

## **ACADEMIC STRATEGIES PROGRAM REVIEW (Draft 4)**

### **1. Overview of the Program**

- A)** As the following history will make clear, El Camino College's Academic Strategies (AS) Department hasn't always been part of the Humanities Division, nor has it been a part of the Humanities Division for long (only the last nine years of its thirty-five year history). Now that it is, however, firmly and comfortably ensconced within the Humanities Division, its broader mission has never been clearer. Not only does each AS course take as its primary purpose the building of the skills which its particular course title references (Prewriting Workshop, Vocabulary Building, Spelling Techniques, Thinking Skills for College Students, Test Taking Strategies, Memory Techniques, Listening/Notetaking Strategies, and Sentence Errors/Punctuation), but the department as a whole takes the same broader principle of all the other Basic Skills (ENGL C, ENGL 80, ENGL B, ENGL 82) and pre-collegiate (ENGL A and ENGL 84) courses offered by the Humanities Division. The mission of the Academic Strategies Department is to build the skills that prepare its students to be capable and self-sufficient college students to better achieve their full academic potential in whatever courses they might take concurrently or subsequently.

While the Human Development department (under the Behavioral Sciences division) also offers courses intending to prepare students for collegiate success, their courses are complement rather than conflict with those of AS; this is by design, not accident as the two departments are progeny of the same program, as the subsequent history will explain. Today's bifurcation of the programs is clear: HD classes focus on students' personal development—for both college and life in general—with courses designed to teach “motivation, self-efficacy, self-awareness, lifelong learning, self-management, health and wellness, interpersonal communication in a diverse world, and educational planning” (according to the El Camino College Catalog 2013-14). In contrast, the Academic Strategies courses (as listed by name in the previous paragraph) focus on skills that for learning, retaining, and applying intellectual information, skills which more directly impact students' academic development.

“Within...weeks the average [Academic Strategies] student can learn the skills necessary [to pass] courses in all other academic disciplines. The progress the majority of the students who finish these courses make is astounding. These classes not only raise skill levels but also confidence and self-esteem as students see their test grades go up in other academic courses. When students' skills, confidence and self-esteem increase they are more likely to complete certificate programs or earn a degree.” The preceding, enthusiastic assessment of the Academic Strategies department inaugurated a 2001 Inter-departmental Memorandum from (then AS full-time) instructor Sharon Van Enoo.

To understand why Academic Strategies courses are focused more on intellectual development and Human Development courses are focused instead on personal development, a synopsis of their shared, aforementioned history is in order. In the fall of 1978, the Division of Instructional Resources included the Learning Assistance Center (LAC). Sallie Brown, Bill Carnahan, and several part-time instructors taught Learning Skills (LS) classes, the forerunners to Academic Strategies (AS) courses. Based on Jean Piaget's learning theory which emphasizes moving from concrete to abstract thinking, the LS program's philosophy promoted letting students learn, then practice until achieving competence the processes necessary for success in each LS course. Divided by specific educational skills, LS courses were designed to offer students information no longer taught in earlier grades but which was necessary for college success, such as listening and note-taking, test taking strategies, memory techniques, spelling and grammar rules, common etymology necessary for college reading and writing, etcetera. In addition, all the courses contained certain elements such as organization of primary and secondary information, classification, comprehension, and deductive reasoning. The intent of the first and subsequent instructors was to teach these skills using cultural literacy norms as defined by Eric Donald Hirsch, Jr., as well as college course content so that students could connect what they were learning to information taught in other college courses. Thus, the skills taught were easily transferrable to other collegiate curricula.

From the research of other colleges' similar approaches and meetings with colleagues at professional organizations, Sallie Brown and Bill Carnahan found El Camino College could attract the most students to these courses if the courses were unit driven and filled with general education requirements for graduation. The program started off with 36 sections of one unit, six-week, Credit/No Credit classes (since then El Camino College has redefined these classes as Pass/No Pass, likely to avoid confusion with classes that offer "C" among their grade option; this impacts course grade distributions provided and analyzed in **2-A2**, below).

Since English faculty primarily taught these classes, they were designed to fill curriculum needs not met by other courses in the English department. In addition, with the help of the Learning Assistance Center, LS instructors also found students generally needed help with studying and test-taking strategies. The first classes offered were Spelling, Prewriting, Vocabulary, Test Taking, Note Taking, Memory Techniques, Critical Thinking, and Creative Problem Solving.

Recruitment for the classes came from the EOP&S high school recruiters Delores Eure and Sharon Van Enoo, peer counselors, LAC staff, academic counselors, and word-of-mouth from other teachers and students. Later, Terry Spearman became ECC's full-time high school recruiter.

In the 1980s, the Learning Skills and Human Development departments reported directly to Dean Ray Roney and were part of Instructional Services. With

backgrounds in education curriculum, sociology, and adult learning, Sharon Van Enoo and Terry Spearman were hired into full-time positions while Sallie Brown and Bill Carnahan retired. The curriculum evolved somewhat: Creative Problem Solving was eliminated, Critical Thinking became Thinking Skills for College Students and Study Techniques was added as a new course. In addition, the department experimented with linked classes as well as classes offered in high schools and local businesses. A few instructors experienced some success with the linked classes and some did not. The courses taught in high schools were not very successful because most of the students were not academically nor developmentally ready for them and those taught in local businesses did not draw enough students to make their continuation worthwhile. All off-campus classes proved expensive to run and difficult for full-time faculty to teach.

In the 1990s, LS added Susan Duncan and Jan Ball to the faculty. Jan started as a part-time instructor who also coordinated the tutor program in the LRC (and would eventually become a full-time instructor in August 2000). Sharon Van Enoo and Susan Duncan taught LS classes full time while Terry Spearman halved his time between LS and Human Development classes and Jan Ball started as a half-time instructor, tutoring students in the LRC as well, until her hiring as a full-time faculty member in August 2000. During this decade, the department added the following courses to its roster: Sentence Errors & Punctuation, Math Anxiety, and the one-unit Individualized Learning course AS 1abcd. When, in 1999, Learning Skills became a title used statewide by Special Resources, ECC's LS program morphed into Academic Strategies. The curriculum adapted, with all courses but the Individualized Learning AS1abcd becoming two-unit, half semester courses. AS 1abdc became a one-unit, full semester course.

In Fall 2001, AS offered 38 class sections (including AS1 abcd), with a success rate of 65% and retention rates ranging from 87-91%, as detailed in a 2002 inter-departmental memorandum. When Dean Ray Roney retired in 2003, Alice Grigsby became acting dean until the 2004 reorganization, which saw the Instructional Services Division changed to the Learning Resources Unit under the leadership of a director. The Human Development (HD) program eventually moved under the umbrella of Behavioral and Social Sciences while Academic Strategies became a department under Dr. Thomas Lew's Humanities Division.

AS thus lost a full-time instructor as Terry Spearman went with HD to the Behavioral and Social Sciences division. Sharon Van Enoo and Susan Duncan continued as full-time instructors and Jan Ball halved her time between teaching AS classes and tutoring. The department contracted further with the eventual retirements of Susan Duncan and subsequently Jan Ball. Neither's job was replaced. Sharon Van Enoo remained the only full-time AS instructor, supplemented by the two full-time English instructors, Mimi Ansite and Brent Isaacs, who now split their class loads between the AS and English departments. In 2012, Sharon Van Enoo retired from her position as a full-time instructor, but continues currently as a part-time instructor. This tumultuous decade for the AS

program was capped by AS1abcd's growing to being offered as four sections per semester only to lose its repeatability (along with other skill-building courses in disciplines such as Athletics, Fine Arts, and Foreign Languages) due to changes in Title 5 regulations. All other AS courses, whose individual numbers had been followed by the "ab" designation—which allowed each to be taken for credit twice (allowing up to four non-transferrable credits for each two-unit AS course)—also lost their repeatability. Currently AS1 is now being offered only as one section per semester, alongside thirteen other AS courses sections from the remaining roster.

The current contraction of the AS program can be traced to several factors, beginning with the loss of a degree-applicable status many years ago and continuing into the middle of the last decade, when statewide budget cuts precipitated a reduction in basic skills classes at El Camino. Even now, in a slightly improved economic environment, AS courses do not enjoy the same status as basic skill courses in English and Mathematics, which are part of each department's respective core curriculum of ascending courses and whose student success statistics are scrutinized by the Chancellor's Office as a key measure of student achievement.

This fall, the AS program's remaining thirteen sections of two-unit, half-semester AS classes, now divided among two full-time English instructors and one part-time AS instructor, are a combination of traditional lecture and skills-building practice, both in and out of students' four hours per week of class time. AS 1 remains, even in its unrepeatable form, a self-paced, computer program-based diagnostic and tutorial course that requires students to complete 100 lessons and 54 hours of work in order to earn one unit of non-degree credit. The courses which currently remain part of the roster of AS offerings (see **3-C**, Course Deletions and Inactivations) are AS 1 Individualized Academic Strategies, AS 20 Prewriting Workshop, AS 22 Vocabulary Building for College Students, AS 23 Spelling Techniques, AS 25 Thinking Skills for College Courses, AS 30 Test-Taking Strategies, AS 33 Memory Techniques, AS 35 Listening and Note-Taking Strategies, AS 36 Sentence Errors and Punctuation, and AS 60 Strategies for Success in Distance Education.

This drastic reduction in support of AS at both the statewide and ECC's administrative level is at odds with ECC's mission "...to ensure the educational success of students...." In 2009 and again in 2010, the ECC Institutional Research department concluded that students who had taken AS classes were more likely to enroll in subsequent math and English courses and succeed in them. The reports state that critical thinking skills increased and students' GPAs made notable improvements in later courses. These reports testify that enrolling in Academic Strategies courses improved skills important to retention and college success.

- B)** As AS is an ancillary program, designed to increase students' collegiate skills to better their odds of academic success in any degree or certificate program as well

as in their lives beyond such programs, AS offers no degrees or certificates of its own. However, success in AS 1 as measured in students' increased reading levels may permit them to satisfy entry-level requirements for the Nursing Department's program for RN candidates.

- C)** The AS department is in direct and consistent alignment with El Camino College's Mission Statement: "El Camino College offers quality, comprehensive educational programs and services to ensure the educational success of students from our diverse community." The AS department is also in direct and consistent alignment with El Camino College's Strategic Initiatives A ("Enhance teaching to support student learning using a variety of instructional methods and services"), B ("Strengthen quality educational and support services to promote student success"), C ("Foster a positive learning environment and sense of community and cooperation through an effective process of collaboration and collegial consultation"), and E ("Improve processes, programs, and services through the effective use of assessment, program review, planning, and resource allocation"). Strategic Initiatives D ("Develop and enhance partnerships with schools, colleges, universities, businesses, and community-based organizations to respond to the workforce training and economic development needs of the community"), F ("Support facility and technology improvements to meet the needs of students, employees, and the community"), and G ("Promote processes and policies that move the college toward sustainable, environmentally sensitive practices") are tangentially supported as all AS instructors and students are part of the larger ECC faculty and student body, respectively. The Overview of the Program (see **1A**, above) explains that Strategic Initiative D was once attempted directly through outreach, in ways most departments never even try, by the AS program.
- D)** The enumerated and prioritized recommendations of the AS Department's 2008-2009 Program Review are as follows:
1. "Recommend hiring of two appropriately qualified full time faculty immediately." Due to shrinking philosophical, pedagogical, and financial support from Sacramento, as reported in the Overview of the Program (see **1A**, above), neither of the two-full-time positions suggested to replace faculty members lost to Divisional reorganization and retirement were made. Whether this will eventually be addressed appears dependent upon a number of factors, both internal and external to ECC, as a re-prioritizing of programs driven by political and educational mandates from Sacramento is still in flux. Whether revisiting this issue will be prudent or even possible in the near future is unknown. Status: On-Hold.
  2. "Recommend more vigorous promotion for courses with declining enrollment and the Academic Strategies program in general." While

individual instructors recruit through posting flyers, direct recruitment of students, and asking colleagues (instructors and counselors) to suggest AS courses to students struggling with any of the many collegiate skills AS courses directly address, declining enrollment across a declining number of offered sections (see **2A-1**, below) indicates an awareness of the program shrinking in proportion to its diminished support by higher levels of educational administration (see **1A**, above). Status: Active.

3. “Recommend automatic assessment and appropriate referral to Academic Strategies courses for students placed on academic probation.” To the best knowledge of this writer, campus counselors are not doing this systematically. Status: Abandoned.
4. “Recommend more Administrative support for [the] Academic Strategies program.” This is constantly discussed at the Division level both in and out of Department meetings. Both Humanities Dean Tom Lew and Associate Dean Elise Geraghty appear committed to the AS department’s survival, even in its current truncated form, against such crises in the last four years as severe state-level budgetary hardships and antipathy by the Chancellor’s Office and state legislature to maintaining repeatable courses in the community college curriculum. The struggle is ongoing, Status: Active.
5. “Recommend learning and study skills assessment as part of students’ placement exams upon entering ECC. This would necessitate follow up/referral to appropriate Academic Strategies courses.” Like recommendation #3, this one is also dependent upon employees in other departments, units, and offices across campus and while anecdotal discussions between AS faculty and non-AS faculty in positions to effect such a change have occurred on occasions, faculty are too busy to be recruiters as well as instructors. There is still no systematic inclusion of AS courses in any referral processes of which this writer is aware. Status: Abandoned.
6. “Recommend staff [be] assigned to outreach for Academic Strategies both on and off campus.” The dearth of full-time AS faculty hires has contributed to this recommendation’s being ignored. Status: Abandoned.

## 2. Analysis of Institutional Research and Planning Data

### A-1) Head Count of Students in the Program

From calendar years 2009-2012, inclusive, AS enrolled an average of 1,291 students among all classes offered during that time (1,550 in 2009; 1,331 in 2010; 1,183 in 2011; and 1,099 in 2012). The declining enrollment can be traced to the declining number of AS courses offered each calendar year of this review (37 sections in 2009, 35 in 2010, 35 in 2011, and 34 in 2012). The actual headcounts for those four years were notably lower (1,095 in 2009-10; 918 in 2010-11; 861 in 2011-12; and 757 in 2012-13) because of the tendency for AS students to enroll in multiple classes each year (the enrollments per students for the aforementioned school years averaged out to 1.42, 1.45, 1.37, and 1.45 respectively). The multiplicity of enrollments during a period of overall decline show that students who take the AS courses like them enough for 42% of students on average to enroll in multiple AS courses.

## Success and Retention Rates for Academic Strategies Fall 2009-Fall2012

Course	Fall 2009		Fall 2010		Fall 2011		Fall 2012	
	Success Rate	Retention Rate	Success Rate	Retention Rate	Success Rate	Retention Rate	Success Rate	Retention Rate
AS 1abcd	58.3%	88.2%	53.4%	81.6%	51.2%	87.2%	56.4%	69.9%
AS 20ab	63.6%	93.9%	55.3%	89.5%	77.1%	85.7%	62.1%	89.7%
AS 22ab	72.6%	84.5%	66.7%	78.2%	61.5%	84.6%	65.8%	88.2%
AS 23ab	81.8%	90.9%	94.6%	94.6%	80.0%	100.0%	72.7%	84.8%
AS 25ab	75.6%	88.9%	81.1%	89.2%	60.0%	77.1%	64.9%	83.8%
AS 30ab	78.5%	92.3%	73.0%	81.7%	82.8%	87.1%	71.8%	88.2%
AS 31ab	80.0%	85.7%	-	-	63.9%	94.4%	-	-
AS 33ab	60.6%	84.8%	76.3%	89.5%	58.8%	79.4%	73.7%	92.1%
AS 35ab	70.5%	90.9%	71.8%	87.2%	73.7%	89.5%	79.3%	86.2%
AS 36ab	71.1%	86.6%	79.5%	90.9%	70.6%	88.2%	58.7%	78.7%
AS 40ab	75.8%	84.8%	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>AS Dept Total</b>	<b>69.4%</b>	<b>88.6%</b>	<b>68.1%</b>	<b>84.4%</b>	<b>64.8%</b>	<b>86.9%</b>	<b>64.9%</b>	<b>82.1%</b>

## **A-2) Course Grade Distribution**

Of the students who completed their courses, 78% passed (a total of 1,629 with a transcript grade of Pass and 456 failed with a transcript grade of No Pass). Annual breakdowns of passing student percentages (and a breakdown of actual Pass/No Pass ratios of students who completed their courses) are as follows: 2009 – 78% (499/138); 2010 – 81% (407/98); 2011 – 75% (376/128); 2012 – 79% (347/92). (Note: The 347 students unaccounted for in comparing the 2,085 assigned grades here against the 2,432 total students from **2-A1**, above, will be addressed in **2-A4**, below: Retention Rates.)

The only course that consistently stands out in terms of its grades is AS 1, the success rate of which was the lowest every year in the inclusive span from 2009-2012 (58.3% in 2009, 53.4% in 2010, 51.2% in 2011, and 56.4% in 2012). Possible, not mutually exclusive reasons for these consistently lowest success rates may include the self-paced and self-motivated nature of the computer program-based tutorial course; the time cost-to-perceived-benefit ratio since students must complete 100 lessons and 54 hours of work in order to earn one unit of non-degree, non-transferable credit.

## **A-3) Success Rates**

In light of ECC's success rate standard, 65% according to the Office of Institutional Research (IR), the AS program's success rates compare favorably, being for the five-year period provided by IR. 66.9%, with the AS department's preliminary success standard from the 2008-9 Program Review having been 65.2%. The yearly average rates for AS showed a slight decline: 69.4% in 2009, 68.1% in 2010, 64.8% in 2011, and 64.9% in 2012. This decline might be attributable to new instructors' joining the program in those years who brought different standards of grading or expectations with them, or might be attributable to an anecdotal decline in collegiate preparation of incoming high school graduates in recent years. This supposition is based on the fact that as younger students, they correlate to an annual decline for all students below the age of 24 for all four years, with the largest loss of success notable in the age groups 19 years of age or less (72.5% in Fall 2009, 69.2% in Fall 2010, 67.5% in Fall 2011 and 63.3% in Fall 2012) and 20-24 years of age (73.0% in Fall 2009, 72.3% in Fall 2010, 66.2% in Fall 2011 and 59.6% in Fall 2012). These consistent declines stand in sharper contrast to older students, as only students 49 years of age and older actually climbed in success rates for all four years (64.7% in Fall 2009, 67.7% in Fall 2010, 74.3% in Fall 2011 and 80.0% in Fall 2012).

The low-skill level of students entering the program is not only a matter of students' age and pre-collegiate educational deficiencies. Since AS courses have



no pre-requisites, more and more students have been referred into the AS courses by the Special Resource Center, and Special Resource students, regardless of age, have proven less prepared to successfully complete assignments and thus AS courses.

#### **A-4) Retention Rates**

Retention rates are another metric by which AS courses consistently shine. The retention rate averages for all AS courses were 88.6% in 2009, 84.4% in 2010, 86.9% in 2011 and 82.1% in 2012. Few programs (if any) on campus can boast of similar rates. Again, the student satisfaction with AS courses implies that the cutting of AS sections is not in the best interest of ECC's students.

#### **A-5) Comparison of success and retention rates in face-to-face classes with distance education classes**

AS offers no actual distance education courses for a true comparison. However, for purposes of institutional research the Institutional Research Office considered AS 1, the self-paced individualized learning of skills through the Plato (and for some of the past for years, New Century, see **6A**, below) software modules wherein students only occasionally meet with an AS instructor to conference about progress or lack thereof, like a Distance Ed course in that it is not counted as either a day or night course (see **4A-6**, below). This provides an opportunity to separate the self-paced, self-motivated solitary computer work students do in AS 1 from the other AS courses that combine traditional lectures and in-class assignments and projects. This less instructor-driven approach may account for why in every measured year AS 1 had the lowest success rates (58.3% in 2009, 53.4% in 2010, 51.2% in 2011 and 56.4% in 2012) and in 2012, it also sported the lowest retention rate, 69.9%, notable because the high percentage of students who still enroll in AS 1 are requested to do so by the Nursing Department because of their poor standing in RN program classes, often due to poor reading comprehension and critical reading skills.

#### **A-6) Enrollment Statistics**

While the steady decline of the AS program's students for the calendar years 2009-2012 (as reported in **A-1, Head Count of Students in the Program**, above) might seem a cause for concern or even alarm, the actual situation is far less bleak when a broader view of the reality behind the numbers is examined. Another metric that is notable in contrast to what otherwise looks like an across-the-board decline in AS enrollment is the percentage of maximum seats filled. In the fall semesters 2004-2006, when headcounts were higher because more sections were offered (22 in Fall 2004, 21 in Fall 2005, 20 in Fall 2006), the

percentage of maximum seats filled were 79.7% in 2004, 78.9% in 2005, and 69.5% in 2006). Only in 2007, when course offerings dropped to 17 sections, did the fill rate increase to 80.6% (comparable to the current Fall 2013, with its 81% fill rate). So the AS program's contraction is judiciously in line with its declining student demand.

It should be noted, however, that the popularity of pre-collegiate, learning assistance courses (like those offered by AS) has declined over the years. Part of this lessening of student demand probably reflects the continued focus of counselors on moving students through the English sequence as quickly as possible in order to make them eligible for transfer-level English courses. Other mitigating factors include an increase of fees over the years to the current \$46 per unit. The cost of a typical AS class is now consequently \$96, a price tag many students may find prohibitive for a course that is not required to qualify for the English sequence and whose units cannot be applied to an Associate's degree nor a vocational certificate.

Finally, the lack of AS courses allowing repeatability for previously successful students has taken a toll on the program. The decrease from Fall 2012 (the last enrollment semester in which the courses "ab" repeatability was offered) to Fall 2013 was a full 11.5% of the program's maximum seats.

#### **A-7) Scheduling of Courses**

AS has only scheduled daytime classes for most of its existence. According to Institutional Research statistics, never less than 70.3% (in 2011) and as much as 76.5% (in 2009) of the courses offered were daytime courses and the remaining courses were all counted as weekend/other courses because the Individualized Academic Strategies AS 1 allows students to do their required hours of computer-based instruction on their own schedule during library hours. For much farther back in recorded scheduling, well-beyond the purview of this review, there have been no night classes scheduled, even though the 2008-2009 AS Program Review mentioned that 17% of students surveyed wanted evening courses and 34% of students indicated an inability to get the courses they wanted in AS. Since a sizeable share of evening students are returning/reentry adults who are forced to enroll in evening classes only due to their full-time jobs (or even part-time jobs that fall within traditional "9 to 5" hours) and parenting obligations, some test sections of different AS courses should be offered in the evening in order to gauge current demand.

Also, a return of two-unit AS lecture courses to the summer schedule might benefit students wanting more opportunities to enroll in AS courses. Summer sessions have great appeal to students who are behind in their education and

trying to catch up in skills between semesters and also highly motivated students who want to increase their skills. Both populations could prove key demographics for AS courses. The high demand for summer courses across campus departments coupled with their traditionally limited options across all campus might drive some students who would never otherwise think of AS courses as options into them if they can't secure enrollment in other classes—an anecdotally common occurrence in spring and especially the overly-impacted fall semesters. The more consistently AS classes are available, the more likely students are to find their way into them.

The cost of scheduling classes on nights and in summer sessions could be negligible if it were merely a shifting of the same number of already allocated sections across the school day, but an increase in offerings would be preferable as it would benefit both the AS program and the students of ECC.

**A-8) Improvement Rates**

Measurement of students' persistence through AS courses is not applicable because there is no sequencing at all within AS courses (though there could be in the future if a second, more advanced Vocabulary Building course is ever offered—another idea explored in the 2008-2009 AS Program Review (as per **III 2-3, Course Revisions and Additions** of the aforementioned Program Review document).

**B) Related Recommendations**

To iterate **A-7), Scheduling of Courses**, night classes and summer AS sections beyond AS 1 should be offered.

### 3. Curriculum

#### A) Curriculum Course Review Timeline

El Camino College  
College Curriculum Committee

2013 - 2014  
COURSE REVIEW LOG

HUMANITIES

COURSE		CCC REVIEW											
		02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14
1.	Academic Strategies 1abed							X					
2.	Academic Strategies 20ab								X				
3.	Academic Strategies 22ab							X					
4.	Academic Strategies 23ab								X				
5.	Academic Strategies 25ab								X				
6.	Academic Strategies 30ab							X					
7.	Academic Strategies 31ab								X				
8.	Academic Strategies 33ab								X				
9.	Academic Strategies 35ab								X				
10.	Academic Strategies 36ab								X				
11.	Academic Strategies 40ab								X				
12.	Academic Strategies 50 (Special Topics)							X					
13.	Academic Strategies 60	X							X				
14.	Academic Strategies 100					X					IA		

#### B) Course Additions

Sadly, there have been no course additions during the last four years, a time of troubling contraction for AS, with an over 50% drop in course offerings.

As a result of this Program Review, however, and its acknowledgement that the AS program contraction is due to several factors (see **2A-6**, above), most probably the cost-benefit ratio to students of increasingly costly AS units which are neither degree applicable nor transferrable, the AS department has begun discussions toward researching and developing new courses which would provide the students one if not both benefits. This may be entirely feasible due to the fact other community colleges offer degree applicable, CSU transferable courses designated as Reading Department courses that offer the same content as several of ECC's AS courses. Since Reading department courses also fall under the purview of the Humanities division, the conversion of some AS sections and/or courses into a semester long, pre-collegiate level course may be feasible.

Developing such a course that offers students a better valuation for their registration dollars and could both strengthen the AS department and better serve its students will be this Program Review highest priority recommendation (see **9, Recommendations**, below).

**C) Course Deletions**

AS 30 Study Techniques was inactivated because course content tended to overlap the content of Human Development 10, Strategies for Creating Success in College and in Life (see **1A, Overview of the Program** for the history of the shared link between departments to the former LS program), as was AS 40, Math Anxiety and AS 100, Supervised Tutoring: Academic Skills Development, the former, due to a lack of AS instructors, and the latter, due to new Title 5 regulations regarding learning assistance centers that made the tracking of student contact hours for apportionment logistically unfeasible.

**D) Distance Education**

AS offers no distance education courses and due to the needs of the students and the guidance necessary to help students develop the skills being practiced in the classroom, AS courses are unlikely to ever be offered.

**E) Course and Section Offerings**

AS has remained committed to making sure each course still activated through the curriculum process and appearing in the current ECC Catalog is offered for at least one section per semester. Since AS classes are not degree applicable, the courses are not articulated. AS's offering no degrees, certificates, nor licensure exams also means that there are no metrics in these areas.

#### 4. Assessment and Student Learning Outcomes

##### A) Alignment Grid

Humanities Institutional (ILO), Program (PLO), and Course (SLO) Alignment						
Program: Academic Strategies		Number of Courses: 13		Date Updated 2/15/13	Submitted by Brett Isaacs Ext. 5163	
Institutional SLOs	I. Content Knowledge	II. Critical, Creative, and Analytical Thinking	III. Communication and Comprehension	IV. Professional and Personal Growth	V. Community and Collaboration	VI. Information and Technology Literacy
Program Rating	4	4	3	2	1	3
Program Level SLOs					ILOs to PLOs Alignment (Rate 1-4)	
					I	II I
1. Upon completion of their course of study in Academic Strategies, students will be able to successfully complete transfer level, vocational or Basic skill level courses.					4	4
Course Level SLOs					ILOs to Course SLOs Alignment (Rate 1-4)	
					P1	I I
AS 1abcd Individualized Academic Strategies: Based upon diagnostic test results students will increase their English, reading and/or math skill levels by completing a minimum of 100 lessons, including mastery tests in 54 hours or more.					X	4
AS 20ab Prewriting Workshop: Given an in-class writing assignment students will use various pre-writing strategies to generate ideas, write a topic sentence with direction, and provide support material for the topic.					X	4
AS 22 Vocabulary Building for College Students: Given an in-class test based on assigned workbook exercises the students will then be able to recall major roots to enable them to decipher and use previously unfamiliar words. Identify specific roots in a list of words. Match word with definition and use appropriate root word in sentence construction.					X	4
AS 23ab Spelling Techniques: Given an in-class assignment based on lecture and assigned work, students will demonstrate knowledge of various pronunciation techniques required to identify and correct spelling errors. 2. Students will be able to recognize and categorize word affixes in order to apply appropriate spelling rules.					X	4
AS 25ab Thinking Skills for College: Students will demonstrate the use of a series of techniques necessary to analyze, compare, contrast and evaluate simple verbal reasoning problems, trends and patterns, and analogies. In addition, they will be able to identify and compare information for purposes of classifying material into major and subclasses.					X	4



Course Level SLOs	Course to PLO Alignment Mark with an X	ILOs to Course SLOs Alignment (Rate 1-4)					
	P1	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
<b>AS 30ab Test-Taking Strategies:</b> Students will demonstrate ability to apply knowledge and understanding of true/false, multiple choice and essay test taking strategies. They will be able to transfer this knowledge and these skills to other academic course work through in class practice and out of class application.	X	4	4	3	2	1	3
<b>AS 31ab Study Techniques:</b> In connection with a selected, discernible goal, students will demonstrate the ability to implement a goal management technique, which establishes clearly defined, measurable action steps and dates of achievement. 2. Given an in-class quiz based on an assigned reading, students will demonstrate the ability to classify main and supporting categories of information as well as corresponding subcategories.	X	4	2	4	2	1	2
<b>AS 33ab Memory Techniques:</b> Given an in-class test students will demonstrate the memory process of inputting, retaining and retrieving information from long term memory by using a variety of mnemonic systems.	X	4	4	3	2	1	2
<b>AS 35ab Listening and Note taking Skills:</b> The students will demonstrate the ability to classify and organize information as general or specific as well as into main or supporting details necessary in taking notes for various types of academic courses.	X	4	4	3	2	1	3
<b>AS 36ab Sentence Errors and Punctuation:</b> Given an in-class writing assignment, students will demonstrate competent writing using correct sentence structure that is reasonably proficient in grammar, word usage, and mechanics.	X	4	4	3	2	1	1
<b>AS 40ab Mathematics Anxiety Workshop:</b> Students will effectively navigate Etudes program and online learning platform systems in order to successfully conduct internet searches, send and download emails, use group discussion boards, and utilize multimedia in distant education courses.	X	4	4	3	2	1	1
<b>AS 60 Strategies for Success in Distance Education: SLO #1.</b> Students will effectively navigate Etudes program and online learning platform systems in order to successfully conduct internet searches, send and download emails, use group discussion boards, and utilize multimedia in distant education courses.	X	4	4	3	2	1	3
<b>AS 60 Strategies for Success in Distance Education: SLO #2.</b> Students will effectively navigate and communicate in synchronous and asynchronous discussions, upload attachments, illustrate ability to conduct rudimentary research on the Internet, demonstrate the application of test taking techniques and study methods in an online environment.	X	4	4	3	2	1	3

**B) Timeline for Course and Program Level Assessments**

**SLO and Assessment Timeline: Four-Year Cycle**

<b>Program Name</b>	Academic Strategies
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**SLO Assessment Timeline: Create Your 4-Year Assessment Plan**

*Directions:* Starting in academic year 2011-2012, SLOs will be assessed over a four-year cycle at ECC. Because program review will start occurring in calendar years (i.e. Spring to Fall semester), the grid below is organized by calendar year rather than academic year. Plan out your program's assessments so that all SLOs (both course- and program-level) are assessed at least once every four years.

Year	Semester	Course-Level SLOs Assessed	Program-Level SLOs Assessed
Year 1 of 4-Year SLO Cycle <i>(3 years before Program Review)</i>	Spring Year 1  2014, 2018	AS 22  AS 25	AS Program Level SLO #1
	Fall Year 1  2014, 2018	AS 40ab  AS 50	AS Program Level SLO #2
Year 2 of 4-Year SLO Cycle <i>(2 years before Program Review)</i>	Spring Year 2  2015, 2019		
	Fall Year 2	AS 30ab (General Test-Taking Strategies and Nursing Students Test-Taking Strategies)	



	2015, 2019	AS100	
Year 3 of 4-Year SLO Cycle <i>(1 year before Program Review)</i>	Spring Year 3 2012, 2016	AS 36ab AS 20ab AS35ab	
	Fall Year 3 2012, 2016	AS 31ab AS 23ab AS1abcd AS 33ab	
Year 4 of 4-Year SLO Cycle <i>(Year of Program Review)</i>	Spring Year 4 2013, 2017		
	Fall Year 4 2013, 2017		

***\*Note: Indicate which SLOs will be assessed in the timeline by indicating the number or title of the SLO.***

Please note: **Any courses that are not taught during the year and semester on which they appear on the timeline will be assessed during the next semester within the Four-Year Cycle in which they are offered.**

**C) Percentage of SLO Statements Assessed**

All courses, a full 100% of the AS curriculum, have been assessed.

AS 1 was assessed in Fall 2012; AS 20 was assessed in Spring 2012; AS 22 was assessed in Spring 2010; AS 23 was assessed in Fall 2012; AS 25 was assessed in Spring 2010; AS 30 was assessed in Fall 2011; AS 33 was assessed in Fall 2012; AS 35 was assessed in Spring 2012; AS 36 was assessed in Spring 2012.

**D) Summary of SLO and PLO Assessments**

It was the Assessment of AS 1 that led to the decision to terminate the contract with New Century courseware modules and retain only Plato courseware modules, thus saving ECC a considerable amount of money and helping students by reducing confusion and boredom in how to reach their goals of improving reading and math skills as part of passing the course through a requisite number of hours and modules.

In total, the recent assessments of all courses in the department within the last two-and-a-half years has provided instructors new to AS courses, whether full-time Humanities instructors sharing their course load among departments or part-time instructors who teach only AS courses, clear goals in developing their syllabi and assignments in order to keep consistent with both AS's historical methodology and goals while adapting to the current challenges in providing these skills to a mostly under-prepared population of students. Because Humanities full-time instructors Martha Ansite and Brent Isaacs volunteered to do the SLO assessments for the three courses which they each began teaching in 2011 and 2012 respectively (see **4C, Percentage of SLO Statements Assessed**, above), they have been able to develop new assignments, new outlines, and new syllabi for these courses directly related to their course objectives and SLOs as they assessed them (Ansite assessed and developed AS 20, 23, and 36 and Isaacs assessed and developed AS 30, 33, and 35).

A summary of PLO assessments would be impossible at this time. Due to the AS program's past history (mostly being under the supervision of the campus library and not an academic division) and its not offering degree-applicable nor transferrable units), the courses didn't have Program Level Objectives (PLOs). So, in the Fall 2013, the three current AS instructors (full-time instructors Martha Ansite and Brent Isaacs and part-time instructor Sharon Van Enoo) with the guidance of Humanities division SLO coordinator (and full-time instructor) Kevin Degnan and the input of Dr. Subramaniam Thamizhchelvi (the Division Chair of El Camino College's Compton Center Humanities division, who oversees the Academic Strategies courses taught at the Compton Center) drafted the AS

department's first Program Level Objective statements:

1 - Upon completion of their course of study in Academic Strategies, Strategies students will demonstrate acquisition of college preparatory skills that will prepare them for transfer level skills, vocational, or Basic Skills courses. (This PLO addresses content taught in AS 01, AS 100, AS 40, AS 60)

2 - Upon completion of their course of study in Academic Strategies, Strategies students will demonstrate proficiency in applying various analytical, comprehension, and problem solving skills required for college success. (This PLO addresses content taught in AS 25, AS 30, AS 31, AS 33, AS 35)

3 - Upon completion of their course of study in Academic Strategies, Strategies students will demonstrate proficiency in college level reading, writing and/or mathematical skills. (This PLO addresses content taught in AS 20, AS 22, AS 23, AS 36)

With the implementation of these PLOs, future assessments in future Program Reviews will now be possible.

**E) ACCJC's SLO Rubric Implementation**

Because the SLOs for each of AS's current nine course offerings were just revised for clarity and exploded into the enumerated, tripartite approach currently in favor across the entire ECC campus for a trans-departmental consistency, only the third level of Proficiency can be claimed by AS instructors in relation to their courses. During the next four-year assessment cycle, all instructors will be able to claim the level of Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement as the results of these newly parsed and worded SLOs are measured, evaluated, discussed, and possibly even further refined.

**F) Improved SLO Engagement and Results**

As previously mentioned (see **4E**, ACCJC's SLO Rubric Implementation), the Core AS instructors (both full-time Humanities faculty who now give 50% of their course loads to AS and the recently-retired AS full-time instructor for three decades who has graciously continued as a part-timer to shepherd the aforementioned pair into the program) worked together and with the Division SLO Coordinator to refine all AS course SLOs into the currently desired enumerated, tripartite format. All AS faculty can claim complete awareness with the SLO process and beginning in Spring 2014, the implementation of and levels

of awareness and engagement with students of these improved SLOs will continue.

## **5. Facilities and Equipment**

- A)** Only one classroom in the Humanities building has been set aside primarily for Academic Strategies courses, H-212. The room contains four 4-drawer filing cabinets, a wooden bookshelf, and two large locking cabinets that all belong to the Academic Strategies department. The filing cabinets contain handouts and assignments for various academic strategies courses. The bookshelf contains a few old textbooks, workbooks, and a few tomes related to AS subject areas. The cabinets contain a number of dictionaries and thesauruses, some multimedia materials, and a meager collection of office and project supplies, all of which belong to Academic Strategies. Like all other Humanities classrooms, multimedia equipment includes a ceiling mounted overhead projector, and an instructor control station in the front of the classroom (poorly placed, by the way, directly in the way of the overhead projector's path to the screen) which includes an overhead projector, and out dated, slow running Dell PC, a combination DVD/VHS player, and an increasingly temperamental switching machine, the lit buttons of which only occasionally match the actual functioning of all the interconnected electronics.
- B)** The eventual replacement of all the multimedia stations in the humanities building, which will include the AS designated classroom and all other classrooms to be used for all AS instruction, is under the purview of the campus technology committee, chaired by one of ECC's vice presidents. The much needed updating in streamlining of all this equipment is the responsibility of the campus technology committee.

New Multimedia stations that allow any instructor to connect via Wi-Fi or AirPlay technology with their own iPads and laptops computers, would allow for a quick, painless streaming of videos, sound clips, websites, PowerPoint and/or Keynote presentations, photographs, and other multimedia materials. This would not only better engage students' attention and enhance students' learning, it may very well help with overall course and program retention. Further, instructors' being able to model the ease and efficiency of using technology in a professional setting demonstrates for students what they will invariably be required to do themselves in both collegiate and professional settings.

Depending on the level of ECC's commitment to providing instructors the best in technology for what were once commonly described as "hybrid classrooms" but are now called classrooms, costs per classroom could range from several hundred

to a few thousand dollars apiece.

- C)** The long-range needs for facilities and equipment will probably be the same as the immediate needs. The recent recommendation of the college's vice presidents to allocate \$2 million from the Measure E bond funds for instructional equipment for several academic divisions, including Humanities, may address the division's needs within the next year. The cost estimates and benefits to the program remain the same as in **5B**, above.
- D)** A fund of \$200-\$300 per school year should be provided to the AS department for restocking the cabinet's office supplies for in-class projects.

Whatever multimedia workstations may be installed in the future classrooms for the Humanities division (therefore for use by AS instructors), the AS department strongly recommends that they be moved to one of the front corners of the classrooms so instructors may run the equipment during classes and speak to students during presentations without interfering with any student's line of sight.

Because of the fragmentation and liquidation of several formerly major suppliers of Windows and PC technology to the enterprise market, and the long-term costs of incompatibility, backwards-incompatibility, and the steeper learning curve associated with such products in their usage for many instructors who use the equipment in each classroom, Apple-branded machines and software should be used henceforth, combined with the existing overhead projectors and document cameras. The AS department speculates on this cognizant of the fact that ECC's ITS does not endorse the use of Apple technology.

## **6. Technology and Software**

- A)** AS 1 uses contracted Plato courseware modules to measure and increase reading and thinking skills for enrolled students. The program is on computers in the LRC, all of which belong to the ECC library. AS1 until recently (within the last two years) also licensed the New Century program but due to cost-cutting measures and its perceived overlap in purpose with Plato courseware, New Century was discontinued. While the program is easy to use and offers easily adjudicated metrics for individual students' usage and measured growth, the thirty licenses do cost the library a minimum of a couple hundred dollars each annually.
- B)** Software will likely be less of an issue to AS instructors than the portable machines (laptops or iPads) required to run and share the output of those programs with students. The implementation of Wi-Fi or AirPlay components (see **5B**, above) throughout the Humanities building has been poor due to the poured concrete walls, a building choice at odds with current and emerging

technologies. Each room will likely have to be outfitted with its own receiving/transmission device (the lowest cost recommendation on the market being an AppleTV receiver which would be \$99 apiece, and may require one for each classroom's multimedia station, assuming the Campus Technology Committee is going to forgo providing computers to each classroom in the future and want merely to have instructors use their own or district supplied devices. A lower-tech, cheaper option would be \$40 output cables to connect iPads and tablets to currently existing document projectors.)

- C)** As noted in **5C**, above, the Humanities building has been scheduled for a major technology upgrade, and most of the needs may be addressed in the short term, beginning as soon as Spring 2014. The cost estimates and benefits to the program remain the same as in **6B**, above.
- D)** To iterate an earlier point: Depending on the level of ECC's commitment to providing instructors the best in technology for what were once commonly described as "hybrid classrooms" but are now called classrooms, costs per classroom could range from several hundred to a few thousand dollars apiece.

## **7. Staffing**

- A)** The AS program is currently staffed by a former full-time instructor, now serving as a part-time instructor in her retirement, two full-time English instructors who are each devoting 50% of their class load to AS courses, and an additional part-time Humanities instructor.
- B)** The immediate (1-2 years) future, of the program appear well served: starting in Fall 2014, both instructors are committed to devoting 75% of their course loads to AS, in hopes of strengthening the program. In the long term (2-4 years), if those efforts at strengthening the program prove successful, AS may need to recruit other Humanities faculty to teach AS classes should the program prove on need of expansion. Another alternative, if an expansion happens in the long term, would be to consider hiring a full-time AS faculty member.
- C)** There are no projected staffing costs in the short-term, due to the allocating of currently employed Humanities instructors. Recruitment of other Humanities instructors in the long term would similarly not cost the division any more than the currently allocated salaries. If a full-time instructor would ever be hired in the future, his or her salary could be estimated at \$100,00 annually, based on current estimates of district salaries and benefits.

## 8. Direction and Vision

- A)** Although the California State bankruptcy and resulting budget crisis that Gov. Brown inherited from Gov. Schwarzenegger is technically over, the repercussions have been lasting and damaging to AS. In the last four years when the financial squeeze on ECC's resources resulted in class sections being cut from the schedule, the college's administration disproportionately cut non-transfer courses with the objective of keeping transfer rates high if not actually increasing them. Now, there is political pressure in Sacramento to reform what is perceived by many politicians as a failing community college system, a misguided assumption based on the low percentage of students to actually transfer to four-year universities while ignoring that the percentage of students who enroll in community college with the intent to eventually transfer to a four-year university is already a low percentage with which to begin. This myopia has resulted in a push to streamline community colleges into feeder schools for the four-year universities, returning them to their original status as junior colleges and ignoring their current mission to serve their entire communities. Skills courses that are not part of the continuum leading students into transfer level general education courses have been and will likely continue to be viewed as a lower-tier priority. Yet the skills the courses in AS were designed to teach, the skills ECC's Institutional Research and Planning Office twice lauded for their improvement of student success (see **1A**, Overview of the Program), will always be essential for students. To continue providing those skills, to continue making measurable improvements in student success rates, Academic Strategies needs to survive this current political and philosophical environment.
- B)** Expanding the offerings and impact of AS in the next four years would be an ideal goal if student demand warrants growth. While the college is no longer in a class-section reducing mode, the AS program needs to examine the recent pattern of enrollment decline as well as the long-term impact of the loss of repeatability of all its courses.

In the next four years, reading and writing basic skills courses in the English department are likely to be overhauled and eventually merged. A redesign in the lower level English core classes and the assessment tools through which students are placed in those classes may prove a better opportunity to reintroduce AS courses to campus counselors as an integrated part of the Humanities Division.

In the short term, any attrition of AS instructors from still viable section offerings might better be filled through reassignment of other Humanities instructors than through hiring of new part-time instructors specifically designated to the AS department. A tighter integration of AS courses to the core Humanities curriculum could serve to expose more Humanities instructors to the direct benefits of AS to

their students and, by extension, to success and possibly even retention rates in their other core courses.

The absorption of Academic Strategies into the larger Humanities Division was not always easy nor did it seem to offer many benefits to the AS program. Henceforth, AS should take advantage of what Humanities can do to better serve its needs and insure its very survival. Admittedly, taking a more integrated approach between the AS department and the Humanities division at large by a sharing of faculty and goals will prove tricky in that the AS department needs to maintain its autonomy like its sister divisional counterparts Journalism, ESL, and Foreign Languages and not be subsumed into the English department as Reading recently was (albeit willingly). With due diligence and a deep commitment to the goals and approaches of the original Learning Skills founders (see **1A**, Overview of the Program) AS faculty (even those serving in a shared capacity with other departments until full-time AS faculty can be hired once again) can protect the departmental integrity of AS while still leveraging the trans-campus metaphorical muscle of the Humanities division. Therefore more support from Division faculty is the first logical strength AS can draw upon. The more faculty who can work in or closely with AS, the more vested their interest in AS will be. The more support AS can garner from within the Division, the more support it will then build outside the Division.

If that support leads to more Humanities faculty looking to teach an AS course or two, if those faculty pull more students into AS courses with them, the involution of AS might be stopped and even reversed. The more AS classes the Division can fill and offer and fill again, the easier an argument can be made that one and perhaps eventually more full time instructors need to be hired for a resurgent AS program. The expansion of AS is an ideal goal, but it's not an impossible one.

## 9. Recommendations

	<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>	<u>COST ESTIMATE</u>	<u>S.I.</u>
1.	Research (and possibly develop) a new, full semester, 3-unit, degree applicable and/or CSU transferable AS course. [Rationale: This would increase the value of AS courses to students per <b>3B</b> .]	none	B,C
2.	Examine revising AS 1's software and ties to the LRC. [Rationale: This might decrease the cost per <b>6A</b> and/or decrease the low-success rates per <b>2A-2</b> .]	none	E



3.	Schedule some AS sections as night courses. [Rationale: Night sections might increase students' accessibility to AS courses per <b>A7</b> .]	potentially none	A, B
4.	Establish an AS department fund for replenishment of class-project materials. [Rationale: Projects are important for students' success in AS 33 per <b>5D</b> .]	\$200-300/year	E, F
5.	Schedule some AS sections as summer courses. [Rationale: Summer sections might increase students' accessibility to AS courses per <b>A7</b> .]	potentially none	A, B
6.	Replace AS section instructors as needed with Humanities full-time instructors. [Rationale: Familiarity with AS courses should increase inter-division support per <b>8B</b> .]	none	A, C
7.	Expand number of AS sections offered if enrollment shows an increase. [Rationale: Decreasing enrollment trends per <b>2A-6</b> make this unlikely.]	potentially none (See #6, above)	B
8.	Hire a full-time AS instructor if a sizeable increase in enrollment warrants. [Rationale: Decreasing enrollment trends per <b>2A-6</b> make this unlikely.]	\$100,000/year	A, B