

March 12, 2018

Dear Board of Education members,

This month's letter comes from Jen Sacklin, a part-time faculty in the Adult Basic Skills department. Jen has been at LBCC since 2017 and teaches a number of classes, from English Language Acquisition helping adult immigrants in Lebanon improve their English, to Computer Basics 2 teaching students who want to transition to credit-bearing classes how to navigate the digital world of learning. Jen writes:

The Adult Basic Skills (ABS) Department has been working hard to align our course outcomes with the Oregon Adult Learning Standards (OALS). The State of Oregon's Higher Education Coordinating Commission mandates that all ABS Department courses align with OALS in order to receive state and federal funding. The LBCC ABS Department serves English Language Learners and adults without high school diplomas. Our courses help students gain transferable skills, successfully transition to credit-bearing courses, pass the GED test, and develop fluency, communication, and functional command of English in order to obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency.

Much of what our department had already been doing follows best practices as outlined in the OALS, but it was time to take a fresh look at our classes and make sure that our course outcomes are clearly articulated so that students, as well as instructors and administrators, know what students will be able to do upon completion of our courses. When I was hired, ABS Chair Joyce Thompson Graham asked me to spearhead the effort to re-write our course outcomes.

Our department has no full-time faculty members other than Joyce (our chair), so this project has been entirely carried out by the 29 part-time faculty members in ABS. I have worked closely with many ABS part-time faculty members on this project, but a few who have been instrumental are: Françoise Howard, Lynne Jenne, Annie Recker, Sharla Joseph, Amy Griffin, Kory Sessions-Riseley, Shannon Tanner, Linda Hobson, and Mitch Smith, to name a few. As a team, we part-timers have shaped our course outcomes to meet state requirements, to follow current best practices in our field, and to ensure that our department continues to reach the LBCC Strategic Goals of Productivity (when students know what they're going to get out of class and when faculty have periodic check-ins with students to show them the goals they're reaching, student retention and completion is increased), Equity (our ABS students are among the most demographically diverse students at LBCC), and Quality (the departmental process of re-writing our course outcomes has ensured that we're closing service gaps and meeting students' educational needs).

I have been proud to be part of this process with my fellow part-time faculty members.

Jen Sacklin
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Adult Basic Skills Department