

## **Instructional Redesign: Sustaining a Learning College**

### **Instructional Redesign Process Planning Team**

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*Draft 10—September 21, 2006*

### **Introduction**

In response to President Spilde's call for a "fundamental redesign" of instruction as a partial response to college fiscal challenges, Vice President Christian established an Instructional Redesign Process Planning Team, comprised of the above members, to develop a proposed process for this work to proceed. This team has met over the past several months and offers the following proposal for the college's consideration.

### **Context**

Long-term social, economic, and political trends are seriously challenging Lane's fiscal stability. Despite the increasing need for an educated workforce, public funding for higher education continues to decline across the nation, and in Oregon. For example, Oregon's 17 community colleges received \$462 million in 2001-2003 and \$428 million in 2005-2007. As a result, Lane and other community colleges across the state, are now "state-assisted", rather than being "state-funded", institutions, with student tuition and fees accounting for a significant percentage of revenues. The result is higher education is less accessible and potentially less available to large segments of the population.

It is highly unlikely that this trend will reverse any time soon. Dennis Jones (2006), in an issue paper for the Commission on the Future of Higher Education, projects continued fiscal stress across the states, which will put funding for higher education at even more risk than it is currently under. We at Lane need therefore to rethink the ways we operate in order to be fiscally sound and sustainable, without losing our dedication to the vision and mission of the college. We need to maintain our focus on our core values—learning, innovation, integrity, diversity, accessibility, and collaboration and partnership—while building a college that is fiscally sustainable in this environment of public disinvestment. The challenge for Lane is to remain a vibrant and effective educational institution in the face of these realities.

Responding to this challenge, President Spilde has asked the college community to fundamentally rethink our practices, in order to develop new ways to sustain a learning college. She outlined three areas of focus: institutional processes, technology, and instruction.

**Purpose**

This paper, currently in draft form, is intended to establish the process for rethinking instruction with the goal of sustaining our institutional vision and core values in the current economic reality; other processes are being developed for examining our institutional processes and how technologies can be used to control costs. The outcome of this process will be a set of proposals to the college that will help move Lane towards fiscal sustainability.

This effort to redesign instruction is a response to long-term fiscal issues, and not a critique of instruction at Lane. Further, we recognize that this redesign of instruction cannot, by itself, solve the long-term fiscal issues that have created the need for this effort. Finally, just because the focus of this institutional initiative is “instruction”, it does not mean that learning occurs only in the classroom.

This instructional redesign will take place in a context of ongoing, focused work to bring more external funding into Lane from the state and other sources, as well as the other two fore mentioned efforts underway to increase efficiencies in the college. As one part of an overall response from the college to these fiscal realities, the redesign of instruction must connect with the other elements of Lane’s redesign. In addition, we must use this opportunity to study other emerging issues and trends in higher education.

**Understanding Instructional Redesign**

In his article *Dealing with the Future Now*, Alan Guskin (2003) discusses how colleges can maintain their commitment to quality teaching and learning in a climate of declining resources. Guskin argues forcefully that colleges need to look beyond short term incremental solutions and instead focus on ‘fundamentally’ transforming their institutions on almost every level. No longer can “increases in tuition” and “selective cuts and layoffs” balance the books, as Lane itself has learned in recent years. Guskin also argues that for such “fundamental redesign” to work, colleges and universities need to pursue a ‘transformational change’ that includes “creating a clear and coherent vision of the future by focusing on student learning, quality of faculty work life, and reducing cost per student.”

Following this advice, this instructional redesign project will need to develop such a coherent vision, building, first and foremost, on our existing strengths and commitments. Lane Community College is already widely regarded as an innovative college and highly dedicated to student success; the proposed ‘instructional redesign’ must build on this work.

Developing our vision and a path towards it will not require completely ‘reinventing the wheel’, since a number of colleges and universities as well as national organizations have taken up similar efforts to ‘rethink’ and ‘redesign’ higher education. Examples include Guskin’s aforementioned work, the National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT), the University System of Maryland’s Effectiveness and Efficiency Workgroup,

and the Oregon's State Board of Higher Education's Working Groups (see references at the end of this paper).

The National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT), "provides leadership in using information technology to redesign learning environments to produce better learning outcomes for students at a reduced cost to the institution." However, the redesign discussed at NCAT is focused more on course redesign and less on institution-wide redesigning of student learning.

University systems, such as the Oregon's State Board of Higher Education and the Oregon Community Colleges, and the University System of Maryland (USM) have approached redesign primarily in terms of increasing effectiveness and efficiency of academic and business operations. The OUS has three work groups that address system-wide issues: "Academic Excellence and Economic Development", "Access and Affordability", and "Excellence in Delivery and Productivity".

However, "instructional redesign" at Lane will entirely be a model of our own development and choosing; we can learn from other groups work, but we must design a vision and model for ourselves.

In many ways, this is not new work for Lane. Those at the college in the mid-90s will remember the "Process Redesign" project that focused on reorganizing student services, as well as the administration structural redesign and development of the Strategic Learning Initiative (SLI) to promote instructional innovation. More recently, faculty in various departments have 'fundamentally redesigned' instruction at the course level. Examples include:

- The chemistry and biology faculty's redesign of the prerequisites to the Anatomy and Physiology sequence, which in turn is a prerequisite to the nursing program, to a learning community—*Biobonds*.
- Computer Information Technology and Business departments have come together and redesigned their entire curriculum to meet student need and analyzing the financial impact of the changes. These two departments have developed a "core curriculum" for students across the programs within their department.

To reiterate, the process outlined in this document will include incremental changes as well as those that are fundamental in nature. The two are not mutually exclusive but rather are bookends to a continuum of possibilities. Because of the range of possibilities, we have taken care not to define "instructional redesign" at this time, and we hope that the Instructional Redesign Taskforce will take up the definition as its first task.

## **Scope**

The scope of instructional redesign is broad and includes redesigning how we deliver instruction; achieve learning in the classroom; and provide instructional support that directly aids classroom learning. Curriculum and pedagogical redesign that maintains the quality of the classroom learning environment is, therefore, a part, but not the entire focus, of this effort. While overhauling the curriculum within a discipline to realize efficiencies is part of this effort, it is not within the scope of this effort to identify positions or programs for elimination; that is neither position nor programs will be eliminated as a direct result of this work.

Over the past few years, Lane has adopted research-based proven pedagogies and instructional methods like learning communities, service learning, supplemental instruction, development of core curriculum for programs, integrated student services, etc. However, we have not yet deliberately elevated these from departmental or unit initiatives to institutional-level initiatives, nor have we clearly understood the economic impact of these practices. We hope that the instructional redesign effort will also assist us in identifying specific strategies that can be implemented at the institutional level, and champion the institution's commitment to improving student learning while assuring economic sustainability.

As stated above, although many other aspects of college work affect learning, they are not directly included in the scope of this work and will be carried out by other taskforces. However, if certain aspects arise and are determined to be integral to instructional redesign, then appropriate discussions and research will be done. We do expect, however, that groups working on other aspects of college redesign will work with this group in a coordinated and open fashion. Issues that have contractual implications that may arise in the discussions will be channeled for discussion between the college and LCCEA or LCCEF. If there are policy implications, this will be guided through the appropriate governance council.

## **Instructional Redesign Taskforce Membership**

Taskforce membership will include individuals with relevant expertise and skills and/or authority to facilitate the work. In addition, the membership will be broad enough to address the different parts of the mission of the college. For these reasons the following be included in the taskforce:

### ***Membership by position***

- Associate Vice President for Instruction or Instruction and Student Services
- Faculty Council co-chair or designee
- LCCEA president or designee
- Learning Council co-chair or designee
- SLI Faculty co-chair or designee
- Vice President for ISS

### ***Membership by selection***

- Student representative
- Classified instructional support
- Continuing Education
- Developmental Education
- Instructional Technology
- Learning support (e.g. library, counseling)
- Lower Division Transfer
- Professional Technical

The committee will not exceed 15 individuals. Eight members will be faculty, four to five members will be managers, one to two classified, one to two students. A single individual may represent more than one area on the above list, and we hope to limit the taskforce to 13 individuals. Individuals interested in serving will submit their names in response to a call for participation for the positions that will be filled through a selection process.

### **Membership Profile**

Given the nature of the project, it is important that selected members bring their expertise to the discussion, rather than serving as representatives of constituent groups of the college. The work of the study group is to allow for broad thinking without being tied to only one perspective. The desired profile for membership will include a combination of the following:

- Having knowledge and/or experience in instructional design
- Having served in multiple capacities at the college or in other institutions
- Having the demonstrated capacity to creatively engage in problem solving from a variety of perspectives

Members will be selected by the Instructional Redesign Process Planning Team (IRPPT), and confirmed by President Spilde. Please send nominations for selected member positions to [instructionalredesign@lanecc.edu](mailto:instructionalredesign@lanecc.edu) by September 30, 2006 (self nominations are allowed).

### **Responsibilities**

The taskforce will have two responsibilities:

- Act as a research group and develop proposals for systemic redesign of instructional practices at the institutional level, and
- Act as a coordinating group for the work being done at the instructional department/division level.

The taskforce members will be commissioned with the responsibility of developing strategic proposals for the systemic redesign of instruction, so that it is economically sustainable and sustaining of the vibrant educational enterprise at Lane. A large part of the work will occur in a decentralized manner—both within instructional divisions and disciplines, and in cross-departmental/divisional work. The taskforce will provide the central support for the work and will help develop the framework for instructional

department/division conversations, and will also coordinate inter-departmental/divisional discussions.

*Time Commitment:* The work will begin in early in the Fall 2006 term and likely will continue at least through the 2007-2008 academic year. The group will be appointed by October 15<sup>th</sup> and will start meeting twice a month beginning November 2006. A preliminary report will be provided to the college for discussion in March 2007. A final report will be provided to the President and the college by April 2007. Members should plan on a commitment of approximately 12 hours of work per month towards this project.

### **Tasks**

- Seek input from both internal and external sources at the beginning of the process
- Consult with experts (including those with expertise in state guidelines, the funding formula, etc.) as necessary
- Conduct research on alternative designs, and best practices, for the delivery of instruction and share this information with departments across campus
- Provide guidelines and support for departments, divisions and disciplines that are simultaneously engaged in redesign discussions
- Develop methods to calculate the budget impact of instructional redesign plans and to incorporate these into college budgeting processes
- Develop and review proposals to recognize trends that can be broadly implemented while promoting fiscal sustainability and adherence to contracts, degree requirements and the core values of the institution
- Hold hearings to receive feedback on the redesign proposals from the college community
- Forward a report to the President and the college

### ***Departments/Divisions***

- Respond to the framework provided by the process planning group.
- Share best practices and innovative approaches with the taskforce as well as with colleagues in other departments.

### **Taskforce Decision-making Processes and Authority**

- Taskforce work and processes:  
The taskforce will consider all proposals. The taskforce will attempt to conduct its work using a limited consensus approach, where differing views or disagreements that the parties can live with are sufficient. It is recognized that taskforce 'members by position' have responsibilities to their positions and/or organizations, including communicating with their members.
- Redesign Proposals:
  - Redesign proposals that are in the realm of authority of individual instructional divisions/departments/disciplines/faculty members (e.g. restructuring classes to achieve efficiencies) will be reviewed and recommendations may be made to the parties making the proposal and other relevant parties (e.g. curriculum approval committee). Such

recommendations may be identified as either unanimous, majority, or minority recommendations.

- Redesign proposals that are in the realm of authority of the college and the administration will be made to the President and the college, and may be identified as either unanimous, majority, or minority recommendations.
- Redesign proposals that are in the realm of authority of the Association, Federation, and the Administration (e.g. proposals that are inconsistent with existing contracts or would constitute a change in working conditions) may be recommended to the College, Association, and/or Federation, and may be identified as either unanimous, majority, or minority recommendations.

### **Timeline**

Spring 2006	Process planning group convenes and starts discussions. The process planning group identifies the short term process and starts the planning for the longer term process.
Summer 2006	Process planning group continues to develop the discussion paper on fundamental redesign. A group of faculty and Instructional managers engage in an all day work session.
Fall 2006	Taskforce appointed and begins work. Departments/Divisions discuss instructional redesign through unit planning. Section III of unit planning will be compiled and forwarded to the taskforce. The “short term” component of this section will be used for the FY 08 budget development.
September 2006 (Inservice)	One day (September 18, 2006) focused on best practices to increase student engagement, retention and learning. The keynote speaker—Prof. Vincent Tinto. Second day of the in-service (September 21, 2006) dedicated to discussions on fundamental redesign. The process planning team will facilitate an all-campus meeting followed by department/division work. SLI day (September 20, 2006) dedicated to systemic best practices in instruction and student services.
Fall 2006 (September to November 15, 2006)	Departments/divisions continue the work started on September 21, 2006 and submit their plans to the taskforce by November 15, 2006. Departments/divisions will also submit budget proposals to the budget review committee structured through college council.
Winter 2006 March 2007)	Taskforce reviews information submitted by departments/divisions, reviews literature and presents draft and preliminary report to the President and the college
April 2007	Final report submitted to the President and the college.

## **Report**

The end result of this redesign process will be a set of proposals for changes in the instructional environment that are clearly connected to financial analysis for those changes with the goal of improving the economic sustainability of learning practices. These proposals will be delivered to the President and the campus community. These proposals will include global ideas for systemic implementation at the institutional level as well as those at the department, division, and unit level.

The taskforce will attempt to come to consensus on a common final report to the President and the college. The report will include all non-consensus recommendations and statements submitted by taskforce members.

## **Taskforce Compensation**

Taskforce members will receive appropriate compensation to facilitate the work as agreed upon by the college and the responsible unions or work group representative.

## **‘Parking Lot’**

A number of questions remain to be fully resolved, either by the Process Planning Team prior to formation of the Taskforce, or by the Taskforce itself upon its creation. These include:

- a. Clarifying the relations between systemic and unit proposals, and between short term and long term initiatives
- b. Clarifying the connections between Instructional Redesign, Unit Planning, and Budget Development processes
- c. Clarifying the approval and implementation processes
- d. Identifying how external processes that impact instruction (e.g. state accreditation) will be dealt with in Instructional Redesign
- e. Identifying how Instructional Redesign and the other redesign efforts (i.e., work processes and technology) will be coordinated
- f. Reviewing the proposed timelines
- g. Developing criteria for proposals
- h. Linking Instructional Redesign proposals to the depth of the documented economic problems challenging Lane
- i. Developing robust communication processes between the taskforce and the campus

## **Conclusion**

The Process Planning Team offers this proposed process for the college’s consideration and recommendations. As the ‘parking lot’ list above indicates, we recognize that work remains to be completed on designing the redesign processes. We are also confident that our proposal will benefit from your critiques and recommendations. The faculty, managers and classified staff in instructional areas will begin to consider and engage this work during the September 21<sup>st</sup> in-service session. You may also provide your feedback and recommendations to the Process Planning Team by e-mailing the team at:

[instructionalredesign@lanecc.edu](mailto:instructionalredesign@lanecc.edu).



## References

Computer Information Technology Department, Lane Community College. 2005. *Unit Plan*.

Guskin, Alan E., and Mary B. Marcy. 2003. "Dealing with the Future Now", *Change*, July/August 2003, pp. 10-21.

Jones, Dennis. 2006. "State Shortfalls Projected to Continue Despite Economic Gains; Long-Term Prospects for Higher Education No Brighter", *The Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education*.

National Center for Academic Transformation: <http://www.center.rpi.edu>

Oregon University System—Board Working Groups: [http://www.ous.edu/sb\\_work.htm](http://www.ous.edu/sb_work.htm)

University System of Maryland—Effectiveness and Efficiency Workgroup:  
<http://www.usmd.edu/usm/workgroups/EEWorkGroup>