

**Administrative Response to Program Review**  
**Economics**  
**Prepared by Dr. Birgitte Ryslinge**  
**August 2010**

First and foremost, we apologize for the delay in providing this administrative response. We appreciate the work of the Economics (EC) Subject Area Committee (SAC) in the preparation of your Program Review. The Deans of Instruction (DOI) have committed to providing more timely responses to program reviews. The reality of the 0910 year included above normal demands for academic and bond planning, a tremendous increase in student enrollments, and catching up with program review responses from the prior year. These factors all contributed to a turnaround time for this response to Economics of almost a year, which is too certainly not timely.

On November 6, 2009, the EC SAC presented their Program Review findings to an audience of PCC administrators and others with an interest in the discipline. Both the written report and the presentation were informative and thought provoking. Your presentation provided ample opportunity for questions and discussion, which was enlightening for us all. We are impressed by the steadfastness with which the Economics SAC has held fast to their mission to *"increase economic literacy"* of PCC students.

This Administrative Response will: A) note particular highlights of EC Program and Program Review, B) identify any work still to be completed, and C) provide the administrative response to the SAC recommendations.

**Of Note**

- Highly qualified and committed faculty (full-time and part-time) from diverse backgrounds.
- Highly experienced faculty with experience in teaching economics and other related subjects, at other colleges, and in other countries.
- A strong and rigorous curriculum with high standards.
- Interface and coordination with related disciplines and institutions (i.e., PCC Business, PSU Economics).
- Tight curricular linkages with 4-year university programs, to ensure student success once they transfer.
- Strong working relationships among faculty, and a commitment to work together to continuously improve the program.
- A commitment to on-going professional development of faculty.
- Willingness to engage with, and contribute to, high quality distance learning offerings at PCC.
- A program review that includes institutional research data, and survey of students.
- Consideration of how the Economics discipline helps the college achieve its mission.

## To Be Completed

Program review guidelines (<http://www.pcc.edu/resources/academic/program-review/>) identify areas to particularly address during the program review process. Assessment of outcomes (at the course, program and college level) should be included, and we found this only partially addressed in your report. Furthermore, programs are asked to consider how the outcomes of assessments lead to program changes, and we would like to see documentation of assessment driven change. We are confident that the Economics SAC does in fact approach their program with this spirit of continuous improvement. Your program review refers to frequent discussions and reflection among Economics faculty, and also with other departments at PCC, and at PSU. This kind of discussion is integral to continued growth in our programs. It is also vital that we document and provide evidence of how assessment and related improvement occurs within a discipline. Program review is an important vehicle for that provision of evidence to external stakeholders, and also allows programs to provide models and share best practices across disciplines.

Assessment was identified as an area of focus for PCC during our very recent accreditation visit, and the April 2010 Interim Accreditation Report notes that: PCC must document *“progress in demonstrating, through regular and systematic assessment, that students who complete their programs have achieved the intended learning outcomes of degrees and certificates. Further, the college must begin to demonstrate, in a regular and systematic fashion, how the assessment of student learning leads to the improvement of teaching and learning.”*

We also request that the Economics SAC review and update as appropriate your information on the Core Outcomes Mapping Matrix, <http://www.pcc.edu/resources/academic/core-outcomes/ec.html> It appears that some EC courses have not been entered (216, 230 and 286). Also, on the courses that are entered, Core Outcome 5 (Professional Competence) is blank.

The DOI's would appreciate receiving an update from the Economics SAC during the 10-11 year in regards to these matters.

## Administrative Response to Economics Recommendations

We concur with some of the EC recommendations. In those areas of agreement, we note that some are more constrained by funding availability, and that requests dependent on funding are typically subject to a variety of campus and district based allocation processes. Overall, we have the usual challenge of supporting worthwhile and effective disciplines in a time of growing competition for limited resources. (Economists might frame this challenge as “dealing with scarcity in a reasoned and reasonable manner.”) The question becomes, what can we do with the resources we have now? In that spirit, here are administrative responses to *specific recommendations made by the Economics SAC (SAC recommendations in italics)*.

## Curriculum development:

1. *“Most members of our faculty do not find enough time to devote to curriculum development. This is a very serious problem in our program. Designing new courses that meet the needs of our students with changing times and structural changes in our economy is very important. Additional financial support for curriculum development and financial support or paid release times for both part time and full time faculty would be very helpful.”*

Faculty (through the SACs ) are responsible for the developing, reviewing, and evaluating curriculum. The development and revision of courses and curriculum is a key responsibility distinguishing full-time from part-time faculty. We understand that this can represent a significant investment of time for any discipline, and is particularly demanding for faculty in CTE areas with rapidly changing industry standards.

Faculty (FT and PT) engaged in curriculum review may be eligible for release time or compensation depending upon the magnitude of the change. Please see the “Funds for Curriculum and Course Design (IIP) website (<https://intranet-pcc.edu/view.pcc.edu/resources/staff-dev/grants/course-dev.html>) for a thorough explanation of when curriculum development is considered beyond normal faculty workload, and consequently potentially eligible for additional funding.

During the Program Review presentation you discussed several areas for potential curriculum development, such as environmental economics and/or the economics of healthcare. You also discussed the possibility of “smaller” courses (1 or 2 credits), or hybrid courses which combine face-to-face instruction with distance delivery. We encourage and support these beyond traditional approaches, which may to some extent mitigate some of the barriers to enrollment (cost and relevance to student academic objectives), but caution you to check with the Curriculum Office about less-than-3-credit courses since degrees like the AAOT require most courses to be a minimum of 3 credits.

2. *In addition, we recommend that the two annual SAC in-service days be scrapped. Instead give the SAC chair a 25% release for one quarter per academic year to undertake many tasks and paper work that involve curriculum development. This would support more (part time) faculty interests in curriculum activities and new courses.*

“Scrapping” of in-service days is not a recommendation that we recall hearing from other SAC’s. To the contrary, we hear from many SAC’s that they appreciate this designated (and protected) time to meet with colleagues. However, we are not opposed to the idea of surveying faculty regarding SAC meeting needs, including in-service days.

One direction we would not endorse is to create separate meeting requirements for transfer and CTE faculty, or varied requirements on an individual SAC basis. We also don’t support the notion of compensation for SAC chairs. The SAC is the primary vehicle for faculty involvement in matters related to curriculum, and participation in the SAC is a central professional responsibility inherent in the faculty role. Chairing of

the SAC is intended to rotate among full-time faculty in order to “share the workload” over time. Additionally, some larger SAC’s have adopted a co-chair model.

**Professional development:**

1. *Our division as well as the college must provide more funds and opportunities for faculty professional development activities such as longer sabbaticals and better funded professional leaves.*

We appreciate your frustration in finding sufficient funding to stay current in your field. There are several potential funding sources for professional development. Local budgets for conferences and development are a campus resource, to be negotiated with the Division Dean, who must balance the needs of all the programs in the divisions. There are district level supplemental funds for professional development available through staff development and the TLC’s. These supplemental funds are outside of the instructional budgets, and are an important resource for many different programs and groups. Our best advice at this moment is to work closely with the available funding sources and look for opportunities where funding can be combined and leveraged.

Regarding professional leaves (sabbaticals), guidelines have been carefully developed over time in order to provide faculty with opportunities for professional development within available resources and consistent with the needs of the college. Please refer to Article 20 of the Faculty and Academic Professional Agreement (<http://www.pcc.edu/hr/contracts/faculty-ap-agreement.html>)

**Access & success for students:**

1. *To improve student success, we would like to be given priority for podium-equipped classrooms.*

The assignment of courses to specific classrooms occurs at the campus (not district) level. FT faculty, and department chairs, should work carefully with campus scheduling staff and division deans to request particular classrooms. Each campus works within the constraints of higher demand than supply of podium equipped rooms, with most disciplines identifying podiums as necessary and beneficial to instruction. Consequently, each campus is attempting to increase the inventory of podium-equipped rooms, as funding allows. (Some progress was made during the past summer, and more is planned for Fall term.) One of the central intents of the 2008 Bond program is to add/renovate classrooms to support the growth that is already here, and to provide appropriate technology in those classrooms. We encourage faculty to participate in campus based Bond planning to ensure that instructional technology needs are well represented.

- 2. We also want to be able to hire tutors in the campus learning centers.*

There are a number of ways in which to address the need for discipline level tutoring, each with different strengths, staffing and funding sources. Some options are given below, followed by who the SAC should work with to pursue that particular approach.

- Student tutors in campus learning centers: if demand is sufficient, and funding is available, individual campuses may decide to put this in place. Department chairs should work with their respective division dean and DOI to see if this is a possibility for a particular campus.
- On-line tutoring through Northwest eTutoring (see <http://www.pcc.edu/resources/tutoring/>): PCC has recently become part of a consortium to provide on-line tutoring to students (regardless of whether their enrollment is face-to-face or DL.) Currently we have about a dozen disciplines added. There is some cost associated with each added discipline. There are also limits as to how college specific the tutoring can be, as we are part of a 30+ college consortium, including 4-year institutions. Carey Larsen (Online Student Services Facilitator) can answer technical questions about the service. If you wish to pursue this district wide approach, then you should work with the DOI's & Kendra Cawley, Dean of Instructional Support.
- On-line tutoring from PCC Economics faculty (outside the consortium): The Economics faculty could have some Elluminate Office Hours, where students could either drop in or schedule appointments. Carey Larsen has volunteered to work with the Economics SAC chair to further explore and perhaps pilot this option.

### **Needed resources:**

- 1. We want the open position at Cascade campus filled fall term 2010. (Noted as highest priority for this Program review).*

The Cascade campus has filled the vacant Economics faculty position, with the new instructor beginning Fall 2010.

- 2. We would like money for curriculum development, tutors, sabbaticals, attendance at conferences for both full-time and part-time faculty, software support, and to bring guest speakers to campus.*

See above for a number of strategies for accessing support for curriculum development and professional development. The other needs identified are typically funded at a campus level, and the Economics faculty should work closely with their department chair and respective Division deans to ensure they follow the various application processes for potential funding.

- 3. We would like Institutional Research to study the impact of Distance Learning course offerings on enrollment in on-campus sections.*

- The Office of Institutional Effectiveness regularly collects data about student enrollments (Fall & Summer terms) in Distance Learning (see <http://www.pcc.edu/ir/factsheet/DistLearningfactsheet.html>).
- Additionally, in Winter 2009, IE completed a student survey about Distance Learning (see <http://www.pcc.edu/ir/surveys/index.html>).
- The IE office has not explicitly assessed the impact of DL offerings on campus enrollments. There are a number of issues which make it difficult to parse out this specific variable, most notably the extraordinary growth in all enrollments over the last two years.
- Many disciplines, as well as administrators, have posed questions about the best way to support the significant demand for distance learning offerings. At the April 15, 2009 meeting of the EAC, the formation of a Distance Learning Task Force was approved. This task force was established to develop a statement of mission, values and goals for distance learning that will help guide distance learning standards and practices. In addition, the task force was charged with preparing recommendations for next steps based upon a number of “gaps” in our current approaches to DL. This task force will be making recommendations to the EAC this academic year. See <http://www.pcc.edu/resources/academic/eac/distance-learning/index.html> for more information about the DL Task Force.

### **Meeting community needs:**

1. *We need to survey students and faculty to find out what topics or current economic issues they are interested in. We can use that information to try to secure guest speakers and increase knowledge of those issues from an economic perspective among the PCC community.*

We agree that this is a good approach to learn what topics are of interest, and suggest the Economics SAC coordinate with Institutional Effectiveness to leverage opportunities for gathering this information.

### **Closing**

In closing, we want to again thank the Economics SAC for sharing the results of your program review with us. We very much enjoyed learning about the Economics discipline, your successes and plans for the future. We look forward to supporting your on-going work on continuous program improvement.

Administrative Response submitted by Birgitte Ryslinge, on behalf all your Deans of Instruction

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 Jeff Triplett, Sylvania  
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