

SLO Assessment Review Committee 2007 Annual Report State of the SLO Union

Introduction and Background

Assessment of student learning outcomes, a relatively new focus for Cabrillo, is now occurring in all corners of the campus, embedded in our regular Departmental Review and Instructional Planning processes. As part of this strategic planning activity, departments in each **assessment sector** of the college (Transfer and Basic Skills Instruction, Occupational Programs, Library, Student Services and Administrative Services) **measure** how they individually contribute to student mastery of the college's core competencies. Each of the five sectors of the college uses different methods to assess student success. See the SLO website (<http://pro.cabrillo.edu/slos/index.html>) for a detailed description of the methods used in each area.

Since Departmental Review and Instructional Planning are cyclical and on-going, departments undergo them on a rotating basis; only a few departments complete the process each year. In addition, in Instruction, SLO assessment is being phased in; each year the departments participating in Instructional Planning are given different initial assessment tasks. Once those first tasks are completed, the full scope of assessment, called The Revolving Wheel, is implemented. Eventually, all Instructional Departments will assess student mastery of course, certificate, and degree SLOs as part of the on-going Instructional Planning process.

Those departments completing Departmental Review and Instructional Planning in a given year forward their assessment reports to the SLO Assessment Review Committee. This thirteen-member committee, a subcommittee of the Faculty Senate, is chaired by the Learning Outcome Assessment Coordinator and is composed of representatives from the Student Senate, Faculty Senate, CCEU, CCFT, and a manager along with representatives from Administrative Services, Student Services, Library, and Instruction (both Transfer & Basic Skills and Occupational). The Campus Researcher and Accreditation Liaison Officer serve as ex officio members of the committee.

The SLO Assessment Review Committee's job is to read and analyze these assessment reports, looking for student needs and issues that may be occurring across the campus and also scanning for possible issues for campus-wide dialogue. ARC is then charged with writing a report about its analysis, a state of the SLO union, if you will. This report is sent to campus governing bodies, including the Governing Board, the Master Planning Committee, the College Planning Council, the Faculty and Student Senates and both unions, CCFT and CCEU. These are the groups that can take action about the issues that ARC has observed. For more detailed information on ARC's charge, membership and duties, please see the SLO website.

ARC met for the first time in May 2007. This report is its initial analysis of the SLO assessment results for those departments who completed Instructional Planning or Departmental Review in the 2006-2007 academic year. Since we consider this report a pilot of a new shared governance activity, we also analyzed our own process as well.

Assessment Process: Facts and Figures

Participating in this year’s assessment were eight departments serving Transfer and Basic skills, five Occupational programs, the Library, Health Services, and four areas of Administrative Services.

Assessment Sector	Department
Transfer and Basic Skills	Anthropology Art History Art Photography Engineering Physical Education Physics Political Science Sociology
Occupational Programs	Business Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management Dental Hygiene Early Childhood Education Horticulture
Library	all one department
Student Services	Health Services
Administrative Services	Watsonville Center Bookstore Duplications Business Services Office

For the Instructional/Occupational programs, there were typically from 2 to 9 faculty participating in the departmental assessment dialogs, with from 1 to 6 faculty members giving presentations of their SLO assessment results. Only two departments gave a breakdown of adjunct faculty participation. It is recommended that this information be more clearly solicited in the future. In addition, it would be helpful to know what **percentage** of the entire department engaged in the assessment activity and the dialogs.

Student Services, the Library and Administrative Services areas performed their assessments by conducting surveys. Generally, a satisfactory number of responses were obtained, allowing the programs to assess the effectiveness of their services. The Library

had 90% of its staff and faculty members participate in the dialogs about their assessment results.

The different sectors had different assignments to meet their assessment goals.

- **Transfer and Basic Skills**
All eight programs attempted to assess three core competencies. One program will complete its assessment in Fall 2007, and another program assessed one competency in two different ways.
- **Occupational**
The four programs in this sector wrote SLOs for all certificates and degrees and created plans to assess them. In addition, some, who also offer transfer courses, assessed elements of the Core 4.
- **Student Services**
Health Services presented a clear assessment plan that outlined how services will be assessed over the five-year departmental review process, identified specific assessments to be done each year, outlined the evaluation process and its timing, mentioned staff participation, and described how the process will be used to implement needed improvements. Inputs include student user surveys, the campus climate survey, and Clinical Quality Assurance Indicators, and other measures. Results from the survey were provided, but no evidence of discussion of these results was presented. It is recommended that Departmental Review reports include a mention of those discussions.
- **Library**
The library functions as a computer lab in support of student research and works with students to satisfy their needs for materials and other resources. It assessed student success in these areas through a survey. In addition, it assessed its contribution to student mastery of the Core 4 by assessing two competencies in its Library 10 course.
- **Administrative Services**
All departments successfully conducted surveys of their respective users. Links to the Core 4 were not always clearly stated, but there was evidence of effective discussion about the survey results and how they can be used to improve support for student learning.

Assessment Results: Emerging Needs and Issues

- **Instruction**
One major concern that emerged was the level of actual participation by adjunct faculty in the process. There was considerable variation among departments as to the proportion of adjuncts participating. Since assessing SLOs is central to what

we are as a college, then we need to explore ways to encourage greater adjunct involvement.

Many departments came to the conclusion that more tutorial services for students are needed. Another common thread was the concern over student preparation for college in general and for some specific classes. Appropriate levels of writing, reading and college readiness all remain a challenge.

- **Student Services**

The user survey about Health Services revealed that respondents rated the services they received at very high levels. Sample comments in response to the question “What did you learn today that you will use to live a healthier life?” reveal important student learning is occurring, for example: “I started to get clarity in which direction my life is going;” or “learn to follow a better healthy diet;” or “make health a top priority.”

- **Library**

The library learned from its survey that the longer students have been at Cabrillo, the more likely they respond very positively about their experiences in the library. This has led library staff to informally reach out to new students (“Is this your first semester at Cabrillo?”). Librarians have also done more roaming -- walking throughout the building, being more visible in study areas -- which solicits reference questions.

- **Administrative Services**

Duplications utilized a campus-wide survey (including Watsonville Center) to assess their services. The survey responses, while primarily positive, also suggested that the Policies and Guidelines for Duplications be available on its web site and indicated the need for quicker turnaround times, access to self-service equipment and longer hours.

The Bookstore Customer Service survey showed that the store outperformed the national average on all but two dimensions. The Bookstore plans to develop other surveys to “identify opportunities in the merchandise departments and to refine product mix.”

Business Services’ survey was sent to members of four groups that directly interact with the office of the Vice President of Business Services. The survey revealed that the Office is functioning at very high levels. Though the survey was designed to rate how the office performed, many respondents included favorable personal comments about the individual staff as well, indicating that the paradigm shift from evaluating persons to evaluating office functions has not yet occurred.

The Watsonville Center self-study delineated how services and instruction offered at the Center support the Core 4. The self-study also analyzed student survey

results and the results of external data research (Clarus Corporation Market Assessment). „Students indicated a high interest in job training and classes in Spanish or ESL; needs for more tutoring were also identified.

Assessment of ARC tasks and Cabrillo’s SLO Assessment Process

In addition to looking at the assessment reports, ARC evaluated its own tasks and processes. Overall, the committee felt that the existing processes provided a way to get a good picture of assessment activities across the entire college. It was fascinating to note the common themes that emerged from the Instructional component, particularly about working with under-prepared students. It will be interesting to see if the work of the Emerging Scholars Institute and the statewide Basic Skills Initiative will begin to ease this frequent concern.

The committee was also pleased to note that many program chairs felt that SLO assessment and its resulting dialogue about student learning was worthwhile.

The committee did note the following challenges and suggested possible changes to address them.

- **Instruction**

ARC recognized the strengths and weaknesses of the “check the box” format on the Assessment Review form used to report assessment results. For the time being we will continue to use it, while encouraging faculty to think “outside the box” as well.

It was suggested that using a Scantron form for quantitative data (numbers of faculty involved) might be easier for record-keeping.

- **Student Services**

In their exit report, the accreditation site team recommended that Student Support Services better align their assessment processes with the college as a whole. Regarding this, ARC discussed whether or not all departments in Student Services directly affect Student Learning or if some are more indirect like departments in Administrative Services. Does each department in Student Services need to write specific SLOs and assess them or are effectiveness surveys, like used in Administrative Services, appropriate assessment instruments? We will anxiously await the final accreditation report to learn if departments such as Health Services need to reconfigure their assessment plans and methods.

- **Administrative Services**

We recognized that the SLO Assessment process involves a paradigm shift away from evaluating people and toward evaluating services. As some of the survey

results indicated, we have far to go in implementing this shift. More education and dialog is needed.

Best Practices

The ARC Committee salutes the efforts of all programs and departments that have undergone Instructional Planning since the introduction of the SLO Assessment model. We recognize that producing reports and conducting ongoing assessment requires a great deal of dialog and follow-up work.

ARC felt several of the plans it read could serve as models for other departments or programs. In particular, Early Childhood Education, the Library, Student Health Services, and the Business Office did excellent work.

In terms of faculty participation, the Dental Hygiene Department is to be commended for having 12 of 15 faculty members actively participate in their program assessment. It may be that other departments had a similar proportion of department faculty participate, but that information was not solicited and remains unknown.

ARC recognized that the SLO website - <http://pro.cabrillo.edu/slos/index.html> - is a great resource, including examples of some excellent program planning documents. The committee recommended that “best practices” for SLOs and assessment in all of the college assessment sectors – Instruction (Transfer and Basic Skills and Occupational), Student Services, Library and Administrative Services – be more clearly and easily available through the college’s website and through the college’s P-drive archives. The SLO Coordinator is available to all programs to help in all phases of the assessment process.

Recommendations

1. The Administration and CCFT, along with program chairs and Deans, need to find ways to increase adjunct participation in SLO assessment in Instruction.
2. Revise the Instructional Assessment Analysis form to include
 - a) Information about the total number of faculty in a department, the total number of faculty who completed SLO assessment (contract/adjunct numbered separately) and the total number participating in assessment dialogues, along with what percentages of the department those numbers represent (contract and adjunct listed separately).
 - b) Add a box to the section on the form on how to improve an item for “maintaining strong faculty.”
 - c) Develop a Scantron form for quantitative data.

3. Student Services and Administrative Services Departmental Reviews include a section about departmental discussions of survey results.
4. Continue to educate the Cabrillo community about the paradigm shift from evaluating individuals to evaluating departments. Use flex activities, and campus governing bodies such as CPC and Faculty Senate as vehicles for this education.
5. Make the SLO website, particularly the “best practices” examples posted there, clearly and easily accessible from the campus web page and on the college’s P-drive archives.