Offered at Center Locations in Linn and Benton Counties

Course	Benton Center (Benton County)	Lebanon Center (Linn County)	Sweet Home Center (Linn County)
BI 101 General Biology	X	X	
BI 102 General Biology	X	X	
G 101 Introduction to Geology: The Solid Earth	X		
G 102 Introduction to Geology: Surface Processes	X		
G 103 Introduction to Geology: Historical Geology	X		
GS 104 Physical Science: Principles of Physics	X		
GS 106 Physical Science: Principles of Earth Science	X		
GS 108 Oceanography	X		
PH 104 Descriptive Astronomy	X	X	
PH 211 General Physics with Calculus (1 st Quarter)	X		
PH 212 General Physics with Calculus (2 nd Quarter)	X		
PH 213 General Physics with Calculus (3 rd Quarter)	X		

The College continues to strive to expand access to specialized instruction for students throughout the service area. During the 2008-09 academic year the college added one additional pick-up/drop off service of the Linn-Benton Loop Bus, which provides LBCC students with free transportation from the Benton Center to the Albany Campus (increasing ridership from 280 fares/day in 2007-08 to 455 fares/day in 2008-09). Additionally, in September 2009, the College will further expand the Linn-Benton Loop Bus to include services to the Lebanon Center. The Linn Shuttle will also continue to operate, further tying the Sweet Home and Lebanon Centers to the Albany Campus.

The College has also begun offering online laboratory based science courses. BI 101 (General Biology) was first offered in the spring of 2009 to meet the needs of place-bound or time-constrained students in Linn and Benton Counties. However, evidence suggests that this course did little to expand opportunities for students who were unable to attend regular lecture/laboratory science courses on campus, as the majority of students enrolled in the course were also enrolled in on-campus courses. Nevertheless, the College continues to expand its online science laboratory courses, with GS 104 (Physical Science: Principles of Physics) and GS 106 (Physical Science: Principles of Earth Science) scheduled to be offered during the 2009-10 academic year. The College's earliest endeavor (Summer 2008) into online laboratory based science instruction, PH 104 (Descriptive Astronomy), met with limited success and is no longer offered in an online format at the request of the Physical Sciences Department. Pending additional funding, this course will be redesigned for future online offerings.

There does exist the potential for future expansion of laboratory facilities in the City of Lebanon. A partnership between Samaritan Health Services and the Western University of Health Sciences of Pomona, Calif., will create a College of Osteopathic Medicine in Lebanon, Oregon. Once the facility has been completed (anticipated in 2013), LBCC has plans to move its Health Occupation Programs to this facility and will seek to partner with the College of Medicine to offer laboratory science courses at the facility. The Benton Center continues to have limited opportunities for expansion, and Benton County students seeking laboratory science courses beyond those listed in Table 1, will continue to travel to the Albany Campus for the foreseeable future.

FINAL COMMENTS:

Linn-Benton Community College recognizes that continuous improvement is a process, not a single event. This accreditation report asks that we look at a point in time and describe our improvements related within those time parameters. We also recognize that we have numerous formal and informal pathways to our ongoing development. If one were to sit in almost any meeting at the college they would hear conversations about how something could be done more effectively and/or more efficiently. The staff are very focused in particular around issues related to student success and satisfaction.

The value for the college in undertaking a self study, as was done two years ago, and this follow-up, is the requirement to move beyond small scale conversations to look at the larger picture. When we zoom out from close up to the larger picture we are proud of our accomplishments and how we have responded to the accreditation recommendations from the full scale visit.

Appendices

Appendix 1A

