

Student Learning Outcomes at Gavilan College

A Fresh Look

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“Institutional Research – Use it for good, never for evil.”

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Today's Agenda

- Quick SLO introduction for new faculty
- SLO utility
- New changes in SLO expectations
- Examples from our peers
- An example alternative
- Discussion

“I hate SLOs!”

- A story of revulsion and redemption...
- As experts, faculty “know” – trust your experts
- Federal mandates, which turn to accreditation mandates
- Turn the “know” in to data
- Can be much more than simply “getting it done.”
- Retention → Success → Learning Outcomes
- **SLOs CAN add value in addition to compliance**

Student Learning Outcomes - Primer

- SLOs, as opposed to grades, came into vogue nationally in the 1990s
- In theory, SLOs allow for comparison of measurable outcomes across courses and instructors
- As designed, course grades don't do that
- SLOs are increasingly a part of institutional evaluation and accreditation

Student Learning Outcomes – Primer

- Why do they matter?
 - SLOs allow for “objective” measurement of student knowledge/skill in courses
 - There are scientific limitations
 - Methods and improvement
 - SLOs matter for accreditation

The ACCJC Brain Trust

- ACCJC (our accrediting body) is a bit behind the times in using SLOs for accreditation
- Because of this, they're moving fast to catch up
- Standards revised in 2014 – and will apply for our next reaffirmation in 2019

ACCJC SLO Changes for 2014

- SLO results must be “disaggregated”
 - Under current system, we can’t do this
- SLOs must be used in the evaluation process for all employees
- What constitutes “regular”
- Dissemination and discussion of results / specific improvements made

What are our peers up to?

- Example 1:
 - 100% have SLOs
 - 80% of courses assessed annually
 - 80% of faculty involved in SLO activity annually
 - Those that aren't are due to error/circumstances
 - Improvements based on results are documented and revisited in subsequent assessments
 - Results become basis for committee dialog, program planning, quality improvement

What are our peers up to?

- Example 2:
 - Document participation, discussion, follow-up
 - Simplify simplify simplify
 - Stipends for setup work
 - Either a full-time faculty facilitator or multiple department-level facilitators with stipends
 - Assessment committee
 - Disaggregation is key

Gavilan's Potential Hiccups

- Complex
- Irregular
- Consistency (or lack thereof)
- Documentation, improvements, follow-up
- Participation
- Feeder for PLOs/ILOs

Gavilan's Potential Solutions

- Do less work
- Get better results
- Simplify – 2 to 4 SLOs max
- Regularity – settle and stick to schedule
- Consistency – report it the same way
- Discuss, plan, and document
- Done right, PLOs and ILOs should be minimal extra work
- An example...

An Alternative Model

- What if... we assessed every student, in every course, every semester, with less work?
- It's possible!
- True story...
- A college using the following method went from “show cause” to a “model” in three years

An Alternative Example

- Baseline
 - Many courses had no SLOs
 - Those that did were assessed every five years
 - No discussions or improvements documented
 - No consistent dissemination of information
 - Fewer than 15% of faculty reported being involved in SLO work annually

An Alternative Example

- Scramble to save accreditation – college closure possible
- New model, with multiple steps
- Threw money at the problem



The Example – Step 1

- Shared governance discussions
- Identified faculty leaders in each operational area or department
- 3 to 5 days of summer work (one time only)
- Faculty were paid for this initial summer work
- An MOU for evaluation and schedule

The Example – Step 2

- Faculty selected *existing* exam or assignment, added SLO score along with grade
- Entry of grade alongside overall SLO score at end of semester
- When surveyed, faculty reported the additional work as “very minimal”

The Example – Step 3

- Facilitators pulled simple reports
- Facilitators led annual department discussion
 - Results
 - Documentation
 - Improvements
 - SLO goal setting
- \$750 for a day's work
- Revisited the whole thing next year

The Example – Step 4 (PJW Style)

- My former college's spin on it:
- In year two, a committee would use the SLO results from year one to develop:
 - PLOs (no more than 5 per program)
 - ILOs (no more than 6 for the college)
- SLO results → PLOs
- PLO results → ILOs
- Do less work, get better results
- Include in annual fact book / report to state

The Example – Results

- Institution went from “show cause” to a “model institution” for SLOs
- After the initial setup, faculty reported:
 - Less work and better results
 - ≈100% faculty participation
 - ≈100% assessment of all students in all courses every term

The Example – Advantages

- Accreditation
- Track student growth
- Disaggregation easy; SLO scores tied to student IDs
- Made planning efforts based on data easy
- Faculty control; trust the experts
- Simplicity, transparency, consistency
- Eliminated need for SLO-specific artifacts and a summer duty day

The Example – Disadvantages

- Setup was time consuming for some
- Conflict prone departments → conflict prone SLO development
- Disproportionate burden on CTE programs
 - Not necessarily different than now
- Cost for stipends and initial summer setup

Closing Remarks

- Regardless of the direction, updating our SLO procedure will be a large process
- Updating our procedure and going through one cycle before our next visit means starting immediately
- “No brainer”: As subject matter experts, faculty should be empowered and trusted to lead the process

Before I turn it over to the legendary
Susan Dodd for discussion...

**Any questions about the
presentation material?**

Discussion

Where does Gavilan go from here?