**PCC/UCLA Evaluation Partnership**
**Year End Reports 2012-2013**


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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# Executive Summary

**Evaluation Partnership Background**

Internal Evaluation Team – PCC Office of Institutional Effectiveness

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) at PCC facilitates departmental collaboration and evaluative activities towards a culture of innovation, inquiry, and evidence use in the service of student success. OIE is the "home base" for four departments integral to these efforts: Planning, Program Review, and Accreditation; Institutional Research and Evaluation; Organizational and Professional Development; and the Center for Innovation and Student Success.

External Evaluation Team – UCLA Graduate School of Education

The external evaluation team is lead by Professor Tina Christie of UCLA, and is supported by four doctoral students from the UCLA Graduate School of Education. Three doctoral students – Patricia Quinones, Deborah Grodzicki, and Talia Stol – are from the Social Research Methodology division. The fourth doctoral student, Patricia Carroll, is from the Human Development and Psychology division. The UCLA evaluation team works in conjunction with OIE to plan and coordinate collaborative evaluation activities with PCC program coordinators and faculty.

Evaluation Funding

In addition to evaluation funding designated within the operating budget of each PCC department, the PCC Board of Trustees has provided Student Access and Success Initiative (SASI) innovation grants to select faculty and staff. The grants provide a structure and process to help individuals, cross-disciplinary groups, campus departments and divisions develop and implement new and innovative educational projects to facilitate the achievement of the institutions Education Master Plan Project 90 goals (see below).

Evaluation Purpose

During the 2012-2013 academic year, UCLA evaluation team activities centered on facilitating and supporting evaluation of Pathway programs and SASI grant projects. Each program and project has built in evaluation goals from which evaluation priorities emerged as PCC and UCLA members collaborated. All evaluation activities purposively connected back to the Mission Critical Priorities set forth by each program and project. *As is evident by the variation between individual reports, each evaluation differed in its scope, focus, degree of engagement with program staff, and organization.* This was due to the unique needs of each program as well as the nature of evaluator involvement. These differences speak to the evaluation team's emphasis on utilization-focused and context-sensitive approach (see the Evaluation Approach section below).

Evaluation Approach

The UCLA evaluation team follows an evaluation approach that incorporates principles foundational to the utilization-focused[1], practical participatory[2], and context-sensitive[3] evaluation frameworks. These

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[1] Patton, M.Q. (2008). *Utilization-focused evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

[2] Cousins, J.B. & Earl, L. (1995). *Participatory evaluation in education: Studies in evaluation use and organizational learning.* Washington, D.C.: Falmer Press.

frameworks allow the evaluation team to respond to contextual issues that arise throughout the evaluation process, which may require modifications to the evaluation design. Particularly important in the context of PCC and the institution's mission critical priorities, this tailored approach values and encourages stakeholder participation and fosters the use of findings throughout the evaluation.

Host Institution Educational Master Plan

In 2010, Pasadena City College established an Educational Master Plan (EMP) that envisions PCC as a leading California community college by 2014.

The **Project 90 Action Plan**, identifies 15 action items to be addressed within the first two years (2011-2013) of the 10-year improvement plan. Action Item 10 addresses evaluation activities:
Action 10:   Adopt a Program Viability Policy (Spring 2011; MCP: A/F/G/I/K)
      10.a: Align Ongoing Program Review with Annual EMP Update process
      10.b: Continue program evaluation and effectiveness reviews to ensure alignment with needs,
          mission and resources

The EMP Task Team also identified six **Signature Goals** as benchmarks for measurement and evaluation of progress:

*Guaranteed Enrollment for In-District High School Students*
*Premier Transfer California Community College*
*Degree and Certificate Programs that Address Marketplace Needs*
*Cutting-Edge Learning Environments (Pedagogy, Technology, and Facilities)*
*Dedication to Lifelong Learning*
*A Sustainable College Community*

Finally, **Mission Critical Priorities** were chosen to guide all institutional improvement efforts:

| | |
|---|---|
| Student Success, Equity, and Access | Enrollment Management |
| Professional Development | Sustainability |
| Technology | Revenue Enhancement Strategies |
| Pathways:  K-12, 2-Year, 4-Year, and | Life-Long Learning |
| Community Connections | Curriculum Responsive to Market Needs |
| Student Support Services | Facilities and Resource Management |
| Institutional Effectiveness | |

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[3] Alkin, M.C. (2012). Context-sensitive evaluation. In *Evaluation Roots: A Wider Perspective of Theorists' Views and Influences* (2nd *Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.*

Summary of UCLA Evaluation Activities

The UCLA Evaluation Team was involved in four programs during the 2012-2013 academic year. The programs and attendant evaluation activities are summarized below. Full reports and appendices are provided at the end.

## 1. Design Technology Pathway [DTP]

*Program Description*
The Design Technology Pathway was created as a model Career/Technical Education and transfer pathway, and as a professional learning community for students with interest in design careers. The pathway curriculum emphasizes contextualized basic skills math and English. Using multidisciplinary design problem-solving, students work in teams to apply design technology, math, and English content to develop solutions. Curricular development from pathway faculty focuses on success in certificate and transfer possibilities.

The DTP program contains six critical elements: (1) outreach to the Pasadena Unified School District [PUSD] high schools (specifically, linked learning academies); (2) early assessment, (3) transition to college in the form of a summer bridge; (4) streamlined pathways and contextualized learning; (5) supplemental support in the form of coaches and tutors; and (6) tracking students as they progress through their pathways (e.g., from PUSD to PCC to a career internship).

*Evaluation Focus*
The DTP coordinator requested UCLA assistance in evaluating two critical components: Summer Bridge and Contextualized Curriculum. Additionally, the UCLA evaluation team assisted the DTP coordinator in developing survey instruments for the pre-assessment jam that took place in Spring 2013 and, in brainstorming evaluation activities for Fall 2013 that include the incoming 2013-2014 DTP cohort.

*EMP Mission Critical Priorities:* A/B/C/D/E/H/I/J/K/L

*Evaluation Questions/Priorities*
(1) Summer Bridge (Exploratory/Descriptive): gathering information regarding students' experience in the summer bridge, their attitudes and beliefs about persisting, as well as their motivation for enrolling in the pathway; (2) Contextualized Curriculum (Exploratory/Descriptive): gathering information regarding the pathway content (contextual curriculum), students' future plans, and persistence. Student feedback intended to be used for future improvements to DTP.

*Description of Evaluation Activities*
Multiple focus groups were conducted in September 2012 to seek information from students about summer bridge, their attitudes and beliefs about persisting, their motivation for enrolling in DTP, and in December 2012, about the contextualized curriculum (English, Math, and College 1), students' future plans, and persistence.

*EMP Mission Critical Priorities Addressed*
A1.1 Ensure that students who place into developmental math, English and ESL have access to sustained orientations, for example, summer bridges and "jams"
A2.1 Develop short and intense course offerings in basic skills to accelerate course and sequence completion
D1.1 Evaluate and implement model pathway programs.

*Learnings/Findings (From Focus Groups)*
(1) Students expressed high satisfaction with their initial DTP experiences; (2) Students' eyes had been opened to various careers in design, elevating or kindling interest; (3) Few students were aware of DTP before attending PCC orientation, and then only through a chance connection, indicating weak pre-college outreach;  (4) English Class: Students liked the assigned essays which allowed them to write about design tech projects; (5) Math Class: Students stated that all math assignments were useful to them and related to their design tech projects and they enjoyed the collaborative environment; (6) College 1: Students found the personal development the most useful and enjoyed that the coursework overlapped with design tech, with one student exclaiming: "*That is the greatest idea ever – the fact that all our courses are integrated*"; (7) Future Plans: Most students were seeking to transfer to 4-year institutions and; (8) Persistence: Many students were motivated to pass courses in order to continue to receive guaranteed course enrollment and to reach their goal of transferring to a 4-year institution.

*Next Steps*
The DTP coordinator is involving the UCLA evaluation team in the following activities during 2013-14: (1) Focus Groups of PUSD faculty to seek understanding of current pre-college outreach efforts/opportunities; (2) Survey Instruments for the new PCC/PUSD joint student project in media to collect ongoing information of effectiveness of this venture; (3) Piloting of Diagnostic Test of Spatial/Science Abilities to seek ways to possibly identify certain characteristics in DTP candidates; and (4) Longitudinal Study logistical planning with an eye on tracking pathways and outcomes for DTP students over multiple years.

## 2. Professional Learning Design Project:  Professional Learning Committee [PLC]

*Project Description*
The Professional Learning Design team was created to develop a structure and curriculum for extensive professional learning opportunities for new and continuing faculty at PCC.  Their mission is "to foster institutional excellence through inquiry based practice and collaborative learning opportunities. By engaging faculty, staff, and managers in organizational, instructional, and personal development, we promote collegiality and student achievement."

The PL Committee plans to design a two-year professional learning plan based on best practices, curriculum for professional learning seminars, assessment tools to evaluate the impact of professional learning on faculty and students, a revised faculty orientation program, and a faculty peer mentoring program (*from the PCC website*).

*Evaluation Focus*
A member of the UCLA evaluation team observed every committee meeting.  The purpose of these observations was for the evaluator to become familiar with committee goals and proceedings so as to potentially offer tailored evaluation support in subsequent years.

*EMP Mission Critical Priorities:* A/B

*Evaluation Questions/Priorities*
In this year, there were no evaluation questions/priorities for the UCLA team.

*Description of Evaluation Activities*
Observation of three stages of planning: (1) Defining Evidence-Based Professional Learning; (2) Developing the Professional Learning Curriculum; and (3) Institutionalizing the Professional Learning Curriculum.

*EMP Mission Critical Priorities Addressed*

B1.1 Provide all faculty, staff, and managers with the training needed to work effectively with underprepared students

B2.1 Provide professional development opportunities for faculty, staff and managers to learn about new trends and effective practices

*Learnings/Findings*

The PL Committee employed its own professional development cycle to identify framing criteria for the PL curriculum, design a working timeline, and developed/administered a needs assessment survey to identify faculty and staff preferences regarding professional development (results forthcoming).

*Next Steps*

Summer 2013: train faculty and staff on new course management system; Summer/Fall/Spring 2013: solidify budget, develop PL website, select faculty to lead PL seminars, assist faculty with seminar development, advise on modules and course content, solidify remainder of planned professional learning days.

## 3. Stretch Accelerated Composition Program [STACC]

*Program Description*

The Stretch Accelerated Composition program at PCC (also referred to as STACC) aims to "place reading, writing, thinking, and scholarship as the core content of English courses". By changing the English course sequence and composition, and allowing students to self-select into an English course, the STACC program aims to increase access to and success in transfer-level composition courses, as well as to empower students as thinkers, and develop students' critical literacies.

*Evaluation Focus*

The focus of this formative evaluation is to (1) assist STACC coordinators' capacity to evaluate and subsequently improve their program development efforts; (2) provide feedback regarding development and implementation of professional learning activities; and (3) gather information regarding the structure and functionality of the writing center.

*EMP Mission Critical Priorities*: A/B/D/G/K

*Evaluation Questions/Priorities*

(1) Assist STACC coordinators create an evaluation plan; (2) Provide feedback regarding development and implementation of professional learning activities; and (3) Gather information regarding the structure and functionality of the writing center.

*Description of Evaluation Activities*

The UCLA evaluation team engaged in a series of meetings with STACC coordinators for evaluation planning and development of assessment tools. These tools included (1) Pre- and Post-tests to measure student outcomes; (2) a Faculty Survey to assess attitudes, beliefs and expectations; and (3) a Student Survey to measure attitudes and abilities related to writing. The UCLA team and STACC coordinators also created a process evaluation plan do address questions regarding STACC curriculum implementation. In addition, the UCLA team conducted focus groups with students who use the writing center in order to analyze and triangulate findings from end-of-semester writing center surveys.

*EMP Mission Critical Priorities Addressed*

A2.1 Develop short and intense course offerings in basic skills to accelerate course and sequence completion

B1.1 Provide all faculty, staff, and managers with the training needed to work effectively with underprepared students

B1.2 Offer a well-defined and extensive professional mentoring program to enhance cross-discipline and interdisciplinary learning

B1.4 Support a culture of innovation by rewarding new approaches and improvements in all areas of the college (facilities, administration, academics, and student services)

B2.1 Provide professional development opportunities for faculty, staff and managers to learn about new trends and effective practices

D2 Develop cohort pathways to ensure program and course series are aligned in a logical sequence for efficient completion

E1.1 Provide comprehensive, integrated, and sustained support to students (monitor, mentor, and stay-in-touch)

E5 Develop robust student support services (tutoring, cohort learning groups, library services, etc.) to help students achieve their goals

G5 Align course section offerings with student demand

K4 Develop a Program Review process element which regularly assesses a program's effectiveness in support of employer needs

*Learnings/Findings*

Given that the STACC program has yet to be implemented and is currently working on assessment tools for the upcoming year, there are no student outcomes to report. However, the STACC coordinators have met with the UCLA evaluation team, and developed a comprehensive evaluation plan for the upcoming academic year (2013-14).

*Next Steps*

For the upcoming academic year (2013-14) the evaluation team will continue to work with STACC coordinators and provide support as they implement the STACC pre-post evaluation plan as well as the professional learning evaluation.

For the pre-post evaluation, the evaluation team will: (1) Assist with the development of additional survey and observational instruments; (2) Help with the construction of a comparison group; (3) Help with data analysis once all data has been collected; and (4) Provide a written report of results.

For the professional learning evaluation, the evaluation team will: (1) Attend the 3-day professional learning retreat; (2) Browse all professional learning modules on canvass; (3) Conduct classroom observations; (4) Interview faculty; and (4) Provide a written report of all activities.

## 4. Stats and Liberal Arts Math Program [SLAM]

*Program Description*

The Stats and Liberal Arts Math (SLAM) project is creating a new basic skills math sequence (Quantitative Literacy I and II) for non-STEM majors that emphasizes critical thinking and metacognition while providing prerequisite content for Math 15 and Stat 50. The curriculum redesign team includes faculty volunteers from the PCC math division and is led by two Co-Chairs who coordinate logistics, content development, and implementation of the new quantitative literacy courses.

*Evaluation Focus*
The 2012-2013 "Year 1" evaluation project was a process evaluation focusing on faculty engagement and participation in the curriculum redesign process. Three evaluation priorities emerged from collaboration between the UCLA evaluator and the SLAM Co-Chairs that aligned with the project's targeted EMP Mission Critical Priorities: (1) Curriculum Design; (2) Faculty Engagement; and (3) Project Sustainability.

*EMP Mission Critical Priorities:* A/B/D/E

*Evaluation Questions/Priorities*
How is consensus reached on the concept of critical thinking, how to assess critical thinking, the structure of courses, and the development of course content? (Curriculum Design)
How are existing education conditions used to inform QL curriculum decisions? (Curriculum Design)
How is faculty investment cultivated for QL initiative? (Faculty Engagement)
In what ways does participation in the redesign process serve as professional development for faculty? (Faculty Engagement)
To what extent do faculty members feel empowered to try new techniques in their classrooms? (Faculty Engagement)
To what extent to activities lay groundwork for training future QL teachers and scaling up the course offerings to meet student demand? (Project Sustainabilty)

*Description of Evaluation Activities*
A member of the UCLA evaluation team attended the majority of SLAM meetings and retreats, using an observation protocol to standardize data collection.  Midyear and End of Year Faculty Surveys were developed to align with evaluation questions and administered to all faculty members involved with the SLAM project.  In addition, Midyear and End of Year reports from the UCLA evaluation team provide synthesis and analysis of the process evaluation.

*EMP Mission Critical Priorities Addressed*
A2.1  Develop short and intense course offerings in basic skills to accelerate course and sequence completion
A3.2  Engage all departments campus-wide in working with basic skills/underprepared students
B1.1  Provide all faculty, staff and managers with the training needed to work effectively with underprepared students
B1.3  Support and reward effective teaching approaches, including success in using hybrid formats and alternative methods of instruction
B1.4  Support a culture of innovation by rewarding new approaches and improvements in all areas of the college (facilities, administration, academics, student services)
B2.1  Provide professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, and managers to learn about new trends and effective practices.
D1.1  Evaluate and implement model pathway programs
D2.4  Guarantee timely progression through degree and certificate programs
E6    Refine and revamp assessment policy and procedures to improve course placement

*Learnings/Findings*
(1) Despite significant time devoted to discussion and exploration, critical thinking remains an amorphous concept that SLAM participants most often describe in terms of an ability to make connections across different settings and apply math concepts to real life experience; (2) Language around critical thinking in the SLAM context was driven by a reiteration of "core" philosophies and principles, which were informed by a synthesis of multiple ideas drawn from a variety of academic and non-academic sources; (3) Assessment of critical thinking was a central preoccupation of participants from the outset, who often

struggled to distinguish between assessment and grading. Assessment became a focus of SLAM activities in the latter half of the academic year, with progress towards the development of assessment tools, specifically rubrics; (4) The initial lack of templates or overarching structure for units and lesson plans resulted in issues of cohesion and consistency between course materials that were created by different faculty members; (5) The SLAM team was attentive to the need for the QL sequence to fit into the existing progression through transfer-level courses, and meet articulation agreements criteria; (6) Course format decisions were ultimately made in favor of what was perceived to be in the best interest of students within the PCC context; (7) The self-selected nature of the math faculty participants provided a strong foundation for investment in the project; (8)The Co-Chairs exhibited a complementary leadership style that encouraged faculty input and framed struggle as a normal and inevitable part of the redesign process; (9) Faculty members became familiar with new techniques through SLAM activities that created opportunities for them to experience instruction from the student perspective, as well as opportunities to practice' on each other and receive constructive feedback; (10) SLAM meetings served as a space for faculty to share their experiences and reflect on their practice; (11) Most SLAM participants practiced new activities or techniques in their classrooms, though to varying degrees; (12) The Co-Chairs are attempting to build a resource base of instructor materials that will present course goals and philosophy clearly and explicitly, and minimize the amount of time instructors must invest in creating new content; (13) The Co-Chairs plan to build in mechanisms for QL teachers to reflect on how their classes are going and troubleshoot issues mid-course; and (14) The time commitment was significant but manageable for Co-Chairs and feasible for participants; however, many felt the redesign process was rushed and would have preferred more time to develop the curriculum before piloting.

*Next Steps*
The UCLA evaluation team will continue to work with the SLAM project during the 2013-2014 academic year. It will facilitate the development of evaluation questions and priorities for the pilot year of the curriculum that will include student-level indicator outcomes. The evaluation team will continue to assist the Co-Chairs in identifying and monitoring faculty-level experiences as well.