

Project LEARN Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, February 26, 2011

In attendance: Kris Abrahamson, Carole Bennett, Wanda Burzycki, Nancy Chinn, Micca Gray, KC Greaney, Julie Muzzatti, Mary Kay Rudolph, Terry Shell, Eric Thompson

The meeting was called to order at 1:09 p.m. by Kris Abrahamson, and the minutes from the January 20, 2011, meeting were approved.

Report from the Academic Senate. Eric Thompson said that he presented the final draft of the new SLO Assessment Procedures in his last report to the Senate. Other than one question about flex credit, there were no comments, so the procedures supporting the resolution remain unchanged and in place.

Report from SLO Coordinators. Carole Bennett presented a chart that shows that 66% of approved courses have SLO's. She noted that the numbers seem to have plateau-ed and that department chairs may need another "nudge," i.e., another email reminding them which of their department's courses do not yet have SLO's. She said that courses seem to get "lost" between Cluster Tech Review and the Curriculum Office, perhaps ending up on someone's desk. She suggested that the committee continue to look at ways to streamline the process.

She has continued to work with the Curriculum Office and the "user hostile" software that makes it so difficult to update certificate and major websites. Some progress is being made, however, addressing the concerns of the college's task force on Certificates and Majors.

Wanda Burzycki said that she has been having a few people show up at the weekly drop-in SLO/Curriculum sessions, and these interactions have been very productive. She has met with individuals from Culinary, Dance, Counseling, and Student Services. She has also attended some department meetings, such as PE and Child Development, to go over the new procedures and found that people have been very receptive to them. Wanda also worked with Linda Johns to set up a Student Services page on the Project LEARN website and followed this with a message to Student Services staff and faculty outlining Student Services SLO Assessment procedures (slightly different from the academic side). On PDA, Wanda presented a workshop on rubrics and had a good turn-out with genuine interest.

Micca noted that service-oriented departments such as the Library should be included in all discussions of SLO assessments. She gave an example of the current survey used by Library staff to determine the degree to which instructors are supplying course texts for the Reserve Desk.

Electronic Submission and Tracking System for SLO Assessments. Carole has been working extensively with IT staff to create a system for online access to and completion of the SLO Assessment Form. She distributed a flow chart that showed who would be able to access the form and when. The faculty working on an SLO Assessment would have initial access to it, and at different stages, others such as department chairs, supervising administrators, other members of the college community (depending on the department's wishes), and accreditation visitors would be able to view the form. The committee discussed who should have access, and it was agreed that department chairs should have full access once the first two parts of the form were submitted, and deans should be able to see it after the form is completed. It was observed that many faculty fear allowing their assessments to be viewed by the public since administrators or others may misinterpret the assessment results and may judge them or their department unfavorably. Kris reminded everyone that the contract states that assessment results cannot be a part of faculty evaluation.

At this point, it looks like the form would probably reside in the Sharepoint digital storage, which is being adopted by the college, and could be accessed, she suggested, through faculty Cubbies. The new form will have a number of drop-down menus in the heading; there was a question as to whether the SLO's from the course could be available from the form as well. Carole said she would investigate. There was also a suggestion that the form clearly require some comment on dialogue, discussion, or other follow-up of the SLO results. This would be important because accreditation emphasizes how results are addressed by the faculty and the department.

Carole said this form could be launched this semester and suggested piloting it with a large department such as Math.

She said she would invite Scott Conrad and Mark Linford to the next Project LEARN Steering Committee meeting to demonstrate how the form and the electronic process would work. The committee voted to approve the use of the online form as soon as it was ready.

Communication Strategies for March. Kris recently sent out an email with a clear graph summarizing the numbers of courses and programs with SLO's. She noted that there has been little progress in terms of program SLO's—it's hard to tell how much of that is due to the website bottleneck for certificates and majors or that departments have not been submitting them. She is going to have Linda Johns get a list of majors and certificates without SLO's, and Wanda and Carole will follow up by personally contacting department chairs and offering support. It was also suggested that workshops on writing and mapping Program SLO's be offered more frequently.

Wanda said she will send something out announcing that the rubrics have been posted on the Project LEARN website.

Carole asked if faculty have been working on course inactivations—after a peak in the fall, there has seemed to be little activity on that front. Wanda said that she is working with the Curriculum Review Committee to prepare a step-by-step “cheat sheet” about course inactivation and reactivation so that faculty will have a better understanding of the process and the consequences. Once this is completed, she will communicate with the Academic Senate and department chairs, and this—plus the upcoming PRPP—may motivate faculty to submit more inactivations.

KC said that when the results about Institutional Learning Outcomes from the recent Student Survey are finalized, this would be another point of interest to share with faculty.

Institutional Learning Outcomes—Student Survey Preliminary Results. KC provided her preliminary findings on the Student Survey. The percentage of students reporting gains on institutional SLO's went up in every category except writing. Kris hypothesized that reducing the schedule by 12% has eliminated the recreational/avocational student, and a greater number of the students here in Fall 2010 were seriously pursuing a degree or certificate. One category, Health and Wellness, continues to have a lower percentage of students who have made gains. Perhaps it is simply not a critical component of most classes. KC suggested perhaps it is time for the Senate and others to revisit the institutional SLOs to determine if these are still the knowledge and skills that we want all students to learn.

SLO's in Course Outline of Record

Kris brought up the idea again of including institutional SLOs in the course outline of record to remind faculty to include them in the design of their instruction. This item will be on the next agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:47.

Respectfully submitted,

Wanda Burzycki (with supplemental information from Kris Abrahamson)