CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE to the CIC

The Curriculum and Assessment Review Subcommittee will meet with all academic and professional/technical programs on a regular and systematic basis in order to learn about changes that improved the quality and effectiveness of the programs. Each program is scheduled to be reviewed every six years. The subcommittee members do not evaluate or assess course content. The subcommittee is focused on improvements in quality and effectiveness of the overall program and what evidence there is of these improvements. It is also looking for evidence that program outcomes and institutional Student Learning Outcomes are being met.

The subcommittee recognizes that some evidence will be anecdotal; however, it is also interested in hard data. The subcommittee understands that the Planning, Research & Assessment office will help with data gathering.

The CIC wants a written response as well as a face-to-face meeting with the members of the subcommittee to address the following questions:

1. What changes were made to improve the quality and effectiveness of the program at the certificate or degree level (please be specific in your discussion whether you are discussing a certificate or a degree)? Include the rationale for the change(s).

    A. *Hired a full-time Prof-Tech Advisor which includes advising for LHO. This directly affects certificate and degree pathways. Academic advising was not able to give proper advice for which classes and sequencing many of the Prof-Tech programs.*
    B. *Recently compressed the Design courses sequence from 5 classes/quarters down to 3 classes/quarters. This will allow students to complete one year certificates with better job skills and knowledge.*
    C. *Over this past summer, we changed the landscape design CAD platform from AutoCAD to Dynascape. Dynascape is a landscape design specific CAD platform. Many of our students are going to be self-employed entrepreneurs where they will design, cost, and install those landscapes, which this software and its components are very useful.*
    D. *This quarter, we have formed a new Arboretum subcommittee as a part of the LHO TAC. The Arboretum is an important component as an educational resource and marketing tool for the LHO program.*

2. What evidence is there that the changes resulted in an overall improvement to the program?

    A. *Enrollment in LHO has been declining for a few years. In the last two quarters, enrollment has increased by over 10% from previous year's quarters.*
    B. *More interest in the design program from people other than currently enrolled LHO students, including graduates of the program.*

3. Please address the following:
    a. What evidence is there that entry COMPASS cut-off scores are appropriate for placement in the program or area?
    Overall, the faculty haven't found any significant problems with students not having a high enough level of basic skills necessary to complete and pass the courses.

    b. What evidence is there that students are achieving the Program Outcomes?
    The students who pass skill specific courses and those completing and graduating from the program are being sought out by employers which would indicate they are meeting the courses and program outcomes. We have had recently discussions about the program outcomes are too focused on the design/build track of our program and don't accurately reflect the outcomes of the land management or horticultural studies tracks.

4. What evidence is there that students are achieving the college-wide Student Learning Outcomes and the outcomes for the specific program under discussion?
    Evidence is demonstrated through student success in their course work, graduation, and employment. Completion of the 1 year certificate as well as the 2 year degree reflects achievement of:
    A. *Communication – Evidence is through required reading materials and applying those readings through practical applications, projects, and testing. In addition, many of the classes' assignments and projects require group participation where they must utilize oral and written communication and demonstrate effective writing and speaking skill for a passing grade.*
    B. *Computation –Many of the classes require calculations and measurement, including site measurements, area computation, estimating and bidding of project cost and required labor, specifications for design and installation projects, pricing plant materials, and application rates of various chemical products.*
    C. *Human relations – Most classes use group interaction for learning course outcomes, including group and program projects. Many of these projects can take up to a quarter to complete and at times some projects last over many years (Rose Garden and other Arboretum projects).Student must be able to work and communicate with diverse cultures in real working conditions.*
    D. *Critical Thinking & Problem-solving – Much of the coursework, assignments, and projects in the program are real and practical with ever-changing issues and situations. Students are continuously being challenged to realize what is the actual problem and or the changes encountered and then what changes or modifications necessary to achieve the correct or proper outcomes.*
    E. *Technology – A part of every class, students gain experience and a degree of proficiency.*
    F. *Personal responsibility – Because much of the program activities revolve around group participation (discussions, problem solving, projects), the students demonstrate respect of others in their class. In addition, they must not only follow safe conduct in classrooms and laboratory areas, but equally important they must follow strict state and federal legal, environmental, and industry standards and laws.*
    G. *Information literacy - Same as above. Students must know where to find information about standards and law, and apply them in an ethical and safe manner that effectively accomplishes specific goals and purposes.*

5. What changes do you plan for the future and what is your rationale for those changes?
    A. *In our next advisory meeting, we plan to have our industry partners discuss revising the program outcomes and skills requirement for various pathways. This could/should generate modifications ranging from changes with current curricula to possibly entire new courses.*

B. We would like to make a one year certificate from stackable short term training certificates. This will allow students to design a more personal tailored program with immediate employment as the goal. In addition, students will be able to attain completion faster. The two year degree would be for more in-depth studies of a given pathway.

C. We have recently had discussion with Career Links and B&TS and having their students attend some of our classes one day a week. For certain classes, this could lead to immediate employment as well as a method to on-ramp students into the program for more classes.

D. We are working on forming a partnership with Seattle Parks and Recreation and private landscape companies to develop some short term training programs for their current employees, including their ESL employees. These would include job specific skills (landscape maintenance, IPM, plant diagnostics, tools and equipment safety, set-up, and maintenance) as well as basic employment skills (resume and interviewing skills, supervision and management). For their ESL employees, we would incorporate many of the same professional development skills while improving their English competencies.

E. We have developed two training programs one quarter in length for Life-Skills-to-Work (LSW). One was construction focused and the other was design for seasonal parks maintenance. LHO's focus was on specific job skills; LSW was focused on transition skills, job skills, and basic learning skills. We would like to start offering these programs Fall Quarter 2014.

F. We are working out methods for incorporating more class time in our labs including the Arboretum. One way is to increase many of the classes from 3 credit to 5 credit classes and use the extra 4 hours of lab time for more specific hands on training. Another way is for better integration between classes so they can see how their projects overlap with other classes. This will in turn allow the students to see how one thing interacts with others. For example, when the design class revises a drawing, the students will see what impact those altered lines have to a construction project/class. Possibly, we go as far as to have certain classes switch places for the day.

G. Implementation of flipped classes. This ties into (F) above. Possibly having the lectures given online, the students would have more time to demonstrate and apply those skills and techniques, as well as have opportunities to be challenged to use more critical thinking applying the acquired knowledge ("what if……")

For Professional/Technical only:
6. If the Occupational Program Review evaluators made curriculum recommendations how were those recommendations addressed? (Please include copies of these recommendations).

A. "Compress the curriculum in the design sequence and incorporate CAD earlier on in the sequence." See #1 B. and C. above.

B. "More classes incorporate the arboretum in instruction." See #1 D. and #5 A, F, and G. above.

C. "Consider these areas for Spanish language instruction to reach incumbent and potential entry-level workers: specialized irrigation, pruning, soils and plant identification. Investigate support from the Department of Agriculture and Department of Ecology." See #5 C, D, and E above.

D. *"Increase marketing opportunities." This past February, the program participated in the Northwest Flower and Garden Show. This proved to be a great success for the students and hopefully enrollment. We have a paid intern working with social media for a marketing tool for the program and the Garden Center. We are trying to become more active in utilizing electronic announcements for the program. Before the end of this quarter, we should have a new brochure for the program.*

E. *"Include use of electronic spreadsheet as applicable". Excel is incorporated in the Estimating and Bidding class (LHO 238) which is required for all degree pathways. See #5A above.*