Hi Kathleen,

Sure, I’d be happy to update you on these items.

Regarding the SLO Assessment Committee: Although we are scheduled to meet twice monthly, we have been meeting once a month recently and will likely continue this going forward. The liaison will ask members to make themselves available once per month, but also on an “as-needed” basis in the coming semester. We had to cancel our early November meeting due to illness (mine), and the second meeting of November fell on Thanksgiving. I am attaching minutes from our 9/25 and 10/23 meetings to this email.

The issues under consideration have been many, but here are the big ones:

1) Developing a web presence. The committee has devoted significant resources to considering faculty needs with regard to support of SLO/PLO assessment efforts, in conjunction with the Professional Development Liaison who is on the committee. These efforts have resulted in prioritization of 5 areas of support/dialogue, which are: ongoing faculty dialogue about assessment, best practices or guiding principles document(s), relevant/interesting articles, spotlight/personal profiles regarding faculty experiences (video interviews), and a section specifically devoted to part-time issues and concerns with SLO assessment process.

Resources are currently being gathered from various sources, and once they are gathered, we will ask MIS for a campus based website that faculty can curate. We should have something up by the new year, depending on MIS support. The committee felt that this is really only a temporary solution, and that it would be beneficial to hire a web designer to put something together that is more engaging than the standard intranet pages that shared governance committees use. Kaye Bedell did something like this for the high school ROP articulation page. The shared governance pages are boring, they all look the same, and our web presence would get kinda lost in this setting. Also, these pages do not offer any kind of interactive dialogue feature that would allow faculty to post in a discussion forum if they want to. We discussed the idea of using iLearn for this, in conjunction with the standard intranet pages, but the committee indicated that these resources are limiting and cumbersome, and the campus would be better served with something better and more modern, especially if we are trying to “re-boot” the campus discussion around assessment.

2) We have been brainstorming ways to foment faculty dialogue around SLO’s, and as a result, a plan is in place for an interview video with campus community members about the use and purpose of SLO’s. Those interviews will take place next semester, and the plan is for an edited video demonstrating and encouraging the ongoing dialogue to be posted on the forthcoming and above referenced SLO website by the end of the semester. Encouraging engagement will be an ongoing discussion item for the foreseeable future.

3) Getting SLO’s in the contract. This is an important issue that will require district support, financial and otherwise. Union members have expressed reluctance to use one of the limited number of openers on this issue, meaning that success will be much more likely if this is opened mutually. This issue is of particular importance because SLO assessment data is supposedly a prominent factor in resource allocation decisions and instructional improvement efforts, and to have duties that are so core to the functioning of the institution outside of the contract is nonsensical.
Keeping the work outside of the contract has contributed to the previously extant feeling among faculty that the process has little value, as demonstrated by the district’s failure to allocate resources to compensate faculty for this addition to their workload. The details of how the committee will advise that assessment be entered into the contract are negotiation items, and are therefore beyond the scope of this missive.

4) Review of another assessment reporting tool for possible campus adoption that has slightly different capabilities, and is more “slick”. Here is a link to the demo:

http://www.lawsonry.com/projects/slocloud/

The committee likes this idea, although MIS did validly point out that, while slick, this system actually does not have all of the functionality that our homegrown system has. For this reason, we are likely to stick with what we’ve got.

Regarding some individual connections... there have been numerous, on issues ranging from big-picture SLO assessment guidance, to specific assessment techniques, to help with data analysis. Three specific ones that come to mind are:

1) Conferring with Cosmetology faculty about assessment for Cosmo 201. I have communicated with Maree Andre and Neena Khanna of the Cosmo department and have helped/guided them in their successful efforts to assess Cosmo 201. These faculty members needed big-picture guidance about SLO assessment. Specifically, Neena made up her own SLO’s and was initially assessing those, and I was able to direct her to the official SLO’s for her course and offered support in determining assessment techniques for those SLO’s as well as providing advice about how to change the SLO’s for her course if she wanted to.

2) Supporting Tatiana Irwin in her efforts to assess History 5. Tatiana reviewed the SLO’s and determined a way to assess those that would have been totally adequate. I suggested an alternative that I believe is slightly better, and is a more efficient use of her time. I believe she will use the approach I mentioned, but of course it is up to her.

3) Helping Jane M. of the DRC with analyzing the data she gathered. Jane came to me for advice because she was not happy with the results of her SLO assessment. Her assessments were based on surveys from students, where students were asked to classify how much they learned about their disability and the accommodations they need to be successful in classes. The students were asked to check a box stating how much they feel they learned. A “success” in reaching the outcome was based on a student selecting “some” or more, and a “failure” to reach the outcome was determined if the student selected “A little” or less. Under this methodology, Jane determined that performance was getting slightly worse over time. I asked some questions, and pointed out that since the terms “some” and “a little” are subjective, and the students had not been educated about how to distinguish between the two, that the change she observed in the data could just be what statistician’s call “random noise”. Since the terms “some” and “a little” can be interpreted to mean the same thing, and since these values are totally subjective anyway, it would be more meaningful to define success in meeting the outcome to be any response indicating “a little” or more, and with this new definition, to review how that data have changed over time. Based on these adjustments, although there was some fluctuation in the data which could have been totally random, there was no indication of the problem she came to me with.

In addition to meeting with these individuals, I have gone to the department chairs meeting to discuss SLO’s, and have been to the Business department (twice), and to Kinesiology, Social Sciences, and Aviation, and am on each agenda to discuss SLO’s. Further, I am scheduled to speak at department meetings for Math, Cosmo, DRC, and ESL going forward.

The course report situation is a bit concerning... When I just looked at the data our completion percentage went down, which is likely due to the addition of new courses. So by just comparing the percentage assessed, we are comparing apples to oranges (e.g. Kinesiology has added many new courses to deal with the repeatability issue). We could get the number up by removing courses that have not yet been offered from the course report, but I’m not sure which those are, or about the ethics involved. If you would like to have some courses removed from the course report, please send a
list to Kyle Billups. Otherwise it looks like we have a lower percentage of courses assessed than we did when the accreditation team last visited. Cleaning up this data could help our numbers significantly.

Please let me know if you have any other questions or concerns.

Best,
Julian

P.S. It recently came to my attention that some california community colleges are paying their SLO folks as much as a .6 release time. Wow.

Kathleen Rose writes:

> Hi Julian,
> 
> > Over the next two weeks I will be setting aside time to work on the final draft of the accreditation follow up report. Could you please forward any recent minutes, goals of the advisory committee, individual connections, or recent SLO report showing assessment completion?
> >
> > Thanks very much,
> > Kathleen