

Administrative Response to Program Review English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program December 2019

On Friday, December 13, 2019, the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) SAC presented their Program Review findings to an audience of PCC administrators, college stakeholders, students, and others with an interest in the discipline. The presentation was informative and thought provoking, with active engagement from students, alumni, and ESOL faculty.

This Administrative Response will: A) note particular highlights of the ESOL program and Program Review; B) provide observations and recommendations; and C) provide the administrative response to the SAC recommendations/resource requests.

NOTEWORTHY EFFORTS OR ACHIEVEMENTS

- The program review document and supporting materials were well written and clear.
- The program review presentation was interactive, engaging, and demonstrated the commitment of faculty and staff to meeting the needs of students and pursuing equitable student success.
- The ESOL program's commitment to maintaining high quality teaching and learning is recognized and appreciated.
- The panel of current and former students available to share their experiences in the program was wonderful and very much appreciated.
- The program demonstrated great work and collaboration with district and campus Disability Services in order to serve students more equitably.
- The student scholarships through the ESOL Fund are noteworthy and appreciated.
- The improvements in online offerings through both online and hybrid courses delivery and especially the interactive video components included in those online courses is fantastic.
- The interactive technologies incorporated into classrooms and teaching pedagogies across ESOL courses is exemplary.
- The program's commitment across many faculty in the creation and use of open educational resources is noteworthy and it is clear that the program faculty are leaders in our state with the development of OER for ESOL courses.
- The engagement with Community Based Learning and the use of experiential learning in ESOL classes is wonderful.
- The collaborations with the Office of International Student Services (OISS) through speed culturing opportunities and the courses for TOEFL preparation is commendable and a value to students and the institution.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- With regard to equitable student success, we would like for the SAC to review disaggregated data on pass rates among ESOL students. For example, are there gaps in student success based on gender, ethnicity, or native language? What is the disaggregated data on who progresses in the pipeline and/or who repeats courses more often? This information will be helpful in your continued work and commitment to equitable student success and to help inform any future professional development for ESOL faculty and staff if needed. Additionally, this will be an integral part of the new program review format, so this will be something that the SAC will be asked to look at and respond to more regularly in the future.
- With regard to enrollment, we recognize that enrollment has declined across the college and we appreciate the myriad of other issues raised in the program review that have contributed to a subsequent decline in the ESOL enrollment. One thought in thinking about how to better predict enrollment would be to gain more information about how many ESOL students are within the K12 system in nearby school districts and to look at any pipeline options for those students transitioning to PCC for further support in ESOL. We recognize that since the last review, the SAC did communicate with the Dual Credit office about enrollment from high schools and we understand that there are no dual credit articulations in ESOL, but this pipeline would still be worth looking into beyond Dual Credit.
- With regard to the use of Open Educational Resources (OER), we think it would be worth considering what are the barriers within the departments/SAC that prevent full-scale use of OER? To date, the design and implementation of OER in the SAC is commendable. Additionally, the arguments for using OER throughout ESOL are compelling. It would be good information to have and consider until the next program review.
- As the college works to implement the Title III grant and the on-ramps to our academic pathways, please continue to align the work of ESOL with integrated education & training (IET) efforts as they take shape. The Deans feel there is some value in this collaboration as we figure out how this will take shape for PCC in the future.
- For future program review presentations, some time to introduce those in the room would be welcomed.

We are pleased with the many advancements this SAC has made since the last program review and with the commitment we see from your SAC to promoting equitable student success. We urge you to continue to keep up the great work.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

What is the SAC planning to do to improve teaching and learning, student success, and degree or certificate completion, for on-campus and online students as appropriate?

AND

What support do you need from administration in order to carry out your planned improvements?

Recommendation 1: Improving Onboarding, Testing and Placement

Our SAC has observed that PCC's unwieldy and complicated process of admissions, testing, placement and enrollment is a barrier to our current and prospective students. Especially in light of low enrollment, we cannot afford to lose students to technicalities. Thus, we have begun studying how to simplify this process from our end. In 2018, Luis Rodriguez, director of ABE, together with a group of ESOL instructors and ABE navigators, received a President's Fund Grant to improve and align the processes and practices of Levels 1-3 ESOL testing and placement across the district. This work yielded a new testing and placement process for students entering Levels 1-3. Now, the SAC would like to implement the revisions and improved tools developed by this committee. In addition, the SAC would like to carry out the same study and improve the process of testing and placement for ESOL students in Levels 4-8 by ESOL instructors. Oral and written assessments are key components to placing students accurately, thereby helping them complete the program and move into degree and certificate programs as quickly as possible. This committee believes that an overhaul of the onboarding process of new ESOL students would greatly improve student equity and retention.

We would like support to implement revisions and improved tools for testing and placement of Level 1-3 students. First, the President's Fund committee proposes that Level 1-3 students no longer take Accuplacer, which would save PCC the funds it costs to pay for each test. Next, instead of prospective ESOL students starting in the testing centers, they would be tested and placed by navigators and ESOL placement advisers in a single visit, thereby eliminating traffic to the testing centers and saving students multiple trips to PCC before being registered. In order to run intakes with ESOL instructors, assuming an average of 7-10 intakes per term per year with three hours for intake, we estimate that this new process would cost around \$53,792 each year district-wide (see Appendix 3 for breakdown of costs). We would also request support to carry out an inventory and assessment of testing and placement of Levels 4-8 students, which would cost about \$6,500, as well as the support to implement any changes recommended by the study. The total cost of implementing changes to Levels 4-8 testing/placement will depend on the outcome of the study. Finally, we request translation of the website instructions into various languages to remove initial barriers low-level prospective students may experience.

Response: *The Deans support improved onboarding and advising for students across the ESOL continuum and support the SAC in their work to identify and implement continued improvement to this process. There will be opportunities in the very near future with our YESS and Title III work to implement advising redesign in a way that includes ESOL students and provides the support they need. A committee will be formed in spring term 2020 to address this specifically as part of our Guided Pathways efforts. Your SAC representatives on the soon-to-be-developed YESS ESOL/ABE Workgroup should raise this recommendation and suggested responses to ensure that these concerns are addressed through the lens of equitable student success.*

Recommendation 2: Level 6 as Non-Credit

As we have indicated previously in this report, the ESOL SAC hopes to change Level 6 to non-credit, which would help students have access to ESOL classes for a longer period at a more affordable price. When the ESL and ENNL programs merged in 2006, we successfully created non-credit Levels 4-5 to help retain and transition students into the credit program. Making Level 6 classes non-credit would similarly increase retention and completion rates, as well as helping transition more students into CTE programs, which often have a prerequisite of Level 6 ESOL completion. Until September 2019, Level 6 classes qualified as General Education Courses. Since this is no longer the case, students are paying privately or using financial aid on courses that do not transfer.

We see the switch of Level 6 courses to non-credit as a win/win. Although the college would lose the tuition revenue from these courses, we see enrollments going up substantially as a result of this shift, thus generating more FTE and greater retention (hence tuition revenue) at the higher levels of ESOL and in CTE programs.

Response: *The Deans support the SAC in working toward the creation of a non-credit Level 6 course alongside the work of YESS and Title III. This work will be incorporated into the YESS ESOL/ABE Workgroup for follow-up and further recommendation.*

Recommendation 3: Faculty Equity

While the sense of division and inequality between full-time and part-time faculty is not a new issue for our SAC (or the college as a whole), the introduction and rollout of Multi-Year Contracts has added another layer of division within our ranks. The SAC is committed to addressing the demoralizing effects of these divisions as best we can with the understanding that our students are better served when ALL our faculty feel they are valued and respected as co-equals, a vital and irreplaceable part of the college instead of "throw away" temporary help. To this end, we plan to engage the part-time (majority) faculty more by keeping them better informed and offering professional development whenever it becomes available.

ESOL teachers are reflective and dedicated educators who are enthusiastic about our work. Yet we cannot help PCC reach its goals unless PCC extends its vision of equity to faculty by providing substantially more full-time contracts for daytime and evening positions. We

recommend that, at minimum, the administration support filling the three full-time positions left vacant by retirements since our last Program Review and commit to fill full-time positions as they are vacated in the future. The high degree of contact time and care that ESOL students receive beyond the classroom leads to increased rates of retention and success. We need more full-time faculty to meet the challenge of successfully retaining these students who often come from a background of oppression and vulnerability.

Full-time and part-time faculty of the ESOL SAC agree that to fully achieve equity among all the instructors, there should be no difference between the pay scales for the two classes of employees and that part-time faculty should have opportunities to engage in paid non-instructional work, which is currently limited to full-time faculty.

Due to an increasing number of college-wide initiatives, a great deal of work outside of the normal teaching load and other contractual duties is being carried by faculty with little or no compensation by the college (e.g. Gen Ed/core outcome redesign, Guided Pathways, etc.). The ESOL SAC is supportive of these initiatives because of the numerous benefits to our students and the professional development opportunities they afford faculty. We recommend that efforts be made at the district level to both fairly compensate faculty participating in these efforts and to encourage faculty who are not involved to participate.

Response: *We acknowledge the challenges of losing positions. The Academic Affairs Council will continue to evaluate the workload and ratio of full and part-time faculty in order to meet student demand and our YESS priorities going forward. We plan to review open positions within this year to assess where positions are most needed. Please continue to work with your Division Deans and SAC Liaison about shared SAC work for college/district initiatives. In the future, the reorganization of the college into a “one college” model may be helpful for determining need and advocating for resources. Where possible, we are working to provide stipend work for part-time participation.*

Recommendation 4: Serving Students More Equitably

- **Hybrid Courses:** the SAC is continuing to experiment with offering hybrid courses.
To assist the ESOL SAC in increasing our hybrid offerings, we request that the administration offer more faculty training (including paid training for part-time faculty).
 - **Response:** *The Deans encourage the faculty and the SAC to continue experimenting with Hybrid course development and offerings. Please continue to work with your Division Deans and SAC Liaison, as well as, the Online Learning Office on future training opportunities for faculty.*
- **Resource Distribution:** Another way we can increase equity and retention is by balancing out the distribution among campuses of faculty and financial resources so that a student at one campus has the same opportunities as a student at the next campus.
 - **Response:** *The Deans are in support of finding equitable resources at each campus. As the college embarks on a reorganization of our instructional areas in*

addition to the work that will be done to support foundational areas of Guided Pathways through our Title III grant, we encourage the SAC to stay involved and continue to offer this desire and its impact as part of the dialogue.

- **Scheduling Equity:** Evening students should have the same access to full-time teachers as daytime students. Arguably, the most at risk but, at the same time, with the least access to college resources such as campus centers, business offices, bookstores, counseling, and disability services, evening students deserve equal access to full-time instructors. The SAC plans to review our course assignment process to make sure that students are being served equitably.
 - **Response:** *The Deans encourage the SAC and the faculty department chairs that schedule classes to continue to analyze and experiment with strategic scheduling to meet the needs of the students.*
- **Advising:** As part of serving ESOL students equitably, the Southeast retention team has been using student focus groups and ESOL faculty and staff input to design a warm hand-off of ESOL students to degree, certificate, and job training programs at PCC. Part of this discussion is how to create a process for advising students in the mid levels (4-5) and academic levels (6-8) around program options and financial aid. We hope to create an ESOL advising position to handle enrolling, testing, placement, and current/exiting student advising.

We would like to strengthen the relationship between advising and ESOL. Financial aid and academic advisors often do not understand the unique needs of ESOL students. We recommend that at least one financial aid advisor on each campus be designated and trained to serve our students. Of particular importance is knowing how to advise students about when they should apply for financial aid. Courses at Level 4 and 5 can be taken for credit and thus the student is eligible for financial aid. This seems like an attractive idea, but the problem is that there is a great risk of the student reaching financial aid limits before they have achieved their educational goals. Furthermore, students completing ESOL Levels 7-8 and moving into degree and certificate programs need advising. Stronger ties between ESOL and Advising will ensure a smoother transition.

We request that PCC hire and train a dedicated ESOL academic advisor at Southeast campus.

We request funding to help our marginalized students, especially those at the lower levels with limited English skills. Students with physical and mental disabilities and students who have suffered trauma, need translators and professional help beyond what instructors may be able to provide. Additionally, students who struggle in Level 1 with low literacy skills need additional help in order to successfully participate in a classroom setting.

- **Response:** *There will be opportunities in the near future to partner with advising for support as we implement the advising redesign process. Please work with your Division Deans, SAC Liaison, and the Manager of Advising Redesign to prepare for this transition. As mentioned earlier, there will also be opportunity through the Title III grant to rethink how advising is designed and delivered for ESOL students. Your collaboration with the Advising Redesign team and the Title III grant team to create a sustainable model will be critical.*
- **Guided Pathways:** ESOL is concerned about how students will encounter our program in the Guided Pathways experience. Our SAC feels there are two models that could work concurrently. First, ESOL has a large number of students whose sole purpose for coming to PCC is English-language improvement. Thus, ESOL feels we belong on the AHCD pathway along with our peers in Languages. We understand that only programs that culminate in a degree or certificate can be in this pathway, and we plan to explore the option of becoming a certificate program. Many of our students ask for this every year, so we know there is interest. We also wonder if the fact that Level 8 ESOL is many students' ultimate academic goal should be considered when placing our program into a path.

However, we also have many students who experience ESOL as a pre-college requirement. We advocate a seventh "Pathway" be thoughtfully and organically incorporated into the model, starting as soon as possible. Such a pathway should be welcoming and be built with the understanding that not every student needs to "complete" in a short period. Many of our students are not paying with financial aid; language acquisition takes time. We want to ensure that the important pressures of completion do not drown out the "community" aspect of this community college. Furthermore, we are very concerned about the intimidation factor that students already experience with the website and with the GRAD Plan. We know that lower-level students experience this as a barrier, and it is a serious problem, one that Pathways could compound.

ESOL is a unique program. We are not a strictly "pre-college" program. We have over 16 regularly taught courses that are 100-level, and thus are Gen Ed classes. Students can apply 24 ESOL credits to their graduation requirements. Additionally, many of our students transfer directly from ESOL into graduate programs all over the world. As we are unique, we are hoping for some reassurance that the Guided Pathways team understands our role in the college. We are happy to participate in future conversations to whatever extent we can.

- **Response:** *The college will be moving forward with six academic pathways. As part of the Title III grant, we will also be creating better on-ramps for foundational credit acquired by students in ESOL, ABE, & GED. The SAC's partnership with this work will be critical moving forward.*

- **Computer Literacy Specialist:** If we are to make online classes truly accessible to all ESOL students, not just those who self-select, Computer Literacy Specialist positions must be standard at all campuses, particularly now that the CAS program is being phased out. Although computer literacy in general is increasing among ESOL students, there is still a profound digital divide between those who have computers at home and those who do not. Those who do not are often recent immigrants and refugees with very limited resources. Having access to a Computer Literacy Specialist would improve student retention.
 - **Response:** *The Deans agree that digital literacy is important for all of our students. The college is working to improve our delivery of digital literacy options for students and we encourage the SAC to stay informed and engaged in those areas for the support of ESOL students across the district and including the Workforce Centers.*
- **Interpreting and Translation Services:** Students have a great need for improved interpreting and translation services at PCC. Some of the students who test to enter the program but never register for classes fail to do so because of language barriers. Other students struggle with the procedural challenges of accessing services. Easy access to multilingual staff that can help at these points of contact would open doors for these students. Moreover, these low-level students often need help in non-instructional areas such as legal aid and food security.
 - **Response:** *The Deans encourage the SAC to continue to work with the Marketing and Recruitment teams on creating documents and services that would better serve students in multiple languages. Additionally, the college is working to provide better services through our Pathways to Opportunity grant*

Recommendation 5: General Education Reforms

As a SAC, we need to ensure we are prepared to align our program to reforms in General Education (Gen Ed) at PCC. If we stay listed under the Gen Ed category, then we will need to create signature assignments for Levels 7-8. If we decide not to stay categorized in Gen Ed, then we plan to adjust the curriculum to include preparation for signature assignments in the Gen Ed course work they will do after they complete the ESOL program. The Arts and Letters outcomes require some degree of self-reflection and an ability to envision the impact of one's studies on one's personal life as well as on one's perceptions of the world. Our Levels 7-8 CCOGs will need to be reviewed with these outcomes in mind.

Response: *The Deans support the SAC in your work toward continued review and alignment with outcomes in your courses.*

Recommendation: Retention and recruitment

We request funding to allow the ESOL program to build upon its groundwork in this area. Funding would allow for greater consistency. For retention, we would like to follow up with students who make appointments for placement testing and do not show up, for students who test but do not return for classes, and for students who start classes and later drop out. For recruitment, we would like to build upon our bases of contacts at locations such as Nike, Intel, and Roosevelt High School. The current political climate has made this outreach more important and necessary than ever.

Response: *The Deans encourage the SAC to participate in the YESS and Title III work happening at the college. This recommendation should be brought to the YESS ABE/ESOL workgroup for more consideration.*

CLOSING

In closing, we want to again thank the ESOL faculty for sharing the results of your program review with us. We enjoyed learning more about the discipline, your successes, and plans for the future. We look forward to supporting your ongoing work on continuous program improvement.

Administrative Response submitted by Sarah Tillery, with input from and on behalf of the Deans of Instruction and Dean of the Academic Affairs.

Kendra Cawley, Dean of Academic Affairs
Karen Paez, Dean of Instruction Sylvania Campus
Cheryl Scott, Dean of Instruction Rock Creek Campus
Kurt Simonds, Dean of Instruction Cascade Campus
Sarah Tillery, Interim Dean of Instruction Southeast Campus

Note: Vice President of Academic Affairs, Katy Ho, has also contributed to the responses provided herein. In addition, areas mentioned in the recommendations have weighed in on responses related to their areas.