

Project LEARN Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, September 20, 2012

In attendance: Kris Abrahamson, Wanda Burzycki, Li Collier, Karen Frindell Teuscher, Micca Gray, Eve Nighswonger, Anne O'Donnell, Susan Quinn, Eric Thompson, John Weser.

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m. by Kris Abrahamson, Project LEARN co-chair. New members were introduced:

- Li Collier, Dean of Student Success and Retention, who will represent Student Services. Susan Quinn will maintain connections with the committee as Li transitions in.
- Karen Frindell Teuscher, Interim STEM Dean, who will be representing AAC in place of Victor Cummings, who is stepping away after many years with the Project LEARN effort.
- John Weser, instructor from the English Department, who expressed interest in becoming involved in Project LEARN after his own experiences with assessment.
- Anne O'Donnell, of Consumer & Family Studies, who is now officially taking over from Carole Bennett as SLO Coordinator with a CTE focus.
- Peggy Swearingen, Administration of Justice instructor, who will act as liaison with the Curriculum Review Committee.

Kris commented on the importance of this committee not only in relation to accreditation and college initiatives, but for the cross-constituency representation of assessment efforts in multiple arenas.

The minutes from the May 17, 2012, meeting had been completed and sent to Kris, but since they had not yet been distributed to the group, it was decided that they could be sent out with the minutes for this meeting and reviewed and approved at the Oct. 18 meeting.

Report from the Academic Senate. Eric Thompson said that the Senate is not really talking about SLOs and assessment now because a major goal—incorporating SLOs into all course outlines and program descriptions—was accomplished earlier this year. He noted that despite Project LEARN efforts at communication, some instructors were still unaware of the availability and the role of the Project LEARN SharePoint site. Wanda said that information was sent out at the end of Spring and information and links are on the website, but she will follow up with announcements about SharePoint trainings in October.

Report from SLO Coordinators. Anne and Wanda met earlier to discuss strategies, and both have communicated with department chairs to determine the needs of individual departments. Anne said that she has had responses from almost all the CTE chairs and in the process of meeting with them and attending department meetings.

Wanda worked with Corrine Haverinen on the SLO website to make minor updates. Kris said that some funds are available for Corrine to make additional changes such as adding the new members, providing a newer version of SharePoint instructions, and posting some new examples of good assessment projects on the Showcase page. Wanda will follow up with Corrine.

A question came up about the percentage of course assessments currently in SharePoint. The last count at the end of Spring was about 18%, but Kris thought that the percentage might be higher by now since several departments entered assessments over the summer. The group discussed the need for keeping courses that are not currently being taught (and therefore cannot be assessed) out of the equation. Peggy said that the Curriculum Database lists courses not being taught. However, at this point, any calculations need to be done manually. Kris will see if IT can help develop some mechanism in the PRPP to separate out these courses.

SharePoint Project LEARN Site: There is clearly a need for training for both faculty and AAs, so Wanda and Anne will work with individuals and departments, and Wanda will organize a couple flex workshops this semester.

Communications for October: Before specific plans were made, the committee members discussed the definition of a cycle of assessment since faculty are beginning to ask that question. At this college, it has been stated that every SLO should be formally assessed and documented every 6 years, but there is an assumption (or hope) that faculty are informally assessing and discussing results on an ongoing basis. Anne stated that, based on her experience with the Diet & Nutrition accreditation this past spring, it's important that departments and other components document informal assessment in some accessible fashion, such as department minutes, updates in departmental emails, or postings on department or program websites.

Assessing Certificates and Majors: Now that SLOs for all certificates and majors have been posted, they need to be assessed. This is not such a difficult task for many CTE programs, which often have licensing exams or projects in capstone courses to use for certificate or major assessment purposes. However, most Liberal Arts and Sciences majors require a different approach since it's often hard to identify which students are majors. At this point, the "bottom up" method can be used, in which the cumulative assessment of a major's course SLOs will demonstrate the assessment of the program SLOs. This is where referring to the certificate or major "map" will be a useful tool and possibly a template for representing how the assessment was done. The SLO coordinators will help communicate this approach to department chairs and other faculty, but there may be a more comprehensive way, such as workshops or presentations, to explain this approach. An appropriate form and process for storing also need to be developed.

Institutional Learning Outcomes Assessment: Kris explained that it is important that the college demonstrate how results of institutional assessment are being used. Susan Quinn mentioned how the National Health Survey conducted in 2010, and to occur again in 2013, might be an example of a broad, institutional assessment that might be used for such a purpose. For example, the survey results might provide a platform for a thematic approach to ILOs, such as the one on "maintain and improve health," where many departments could focus their assessment on course or program SLOs that relate to the health item under "Personal Development and Management."

While the committee agreed that there did not seem to be a need to revisit all the ILOs at this time, it would probably be a good idea to have workshops and other activities to encourage dialogue about them, along with assessment ideas, in Spring 2013.

Goals for 2012/2013: The committee reviewed the Steering Committee goals from the previous year along with the goals for College Initiative V on Student Learning Outcomes, which directly reflect the standards from ACCJC accreditation requirements in that area. The emphasis now moves from simply identifying and posting SLOs to assessment and documenting dialogue and improvement based on assessment results. The committee returned to the topic of assessing certificates and majors, especially for Liberal Arts & Sciences, and set a tentative goal that 10% of all programs—approximately one per department—would be an appropriate goal for the year. This would involve educating faculty and staff about approaches to program assessment, and the SLO website will be instrumental in this effort. This will call for additional information and examples on the website.

Kris will take the suggestions from the committee to create a draft of the 2012/13 Project LEARN goals, and the next meeting will focus on finalizing them.

Next Meeting and Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 2:58. The next meeting will be Thursday, October 18.