

Administrative Response to Program Review
Landscape Technology
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On January 29, 2010, the Landscape Technology (LAT) Subject Area Committee (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. We are very appreciative of the engagement of this SAC in both the process and reflective intent of program review. We enjoyed hearing about the long history of the LAT program: what has remained constant and what has changed since the last program review. The LAT program continues to evolve, and your forward focus of building on existing programs with a sustainability focus will be interesting to follow.

Your presentation provided ample opportunity for questions and discussion, which was enlightening for us all. We are impressed by the steadfastness with which the Landscape Technology SAC has held fast to their mission to offer a program *that prepares students for entry and supervisory work in landscape construction, landscape management, landscape design, or nursery production.*

We would also like to take this opportunity to note the strength of the written report, which addressed in a very informative and coherent way the questions posed by the program review process. The report was well organized, easy to read and understand, and included good analysis and presentation of the data.

This Administrative Response will: A) note particular highlights of the LAT Program and Program Review, B) identify any work still to be completed, and C) pose some questions for further consideration, and D) provide the administrative response to the SAC recommendations

Of Note

- The longevity and focus of this program, providing high quality Landscape Technology instruction at PCC since 1970!
- A strong emphasis on applied experience: learning by doing, hands on, and inquiry based learning.
- The professionalism and commitment of the faculty, who over the years continue to accomplish a great deal within sometimes quite limited resources.
- The commitment to ensure that students are prepared for their careers with skills and critical thinking ability.
- The many contributions of the Landscape Technology faculty and staff to the beauty of the Rock Creek campus.
- The program review provides a good overview of the complexities and nuances of sustainability as apply to this CTE area.
- External standards and bench-marking, including the Professional Landcare

- Network and the Association of Professional Landscape Designers.
- Use of national and professional discipline/program guidelines
- The Oregon Landscape Contractors board acceptance of LAT's two-year certificates and degree as qualification to sit for the Landscape Contractor's licensing exam.
- A history of a strong advisory board and now working with their board to set program directions for options specifically targeting sustainability.
- Considering a new AAS degree in Sustainable Natural Resource Management, which would combine courses from LAT and Biology.
- The course sustainability matrix, which shows the extent to which sustainability already infuses the full curriculum.
- The inclusion of core outcome mapping in the program review, which seems to be up to date (thank you!)
- Willingness to experiment with Distance Learning, with first course planned Fall 2010
- A commitment to on-going professional development and certification of faculty
- Faculty whose level of knowledge and advocacy provide leadership for Landscaping professions within Oregon.
- Addressing assessment in the program review, with discussions of assessment at the course, degree and certificate, and college level.

To Be Completed

We were very pleased to see the Degree and Certificate outcomes presented and discussed in the program review document. Currently the PCC Degree & Certificate outcomes website shows different (presumably the earlier) outcomes. (See website <http://www.pcc.edu/resources/academic/degree-outcome/lat.html>.) Please coordinate with Kendra Cawley, PCC Dean of Instructional Support, to ensure the website reflects your most recent Degree and Certificate outcomes.

For Further Consideration

Advising

Your review highlights student advising as a challenge area for LAT. *"The overall system for guiding students from the point of entry into the system through completion is confusing and bureaucratic. There is no streamlined system, and many students are confused about what to do. In addition, the rules and systems change so often that faculty don't know always know what the rules are, much less the students."* This is an unfortunate state of affairs we would like to see improved. We believe with the implementation of the new degree audit software, **GRAD Plan**, both students and faculty advisors will have much stronger tools at their disposal. This should go a long way towards improving advising for CTE programs. Training for faculty is underway now, beginning with department chairs. Please let Dean Fyfield know if anyone else would like to receive the training. Additionally, it might be a good idea for LAT faculty to meet with one or more Rock Creek advisors to see if there are ways to enhance communications and ease transitions for LAT students.

Classrooms

Another area of concern evident in the program review is the continued adequacy of effective learning spaces. Like many programs, you have been feeling the pressure of continued growth across the campus and so it can be difficult to find even basic classrooms, let alone classrooms with more specialized equipment. Certainly, one of the central intents of the 2008 Bond program is to add classrooms to support the growth that is already here. While new buildings are still some years out, Rock Creek is repurposing facilities whenever possible, and will continue to add “swing space classrooms” where feasible. We do ask programs to consider opportunities to share specialized lab areas in order to better leverage current and new resources as they come on line, and exploring program synergies is perhaps something that LAT can think about.

Assessment Driven Change

We very much appreciate that you addressed all the levels of assessment in your program review, and talked about what kinds of assessments you use in LAT. Clearly Landscape Technology has approached their program in the framework of continuous improvement. It was evident in the program review that you have always looked to see what works best, in order to adapt to a changing environment, but like many programs you do not necessarily document assessment driven change in any formal way. Increasingly, we will be expected to also document how our assessment results lead to program change.

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.”*

Administrative Response to Landscape Technology Recommendations

In general, we concur with the LAT recommendations, noting 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 a very worthwhile, effective and well-managed program in a time of growing competition for limited resources. 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 Landscape Technology SAC*

SAC Recommendations from Program Review,
followed by *Administrative Response (in italics)*

Recommendations:

1) Technical assistance in the area of public relations/ recruitment.

Program outreach, marketing and public relations is most certainly an area where CTE programs need support and assistance. In 2009 Rock Creek allocated one-time funds to add a Community Relations manager (for two years) who is responsible for a variety of outreach functions including program promotion. As you note, we are starting to see some return from this investment, and if funding becomes available we hope to make this a permanent position. Additionally, PCC marketing at a district level increasingly understands the need to support marketing throughout the organization. Here is a recent update from PCC marketing:

Empowering Staff to Promote the College

The transformative power of education starts with resource development. We need every member of the PCC community equipped to share in this mission. So, we're developing a system of approved, PCC-branded online templates that will let college employees prepare a variety of brochures, flyers and posters themselves. We will also make available PCC-branded PowerPoint templates and an extensive library of photos that you'll be able to download. Watch for these new resources during the summer 2010.

Please continue to work with campus resources (Dean Margie Fyfield and marketing and advising staff) to find ways to better market the LAT program and raise awareness, perhaps using some of the new templates. Program innovations (and you are considering several) are opportunities to highlight the program as a whole. Individual student success stories also present new opportunities for marketing.

2) A five-year budget plan on replacing major equipment and facilities maintenance.

We agree that a written budget plan is needed for Landscape Technology. How and when the plan might be funded is a separate matter, but without an accurate understanding of the fiscal impact over time, effective planning and leveraging of resources cannot occur. We encourage LAT to work with Dean Fyfield to develop such a document, which should include the costs associated with glazing of the greenhouse. PCC's Facilities Management Services will be an important resource in assessing facilities needs. The timing is opportune, as FMS is currently engaged in a building-by-building assessment of all PCC facilities and is completing a costing exercise for deferred maintenance.

The LAT budget plan can be used to feed into campus based funding processes. For the last couple of years at least, one time "margin funds" have helped address one-time equipment needs and even smaller facilities improvements. In the past year, LAT requests of approximately \$16,000 were funded in this way (Skid-Steer Loader Bucket, Finish Mower).

Please work with Dean Fyfield to ensure that the needs of LAT continue to be considered along with other campus priorities.

- 3) If we are to continue to move in the direction of sustainable landscaping, to expand our course offerings towards those that focus on sustainability, we need **the faculty and facilities to support our mission**. Specifically upgrade 7/102 to have a podium and room for more tables, or a larger room with drafting tables to support larger design classes. Future expansions could include an additional classroom/lab space for building 4, and upgrading the greenhouse to current industry standards.

We agree that resource planning will be vital to support LAT program development, and similar to the facilities and equipment planning effort described above, a similar document might be developed laying out the various options under consideration and associated costs.

The requested items in this recommendation have varying levels of complexity and cost. At the simpler end of the spectrum, Room 7/102 has been added to the list of classrooms to be prioritized for new podiums, and there is a good chance this can be accomplished over the next year. Additionally, furniture might be reconfigured or replaced. Expanding a classroom is a much more complex matter which will need further analysis and consideration in light of available funding and the totality of projects under consideration. As with so many of the recommendations in this program review, the best path forward is to document your needs and to work with your Division dean to ensure that LAT needs are considered in overall planning.

Regarding the greenhouse, we know that student government and some users of the Learning Garden have expressed a keen interest in adding, or having access to, a greenhouse to support the Learning Garden. We encourage LAT to be a part of these discussions to provide expertise, and also explore potential collaborations and synergy in both usage and funding. We all have an interest in ensuring that our greenhouse facilities are as state of the art (and sustainable) as possible. At a minimum, it would be important to consider adjacencies if RC were to move in the direction of an additional greenhouse.

- 4) A budget for faculty development.

We appreciate your frustration in finding sufficient funding to stay current in a changing discipline. Local budgets for training are also a campus resource, to be negotiated with the Division Dean, who must balance the needs of all the programs in the divisions. There are supplemental funds for professional development available through staff development and the TLC's, and yes, there is some paperwork involved in the application process. These supplemental funds are outside of the instructional budgets, and are an important resource for many different programs and groups. As you look ahead to developing new curriculum, keep in mind that IIP grants are an important resource. 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.

5) A budget for new trees and shrubs as well as input on what is removed and installed on campus, particularly in light of the upcoming bond construction.

One of the unique things about Rock Creek is the extent to which our external and “green” spaces are also learning spaces, and an important curricular resource. We recognize that over time, the campus has lost some important plant, shrub and tree specimens. Rock Creek administration is committed that the 2008 Bond program will reverse that unfortunate trend, and is very glad to have the expertise of LAT faculty and PCC Grounds staff who can take a long range view of what makes sense aesthetically, instructionally, and in terms of upkeep and maintenance. To this end, LAT faculty and staff have already been part of initial visioning, and the development of guiding principles for Bond implementation. LAT Faculty and staff are to be commended for their willingness to engage in this process, and will continue to have opportunities for input. As we get closer to actual implementation, we commit to further engagement and consultation, and discussion of how budget allocations for the grown environment will be managed. Plant budgets outside of Bond considerations should be addressed in a similar way to what has been discussed in some of the other funding areas: please develop a proposal with costs, and work through the Division Dean to ensure these requests are taken into consideration along with other campus needs.

Closing

In closing, we want to again thank Landscape Technology SAC for sharing the results of your program review with us. We very much enjoyed learning about the LAT program and your many successes and plans for the future. We look forward to supporting your on-going work on continuous program improvement. Finally, our regards to Loren Radford as he leaves the LAT program for retirement, we know that his contributions have been instrumental in making the program what it is today, and that he will be sorely missed by both colleagues and students.

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