

The “Tipping Point”: Toward Institutionalizing Student Centeredness

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**An Implementation Plan for the
College of ENV Design,
Cal Poly Pomona**

February 15, 2007

Learning Centeredness in the College of Environmental Design

The following Report documents the College of Environmental Design's plans to institutionalize student-centeredness in its

- 1) Academic Programs (classroom- and studio-based learning);
- 2) Non-academic programs and student support; and
- 3) Planning, budgeting and resource allocation.

Note that the contents of this report will overlap with other College efforts and reporting directed at the First Year Experience, improvement of advising, learning outcomes assessment, Road Mapping and other progress-toward-graduation initiatives, as well as its partnerships with Student Affairs to serve ENV's diverse student population. Note, too, that seemingly unrelated actions such as technology upgrades and staffing changes can play a role in all three of the above categories; however, this report will focus primarily on changes (implemented or in progress) at the attitudinal, policy and process, and assessment levels.

1. Academic Programs (classroom- and studio-based learning)
 - A. Accreditation (program level assessment of student learning):
 - i. For ENV's four accredited undergraduate and three accredited graduate programs, national accreditation is the primary cyclical method for assessing and reporting on program successes and areas needing improvement.
 - ii. Accreditation review also assesses the content and quantity of non-classroom/studio academic offerings such as lecture series, exhibitions, symposia and colloquia.
 - iii. ENV reports to four separate discipline-based accreditation agencies (LAAB, NAAB, NASAD, and PAB). Increasingly, both the accreditation process and its products are driven by assessment of student learning.
 - iv. In addition to Team Visits and comprehensive Reports every 6 or 7 years, these boards also require annual status/progress reports.
 - v. ENV anticipates that, in the future, additional pedagogical innovations will come forward from – or be supported by – the accreditation process.

The College will continue to support its accredited programs and their efforts to maintain accreditation. Its accredited programs will continue to use the accreditation process to reflect on and to improve learning centered attitudes and increase learning centered activities and assessment strategies.

- B. Standard course assessment techniques (course level assessment of student learning):
 - i. Learning outcomes assessed through testing, projects: At the course level, student learning in the ENV disciplines typically is assessed through testing, evaluation of written work and oral reports, and review of individual and group projects.
 - ii. In-class assessment activities unique to ENV include
 - One-on-one day-to-day desk critiques in design studios
 - Juries of student coursework attended by ENV faculty from outside the class

Juries of student coursework attended by professionals invited from off-campus.

Juries involving both on-campus and off-campus (internal and external) reviewers. Such juries often precipitate discussion both of course content and of student learning. This information typically cycles back directly into course planning and development and/or into the accreditation process.

- iii. Department curriculum reviews and retreats: faculty meet (often in retreat) to review student coursework and class syllabi to see that course content is both relevant and effectively taught.
- iv. Faculty attendance at future Faculty Center sessions on assessment of student learning and the development of student centered course syllabi and lesson plans.
- v. Faculty advising for career success and co-curricular support
 - Faculty advising training
 - Use of University on-line progress to degree reports and road maps to graduation
 - Mandatory student advising: some Departments use advising holds; others may move in this direction.
 - Exit interviews: departments are discussing the value of exit interviews.

The College supports its Departments and their faculty in:

Assessment of student learning;

Development of student-centered syllabi and lesson plans; and

Continuous improvement in faculty academic advising.

As part of its strategy, the College will both initiate and support efforts to inculcate and institutionalize student centeredness. For example, the College will support requests for time and (as necessary and available) funding to improve student learning and success.

C. Course-related Service Learning courses, programs, activities and projects

The College of ENV Design continues to be noted for its Service Learning and community outreach activities. Another new Service Learning course and lab is now under review by the College Curriculum Committee.

The College will continue to support the institutionalization of Service Learning courses in its Departmental curricula.

D. ENV First Year Experience (academic activities):

- i. Three of the four ENV Departments require all-College First Year Program academic activities, including ENV 101/101L (a foundation studio course) and ENV 115/ENV 115A (a foundation art and design history course).
- ii. These interdisciplinary team-taught courses introduce students to the ENV disciplines and inculcate good study habits, thinking skills, information and visual literacy, and direct observation (primarily through field trips).

The College will continue to support student learning through First Year Experience academic activities. The First Year Experience remains on all ENV Executive Council agendas, and the Council will continue to review academic initiatives for strengthening ENV's First Year Experience.

2. Non-academic programs and student support

A. Accreditation (non-academic programs and student support)

- i. Accreditation reporting includes supra-curricular factors such as review and assessment of program missions and objectives, Departmental and College governance, faculty and staff support, and the relationship to the University and the community.
- ii. Accreditation may also consider student financial aid and advising in its assessments.

The College will continue to support its accredited programs and their efforts to maintain accreditation. Its accredited programs will continue to use the accreditation process to:

*Reflect on and to improve learning centered attitudes,
Increase the extent and quality of learning centered activities, and
Improve Departmental non-academic assessment strategies.*

B. Other ENV initiatives and measures of support of non-academic programs and student learning

- i. Faculty advising for career success and co-curricular support
- ii. Professional preparatory activities
 - Portfolio workshops
 - Career Day interviews
- iii. Development of an ENV First Year Experience (non-academic activities)
- iv. Funding of the ENV Coordinator of the College Office of Student Affairs position
 - Participation in 4 year Pledge Program (5 year for Architecture)
 - Partnership with Office of Admissions and Outreach in support of Architecture and its Second Choice Major applicants. This position handles inquiries and processes eligibility indexes, correspondence and phone calls relating to over 2000 applications to the University's only impacted program.
- v. Partnerships with Student Affairs
 - Registrars Office
 - Undergraduate Studies
 - The Disability Resource Center
- vi. ENV Council and student clubs
 - Leadership initiative participation
 - Non-academic outreach programs, activities and projects
 - Social events and community-building
- vii. ENV Scholarship Fair (founded in 2006)
- viii. ENV Career Day

The College and its Departments will continue to:

*Offer co-curricular support for its students, with the goal of engaging them in the life of the College and the University as well as with their future professional communities, and
Participate in, track and assess the quality and quantity of its co-curricular events.*

3, Planning, budgeting and resource allocation

- A. **Engaging with the Departments and the University in planning and related activities toward the construction of a new building to house the College and its programs.**
- B. Supporting University and College data collection/analysis: baselines for continuous improvement of student progress toward graduation, progress with the majors, and tracking of student advising.
- C. Scheduling of courses a year (with two-year theoretical plans)
- D. Budgeting and supporting requests for funding to support student learning
- E. At the College and Department levels, developing and sustaining an ENV staff team focused on supporting and promoting a student-centered academic and co-curricular environment.
- F. Allocation of funds (as available) to support:
 - Departmental course offerings
 - Faculty searches
 - Offering of “bottleneck” course sections
 - Additional student assistants for:
 - o Large-enrollment GE courses
 - o Interdisciplinary First Year Studio (ENV 101/L)
 - o Computer labs
 - ENV Technology Committee recommendations (faculty committee charged with advice on activities and expenditures to improve student learning conditions)
- G. Planning and completing upgrades to improve facilities supportive of student learning. Immediate examples include the following projects
 - Building 45 – move in of ENV Model Shop, summer 2007
 - Building 3 – new studios and labs as of fall 2008
 - Identifying, with Academic Resources, studios and classrooms to support additional program growth (
 - ENV Resources Center (Library)
 - Art and Archival Collections
- H. Continual efforts to achieve and maintain ADA compliance

The College and its Departments will continue to advance toward a holistic and systematic planning/budgeting/implementation/assessment process with student centeredness as its primary core value.

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