



CENTRAL OREGON
community college

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Dear Seth and ABS Faculty,

Thank you for taking part in this inaugural year of the Department & Program Review (DPR). The focus of the DPR redesign was to simplify the compilation process, to highlight successes and voice critical needs, and to connect the College plan to a department or program's vision. Your engagement in this process is important, and we applaud the time and effort you spent reflecting on your program and analyzing the work you are doing.

Strengths of your program

One of your greatest strengths and successes as a program is your commitment to serving our underserved communities. As you noted in your report, the ABS program serves diverse populations at the highest rates of any program at COCC. This critical work builds bridges for those individuals to support their families, pursue their careers, participate in their communities, and prepare for college.

Another noted success is the significant increase in ABS student enrollments since the pandemic. Your program has grown by 101%, the highest rate among ABS programs throughout the state. Along with serving more students, you have also increased your success metrics; more students are earning their GED and gaining measurable skills in reading, writing, speaking, and mathematical computation.

Along with your noted successes and accomplishments within your program, you have also been striving to further broaden the ABS program's connections across campus. Examples include GED graduates walking in the COCC graduation celebration for the first time and working with Assessment & Curriculum to re-engage with the assessment of student learning outcomes, notably challenging for ABS compared to other programs.

Your journey has not always been smooth. Leadership turnover has made it difficult to set a direction and move forward. The shift to the instructional outreach dean, installation of a director, and hiring of a full-time data analyst should bring more stability,

Challenges of your program

As noted in the last section, leadership turnover has been a particular challenge for ABS – though we hope the recent additions to the ABS leadership team will mitigate much of this challenge. It may be useful for the program director to consider developing an ABS “administrator handbook” in collaboration with other

stakeholders. Such a tool can minimize the disruption that often follows the loss of directors, long-time faculty, and other administrative staff.

An administrative handbook (or other documentation that can be passed on to future program leaders) might also help another challenge raised in your DPR report: the complicated assessment and curriculum environment and history for ABS. Given the nature of ABS's external reporting requirements and the disruption caused by the pandemic to regular assessment practices, documenting the current state of assessment in the program would be helpful for sustaining the practice over the long term. We know that ABS faculty have also addressed their assessment challenges by engaging the Director of Assessment for support and guidance throughout AY 23-24; recording and tracking that work will help bring continuity and consistency to assessment going forward.

Finally, while the broader College's awareness of your faculty's important work with noncredit students is certainly a notable challenge, we were pleased to see signs of that situation improving (albeit slowly) in your DPR report. Our discussion during the ABS response meeting raised several strong ideas for continuing to build faculty and staff awareness of the ABS program and how it can support the work of credit programs and students, including using some time at key meetings to share information about the program and opportunities for collaboration with ABS faculty. We encourage you to continue to work with your dean and instructional leadership to seek appropriate opportunities to build general awareness of the excellent teaching and student support happening in ABS.

Goals and needed resources

Regarding the strategic initiatives and potential areas of growth that you discussed in your report, we want to share the following:

Goal 1: Increase our capacity to provide students with a variety of wraparound supports

One exciting development is the increase in wraparound supports, beginning with the grant-funded success coach pilot. This initiative represents a promising start, and as our basic needs center evolves over the life of the current strategic plan, it should become an integral part of the ABS student experience.

Goal 2: Increase integration of ABS program, including students, faculty, and processes into the broader college community

This goal is one that will benefit all students and staff, especially as we move toward our Guided Pathways model and continue to look for ways of increasing the likelihood that ABS students move into credit and non-credit opportunities that can propel them into living wage jobs. Your dean has been a champion of this work, and we encourage you to continue working through her to help the campus understand and connect with the ABS program.

Goal 3: Explore the possibility of offering employer-based ELL classes that reach working students and help local business and industry retain employees by offering onsite educational opportunities

The proposal to offer employer-based English Language Learner (ELL) classes is intriguing. We need to clarify the specific support required for this project, as outlined in section 8.3. This clarity will be crucial for ensuring the program's success and effectively meeting the needs of our students.

Goal 4: Expand our ABS (GED, ELL, IET) program offerings to meet the needs of our communities

Expanding into evening classes is another initiative that could greatly benefit those who work during the day. While providing student support resources regularly for every evening class might present challenges, we suggest scheduling a resource night once per term. This approach could address some immediate needs and help students familiarize themselves with available resources. Your dean can help facilitate conversations with those who should attend such an event.

We are curious about the practical application of "Develop flexible, standardized curriculum." Understanding this concept in action will help us align our efforts with our strategic goals.

Finally, it seems that many faculty members may be interested in partnering with ABS to develop Integrated Education and Training (IET) connections and pathways. However, IETs are not well understood across all credit-bearing disciplines. Hosting an information session or workshop for faculty interested in collaborating with ABS could be an effective way to bridge this knowledge gap and foster meaningful partnerships.

Thank you for the good work you have done developing and revising this report about the ABS program. We look forward to discussing them further and exploring how we can collectively enhance the ABS program.

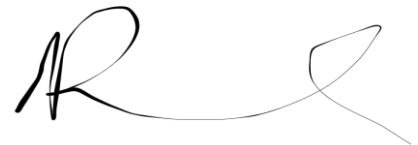
Sincerely yours,



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