Project LEARN Steering Committee Minutes
April 15, 2010

In attendance: Kris Abrahamson, Carole Bennett, Wanda Burzycki, Nancy Chinn, Victor Cummings, Micca Gray, Kimberlee Messina, Eric Thompson

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. and the minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

Report from the Academic Senate. Eric Thompson will be reporting to the Senate at the upcoming April 21 meeting. Two meetings ago, the Senate passed a resolution to support the adoption of a computer program that would track and organize SLOs and assessment information, which is a good sign of support. At the April 21 meeting, Eric will provide the current numbers for courses and programs with SLOs, which, although not yet reaching this year's goal, are still creeping up. Also, Eric announced (modestly) that he will be receiving the Academic Senate's President's Award this year; he credited much of this recognition to the work of the Steering Committee as a whole.

Report from SLO Coordinators. Wanda has mainly been working with individual faculty members on their LAPs. She noted that many people still seem to be confused about where to send LAP proposals and completed projects, so the Committee suggested that she send out an email to department chairs and deans that offers help and lists the steps for submission.

Carole noted that activity regarding SLOs in course outlines spiked after PDA day. She has managed to work through the labyrinth of CATS to determine which courses of each department do not yet have SLOs. Because CATS does not have an efficient means of displaying this information, Carole has manually created lists and sent them to department chairs along with a cover letter offering her assistance in either adding SLOs to course outlines or inactivating courses.

Report from C-Learn. Wanda and Victor reported that C-Learn has not met since the previous meeting but expects that a number of completed LAPs will be submitted at the end of the semester or in the summer since a number of courses depend on data from final exams to represent student achievement of outcomes. Kris will ask Marie Cuneo for an updated list of departments' progress on LAPs.

Report from Pro-Learn. Nancy said that Pro-Learn has been reviewing a few LAPs, mainly from Student Services, and some certificate/major SLOs and maps. Ricardo Navarrette has agreed to support Student Services' efforts in assessment by allowing each unit to dedicate 2-3 hours in the Fall semester to working on their Learning Assessment Project. At the same time, Student Services areas have continued to refine their SLOs so that they can be posted on each area's website.

In terms of instructional programs, many certificates and majors still do not have SLOs. To address this, Pro-Learn will be offering a hands-on workshop during Fall PDA with a special invitation to faculty from those departments. The workshop will be held in a computer lab and will guide discipline faculty in developing, listing, and mapping SLOs for their programs. Participants will leave with completed documents.

Nancy also reported that the tracking of instructional program SLOs and LAPs will now be clearer and more efficient because Liko Puha and Toni Eaton in the Curriculum Office worked with Lynn Dolce to create a comprehensive spreadsheet for program assessment that will be accessible to all three of them.

There was also a discussion of how academic support programs such the Library, Academic Computing, Tutorial Centers fit into the assessment paradigm—are they instructional or more like Student Services? Are they extensions of the SLOs of courses, or are they courses or services themselves? The Committee decided to ask those groups to wait on defining and assessing outcomes until the instructional and Student Services components of program outcomes assessment are more established.

Report from I-Learn. Micca said that KC Greaney has been working with Student Services on how the upcoming student survey will include assessment of Institutional Outcomes. Also, the assessment related to the ILO of "Maintain or improve health" will probably be launched by Health Services in the Fall.

Update on eLumen. Kris reported that Scott Conrad, the new Director of Computing Services, is in the process of re-evaluating existing SRJC computing programs. He discussed eLumen with representatives from the company and feels that at this time, eLumen is not compatible with the current version of SIS. Kris recommended that any decisions about eLumen or a comparable assessment program be postponed until Computing Services has made a full evaluation of its current software and future directions.

Communication Strategy for April/May. The Committee noted that activity related to SLOs and LAPs was low this month but that may be due to other pressing deadlines, such as schedules, PRPPs, and evaluations.

Kimberlee will send out a message about the Fall PDA to the departments that need to work on program SLOs. There was some discussion that some departments should consider consolidating or eliminating the low-unit certificates that do not appear on transcripts and may not be worth the time needed to list, map, and post SLOs.

Wanda will send out a reminder to department chairs and dean about final submission of LAPs. She noted that people still seem very confused about where to submit materials.

Fall 2010 Proposed PDA Sessions. Fourteen departments have requested to conduct assessment-related department workshops during the afternoon of PDA. Nancy and Kimberlee will offer the Program SLOs workshop mentioned above, and Wanda will present something called "Making Assessment Work for You."

Recommended Budget and Conference Travel for 2010/2011. Kris distributed the 2010/2011 budget and noted that there is some money to send two faculty members to the Strengthening Student Success conference in October. The committee decided that it would be good to extend the invitation to faculty not currently involved in Project LEARN in hopes of extending the participation of faculty in outcomes assessment based education. One approach would be to invite tenure track faculty first (Tammy Sakanashi would be the contact), and then seek interested conference attendees through a general announcement as needed.

Project LEARN Structure and Processes. The Committee spent about an hour discussing ways to simplify and streamline the processes currently involved in establishing and assessing SLOs for courses and programs. The need to make decisions in this area is particularly urgent since Project LEARN needs to clearly inform faculty exactly how to handle SLOs and assessment at the Fall PDA presentations. Wanda handed out a few pages of her personal brainstorming on these issues, and the group moved from these to their own ideas.

Given that eLumen or equivalent software will probably not be implemented in the near future, a main thread of the discussion concerned using existing systems to absorb SLO/assessment efforts. For instance, it was suggested and generally agreed that Cluster Tech Review Committees could be used to review SLOs for certificates and majors, and that way all paperwork and communication would stay connected to the Curriculum Office. This would be appropriate since the Curriculum Office adds certificate and major revisions to the Curriculum Review Committee agenda and is also responsible for posting those SLOs on the web. The proposed general process would look something like this:

1. Department develops certificate/major SLOs and creates map.
2. SLOs are entered into field on existing "Certificate and Major Revision Form" (*not* as separate attachment) and map is attached.
3. Form and map hard copy are sent to department chair and then cluster dean for approval and signatures. Electronic versions are submitted to Curriculum Office.
4. Dean submits materials to Curriculum Office.
5. Curriculum Office logs these in and then sends to cluster dean for Cluster Tech Review Committee.
6. Cluster Tech Review Committee reviews Certificate/Major SLOs and map with submitting department representative present. Suggestions are made, minor changes are taken care of right there, and form with SLOs and map are resubmitted to Curriculum Office.

7. Curriculum Review Committee approves SLOs and any other program revisions on Consent Agenda (no discussion).

Logistics of the above process would need to be worked out with the Curriculum Office, and deans, department chairs, and Cluster Tech Review Committees would need to be trained in reviewing program SLOs.

It became evident that the process of course assessment (currently in the form of Learning Assessment Projects) also needs to be streamlined, but that this would involve a much deeper discussion. The Committee decided that it needed to meet at length before the end of the semester, so Kris will work on determining a date and time for a retreat.

A few parking lot issues came up:
- Should the College allow departments to add SLOs to course outlines even if the COR is out of its review cycle (6 years)?
- What kind of efficient tracking system would be used if there is no comprehensive software like eLumen to handle this?
- If Cluster Tech Review Committees were going to be responsible for program SLOs, the workload would be uneven. For instance, there would be an undue burden on the Maggini Cluster, which includes almost all of the CTE and business departments, which have many certificates among them. Meanwhile, other Cluster Tech Review Committees, such as Language Arts and Academic Foundations (LAAF), only have a few majors to deal with.
- How should courses with multiple sections be assessed? With common assessment tools? Is this a department decision?

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

For reference, excerpts from Wanda's brainstorming is being sent as a separate document.