

## Executive Summary of the ESL Department for the Program Viability Task Force

The **mission** and goals of the ESL Department align with the budget decision criteria by promoting student success (Goal 1:1.6, Student Success) in **basic skills** with compressed/stacked courses, ensuring that our SLOs are achievable, and addressing the needs of people in our service area. By improving students' language skills in reading, writing, and listening/speaking, the department is preparing students to succeed in degree, certificate, and transfer programs. Its focus is on supporting individuals while maintaining standards in order to ensure course completion in all areas of our program.

The ESL Department supports the **Core Mission** of the campus by offering classes that meet the needs of Basic Skills, CTE, and Transfer students. In 2011-2012, the department served 793 students (unduplicated headcount). We met the Core Mission in these ways:

- Basic Skills
  - 12 courses of ENSL 60 (Basic Writing Skills) (two-levels below freshman level English) were offered on our main campus and our Delano site. (1 summer '11, 5 fall '11, 6 spring '12, including one in a compressed/stacked class)
  - 10 courses of ENSL 50 (Introduction to Composition) (one-level below freshman level English) were offered on our main campus and our Delano site. ( 5 fall '11, 5 spring '12, including two in compressed/stacked classes)
  - 11 courses of ENSL 70 (Grammar and Composition) (three levels below freshman level English) were offered on our main campus and our Delano site. (1 summer '11, 5 fall '11, 5 spring '12 including one in a compressed/stacked class)
  - Various sections of Basic Skills Reading and Listening/Speaking courses benefitting long term English learners, recent immigrants, and international students.
- CTE
  - The ENSL 50 (Introduction to College Composition) course supports the certificate and degree requirements for Automotive Technology, Fire Technology, Human Services, and Woodworking.
  - Vocational ESL Curriculum and assessments were designed for Paramount Farming and plans made with Bolthouse Farms.
- Transfer
  - 3 courses of ENSL B31 (Advanced Reading and Literature) offered per year meet the needs of general education requirements (Category C)
  - 2 courses of ENSL B21 (Intermediate Pronunciation/Listening) to meet the needs of transfer level International students and recent immigrants.
  - 2 courses of ENSL B22 (Advanced Academic Communication) to meet the needs of transfer level International students and recent immigrants and prepare students for Communication courses.

**Retention:** The ESL Department has historically had high retention rates for many years, fluctuating between 89.9% to 92.5% for the last five years, higher than the college average of 84%. In 2011-2012, the retention rate was 89.3%. This rate is on par with the ESL state average of 90.5%.

**Success:** The success rates have fluctuated between 60%-67% in the last five years. In 2011-2012, the success rate was 61.2% Although lower than the state average of around 70-72%, my research and experience shows that those numbers include success rates of levels up to six below transfer, and that other ESL departments do not require their students to pass the same final as their English students. Our ESL 60 and ESL 50 students are held to the same standards as the native speakers in English 60 and 50 students, and have similar success rates as those in the English department. In

order to improve the ESL Writing success rates (of 55%), we have implemented compressed/stacked classes in ESL 70/60 and in ESL 60/50 as well as eliminated the high stakes Final Essay Exam, and substituted the portfolio in ESL 60, the composition class that is two levels below transfer.

**Degrees and Certificates:** Although this may not be a PVTF criteria, it is worth noting that ESL students earn degrees at a higher rate than the general BC student. They are hardworking and persistent; ESL students earned AA/AS degrees at a rate of 63%, a rate that has been steadily increasing in the last five years, up from 58%, while collegewide the rate is 55%. Cohort tracking shows that even the students that enter at 3 levels below transfer in ESL 70, have a persistence rate consistent with those students (native speakers and ESL alike) who place in English classes one or two levels below transfer – between 10 and 15%. This shows the remarkable perseverance of ESL students. Unfortunately, since ESL is not a major, transfer data is unavailable.

**Cost per FTES:** The ESL department is broken down into three areas depending on TOP code: Writing, Reading, and Speaking/Listening. The costs are all different, which makes no sense except that one section is taught one semester by an adjunct and one is taught by a full-time instructor. However, the average is \$3,234, which is lower than the district figure of \$4117.16. On the other hand, this figure may appear to be more expensive than other programs, but there are a couple of factors at work. First, there is a classroom limitation of 28-30, and pedagogically, one cannot teach language or composition effectively with intense instructor-pupil contact in larger classes. Also, there are contract limitations due to the nature of the heavy grading of English compositions. Another reason is that the numbers are not correct; no classified salary is included, yet the department does enjoy - at least a quarter time- the labors of a DAIII. No equipment costs were included either; however, a few hundred dollars are allotted for dry erase pens and the like. Therefore, revising the figures of cost/FTES before considering that as a criterion is worthwhile.

**Trend Data:** Bakersfield College is a Hispanic Serving Institution. In fact, in 2011-2012, more than half (54%) of its student population self-identified as Hispanic/Latino. The ESL Department serves that community, as well; in 2011-2012, 78% of its students were Hispanic/Latino. Being an HSI, BC is eligible for various Title V and Title III grants and can benefit greatly from the participation of the ESL Department. According to the Public Policy Institute of California, “Latinos are projected to become the largest racial/ethnic group in the state by 2020 and to constitute a majority by 2050. They are now the largest group of residents under age 30, and almost half of the births in the state are to Latina women.” In addition, “By 2025, 30 percent of the state’s residents will be foreign-born.” Such census figures demonstrate the continued need of ESL. If we read the mission of Bakersfield College, it claims as a value, “Fostering a learning environment that respects and supports the *diversity of people*, ideas, *learning styles* and instructional methodologies.” That is the ESL department in a nutshell.

The discontinuance of the ESL – soon to be English for Multilingual Students or EMS - program would affect the **mission** of BC, as we would not be serving our *diverse* community in Kern County. In addition, it would affect part of the **Core, Basic Skills**, since ESL serves basic skills students. It would also negatively affect BC’s eligibility for grants through the institution’s HSI status. Even more importantly, though, it would affect the hardest working students on campus. At least 23 sections per semester would be cut. And what would we then do with the students who are still going to enroll in classes, but do not have the English skills to succeed? What would that do to the *success* rates of Psychology? Biology? History? Political Science? Or even regular English or Math? They *will* keep coming to school because this is a motivated group of students. They need the language support of qualified TESOL professionals and usually about a year of ESL classes in order to succeed in General Education and major courses so that they too, get a chance at being contributing members of our community.

