

Lane's Learning Plan

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Learning Council

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LANE'S LEARNING PLAN: INTRODUCTION & GOALS

Introduction

Genesis of the Learning Plan

In the fall of 2005 the Learning Council was formed as a key component of Lane's new governance system. The Learning Council was chartered to: Develop a strategic learning plan for instruction and learning support; to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategic learning plan; update the plan according to the guidelines of the college-wide planning system; identify new instructional directions that align with the mission, learning principles and strategic plan of the college; formulate policies regarding college-wide instructional and learning support; and ensure the college's alignment with accreditation standards 2, 4, and 5.

Learning Plan Development Process and First Draft Content

Ideas for this plan came from college staff, students and other governance councils; demographic, employment and population data were gathered; and internal and external sources, including Unit Plans, were scanned for both existing and emerging issues and trends. At the conclusion of the data gathering phase Learning Council members participated in a series of retreats and small-group work to create a learning plan draft for discussion and revision by the full college community.

As the Learning Plan took shape two ideas emerged that have implications for both the implementation and success of the plan. The ideas, inspired by Lane's Learning Centered Principles developed in April, 2004, are:

- 1) All college decisions need to be shaped and guided by the needs of learning, and
- 2) All Lane students and staff contribute to learning.

These two ideas are essential to this plan and provide the foundation upon which the Learning Plan should be built. In support of these ideas, the Learning Council committed to increasing the capacity of staff to make learning-centered decisions through the development of learning-centered decision making criteria.

Learning Plan Draft Review and Revision

The Learning Council facilitated a campus-wide discussion of the first draft of the Learning Plan during May of 2005 through the use of an electronic bulletin board. In addition, Learning Council members made presentations to most governance councils where ideas and comments about the plan were gathered.

As a result of the campus-wide discussion of the Learning Plan, it became evident that a number of issues needed additional work and would require continued broad-based campus conversations. The Learning Council has committed to continuing work during 2005-06, in cooperation with other governance councils as appropriate, on these issues which include but are not limited to the Instructional Technology Plan, The Assessment Plan, diversity, sustainability and ADA.

Implementation of the Learning Plan

The Learning Plan provides a framework for the work of instruction and learning support for the next three years (2005-2008). Unit plans have informed and will continue to inform the ongoing development of the Learning Plan; this plan should itself inform new rounds of unit planning and

decision-making in instructional and student support areas. Responsibility for this implementation process rests with the VP for Instruction and Student Services.

After the Learning Plan is approved by College Council and the Faculty Council, the Office of Instruction and Student Services will develop a work plan for implementation in consultation with the Learning Council.

Evaluation of the Learning Plan

The Learning Council, through its charter, is responsible for evaluating whether the Learning Plan is having the intended effects. An important part of the Council's work during 2005-06 will be to create and implement an evaluation process for the Learning Plan. It is expected that the evaluation process will provide the mechanism for continuous improvement of the Learning Plan, and for reviewing and assessing ongoing implementation of the plan

Learning Goals

Enhancing the Learning Environment

Commit to a culture of innovation in and improvement of the learning environment, testing new directions and incorporating successful innovations into the mainstream of the college.

A. Increase support for innovation in instruction

- Increase support for innovation in instruction and learning support. (For example: The Strategic Learning Initiative, First Year Experience, Sustainability, Reading Together)
- Develop and implement a system for mainstreaming and supporting successful innovation.

B. Address the need for direct student support from faculty and staff as a crucial element of the learning environment

- Given that direct contact with faculty increases student success, support and encourage efforts of units to achieve an optimal ratio of full time to part time faculty and staff.
- Address the effect of workload issues on the learning environment.
- Expand student access to learning support staff such as tutors, and lab aides.

C. Enhance student success and retention

- Focus on developing ways to enhance the college experience for incoming students and provide a welcoming and safe environment.
- Support instructional delivery which addresses under-preparedness for college learning.
- Incorporate best practices to enhance learning and student motivation especially through faculty-student interactions.
- Increase campus-wide awareness of issues in developmental education. Create a culture of excellence and achievement among students.

D. Curriculum enhancement

- Increase curriculum development activities linked to systemic needs analysis.
- Support cross-discipline and inter-disciplinary efforts such as learning communities.
- Support faculty efforts to help students become active partners in learning.
- Explore alternative formats for learning.
- Encourage increasing use of multiple approaches to pedagogy that allow multiple modalities and maximize accessibility.
- Explore sustainability as a core institutional and instructional value, infused into a wide range of curriculum.

E. Support connected learning through inter-disciplinary and collaborative learning strategies

- Strengthen financial and workload support for learning-related programs and activities that foster inter-disciplinary learning
- Develop effective collaborative connections, smooth transitions and clear articulation between credit and non-credit classes and programs
- Develop flexible organizational structures to respond to change
- Develop flexible scheduling to respond to new instructional formats

F. Facilities enhancement

- Improve non-classroom learning facilities such as the library and computer labs.
- Improve physical classroom facilities.
- Expand student non-classroom space.
- Increase accessibility to network resources.
- Evaluate college-wide classroom scheduling procedures to support student learning based on program and student needs as well as staff workload.

Community Collaboration/Connections

Strengthen relationships with high schools, transfer institutions, community partners, and employers to enhance student preparation for and success in college, career and civic life.

A. Develop and encourage appropriate assessments to ensure preparedness

- Expand assessment of high school students' preparation for college level work through early placement testing.
- Review and renovate general education prerequisites and placement testing at Lane.

B. Enhance student transitions at all levels

- Expand and explore high school connections and curricular articulation.
- Strengthen transitional pathways from developmental and non-credit classes to college credit classes.
- Strengthen articulation of courses and programs to streamline transition to other educational institutions.
- Strengthen courses and programs to streamline transition to the workforce.

C. Facilitate more integrated and connected educational opportunities

- Provide clear educational pathways for students to advance in their careers.
- Encourage cooperation between credit and non-credit courses to strengthen the connection of students to Lane.
- Expand partnerships with local businesses and community groups to provide real-life challenges to students.

D. Create innovative, flexible and collaborative programs that are responsive to current and emerging needs of students and employers

- Offer programs in response to identified current/emerging community employment opportunities.
- Increase opportunities for lifelong learning for demographically increasing populations such as Latinos and seniors.
- Encourage and support workforce and career development activities for disadvantaged groups.

Diversity

Ensure the retention and success of diverse students through building a diverse and inclusive learning environment addressing anti bias/gender/multicultural issues as well as power, privilege and difference.

A. Build capacity to teach curriculum addressing issues of race/class/gender/sexual orientation and other institutionalized systems of inequality.

- Utilize curriculum development funds for development of diversity related curriculum.
- Utilize reassignment time and professional development funds and opportunities (such as in-service and Spring Conference) to develop faculty capacity to respond to evolving diversity needs of the college.
- Create the strategic faculty positions prioritized in the Diversity Plan as funds permit.

B. Improve hiring practices to ensure recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and staff, and create teaching opportunities for faculty of color through processes such as residencies and incentives.

- Build college wide awareness of the experiences of people of color and the structures of power, privilege and difference.
- Develop ways to build community among all members of the college.
- Explore and implement best practices from other institutions.
- Build capacity to achieve the college vision of diversity.

C. Make all learning spaces safe for all students and staff.

- Increase organizational support for training including peer led training.
- Build understanding of safety for diverse communities.
- Support safe and inclusive environment proposals in the Diversity Plan.

D. Assess how well the college serves diverse communities of learners such as ESL students who have recently moved to main campus.

Technology:

Instructional values must be at the center of Lane's technology use. Specific instructional technology choices should be purposeful, appropriate, and driven from individual, departmental, and unit planning.

A. Implement the Instructional Technology Strategic Plan once approved.

B. Increase access to student data for assessment of learning.

C. Organize coordinated support for Instructional technology.

D. Expand support for the creation, development, and implementation of distance learning courses and degree programs.

E. Provide on-going technology training for faculty and staff.

Staff Development

The pace of change requires Lane to focus on staff development. The learning-centered principles point to the need for ongoing learning for all staff, and the need for more investment by the college in professional development for all staff.

A. Provide more support for staff development.

B. Review the overall staff development program to ensure staff development opportunities are available to all staff groups on an equitable basis.

- C. Recognize the need for training “front-line” student support such as tutors and lab aides**
- D. Organize scholarship and other staff development efforts in areas of adult learning and motivation in the context of the current social, economic, and cultural environments.**
- E. Expand discipline-oriented faculty professional development, with care to include professional-technical faculty.**

Assessment

Commit to a culture of assessment of student learning through assessment of programs, services and learning environments.

- A. Create an Assessment Plan that provides a method for systematic and regular assessment of student learning at the program level and at the institutional level.**
- B. Develop and expand systems for assessing the effectiveness of services in supporting students to enhance their learning and achieve their goals.**