



Project LEARN Steering Committee Meeting Minutes October 21, 2010

In attendance: Carole Bennett, Wanda Burzycki, Nancy Chinn, Victor Cummings, KC Greaney, Julie Muzzatti, Susan Quinn, Mary Kay Rudolph, Eric Thompson

The meeting was called to order at 3:12 p.m. by Steering Committee Co-Chair Eric Thompson. Kris Abrahamson was on an accreditation site visit. The minutes from the previous meeting (September 16) were approved.

Report from the Academic Senate. Eric reported that on the whole, the Academic Senate seems to support Project LEARN's goals. He recently sent out a college-wide email about his personal implementation of SLO assessment in his courses, and he said that the email was well received overall, with about 25 responses, almost all positive. The next step is having the Senate approve a resolution reflecting Project LEARN's plan for assessment and faculty obligation. Eric will compose that resolution and send out a draft to Steering Committee members within a couple days so that the resolution can be placed on the November 3 agenda.

Mary Kay described a second resolution that was being developed between the Academic Senate and Academic Affairs Counsel about the inactivation of noncompliant (out of review cycle) courses. Wanda asked to be involved in the composing of this resolution since it is related to the Curriculum Review Committee. Ideally, this resolution would also be presented at the Nov. 3 Senate meeting, but the two resolutions would be voted upon and approved separately.

The group discussed the importance of the Senate endorsement of these two resolutions because faculty need clear direction about the action they need to take in order to reach the "proficiency" level for course and program assessment. Susan Quinn shared Ricardo Navarrette's observation after an accreditation visit that the faculty involved were less "forgiving" than administrators about weaknesses in an institution's assessment process, and that SRJC should be aware of these high expectations.

Report from SLO Coordinators. Carole displayed graphs that illustrated the effect the inactivation of courses has on the percentages of courses with SLO's (now 56%). She then described her recent accreditation visit to San Diego City College. She said the experience was very enlightening, and in particular reinforced her sense that SRJC is moving in the right direction with its SLO Assessment form, its separation of SLO's from Objectives in the course outline (though some colleges just re-titled their course objectives as SLO's), and the resulting discussions. She said that accreditation teams are seeking evidence of dialogue about assessment results and how these provide a basis for improvement in education.

The committee discussed ways that SRJC could better document its involvement in assessment and use of results towards change. Suggestions included reminding department chairs to note dialogue about SLO's and assessment in department meeting minutes and giving department chairs a form to fill out regarding their department's activities, discussion, conclusions, and resulting changes during flex and PDA workshops on assessment.

Wanda reported that she and Carole had visited almost all departments to inform faculty about the assessment process and the need for increasing faculty involvement in the assessment of courses. Generally, faculty at the meetings have seemed to welcome the more individualized approach, moving from the "department project" to a process that uses existing methods of evaluation as assessment tools. This allows departments to conduct assessment for several courses and SLO's simultaneously, and several departments are already assessing multiple courses, regardless of the Senate's official recommendation.

KC explained that the Office of Institutional Research could provide some support for faculty, including technical support for automating data collection and assistance in formulating survey questions. Wanda said she would discuss this a little further with KC and then communicate the possibilities to department chairs.

Questions had come up about assessing programs. Focus recently has been on courses, but some options for programs are:

- Using the program "map," a department can record the assessment of courses that relate to program SLO's. When all courses have been assessed, then essentially the program SLO's have been assessed.
- Assess the SLO's of a capstone course, which usually reflect all or most of a certificate or major's SLO's.
- Use a form of external assessment such as licensing exams or employer surveys to represent student achievement of program SLO's. (This may work for CTE programs, but not usually for academic majors.)

The group concluded that program SLO's can still be stated even if the form of assessment cannot be specified initially. For instance, option #1 from above might be a way to address SLO's when it is impossible or impractical to identify and assess the few students who are majoring in a certain discipline.

Institutional Learning Outcomes: KC reported that the Student Survey is underway and that it is being received more positively this time, due perhaps to better education of instructors about the importance of the survey. She reminded the group that the survey does assess all ILO's, and therefore the college is 100% compliant in that regard.

Communication Strategy for November. Eric will speak at the next DCC/IM meeting. Wanda and KC will work on a "what OIR can do for you" email for department chairs or all faculty as a way to remind faculty to continue working on (or start working on!) course assessment. Julie asked, "How do we make people care about accreditation?" and it was suggested that Kris send out a description of what the midterm report involves, what "proficiency" looks like (again), and the implications of the institution's meeting or not meeting accreditation standards. Carole and Wanda will continue to keep in contact with departments to help address their needs. It was suggested that the Senate's passing of the

resolutions would be a good time to launch new reminders of how Project LEARN members can help departments meet college expectations.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Wanda Burzycki