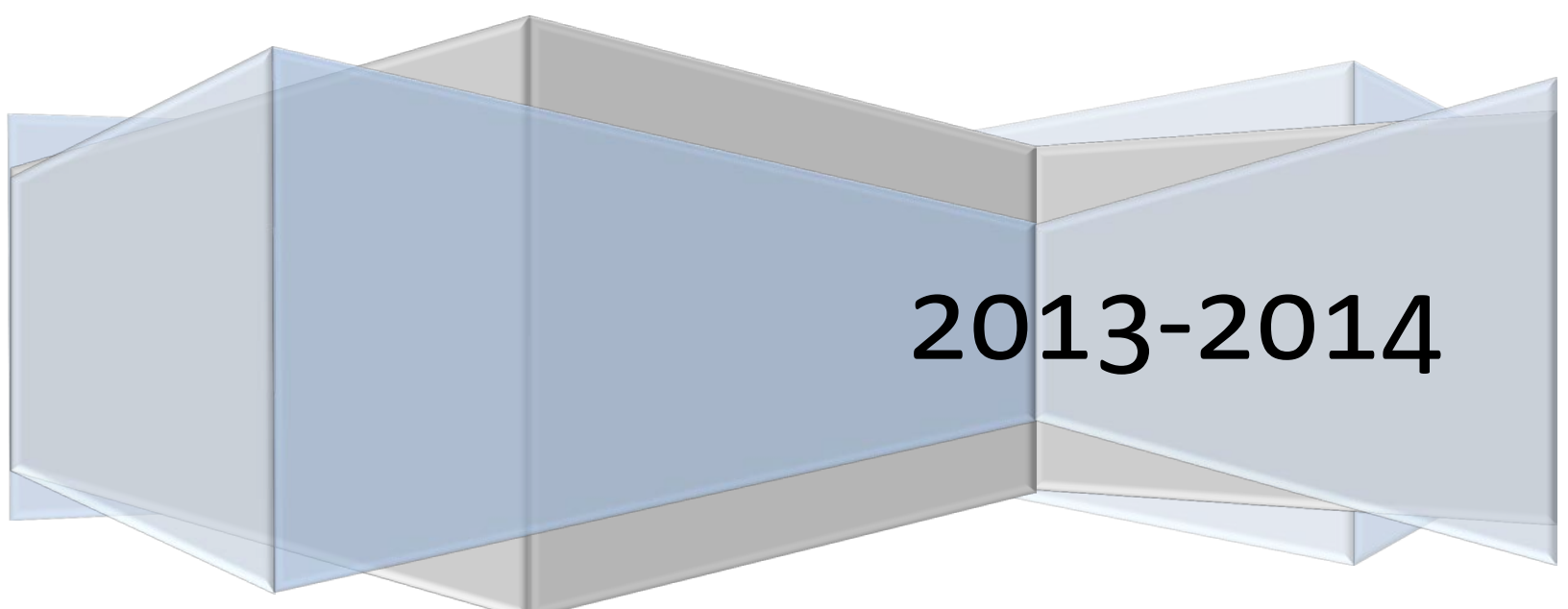


Bergen Community College

PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT

AMERICAN LANGUAGE PROGRAM



2013-2014

PROGRAM: American Language Program

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ADDENDA (THE DOCUMENTS BELOW ARE AVAILABLE AT:
<http://www.bergen.edu/Portals/0/Docs/ESL/Addenda.html>

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OVERVIEW

PROGRAM INFORMATION AND HISTORY

English as a second language courses became part of the curriculum at BCC around 1975 in response to an increase in enrollment at the College of students from abroad. Acknowledging the fact that students with a variety of language abilities were entering college-level courses, the English department created an ESL sequence, American Language I, II, III, and the Speech Communications faculty created a corresponding sequence, Speech I, II, III for International Students. Students were tested and if placed in ESL, they were required to complete ESL before they could enter any college-level courses. The ESL sequence was considered semi-intensive, with 15 credits at each level; all students took an entire level in one semester.

American Language I, II, III were each one 12-credit course including instruction in grammar, reading, and writing. A course could be taught by one person; however, sections had to be divided to account for 15-credit full-time schedules and adjunct faculty schedules of 3, 6, or 9 credits. These courses were housed in the Humanities Division with the other English classes. Speech I, II, III were 3-credit courses and housed in the Social Science Division with other Speech Communications courses.

ESL began as three levels (beginner, intermediate and advanced). When more students who were low beginners began to seek instruction at the college level, Foundations courses were added to complete the 4-level sequence.

From the beginning, ESL existed in two departments: ALP and ALP Speech. Today those departments are housed in the same academic division (Arts, Humanities, and Wellness) and were recently renamed ESL and ESL Speech.¹ Today the two-department configuration is under discussion. With the two departments functioning more as one program, there seems to be less need for two departments. Nevertheless, allotting more resources to speaking and listening has permitted BCC to have a strong curriculum in these skills. It remains to be seen whether the current configuration will be continued as there are many more factors both for and against it.

In the 1990s, the 12-credit American Language courses were made into 3-credit components with pre- and co-requisites. Since then, each level of the 15-credit program has consisted of Grammar (6 credits), Reading (3 credits), Writing (3 credits), and Speaking/Listening (3 credits). Students receive one placement for Grammar, Reading and Writing and a separate placement in Speaking/Listening .

¹ For the purpose of consistency in this report, ALP and ALP Speech will be used for the departments. American Language Program (ALP) will be used to refer to the ESL Program.

The impetus for the division of the 12-credit course into four 3-credit courses was a state mandate that all “remedial” courses be 3 credits or less. One favorable outcome was that students could take fewer than 12 credits; therefore, the program became more attractive to part-time students. Increased flexibility in assigning faculty schedules was another outcome. Better summer session scheduling made the courses more attractive to the students because they were no longer required to take an 11-week program.

Other outcomes were not as favorable. First, the label “remedial” ignores the fact that learning English as a second language is not remediation; rather it is acquisition of valuable knowledge and skills, as is all second or foreign language learning. This issue is being addressed by most ESL professionals, especially since it has implications for financial aid eligibility.

The second problem resulting from having 3-credit components in a 15-credit program is fragmentation of instruction in skills that in reality cannot be separated. Today, the ALP faces many questions about the effectiveness of the current configuration of credits.

From the 1990s up to 2010, ALP enrollment grew, and full-time faculty lines were added. English and Speech Communications professors with TESOL degrees were hired. The English Language Resource Center was created to take advantage of computer technology and tutoring for supplemental instructional support. The College was the recipient of state funding for several projects, one addressing changing needs of the ESL population, in particular the U.S.-educated English language learners, or Generation 1.5. Another addressed the program needs for consistent quality instruction by creating a database of materials and information for adjunct faculty and providing professional development opportunities. Finally, English for Academic Purposes was the focus of a third project to incorporate content-based instruction into the classes.

Members of the ALP and ALP Speech faculty convened a summit in spring 2013 during which a SWOT analysis was conducted. A follow-up summit took place in fall 2013. Faculty approved a proposal to create a capstone project for Levels 2 and 3 entitled Integrated Skills for Academic Success.

In addition, paired courses were initiated and have been offered on an experimental basis since fall 2011. ALP Writing and Reading courses are paired with Introduction to Psychology and Introduction to Sociology. A proposal to create a learning community around these linked courses is under consideration.

Enrollment in ALP has been declining since 2010. Several data briefs from the BCC Center for Institutional Effectiveness show this decline (both by fiscal year and by semester) of approximately 25%. Possible reasons for the decline include tightening of financial aid regulations, regional and global economic trends, and demographic shifts. This program review will make it possible to build on the strengths of the ALP and to make improvements that will attract more students and give them the best opportunities to reach their goals.

MISSION STATEMENTS

- 1) The mission of the ALP Department is to provide ESL students, from beginner to advanced levels, with knowledge and English language skills needed to reach their academic, professional, and personal goals.
- 2) The ALP Speech Department gives instruction in listening and speaking to non-native speakers of American English by providing them with the skills needed to succeed in academic and professional environments.

LEARNING GOALS

ALP

Students will:

- Use reading strategies and critical thinking skills to understand and analyze college-level texts;
- Understand and use vocabulary needed for college-level course work;
- Use the writing process to write essays using academic rhetorical patterns;
- Demonstrate information literacy skills in research assignments;
- Use study skill techniques to understand and recall information in texts;
- Understand and use the grammar of the English language correctly in written and oral production.

ALP SPEECH

Students will:

- Use spoken language to communicate meaningfully and appropriately;
- Demonstrate listening comprehension;
- Identify and produce the segmentals and suprasegmentals of American English;
- Expand their vocabulary;
- Make oral academic presentations;
- Be able to use technological and informational resources to conduct research.

REPORT FROM 2010 PROGRAM REVIEW

In 2009 – 2010, as part of the College assessment process, all departments conducted the “Special Topics Program Review: Focus on Bergen’s Expectations for Student Learning”. The ALP Department and the ALP Speech Department conducted these reviews separately.

ALP GOAL ONE: CREATE NEW MATERIALS TO ENHANCE ACADEMIC SKILLS AND INTEGRATED, CONTENT-BASED ESL TEACHING AND LEARNING.

Suggested Changes	Progress Report
<p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Assignments that give students practice in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Summarizing ▪ Paraphrasing ▪ Using Study Skills ▪ Critical Thinking ▪ Using Information Literacy Skills 	<p>Information literacy instruction was designed entitled Outline of Big 8 Research Questions; sample lessons were created for all levels.</p> <p>New textbooks have been adopted for all levels, making it possible for instructors to include summarizing, paraphrasing, and critical thinking skills in the Level 2 and 3 Reading courses.</p> <p>Currently, a team of faculty working on the Capstone Project and instructors teaching paired courses have been developing and piloting materials covering these topics.</p>
<p>Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignments that require students to write paragraphs and essays based on readings. • Assignments that prepare students for newly designed writing final/exit exams. 	<p>An ALP faculty group worked on writing assignments based on readings.</p> <p>Members of the Capstone Project are moving in this direction. Students in the Paired Course Project have writing assignments based on readings.</p> <p>Departmental writing tests have yet to be redesigned.</p>
<p>Grammar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to existing materials: Adding contextually based tasks to assignments. 	<p>Discussions of how to include context in Grammar courses and how to ensure integration of skills in grammar instruction have been on-going, and some faculty are implementing new approaches.</p>

ALP GOAL TWO: DEFINE PROGRAM LEARNING GOALS, STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND REDEFINE COURSE CONTENT AND REQUIREMENTS.

Suggested Changes	Progress Report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To define our Program Learning Goals. 	<p>Program Learning Goals were written.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To create Student Learning Objectives and to reexamine the content and requirements of each course. 	<p>Student Learning Objectives were written for each course, and the current program review has provided faculty the opportunity to revisit those changes. Areas for further revisions have been discovered.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening into all classes and assignments. 	<p>Members of the faculty were asked to provide samples of assignments. Responses show that individual faculty are using this approach.</p>
<p>Reading Classes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarizing and paraphrasing of texts at all levels. Additional study skills will be added to Levels 2 & 3. Teaching Information Literacy Skills at all levels. Teaching critical thinking skills in Levels 1, 2, and 3. Using writing in response to readings as an assessment tool. 	<p>As a result of the two faculty summits, more attention is being placed on academic skills, particularly in the Capstone Project and the Paired Courses. Information Literacy is part of the curriculum at all levels; data from the library show, on the whole, an increase in the number of classes receiving library instruction. Some faculty members include research skills in their classes without the assistance of library instruction.</p>
<p>Writing Classes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing paragraphs and essays with reference to texts. Minimum lengths of writing will be expected. Vocabulary that is varied and level appropriate will be expected. 	<p>Syllabi state minimum lengths of writing assignments. Moreover, the latest textbooks reflect the emphasis in the field on academic writing and vocabulary development. Full-time instructors choose books that help them to meet the course goals as indicated here.</p>
<p>Grammar Classes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral forms of grammar will be taught and assessed. A 50 - 50 balance between teaching form/function of a target structure and contextually based tasks will be emphasized at all levels. Paragraph writing will be included at all levels. Level 2 will have a level wide final exam. 	<p>Instructors recognize the importance of form /function and context-based tasks. The following statement was added to all the Grammar syllabi: <i>“Instructors may teach these structures as they find appropriate. However, sentence and paragraph writing should be used when possible. Grammar is a tool that facilitates writing skills, reading comprehension, speaking and listening. Practicing grammar and memorizing rules has limited value if not applied to the previously mentioned skills.”</i></p> <p>ALP instructors have yet to reach a consensus on the need for a Level 2 departmental Grammar final or what form such an exam should take.</p>

OVERALL RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 2009-2010 PROGRAM REVIEW

Suggested Changes ALP	Progress Report
<p>Recommendations for future activities or changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration of new courses including a vocabulary course and a bridge course • Discussions about a redistribution of course hours • Discussion of the relationship between the ALP and ALP Speech • Discussions about the role of the ALP within the College • Reexamining placement tests and exit tests/final exams • Bringing in experts to share current research in the field • Researching how other programs in other schools organize their programs • Adding a Level 3 Grammar final • Discussing whether we are preparing our students to be successful college students 	<p>Most of these items remain unresolved subjects of discussion. In spring 2013 the ALP and ALP Speech faculty met in a summit and a follow up summit in the fall. The spring summit featured a SWOT analysis, where all of these issues were again discussed. As a result , groups were formed to work on the specific areas determined to be of primary interest and importance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum: Program Design and Content; • Student Support Group: enrollment, recruitment, advertising, placement, retention • Articulations between ALP and other BCC ESL Programs • Alternative Learning: Learning Communities and, Accelerated Programming, <p>At the fall 2013 summit, the Curriculum group presented a proposal for the Capstone Project, which is currently in development and scheduled for a fall 2014 pilot.</p> <p>The Alternative Learning group presented a proposal for an ESL Learning Community to the department. This proposal included paired Reading and Psychology courses; a writing/grammar course; a speech course and tutorial support for the reading and college-level course. This proposal did not receive departmental approval for a spring 2014 pilot. At present, there is interest in revisiting this proposal concept.</p>
Suggested Changes Speech	Progress Report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Level 2 department listening final • Update Level 3 listening exit test • Create a new course in conversation skills • Create an advanced level public speaking course 	<p>The first three goals were reached:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Level 2 students must take the department listening final, which is worth 20% of their grade; • A new listening exit test more closely reflects the student learning objectives in listening; • Idioms, Conversation and American Culture (SPE-010) was created, approved by the College-wide Curriculum Committee and offered as of spring 2103.

FOCUS ON STUDENTS

DEMOGRAPHICS

Data Sources

ALP Program Review Data Brief, (IR, 03/14) showing data from the academic years 2011 – 2013. ***Unless otherwise indicated, data from this study is used. Statistics from this study are averaged.***

ALP Data Brief, (CIE, 5/13/13), gives statistics by fiscal year, 2008-2013.

ALP Graduate Survey, (2012), a survey of 120 ALP graduates from 2008 to 2012 conducted by Harold Kahn.

ALP Degree Interest Survey (2014), a survey of 300 students conducted in fall 2013 by Gail Fernandez

Data Brief: ALP-063 to WRT-101(CIE 4/14), a study showing how students completing the ALP prerequisite, ALP-063, perform in English Composition I, WRT-101.

Comparison of ALP and Non-ALP Students in College-Level Courses, (Office of Research & Planning, 1998; CIE, 11/2011).

Gender:

Female	65%
Male	35%

Age:

Up to 21 years	29%
22-24	16%
25-34	30%
Over 34 years	25%

A closer look at the ages from fall 2011 to spring 2013 reveals a slight increase in students under 21 years of age..

Country of Origin: Students in the ALP come from all over the world. This study looked at the top 15 countries of origin and notes the following highlights:

South Korean students comprise approximately 20% of the ALP students. Their number has held basically steady from fall 2011 – spring 2013;

In three of the four semesters reported, the top four countries have been South Korea, Colombia, Turkey and the Dominican Republic;

Students from Colombia make up the largest percentage from Latin American countries; however, the percentage has decreased from 9.2% in fall 2011 to 6.8% in spring 2013;

Latin American countries represented in the top 15 are the Dominican Republic, Peru, and Ecuador, with the Dominican Republic showing the largest increase (4.3% to 5.8%);

The percentage of students from Turkey has increased from 4.9% to 7.2%;

The percentage of students from China has increased to 3.3%;

Approximately 15% of students report the United States as their country of origin.

Ethnicity: Data on ethnicity show a decline in Asians from approximately 25% to 17%; a decline in Hispanics from 25% to 17%. In spring 2012, for 51% of students, ethnicity is unknown. This percentage increased from 29% in fall 2011.

Educational Background: According to the spring 2012 ALP Graduate Survey, over 50% of students indicated that they had had some college/university education or were college university graduates before they entered the ALP. The 2013 ALP Degree Interest Survey found that 21% of students have a college degree rather than just “some college”.

Enrollment: Enrollment in ALP and ALP Speech declined between FY 2008 and FY2013: About half of students are enrolled full time, taking 12 or 15 credits with the remainder part-time, taking 3, 6, or 9 credits. The distribution of students by day/evening and by level is on average:

Distribution by Time of Day	
Day	65%
Evening	13%
Day and Evening	22%

Distribution by Level	
Foundations	14%
Level 1	20%
Level 2	32%
Level 3	34%

Enrollment		
	FY2008	FY2013
ALP	1,595	1,133
ALP Speech	1,057	728

Tables 8 a-d (IR 3/14) show the differences in numbers and percentages of new and continuing students enrolling in the ALP from fall 2011 to spring 2013. Further analysis of the data is needed to understand retention rates and enrollment patterns.

Residency: About 10% of students are US citizens, 45% are permanent residents, and 30% are non-residents, which would include those with F1 student visas. Approximately 65% are residents of Bergen County and 5% are residents of other counties or states.

International F1 Visa Students: According the ALP Program Review Data Brief (IR, 3/14), in the spring 2013 semester, 27.1% of ALP students had F1 Visa status, a rise of 2.8% (although a

decrease in total number of F1 students; fall 2011 = 241; spring 2012 = 211; fall 2012 = 228; spring 2013 = 191).

In the data reported, approximately 12% of F1 Visa students are in Foundations, 16% are in Level 1, 26% in Level 2, and 30 % in Level 3. The remainder is in multi-level or in Speech only.

Major reasons for enrolling: According to figures from the fall 2013 ALP Degree Interest Survey, approximately 70% of ALP students say that they want to get a degree from Bergen and transfer to a 4-year institute. Students indicated that their top areas of study are:

Business, Social Science & Public Services Division: (28.5%)

- Business/Accounting
- Early Childhood Development
- Criminal Justice
- Hotel, Restaurant & Hospitality

Health Professions: (26.5%)

- Dental Hygiene
- Nursing
- Radiography

Math, Science, & Technology: (18.8%)

- Computer Science
- Engineering Science

STUDENT SATISFACTION

One hundred twenty students participated in a 2012 survey of graduates of the ALP from 2008-2012. The following are some of the results of that survey regarding student satisfaction:

Approximately 70% said that the ALP helped them meet their goals.

When asked to indicate how much their specific classes in the American Language Program helped them to improve in English, grammar received the highest rating (4.14 out of 5) followed by writing at 3.99, reading at 3.85, and speech at 3.71. Overall, 75% of students were satisfied with their experience in the American Language Program, but an even higher percentage (81.5%) were satisfied with their experience at Bergen Community College in general.

Here are some comments on the positive aspects of the program:

“ALP in BCC is excellent program; especially the ELRC tutor was very helpful for me.”

“I am really thankful to completed Bergen Community College ALP. After graduation from BCC, I enrolled a university and I finished my master in MBA.”

“Personally, my experience was good. I state (sic) at BCC for a long time because of my family situation, but each time that I came back was like if I was at home. The staff is excellent human bean. I am very pleased with everybody. Thank you very much.”

“My years at BCC were very good and productive. My teacher was wonderful. He taught us not only grammar but also American culture and he also strongly encouraged us to get involved in BCC students’ life. The multi-cultural classes were also very helpful because at the beginning, these people were the only ones with whom I spoke English. I also want to thank the International Student Center. That was always very helpful and patient. I would recommend BCC and ALP to everybody who wants to lean English and American culture.”

In addition, interviews conducted with graduates of the ALP elicited positive comments about the American Language Program, which were mostly about its grammar, speech, and writing courses, the tutoring and conversation groups at the English Language Resource Center, and especially the diversity found in the ALP. Many reported that as a result of their ALP studies, they gained confidence in expressing themselves in English. One said, “The ALP gave me a life in the US” and another commented, “BCC changed me.”

Among the negative comments was the opinion that the ALP didn’t prepare students to take hard classes, that some professors were too easy, that students didn’t have an opportunity to evaluate their professors, and that the evening teachers were not good. Others expressed the idea that the exit tests weren’t fair, that reading classes didn’t teach how to interpret, that hybrid courses weren’t good because students need more time with the professors, and that computers are not good for teaching pronunciation. Others felt that the ELRC closes too early on Friday, which makes it difficult for working students.

Their suggestions for improvement include the following:

- There should be more intense speech classes with more pronunciation, intonation, and conversation practice.
- They need to have more conversation groups in the English Language Resource Center.
- Students need to practice and talk more, and must use English outside the classroom.
- There should be a work program for international students and more social opportunities to use English outside of school.
- Students learn more when the professors are strict.
- The tests by the professors should be hard like the exit tests.
- Students need a higher level of English and more homework to practice.
- Students need material from regular college classes in their ALP classes.
- Students should take regular classes and ALP classes at the same time.

- They should also take a college experience course and ALP courses simultaneously.

Other student recommendations included:

- Offer a TOEFL prep class.
- Monitor evening faculty members.
- The ELRC and its workshops need more publicity.
- Low level students should study at the Ciarco Center.
- There should be a midterm and final exit test for everyone.
- Students need more writing.
- Textbooks should be shorter.

DISCUSSION OF STUDENT COMMENTS IN THE 2012 GRADUATE SURVEY

Some of the students in this survey said, “There should be more speech classes with more pronunciation, intonation, and conversation practice.” At the time these students were at the college, SPE-010 (Idioms, Conversation, and American Culture) did not exist. This course was added in 2012. Also, some students may not have been aware of our two new pronunciation courses, SPE-006 and SPE-007, which are basic and advanced pronunciation courses. We have increased promotion of these one-credit courses on information flyers and grids that are either hung around campus or distributed at the advising center.

Other students said students need to practice and talk more, and must use English outside of the classroom. The ALP Speech department recognized this need and created the Intercultural Conversation Partners (ICP) program, which matches native speakers and English learners for free conversation practice in the tutoring center. Popularity of the program is evident from the growth in number of students participating and the number of sessions per semester. Students are also encouraged to take advantage of conversation groups that are offered in the ELRC.

ICP Participation		
Semester	Total Visits	Students
Spring 2013	255	81
Fall 2013	309	55
Spring 2014	385	94

In addition, students said a TOEFL prep course is needed. ALP and ALP Speech worked together to create ALP-068, which is a 3-credit elective TOEFL prep course. This course has been running since 2013.

Also, some of the students surveyed said they needed material from regular college classes in their ALP classes. Students are now getting this in paired courses that are offered in Psychology and Sociology.

Finally, two students in the survey felt that the ELRC closes too early on Friday, which makes it difficult for working students. A follow-up survey found that extended Friday hours would not be used.

STUDENT SUCCESS

ALP Pass Rates: Data from CIE shows that the most recent passing rate for all levels of ALP is approximately 80%.

Subsequent Performance in BCC College-Level Courses: The study conducted for this program review by CIE (04/14), shows success of ALP students in Composition I (WRT-101). When compared to non-ALP students, students who complete American Language III: Writing (ALP-063), the prerequisite for WRT-101, have a higher pass rate, approximately 12% higher. They also have a lower “E” and “W” rate. Data collected in 1998 and 2011 compared ALP students who have completed both American Language III: Reading and Writing (ALP-064 and ALP-063) in college-level courses to non-ALP students. Grade distributions from these studies show the percentage of students receiving “A” to be higher for ALP students.

College/University Study: Eighty-five percent of the 120 students responding to the ALP Graduate Survey indicated that they were attending a college or university with 24% majoring in business, 23% in the medical field, and 14% studying computers/technology. Over half of them were currently attending Bergen Community College. As to their activities after completing the American Program, 50% said they pursued a degree at Bergen Community College while 38% said that they transferred to another college or university after attending Bergen. About 7% indicated that they enrolled directly in another college or university without attending Bergen first. Almost 14% said that they sought employment after completing the ALP.

Employment: It should be noted that among those who completed the American Language Program, thirteen are past or current employees at Bergen Community College. Two are tenure-track assistant professors, one is a lecturer, three are adjunct instructors; three work in the college library, two in the International Student Center, one in the School of Continuing Education and one as the college’s webmaster. Other professions of ALP graduates include cardiovascular technician, bank teller, manager of a home care agency, bilingual representative for the Bergen County Office of Community Development, case manager for New York Catholic Charities, and EFL Professor at Ozyegin University in Turkey.

LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

ALP COURSES

The ALP has six program goals. Some of the goals are assessed level-wide while other goals are assessed by individual instructors in their classrooms.

Goal 1: Use reading strategies and critical thinking skills to understand and analyze college-level texts.

ALP Levels 2 & 3 have level-wide reading exit tests that directly measure the abilities of students in American Language II: Reading (ALP – 054) and American Language III: Reading (ALP – 064) to use these skills and strategies. Students must pass these exit tests and receive a passing grade in the course in order to continue to the next level or to graduate from the program.

ALP Foundations & Level 1 have level-wide final exams that directly measure the abilities of students in the reading classes (ALP – 006 and ALP - 044) to use these skills and strategies. The final exam counts for 30% of a student's final grade.

Goal 2: Understand and use vocabulary needed for College level course work.

Vocabulary is assessed on the Levels 2 & 3 Reading exit tests and the Foundations & Level 1 Reading final exams.

Goal-3: Use the writing process to write essays using academic rhetorical patterns.

Although this program goal has not been assessed, students are taught to use the writing process in class and are expected to apply this knowledge while taking the exit tests.

Goal 4: Demonstrate information literacy skills in research assignments.

This program goal has not been assessed. However, data on library instruction classes is kept.

Goal 5: Use study skill techniques to understand and recall information in texts.

This program goal has not been assessed.

Goal 6: Understand and use the grammar of the English language correctly in written and oral production.

The ALP Levels 2 and 3 departmental writing exit tests measure whether students in American Language II: Writing and American Language III: Writing use level-appropriate written grammar.

The ALP Foundations & Level 1 level-wide grammar final exams measure whether students in the Grammar courses are able to use level-appropriate written grammar.

Oral production is assessed in Speaking/Listening classes.

SPE COURSES

Goal 1: Use spoken language to communicate meaningfully and appropriately.

This is assessed in all levels through in-class observation, graded oral presentations, and online voice recordings. There is a department speaking exit interview at the end of Level 3. This is a one-on-one interview conducted by Speech teachers (other than the students' own teacher), using a rubric. If students do not pass this exam, they are re-tested by another teacher. Students who don't pass the re-test can either repeat the course or take SPE-006, American Language Pronunciation.

Goal 2: Demonstrate listening comprehension.

This is assessed in all levels through listening tests, note-taking exercises, and online listening assignments. It is assessed department-wide in Level 2 through a department listening final which is given at the end of Level 2 and is worth 20% of the student's grade. It is also assessed department-wide through a listening exit test at the end of Level 3. Students who do not pass must take a re-test. Students who don't pass the re-test can either repeat SPE-003 or take SPE-008 (Academic Listening Comprehension).

Goal 3: Identify and produce the segmentals and suprasegmentals of American English.

This is assessed in all levels through in-class observation, tests, oral presentations, voice recordings, and department-wide on the speaking exit interview after level three.

Goal 4: Expand vocabulary.

This is assessed through in-class communication, written exams, performance in oral presentations and usage of target vocabulary in homework and classwork.

Goal 5: Make academic presentations.

This is assessed in all levels through oral presentations which use rubrics for grading.

Goal 6: Use technological and informational resources to conduct research.

This is assessed through oral presentations which require research and are graded using a rubric. Students must use and cite sources when giving speeches requiring research.

ASSESSMENT STUDIES

ALP

The ALP has consistently assessed the program for nearly 20 years. ALP and ALP Speech have conducted separate assessment projects. Since 2008, these projects have been conducted as part of the College's Outcomes Assessment Plans. (All ALP reports discussed here can be found in the Addenda).

In the 2008 - 2010 assessment cycle, a study was conducted comparing the percentage of students who passed the Level 2 Writing exit test among seven sections of American Language II: Writing. Students in two of the seven sections were a linked Grammar/ Writing section and were assigned bi-weekly grammar journal assignments for which they needed to write between 250 - 500 words. These students were directed to use structures that were being taught in the course in their grammar journal. In addition, these students were given grammar tests that required multi-paragraph written answers.

The results of the assessment study were that the two targeted sections had a 5% failure rate on the Level 2 Writing exit exam compared with two sections with a 13% failure rate, a section with a 23% failure rate, a section with a 26% failure rate, and a section with a 29% failure rate.

A second study was done in 2012 to see if the recommendations from the previous study (to place more emphasis on the integration of grammar and writing) had helped the Level 2 students improve their writing in the categories of: Organization, Content, Complex Grammar, Simple Grammar, Vocabulary, Length, Stimulating Interest and Exceeding Expectation. Data tables indicate that students in the 2012 assessment project performed better than the cohort group in the previous study (described above).

In the 2010 – 2012 assessment cycle a study again examined American Language II and III: Writing. Students were asked to keep a portfolio of their work, and readers used an agreed upon rubric to evaluate the work. Based on the success of students in the portfolio writing sections, it was recommended that teachers in Level 2 and 3 Writing classes use one rubric, that faculty participate in norming sessions at least twice during the semester, and that all students keep a portfolio. It was suggested that a portfolio could be used as an alternate means of assessment for the Level 2 exit test.

In the 2012 – 2014 cycle, an assessment project was developed to compare whether the pass rate on the combined Level 2 exit test and appeal process would be 10% higher for students in portfolio sections than students in sections not using portfolios. The results were mixed. Contrary to the desired outcome, the number of students in the portfolio sections who passed the exit test was neither 10% greater on the first test nor in the appeal process than the number of students in the non-participating sections who passed the exit test. Students in the portfolio sections did better on the first exit test, but not on the appeal process. Similar to the 2010 – 2012

assessment study, it was recommended that students continue to keep portfolios in their writing classes, that students be given the exit test rubric before the exit test so that they know what the exit test expectations are, and that faculty norm student papers throughout the semester.

ALP SPEECH

The 2010 – 2012 ALP Speech assessment project focused on whether students were able to articulate three important sounds in American English. The desired result of 100% of students achieving a perfect score of “3” was not achieved. Based on the results, a workshop for ALP Speech teachers was held to help improve their techniques for teaching these sounds. Supplementary materials including books, websites and lesson plans which teachers could use at all levels of ALP Speech were also provided.

In the 2012 – 2014 assessment cycle, ALP Speech followed up on findings of the 2010 – 2012 report. After examining the previous evaluation measurements, and because of the perception that students were exiting with only fair to good oral performances, a new exit evaluation was created. In addition, it was felt that better communication with the speech faculty was also needed. The syllabi were also modified.

PROGRAM EXIT TESTS

ALP DEPARTMENT

The ALP department has used department exit tests since the days when the state mandated a test score to qualify for entry into mainstream college programs. At first only a writing test was used and only in Level 3. When Reading and Writing became separate courses, a reading test was introduced. Later, Level 2 Reading and Writing tests were added.

Writing exit tests are given approximately three weeks before the end of the semester. Students are given 70 minutes to write an essay on their choice of one of three topics. The rhetorical patterns include are those typically taught in each level. Students are not permitted to use bilingual or electronic dictionaries during the writing or reading exit tests because of concerns about translating and cheating. Differing opinions on these issues have been discussed at faculty meetings. For the present, these practices are continuing but are subject to further evaluation and discussion.

The writing tests are graded holistically. For each level, scoring sessions are led by the testing coordinator for that level. Two readers read each paper and assign a Pass or Fail grade. If the readers do not agree, the paper goes to a third reader, whose decision determines the outcome.

Reading exit tests are given approximately three weeks before the end of the semester. Students are given 70 minutes to read a passage and then answer 35 multiple choice questions

The reading tests are scored by the Department Chair assisted by two other faculty members. The number of correct answers needed to pass the tests may vary by test. The pass rates on the tests vary from 70% to 80%.

For both tests, students must pass the exit tests and receive a passing grade in the course to complete the level. A retest is given in both writing and reading to students who do not pass the first test. If a student has received an A or B in the course, but has failed the exit test twice, he or she is eligible for a directed studies course, ALP-055 or ALP-065. Students who are taking the course for the first time, fail the exit exam twice, and are receiving a grade lower than a B, are required to repeat the course. If a student fails a course twice, the student can be recommended to take the directed studies course.

Exit testing is a subject of debate within the faculty. Some people maintain that the tests serve an important purpose. On the other hand, there are those people who question the validity and need for the tests.

Arguments for exit testing:

Exit tests measure basic linguistic competency necessary to succeed in college-level courses; they provide an objective evaluation of student performance as measured against the entire department;

Research studies (CIE, 1998, 2012) have consistently shown that students who have passed the reading exit test, without repeating the course or taking ALP-055 or ALP-065 did better in college courses as compared to non-ALP students.

Arguments against exit testing:

Writing exit tests place a high value on grammatical accuracy, yet the syllabi indicate that this is only one of the learning goals of the course;

Writing rubrics are not used consistently during the semester or in scoring the results; therefore, students may not be aware of passing criteria;

Finally, it has been suggested that testing procedures need to be improved to reduce the stress level that some students experience. It is clear that the ALP Department faculty should work together to resolve differences on these issues.

ALP SPEECH DEPARTMENT

The ALP Speech Department requires students to pass exit tests in speaking and listening in Level 3 and to take a departmental listening exam in Level 2.

Speaking exit tests are given approximately three weeks before the end of the semester. Students meet with a Level 3 professor who does not teach their section. There is a norming process for

professors involved in the testing. Students are asked a variety of questions, including a mixture of personal and academic topics. Students are tested on comprehension of the question and the fluency, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation of the answers. Students who don't pass the test are tested a second time by a different professor. Students must pass the Speaking exit test to complete the program. Students who do not pass the test on the second attempt must either retake the course or may be recommended to take a pronunciation course in which they must receive a B.

Listening exit tests are given approximately two weeks before the end of the semester. Students take a 35-question multiple choice listening test. Students who don't pass the test take a 25-question multiple choice listening test. Students must pass the Listening exit test to complete the program. Students who not pass the test on the second attempt must either retake the course or may be recommended to an academic listening course in which they must receive a B.

Departmental listening exams are given in Level 2 approximately two weeks before the end of the semester. Students take a 25-question multiple choice listening test which is worth 20% of their final grade.

FOCUS ON FACULTY AND STAFF

DEMOGRAPHICS

ALP Department: Full-Time Faculty - Spring 2014

Total: 17; (3 retirements in 2013-14; two full-time hires)

Ranks: 5 Professors, 6 Associate Professors, 4 Assistant Professors, 2 lecturers

Gender: 5 Male, 12 Female

ALP Speech Department: Full-Time Faculty – Spring 2014

Total: 5 Full-time:

Ranks: 1 Professor, 2 Associate Professors; 2 lecturers

Gender: 1 Male; 4 Female)

Adjunct Faculty

ALP: 27; 5 Male; 22 Female

ALP Speech: 6; 6 Female

Faculty Credentials:

All ALP faculty (Full- and Part-time) have an MA degree or higher

FULL-TIME TENURE AND TENURE TRACK FACULTY

ALP DEPARTMENT

Brian Altano, Professor; B.A., M.A., M.Phil., Columbia University

Milena Christov, Assistant Professor; B.A., M.A., University of Sofia, Bulgaria; M.A., Hunter College, New York

Gail Fernandez, (ESL Level 1 Testing Coordinator); Associate Professor; B.A., Union College; M.A., University of Pennsylvania

Gemma Figaro, Assistant Professor, B.A., Brooklyn College, CUNY; M.A.T., Fairleigh Dickinson University; M.A., Montclair State University.

Robert Freud, (ESL Level 2 Testing Coordinator), Associate Professor; B.A., State University of New York at Stony Brook; M.A., State University of New York at Fredonia

William Jiang, (ESL Academic Department Chair), Professor; B.A., Shanghai University; M.S., Ed.D., State University of New York at Albany

Harold Kahn (ESL Level 3 Testing Coordinator), Associate Professor; B.A., Columbia University; B.F.A., Queens College; M.S., Queens College; M.F.A., State University of New York at Albany

Maria Kasparova, Associate Professor; M.A. Moscow State University; M.A. (TESOL) New York University

Susanna Lansangan, Associate Professor; B.A., University of the Philippines; M.A., University of Calgary

Margarita Lopez-Bernstein, Associate Professor; B.A., St. Thomas Aquinas College; M.A., Fairleigh Dickinson University

Bonnie MacDougall, Professor; B.A., Cedar Crest College; M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Columbia University

Carol Miele, Professor; B.A., Barnard College; M.A., Middlebury College; M.A.T., Fairleigh Dickinson University; Ed.D., Teachers College, Columbia University

Edward Murtha, Professor; B.A., City College of New York; M.A., Montclair State University; M.A., Jersey City State University

Leah Saliba, Assistant Professor: B.A., Argentina, M.A., Troy State University, TESOL certification, Montclair State University, M.A., Montclair State University.

Beth Snyder, Associate Professor; B.A., Kalamazoo College; M.A., University of Michigan, M.Ed., Teachers College, Columbia University (retired, 2014)

Olga Weston, Assistant Professor: B.A., Moscow Pedagogical State University, M.Ed. TESOL, Moscow Pedagogical State University; Montclair State University.

ALP SPEECH DEPARTMENT

Heidi Lieb (ALP Speech) Academic Department Chair), Assistant Professor; B.A., Rutgers University; M.A., Kean University

Ken Bonnaffons, Professor; B.A., MFA Speech/Theatre, University of New Orleans

April Adams, Associate Professor; B.A. Speech/Theatre, Herbert H. Lehman College, CUNY; M.A. Communications, New York University; M.A. Teaching ESL, Hunter College, CUNY; PhD. Rhetoric Linguistics, Indiana University of Pennsylvania (in progress)

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

FULL TIME TENURE AND TENURE TRACK FACULTY - ALP DEPARTMENT

Brian Altano was a Visiting Fellow at the McGraw Center for Teaching Excellence at Princeton University, where he worked on a project and wrote an article entitled “Grammar without the Teacher.” (Princeton University Press, 2013). He also wrote an article on the theme published in *Innovations Abstract* (NISOD, 2013). The author of nine textbooks, five published by the University of Michigan Press, Prof. Altano has a new high beginner writing text to be published by Prolingua (Vermont). He was the keynote speaker at the International Conference on Storytelling in Salzburg, Austria and an article on his presentation was published in *Interdisciplinary.net* (2014). Prof. Altano premiered two stories in a performance at the Ciccone Theatre at Bergen on May 2, 2014.

Gail Fernandez receives reassigned time for her work as the Level 1 Testing Coordinator. She is a member of the ALP Scheduling Committee and Book Committee. Professor Fernandez has presented her work on Information Literacy, portfolio assessment, program review, writing, vocabulary development, and online learning at TESOL, NYS TESOL, NJTESOL/NJBE, and TYCA NE. She has had articles published in the NYS TESOL publication *Idiom*. Professor Fernandez is a member of TESOL, NYS TESOL and NJTESOL/NJBE. She also serves as an assessment fellow for the Center for Institutional Research and is Chair of the General Education Committee.

Gemma Figaro co-presented a study on *Student Satisfaction with Peer Review* at NJTESOL/NJBE 2013 and NYSTESOL 2013. She has collaborated with the BCC Suburban Studies Group by engaging her ESL students in discussions and presentations about the suburbs of their home countries compared to US suburbs. She also taught the Level 3 ESL Writing section of a paired course in fall 2013 and presented her experiences on a panel at the BCC Tri-State Best Practices Conference in March 2014. She is a member of the Program Review and Capstone Project teams. She was a panelist BCC CITL Summer Institute in May, 2014. Professor Figaro is a member of NJTESOL/NJBE and NYSTESOL. She is a club advisor and serves on the Academic Standing Committee.

Harold Kahn serves as the Level 3 Testing Coordinator and is also a member of the ALP Textbook Committee. He has presented at NYS TESOL, NJTESOL/NJBE, TYCA NE and at the Tri-State Best Practices Conference. In 2012 he was granted a sabbatical leave, during which time he was able to complete *A Survey of ALP Graduates - What Happens to Our ALP Students After They Finish Our Program?* Professor Kahn is a member of NYS TESOL and NJTESOL/NJBE.

Maria Kasparova receives reassigned time for work as a Grant Fellow in the Office of Grants Administration. She has also served as the ALP Assessment Liaison and led the departmental

portfolio assessment studies. She has worked with the department of Social Sciences on developing a model for ESL paired courses and has been teaching an ESL writing course linked to Introduction to Psychology. She has presented her work at NY TESOL, TYCA NE, and NJTESOL/NJBE and at the BCC Tri-State Best Practices Conference. She has had articles published in the NYS TESOL publication *Idiom*. Maria is currently working on *Bridges of Communication*, a rhetorical reader for ESL and Generation 1.5 students (forthcoming, Wadsworth Cengage).

Susanna Lansangan serves as the Foundations Testing Coordinator and ALP Faculty Liaison for the Adjunct Evaluation Process, observing and mentoring ALP adjuncts. Her 2014 sabbatical leave project concerns how to assist students in transitioning from an adult literacy ESL program to an academic ESL program. She is a member of the ALP Scheduling Committee, the Faculty Senate, the Asian Heritage Committee, and Café Bergen Committee. She has served as faculty advisor to the Filipino-American Club, presented lessons on the Philippine Culture during BCC's Day of Service and Community, and presented a concert entitled, "An Evening of Original Philippine Music". She is a member of the New York State TESOL, TESOL and Modern Language Association.

Margarita Lopez-Bernstein has taught in the American Language Program since 1985. She has been involved in different committees including the Textbook Committee (chair) and the Scheduling Committee. She has also taught Spanish at BCC for many years. Prof. Lopez-Bernstein has presented papers at the NJTESOL/NJBE and in the Tri State Best Practices Conference. She has been teaching the paired course: Reading III + Sociology for the last two semesters. As member of the Capstone Project team, she is involved in the development of the vocabulary skill component.

Bonnie MacDougall first taught ESL at Queens College more than thirty years ago. She has taught it ever since along with English Composition I and II, and Literature. She is a leader of the ALP Capstone Project team and has designed several documents for use during the pilot semester of the Capstone in fall 2014. She has conducted two ALP Assessment projects. She recently gave a TEDx talk on how she has changed as a presence in the classroom since she began to teach.

Carol Miele taught ESL at the College for over 25 years, before serving as English Department Head and then as an academic dean. She served a total of 8 years in higher education administration. She was responsible for a number of major grant projects, including a Title V funded project. With Professor Ed Murtha, she was a co-founder of the ELRC. She initiated the ALP Capstone Project with Bonnie MacDougall and is working on the implementation team. She is the leader of the 2014 American Language Program Review team.

Ed Murtha has received reassigned time for his work as the ALP faculty liaison to the English Language Resource Center. Professor Murtha is the chair of the ALP Scheduling Committee,

and has participated in the iPad Project and the ALP Capstone project. Prof. Murtha is a member of TESOL.

Leah Saliba, a new member of the faculty, has recently earned her second Masters degree in Applied Linguistics. She has been accepted into the MA program in Rhetoric and Writing at Northern Arizona University. She has 10 years of teaching experience and extensive experience in using digital technology in a variety of ways. She teaches a number of online and hybrid courses in ESL. She is a member of the iPad project, Capstone project, co-chair of the Pasalubong Club (Filipino club) and member of the Hispanic Outreach Advisory Board. Also, she is a member of the NJTESOL/NJBE, NY TESOL and Applied Linguistics Association.

Olga Weston, one of new members in the department, has over 17 years of English and ESL teaching experience for grade schools and colleges, as well as in preparing of high school and college students for SAT and TOEFL tests. She has taught English as a Foreign Language overseas and ESL to Russian refugees in New Jersey. A member of TESOL and NJTESOL/NJBE, she has attended state and national TESOL conventions. She has presented on bilingual dictionary use, placement tests, and reading comprehension at NJTESOL/NJBE conferences. As a current member of the ALP Capstone Project team, Professor Weston is working on the editing and writing improvement exercises and documents.

FULL TIME TENURE AND TENURE TRACK FACULTY – ALP SPEECH DEPARTMENT

Heidi Lieb receives reassigned time for work as Academic Department Chair. She is also co-founder and co-coordinator of the Intercultural Communication Partner program which pairs ESL students with native English speakers for conversation practice. Prof. Lieb presented at NJTESOL/NJBE in 2012 on the CIRD grant project on Korean Student Success. She also presented at the Tri-State Best Practices Conference in 2012 on the Intercultural Conversation Partners Project and the CIRD grant on Korean student success. Prof. Lieb is a member of TESOL.

LECTURERS AND ADJUNCTS – ALP AND ALP SPEECH DEPARTMENTS

Bina Dugan receives reassigned time for her work as the ALP-Speech Liaison to the ELRC, where she leads two weekly workshops on Presentation Skills and Speaking Q & A. This semester, she created and presented a six-week workshop on The Good Language Learner. Professor Dugan created and teaches two idioms courses, ; she co-created a TOEFL prep course, (ALP 068). She is a member of TESOL.

Lauren Musto has presented results of her research on “Reading and the Effectiveness of Dictionary Usage” at NJTESOL/NJBE. She has also presented results of research on “Student Satisfaction with Peer Review in the Writing Process”. Lauren is a past member of TESOL and

a current member of NJTESOL/NJBE and NYTESOL. She also participates in online training for language assessment through ETS.

Carmela O’Flaherty has served as an adjunct and a lecturer for ALP and ALP Speech departments. She collaborates with the Speech department chair on curriculum and course development. Ms. O’Flaherty has conducted in-house professional development workshops *Pronunciation and Articulation* and *Deep Learning Through Drama-based Activities*, presented at the 2012 NJTESOL/NJBE Spring Conference. She is an instructor and a testing coordinator for Mannes College The New School for Music in NYC. As a corporate trainer, she coaches executives in cross-cultural communication, business language, and presentation skills. Ms. O’Flaherty is a member of NJTESOL/NJBE and NJASTD.

Marilyn Pongracz, the ELRC Supervisor and an adjunct faculty member, is the Technology Coordinator for NJTESOL/NJBE, the state-wide organization for ESL and bilingual teachers from pre-school through college. In this position, she maintains and updates the website, which includes announcements, general information, forms for workshop submissions, membership, conference registration, and the technical aspect of the quarterly online newsletter. She is also responsible for monitoring the active e-mail discussion list. She assists with technology at the Spring Conference, and often presents workshops there as well. She has presented at the last four NJEA conventions. She also contributes a website review for the newsletter and attends the Executive Board monthly meetings.

ADJUNCT FACULTY

Hiring: Academic department chairs hire adjuncts as needed. Adjuncts may teach up to 12 credits per semester.

Support: The department chair provides books and syllabi, and arranges for technical training for online components as needed. In ALP, adjunct members get help from the department chair and the level testing coordinators for testing matters, books, and other issues.

Communication: Adjuncts meet once per semester at the adjunct faculty conference. Other communication is done on a one-on-one basis through email, phone, or individual meetings.

FACULTY SATISFACTION

The ALP Department Faculty Survey was conducted in April 2014 to establish frequency of agreement with statements made by participants during the SWOT analysis of 2013. All 15 full time faculty members responded. Although respondents all believe that the ALP has a very dedicated and strong faculty, they acknowledge there are some issues that need to be addressed. The survey revealed some dissenting voices in several questions. In an academic environment, disagreement and opposing views are fine and often necessary; however, when disagreement and opposing views have caused the department to be "fragmented," and to have difficulties in

“communicating or reaching agreement” as shown in questions 9 and 10, the issues needed to be examined carefully. (For questionnaire and results see Addenda).

In short, the members of the faculty need to have an open dialogue on how to resolve these problems, and how to channel their positive and talented energy to improve the program

PROGRAM PERSONNEL AND STAFF

The American Language Program leadership consists of two academic department chairs - one for ALP and one for ALP Speech, which function as two separate departments within the same program. As mentioned in the history section of this report, the two departments were formed independently in the early days of the college organization, and remain this way for organizational and historical reasons. The two academic department chairs work together to coordinate class schedules, exit test schedules, faculty advising, book fairs, ALP recognition ceremonies, and teaching loads for shared faculty.

The elected department chairs are responsible for fulfilling the duties described in the job description developed by BCC when this position was created. Their duties include, but are not limited to, scheduling classes, hiring adjuncts and lecturers, counseling students, dealing with student comments, questions and/or complaints, scheduling and leading department meetings, approving grade changes, creating annual department goals, attending Academic Department Chair Organization meetings, and attending regular meetings with the dean concerning college and divisional issues. In addition, department chairs are responsible for proposing new courses and getting them approved, and coordinating faculty involvement in various internal and external projects.

In addition, there are five testing coordinators, one for each of the ALP levels and one for ALP Speech. The duties of the ALP testing coordinators include creating exit or final exams in Reading and Writing. In Levels 2 and 3, retests are also created. In Foundations and Level 1, grammar exams are created and exam packets are prepared as well. The exams are piloted and edited before they are administered. Testing coordinators are responsible for scheduling test dates, communicating information about the exams, organizing the grading of the exams (including the preparation of norming materials) and disseminating the results to the faculty.

ALP testing coordinators also choose the books for each level, edit and distribute the course syllabi for their level, and handle level questions from both adjunct and full-time faculty.

The testing coordinator for ALP Speech creates and updates listening exit tests for Level 2 and Level 3. In Level 3, re-tests are also created. The coordinator is responsible for distributing testing materials to faculty, including audio CD's, test booklets and answer keys.

In addition, the ALP Speech testing coordinator plans and organizes exit interviews for all students in Level 3. This involves reserving classrooms, assigning faculty, assigning students to

specific rooms, scheduling blocks of time, distributing and collecting testing materials, and coordinating speaking re-tests. Responsibilities also include updating the interview grading rubric when needed and arranging norming sessions with faculty.

One secretary supports the work of the department chairs and the faculty. It is the view of the two Academic Department Chairs that the ESL department needs either a secretary or a student aid who is knowledgeable about the program to be in the office from 8:00 AM-6:30 PM. We have students coming in throughout the day who need assistance, and there is nobody in the office before 8:30 or after 5:30.

FOCUS ON CURRICULUM

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM CURRICULUM

The American Language Program offers a four-level sequence of general ESL courses for students who were, for the most part, educated abroad (some are US high school graduates) and who are pursuing English for academic or professional purposes. The four levels are:

Foundations:	Zero – low beginner
Level 1:	High beginner
Level 2:	Intermediate
Level 3:	High Intermediate/Low Advanced

Each Level consists of:

Grammar:	6 non-degree credits (two 3-credit 7.5 week courses, must be taken sequentially, from the beginning of a given semester)
Reading:	3 non-degree credits
Writing:	3 non-degree credits
Speaking/Listening:	3 non-degree credits

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

Placement: There is one placement score for Grammar, Reading, and Writing classes determined by an average on the Accuplacer ESL test. There is a separate placement score for Speaking/Listening classes determined by the Accuplacer ESL Listening test and an in-class speaking assessment the first week of a semester.

Pre- and Co- Requisites: Grammar courses are pre- or co-requisites for the Reading and Writing courses at each level. Students can advance in Grammar, but they are supposed to take the Reading and Writing courses of the lower level before or at the same time. Part-time students (fewer than 12 credits) can take reading or writing separately from each other.

Originally, all the courses at one level had to be completed before a student was allowed to advance to the next level. Students placed in ALP and ALP Speech were required to complete the ESL sequence before they could take any college-level courses. Gradually, exceptions were made (and continue to be made) for many reasons. One is for Level 3 students who have fewer than 12 credits remaining to complete the program. Other instances are continuing students who have performed exceptionally well in previous levels, or new students whose placement test indicates that they may not need the full 15-credits of ESL to qualify for taking college-level courses.

Confusion regarding pre- and co-requisite policies has been identified as a major problem students and college personnel have in registration in the ALP. It will be necessary to conduct a thorough review of departmental policies and registration rules in the Datatel Colleague system. Rules need to be updated and policies need to be made consistent and conveyed to staff in Testing, Advising and Registration.

The ALP Department also offers two non-degree one credit directed studies courses (ALP-055 and ALP-065) to students who passed the course but did not pass an exit exam in Level 2 or 3 reading or writing or who have failed a course twice. By recommendation of an instructor, in place of repeating a course, these directed studies courses consist of individualized instruction given in the English Language Resource Center.

In addition to the required Speaking/Listening courses, the ESL Speech Department offers non-degree one credit electives in pronunciation, listening, idioms, conversation, and culture. American English Pronunciation (SPE-006) is taken as a one-credit elective, or it can be taken by students who fail the speaking exit test in Level 3 instead of repeating the course if they have passed all other areas of the course. Likewise, Academic Listening (SPE-008) is a one-credit elective, or it can be taken by students who fail the listening exit test instead of repeating SPE-003 if they have passed in all other areas of the course.

Finally, some students are taking Level 3 Reading or Writing paired with a college-level General Education Course in an on-going experimental project.

Master Course Syllabi: Despite the 2009 – 2010 Curricular Program Review and syllabi revisions made at that time, many problems were uncovered when the Program Review Team examined the syllabi. Each document contains a great deal of information, which appears to be a mixture of learning goals, objectives and activities. The same skills and topics are listed at each level, so it is unclear from the syllabi what makes each level different from the previous one.

CURRICULAR ISSUES

Starting in fall 2009, ALP faculty began exploring the status of grammar courses in the program design. A group composed of three faculty members conducted Internet research to review numerous local, regional, and national ESL programs. Reporting to the department faculty in Spring 2010, the committee made a proposal that involved reducing the 6-credit Grammar course to 3 credits and creating a 6-credit Grammar/Writing (taught by one teacher) course for ALP Level 3. The proposal suggested applying the same treatment to Level 2, after evaluation and assessment of a Level 3 pilot project. Recommendations for Foundations and Level 1 involved maintaining the 6-credit Grammar course and possibly combining it with a 3-credit Writing course, with both courses taught by the same teacher.

At that time, the committee also addressed scheduling issues resulting from curriculum changes. Any changes in the distribution of credits per course would have to take into account the 15-credit teaching requirement for full-time faculty members. In the Level 3 example previously described, Grammar/Writing + Grammar = 9credits + Reading = 12 credits. The only remaining 3-credit course would be Reading, and there would not be enough Reading courses to complete the number of schedules needed.

The proposal was not implemented because the scheduling issues were never resolved.

In the meantime, student learning outcomes assessment projects conducted from 2009 to 2012 recommended placing more emphasis on the integration of grammar and writing. The program review of 2009-2010 recognized this and the course goals mention integrated skills. For the present program review, a call was made for examples of instructional materials and of assignments or lessons that integrate skills and enhance grammar teaching by contextualization. Half of the full-time faculty responded (along with 2 adjuncts), demonstrating that individual instructors have improved materials to meet course learning objectives and are integrating reading, writing, speaking and listening in their classes. (All responses are from teachers of ALP courses; teachers of ALP Speech were not polled.)

The Spring 2013 ESL Summit recognized the need to focus on programmatic changes particularly those suggested by the assessment studies. Two subgroups were formed to work on curricular issues. One group was charged specifically with these issues: Does the program design allow for an integrated skills approach where all the skills are included and reinforced across the component courses? Does the curriculum provide for skill development in any given skill between the levels and into college work?

The result of this group's work is the ALP Capstone Project, which entails utilizing the second half of the current 6-credit Grammar course for a 7 ½-week project that requires integration of grammar, writing, critical reading skills and vocabulary development. The capstone paper requires that students use information literacy and the academic skills of summarizing, paraphrasing and quoting, taught in the reading class, in an essay using MLA citations.

A Capstone Project Team (comprised of 12 people, including fulltime, part-time, ALP and ALP Speech representatives) worked collaboratively throughout the spring 2014 semester and are on track for full implementation of a pilot in fall 2014.

The second group focused on innovations (alternative programming). This group based its planning on the existing paired courses, which have been running as a pilot project since 2012. ALP Level 3 Writing is paired with Introduction to Psychology². Level 3 Reading is also paired

² A detailed discussion of the ALP-Psychology Paired Course Program can be found in the Addenda in an outcomes assessment report.

with Introduction to Sociology. Since students in these courses express a high level of satisfaction with the courses, and their GPA and retention rates have also been higher than students in ALP non-paired sections, the committee proposed a learning community pilot project: Six hours reading paired with Psychology; six hours writing w/grammar; three hours speech; a tutor in the reading/college level course. The proposal would allow students to accelerate through the ALP, thus saving time and money.

In addition to the paired/learning community proposal, faculty in Academic Department Chairs in ALP and ALP Speech propose that the College offer college-credit for ESL. So far, the Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate has approved a proposal to change ALP SPE Level 3 from non-degree to degree credit.

Despite the attempts at program development and renewal, there are questions that have not been fully resolved, in particular:

- To what extent does the program design allow for an integrated skills approach where all the skills are included and reinforced across the component courses?
- How well does the curriculum provide for skill development in any given skill between the levels and into college work?
- How effective is the configuration of credits to subjects (grammar, reading, writing, speaking, listening)?
- How effective is the number of levels in the program?

ALL BCC ESL

The College offers ESL in two other units outside of the academic ESL program (ALP). The Ciarco Learning Center (CLC), the center for adult learning, and the Division of Continuing Education (CE) both offer ESL. A research project is currently going on to answer questions about these different pathways, articulation, and transitions.

The CLC ESL (tuition) program is more aptly described as survival English. CLC also has grant-funded vocational ESL. The CE classes are few and are more aimed at professional purposes. The distinction between the programs is not clearly made in College advertising and promotional materials. Students are not made aware of the advantages of each and therefore do not necessarily end up in the best place. Once they are enrolled in one of the programs, they have little access to information about how to make a transition to one of the others. ESL for Business and Professional Purposes is not a major offering at the College.

The on-going research is addressing these questions among others, particularly student retention at the Foundations level of the ALP. Data show approximately 55% of Foundations students continue to the next level in the following semester. This is approximately 20% lower than the Level 1 to Level 2 rate, which is 25% lower than the Level 2 to Level 3 rate of return.

It may be better for the true beginners, now enrolling in the ALP, to start out at the CLC. It is important to evaluate the Accuplacer results to determine a benchmark to separate “true” beginners from “false” beginners. Rather than enrolling in the ALP, students could be recommended for transfer to the CLC, where they may benefit more from survival ESL classes. At the same time, their progress should be tracked so that they can be encouraged to return to the ALP when they feel more confident and ready for the academic program.

Students completing the upper levels in the CLC program may decide to transfer to the ALP. There needs to be a standardized policy that will support their appropriate placement when they make the transition.

Finally, there is a need at BCC for a non-credit ESL program for F-1 Visa students who are not degree seekers but need to learn English. It is typical of community college to have such programs within the academic ESL department.

Many questions need to be considered to resolve the issues. The main point is to create an interface between these areas that will lead to student success. In addition to curriculum articulation, support services must be made available, particularly, advising, testing, and orientation.

FOCUS ON SUPPORT

TECHNOLOGY: FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

The English Language Resource Center (ELRC), a computer and tutorial center, has existed at BCC since 1994, when developers first started writing software for students learning English. The ELRC tested software with students who went the Center for practice. After the software was tested in the ELRC, it was recommended for the classroom labs. One major title was *Focus on Grammar*. This was especially useful since grammar classes were usually assigned to the labs.

Since 1999, the ELRC has had pages on the College's website with links for students to use to practice English. The staff continuously updates the ELRC Website with links and activities for practice in grammar, listening, pronunciation, writing, and reading. These pages are sometimes used for class practice in the computer labs. In the past six years, there has been a change away from computer software to online textbook companions. This is software delivered via the Internet. Sometimes Java compatibility issues prevent the listening and speaking components from working properly in the College labs.

Since the ELRC has a small number of computers, they can be modified according to the needs of the grammar software and usually made to function for textbook companions. The center also has a pronunciation program, a picture dictionary, and the Longman networked dictionary.

For the future, the ELRC is looking at mobile apps. It seems these are replacing software, but the question of how to deliver them for student use remains to be answered. The ELRC is also looking to convert online flash activities that the staff and peer tutors have created into apps.

The computers in BCC's 4 free-time labs, 18 classroom labs and 59 smart classrooms are equipped with the Academic Core software including three grammar programs: *Focus on Grammar*, *Understanding and Using English Grammar*, and *Fundamentals of English Grammar*. As mentioned above, these programs do not always function properly due to the fact that Java versions required can no longer be supported.

In addition to these programs, the ELRC has *Easy Writer*, *Fishtrek*, *Heinle Picture Dictionary*, *Longman Advanced American Dictionary*, *Preposition Pinball*, *Pronunciation Power*, and *Side by Side*. Despite this array of programs, ELRC computers are used more by students to work with the web components of their textbooks and the Internet than for software.

LEARNING RESOURCES

Library

Bergen Community College Library has 2,195 ALP items. This number includes books with the following subject headings: ALP Fiction, ALP non-fiction and ALP Biography. Also included is a collection of materials on English language teaching and learning, grammar and dictionaries as well as Penguin Readers. The ELRC has a collection of 862 books for use by students and tutors, most of which can be borrowed, and many of these have answer keys for self-study.

English Language Resource Center

The ELRC offers one-to-one tutoring for students in the ESL program for reading, writing, grammar, and speech. Tutoring is also offered for English Language Learners who are in regular college classes but are having difficulty with speaking or writing. There are computers for students to practice English using the Internet, text companion websites, and software. They can also attend workshops, conversation groups, or borrow books from the lending library. The ELRC has a full-time supervisor, a part-time supervisor, and 15 – 20 peer and professional tutors who are native speakers or very good non-native speakers of English.

Since the ELRC was moved to its current location, there has been adequate space for its services; furthermore, there are sufficient tutors, student receptionists, and supervisors. As a result, attendance has remained consistent to just above half of the students in ALP. In addition, some former ALP students, and English Basic skills students who speak English as a second language, also come for tutoring, conversation, workshops, and computer practice.

According to the CIE Data Report: November 2013 of the *American Language Program (ALP) Student Profile*, there were 1,041 students enrolled in the program in the 2012-2013 school year. Of those, 557, or 54%, registered to practice English in the ELRC. 121 students from other classes also registered to use the services of the ELRC. The average number of hours per student was 11.5 (Data compiled from TutorTrac, Fall 2012, Spring 2013).

The faculty liaison position has existed since the Center was established. Currently, the ELRC has two faculty liaisons, a senior full-time faculty member for ALP and a half-time faculty member for ALP Speech. They have several responsibilities. The first is to share ELRC concerns with the faculty and to recruit other faculty to participate in the activities of the ELRC.

Second, the liaisons meet regularly with the ELRC supervisor to discuss the acquisition of additional resources, the improvement of current activities, and the development of new goals for reaching students. The third responsibility is tutor training. The senior ALP liaison holds two sessions each semester on various topics such as grammar, reading, and vocabulary development. The ALP Speech liaison usually prepares one session on how to tutor speech.

The liaisons conduct specialized workshops for students, e.g. “Grammar Q & A,” and “Vocabulary in the News,” “Pronunciation and Conversation Q & A” and “Presentation Tips and Practice.” In addition, this past spring, the ALP Speech Liaison continued the ELRC project on the “Good Language Student,” which she developed into six consecutive workshops.

The work of the liaisons has been beneficial for the American Language Program, the ELRC, and the ESL students in the college.

ADVISING

The faculty and peer advisors in the Center for Student Success work with all students, including those in ALP throughout the year. In addition, the International Student Center provides academic advising to F-1 Visa students. In spring 2014, ALP faculty began advising in the Center for Student Success. Previously, the ALP faculty advisors, who complete their contractual academic advising obligation by helping new ALP students with registration, were located in another area, adjacent to the Testing Office. Relocating the ALP faculty advisement to the Center for Student Success is part of a larger College initiative to create One-Stop-Shop Student Services.

The Center for Student Success has seen a trend that students tend to register towards the end of the registration period and the Center can easily see over 100 students a day. Therefore, as the semester draws nearer to the next term, it has been recommended that faculty advisors sign up as early as possible for their advising hours and that the list be forwarded from the ALP Department Chair to the Center for Student Success as soon as possible. Having the faculty list earlier allows students to make plans to meet with an advisor and allows faculty the opportunity to refresh their portal/web advisor skills.

A further enhancement of academic advising for ALP students was discussed in fall 2013 at an ALP/Student Affairs meeting. Creating an ALP/Counseling Team was suggested. This collaboration would greatly enhance the ability to provide timely and much needed service to students. Action to build this team is anticipated.

For the students transitioning out of the American Language Program after successful completion of ALP Level 3, it has been suggested that academic counselors provide presentations during a Level 3 class session, as was done in the past. However, when the topic was revisited, it was decided that the presentation would take away from classroom time. If Academic Counseling is willing to make the presentation, ALP Level 3 professors might consider building it into the syllabi the same way that Reading teachers at all levels schedule an Information Literacy session at the library. This way an essential service could be provided to ALP students.

Students enrolled in ALP courses can visit the Center for Student Success to discuss their current or intended major. They can meet with an academic counselor who can then review the program evaluation with the student.

The International Student Center (ISC) currently provides a workshop for F-1 Visa students on the verge of transitioning out of the ALP. This workshop is provided in several languages (English, Korean, and Turkish) throughout the fall and spring terms. In addition, the handout for the workshop has been translated into multiple languages (Arabic, French, Korean, Macedonian, Spanish and Turkish). The ISC has the workshop schedule published on the College website and sends it out electronically to all enrolled F-1 students via their Bergen student e-mail account.

As has been noted elsewhere in this report, students on F-1 visas make up approximately 27% of ALP students. Services provided by ISC are targeted for this population. Areas for collaboration and coordination of efforts need to be explored. Sharing information about the ISC Workshops with ALP faculty and students is an example.

PLACEMENT TESTING

The first point of contact for students is the Office of Testing Services (OTS). The staff implements testing guidelines provided by the Academic Affairs, which are:

- ALP Placement Testing Policies: BCC does not accept English credits from any institution outside of the United States w/the exception of the Philippines.
- Students who have lived in this country less than 8 years and have not taken any formal English in high school classes here in the U.S. must take the Accuplacer ESL Test. A student who has lived in the U.S. less than 8 years but has taken at least 3 years of English courses in high school may take the Basic Skills Test. If the student has only taken ESL classes in high school, the student must take the ESL test instead.
- Students may be placed in the ALP with their TOEFL scores.
- Students who have taken the GED test in English and passed do not need to take the ALP test.

Placements are determined by scores on the Accuplacer ESL test: for ALP, one score is used to determine a level placement. It is an average of scores on Language Use, Reading Skills and the Essay sections. The essay is electronically scored. For SPE, the listening section is used with an additional speaking evaluation done in the classroom during the first week of the semester.

Students are allowed to challenge their placement by retaking the Accuplacer one time before the semester begins or before the student starts taking courses. ALP teachers also conduct placement assessment for new students in the Writing courses, using a diagnostic writing assignment. Students' levels can be changed by the Academic Department chair, who reviews the recommendation of the Writing teacher.

Once students have begun to take courses in their assigned level, they do not have an opportunity to test again. Lately, if a student, or one of his or her teachers, petitions, the Chair of the ALP or ALP Speech department may authorize a waiver enabling the student to skip a course or a level.

OTS does placement testing throughout the calendar year. Students who take the test need someone to interpret the test results and assist the students with the advising and registration process. OTS staff must rely on the Center for Student Success and the Academic Department Chairs and the faculty. There is a need for consistency in the information that is given and for the schedules of these areas to be synchronized. Seamlessness of service is a goal for these three areas to achieve.

RECRUITMENT

The ALP recruits students via the BCC website, where information about the program can be accessed in several languages.

Recently, the college recruitment officer was asked whether he actively recruits ESL students to attend the American Language Program. He was unaware of the ALP program and referred only to the ESL program at the Ciarco Learning Center in Hackensack. This points to an institutional breakdown in communication---that the recruitment officer would be unaware of a program that has been in existence at the college for almost 40 years, currently serving over 1000 students. It points to the urgent need for the proper dissemination of information about the American Language Program.

REGISTRATION

It has become evident that students are encountering glitches in registration process. Staff in Advising and in Testing has encountered inconsistencies in the way pre- and co-requisite rules are applied both in the Datatel Colleague system and by individuals who grant waivers to students. The results make it difficult for students to complete their registrations without going to in-person registration with a signed paper form. In order to address these problems, all the rules must be consistent and be applied consistently throughout the campus.

FINANCIAL AID

Students admitted into degree programs are eligible for 30 remedial credits. The ALP courses are considered remedial. Since the entire ALP is comprised of 60 credits, any student on financial aid who is taking Foundations and/or Level 1 courses will run out of aid while completing the program. In addition, students that complete the ALP coursework and then test into remedial math may not have aid to cover those courses.

It is recommended that there be a handout in multiple languages that clearly explains how ALP courses are considered remedial and that students receiving financial aid will only be allowed 30 credits. Repeated courses and grades of “E”, “W”, and “F” will factor into the 30 credit allowance. The ESL program could identify their top languages and translate this information into a single handout.

SUMMARY

Program Achievements, Progress Made Since Last Review

New courses: SPE Electives; TOEFL Prep

Pilot Projects: ALP-Gen Ed Paired courses; Capstone Project: Integrated Skills for Academic Success

Curricular Materials: Information Literacy Instruction

New services: Intercultural Conversation Partners; ELRC Workshop Series

Faculty Development: Library Research Guide: ESL Research; ALP Summits

Mission/Goals/Objectives

Both ALP and ALP Speech have as a mission giving students the skills they need to reach academic and professional goals. ALP includes personal goals as well. The programs of instruction emphasize academic skills. This makes sense since data show that the majority of the students want to earn a degree from Bergen and transfer to a 4-year institution. There are also many students who are professionals with credentials from their countries who need college English for professional purposes, or students who are seeking to improve their English TO advance their level of employment. Finally, there are students whose current goals relate more to improving their lives in the U.S.

In order for the ALP to better serve the entire student population, there is a need to explore expanding options and coordinating with the other ESL programs on campus.

Strengths:

- Dedicated, experienced faculty
- Longstanding program serving a very diverse groups of immigrant and international students
- Comprehensive ESL curriculum, including intensive instruction in grammar, reading, writing, speaking , and listening
- Online, hybrid, and Web-enhanced courses
- Very good support services including the ELRC, International Student Center, and Intercultural Conversation Partners

- Effective use of statistical reporting (e.g. paired courses, curricular assessment, grade comparisons, enrollments, student success rates)
- Desire to make program improvements and create innovative curriculum including one-credit electives and college-credit courses in speech, and paired courses and capstone project in ALP

Challenges:

- Program pre- and co-requisite policies; programming of registration rules; online registration issues
- Exit criteria and processes
- Placement policies and opportunities for acceleration through the program
- Coordination and communication with other BCC ESL programs
- Program curriculum and design:
 - Number of levels;
 - Configuration of credits to subjects;
 - Integrated skills across components;
 - Scaffolding across levels and transition to college-level courses
- College credit for ESL courses
- College courses for ALP Students: Advising guidelines including eligibility and courses allowed
- Recruitment and enrollment; publicity and advertising
- Advising: Improved collaboration with International Student Center, Student Affairs, and Testing; Academic Advising for continuing students and students transitioning from ALP to College courses
- Disagreement over One Program-Two Department organization
- Fragmentation and communication issues in ALP

Recommendations for Change:

Better methods for accomplishing agreed upon goals: assigning tasks to subgroups or individuals; setting up timelines; agreeing on channels of communication and keeping them open

Stronger partnerships with Student Affairs and Testing including joint planning and meetings to assess services

Coordination between ALP, Ciarco Learning Center and Continuing Education to provide a broader range of language program options to ESL students

More academic advisement to continuing students as they move through the levels and transition out of the program and between ESL programs at the college

ACTION PLAN

- 1) Goal: Create acceleration opportunities: Identify and recommend effective approaches for accelerating student completion of ESL programs.
 - a) Objective: Examine, clarify, and articulate in writing current ALP policies and procedures for completion of ESL requirement(s).
 - i) Timeframe: Fall 2014 - Spring 2015
 - ii) Responsible Party(ies): A workgroup appointed for this purpose by dean and department chairs including members from ALP and ALP Speech with an appointed group leader
 - iii) Resource Implications: Information Technology and Datatel support for programming registration rules
 - b) Objective: Review Master Course Syllabi for ALP courses to clarify and differential between learning goals, objectives and activities at all levels.
 - i) Timeframe: Fall 2014 - Spring 2015
 - ii) Responsible Party(ies): A workgroup appointed for this purpose by dean and department chairs including members from ALP and ALP Speech with an appointed group leader
 - iii) Resource Implications:
 - c) Objective: Research and design; Review current pilot projects (Paired Courses; Capstone) and decide on how to incorporate these or others into the ALP Acceleration Opportunities.
 - i) Timeframe: Fall 2014 – Spring 2015
 - ii) Responsible Party(ies): Workgroup appointed for this purpose by dean and department chairs including members from ALP and ALP Speech with appointed group leader
 - iii) Resource Implications:
 - d) Objective: Implementation of acceleration opportunities: scheduling, recruitment, registration, advising
 - i) Timeframe: Spring 2015 – Fall 2016
 - ii) Responsible Party(ies): Department chairs and faculty workgroup, faculty coordinator; academic advisors
 - iii) Resource Implications: Printing, advertising; faculty coordinator released time; academic advisor/counselor

- e) Objective: Evaluation of accelerations components and assessment of outcomes
 - i) Timeframe: Spring 2015, 2016, 2017...
 - ii) Responsible Party(ies): Dean, department chairs, faculty coordinator; workgroup

- 2) Goal: Create college-wide ESL pathways
 - a) Objective: Identify pathway opportunities and create policies and procedures for smooth transitions among ESL programs at BCC
 - i) Timeframe: Fall 2014 – Spring 2015
 - ii) Responsible Party(ies): Workgroup appointed for this purpose by dean and department chairs including members from ALP and ALP Speech and including CLC and CE staff members with appointed group leader
 - iii) Resource Implications:

 - b) Objective: Enhance programs and curriculum as needed
 - i) Timeframe: Fall 2014 – Spring 2015
 - ii) Responsible Party(ies): Workgroup appointed for this purpose by dean and department chairs including members from ALP and ALP Speech and including CLC and CE staff members with appointed group leader

 - c) Objective: Disseminate information to students, college, community; recruit and place students
 - i) Timeframe: Starting Summer 2015
 - ii) Responsible Party(ies): Deans, department chairs, coordinator
 - iii) Resource Implications: Printing, advertising; faculty coordinator released time; Academic Advisor/Counselor

 - d) Objective: Provide advisement for placement, transition between programs
 - i) Timeframe: Starting Summer 2015
 - ii) Responsible Party(ies): deans, department chairs, coordinator
 - iii) Resource Implications: Printing, advertising; faculty coordinator released time; academic advisor/counselor

 - e) Objective: Evaluation of acceleration components and assessment of outcomes
 - i) Timeframe: Spring 2015, 2016, 2017...
 - ii) Responsible Party(ies): deans, department chairs, coordinator