



Project LEARN Steering Committee Meeting Minutes August 19, 2010

In attendance: Kris Abrahamson, Carole Bennett, Wanda Burzycki, Nancy Chinn, Victor Cummings, Micca Gray, Kimberlee Messina, Julie Muzzatti, Susan Quinn, Mary Kay Rudolph, Terry Shell, Eric Thompson

The meeting was called to order at 3:07 p.m. by Steering Committee Co-Chair Eric Thompson. The minutes from the previous meeting (4/15/10) were approved.

Introductions: Committee members introduced themselves. New Committee members are Julie Muzzatti, College Skills instructor; Susan Quinn, Director of Student Health Services; and guest Terry Shell, Math instructor and Academic Senate President. They will be added to the distribution list.

Report from the Academic Senate. The Academic Senate will meet Sept. 1, and at that time Eric Thompson will report on the most recent numbers regarding college progress towards incorporating and assessing SLO's. He will also present the new pathway for program SLO's. At a future meeting, he will be involved in the presentation of the proposal for changes in the assessment process (the meeting date for this presentation has not yet been determined).

Report from SLO Coordinators. Carole has been visiting several departments to share information about updating and inactivating courses. She reported that dealing with the "fringe" courses (such as restricted electives that may not be frequently taught) is slowing some departments down, and that sometimes faculty think they have added SLO's, but the entire process for getting the revised course outline has not been completed. Wanda reported that department chairs have been informed about the new, more streamlined process for SLO course assessment through both a presentation at the Department Chair Training and the PDA workshop on assessment. In general, there has been a positive response to the elimination of the "project" part of the assessment of learning outcomes, and at the PDA workshop, there was considerable interest in the idea of using embedded assessment.

During the discussion about involving more faculty members in the assessment process, Terry mentioned that working on SLO's and assessment could definitely be counted as part of a contract faculty member's College Service.

Mary Kay emphasized that SLO coordinators should make a point to meet with each department early on and be involved in "working meetings" as assessment plans are developed. Also, departments should make updating and inactivating courses a priority, with the bulk of the work (especially inactivations) completed by Spring 2011. There is some concern that if the inactivation of courses not taught for over a designated number of

years occurs at the Curriculum Office level, important components of a few programs might disappear. However, if faculty follow the proper channels for inactivation, this would be much less likely to happen. SLO Coordinators and Project LEARN members should make sure information about SLO's and assessment are communicated to Department Chairs and Deans, all members of DCC/IM, and Cluster Tech Review Committees.

Report from I-Learn. KC was not able to attend the meeting but sent an assessment schedule of Institutional SLO assessment ahead of time. Micca explained that data from the Student Survey, as well as PRPP's and direct student assessment (for writing, math, and health-related knowledge) have all contributed to the ongoing assessment of Institutional SLOs. The next area to be directly assessed will be Intercultural Literacy and Interaction. Specific plans for this will be forthcoming.

Revision of Assessment Process. The committee agreed to skip ahead on the agenda to address this important topic. Kris distributed a draft of Proposed Assessment Process that will be presented to the Academic Senate. She asked for any further feedback by the following day so that it would be ready for Terry to share with the Academic Senate Executive Committee. Discussion centered on the following parts of the proposal:

- Expectation for the first year: one SLO assessed per contract faculty per year. In the future, this might be increased to one per semester.
- Paperflow: The SLO assessment starts with an instructor (or a group, if different sections of the same course are involved); the form goes to the department chair, who may provide feedback on the methodology. However, the committee agreed that any feedback that might be perceived as "criticism" should be minimized since some faculty feel insecure in the first place and will learn better through their own experience about effective approaches to assessment. This led to the conclusion that initially instructors should complete the first two parts of the form about their assessment plans, but a department chair's signature would not be required at that point. The department chair would just keep a copy of the form (electronic and/or hard copy) and provide the Supervising Administrator with a list of the courses and SLOs that will be assessed. When the assessment of an SLO has been completed, an instructor would fill out the remainder of the form and submit that to the Department Chair, who would forward that to the deans for College records. Wanda will revise the form accordingly.
- Embedded assessment: Instructors will be encouraged and trained as needed to use assignments, exams, projects, or other activities that they already use in the course to assess SLOs. Wanda and Carole will work with departments on this.
- Dialogue and reflection: Since this is an integral part of accreditation expectations, departments should use PDA sessions or flex activities to report on and discuss instructors' assessment processes, results, and implications.
- Assessment Committee: There was a discussion concerning the need for a committee (like the now disbanded Pro-Learn and C-Learn) to provide further review and/or support for course or program assessment. It was decided that the SLO coordinators would be adequate resources, and that other Project LEARN members could be recommended for situations where further consultation was needed.

One of the main questions for the Academic Senate concerns the degree to which full-time faculty can be required to assess SLO's (this is the expectation at some colleges). This will be an item for discussion at an upcoming Senate meeting.

Definition of "Cycle of Assessment." Kris said that she has been unable to get a definitive answer from ACCJC about what constitutes "a regular cycle of assessment of SLO's." The draft of the proposal that will go to the Senate addresses the expectations this way:

- At the course level, emphasis will be on key courses including courses that are core requirements in a certificate or major; courses that are included in the SRJC, CSU or UC general education patterns, and courses that are part of a critical pathway, such as the Math, College Skills, ESL, or English sequence.
- SRJC will assess courses that are restricted electives within a certificate/major by assessing a representative sample on a six-year cycle.
- SRJC will assess at least one SLO for each Student Services Program each year.
- SRJC will focus on assessing one Institutional Outcome each academic year, and every three years a Student Survey will assess student self-perceptions about the institutional SLOs.

The Committee discussed various approaches for assessing SLO's of certificates and majors. Some CTE programs have clear methods of assessment through external means (licensing exams, employer feedback), but with academic programs, it's more complicated. The Committee concluded that for many certificates and majors, the assessment of SLO's of courses that relate to the program outcomes would be an adequate reflection of student achievement of program SLO's as well. The mapping document that is currently required for programs would become a good resource for tracking the assessment of program SLOs through course assessment. Kris will include this approach in her revision of the proposal.

During the discussion, it was acknowledged that at this time, the College would not be adopting an SLO assessment tracking system like eLumen because it's basically impossible to make such a system interface with our current version of SIS.

Communication Strategy for August/September. Kris will send out information about the College's SLO/Assessment goals and its progress towards them (in raw numbers and percentages). Wanda will send a follow-up email to Department Chairs to clarify the new assessment process as well as the pathways for course and program SLO's through Cluster Tech Review and the Curriculum Office. Carole and Wanda will contact all department chairs to about attending department meetings.

Conference Attendees. Project LEARN is sending two tenure-track faculty, Lauren Servais from English and Annie Banks from College Skills (with math emphasis), to the Strengthening Student Success Conference in October.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:54 p.m.