



October 2, 2005

**Progress Report  
Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges  
Due October 15, 2005**

**INTRODUCTION**

The results of the March 2004 accreditation site visit require that College of the Siskiyous submit a progress report that describes the progress the college has made on the following recommendation:

**Recommendation 3.** The college develop an institution-wide process, with timelines and responsible parties, for the establishment of specific student learning outcomes for courses, programs, general education, certificates and degrees, and for student services; the assessment of student and employee achievement of those outcomes; and the utilization of the assessment results in a systematic way to make improvements.

The report that follows describes what has been accomplished at COS in regards to student learning outcomes (SLOs) and assessment. To give a complete picture of the process, this report chronicles some of the events and tasks that were completed prior to the March 2004 accreditation visit, and it details events and projects that have been completed or that are still works in progress.

**SLO AND ASSESSMENT SUMMARY**

The following table summarizes the major tasks, completed or in progress, with descriptions, responsible parties, and dates.

TASK	DESCRIPTION	WHO is responsible?	STATUS
<b>Phase One: Training</b>			
AAHE Assessment Conference, Boston	Members of the Accreditation Steering Committee attended many workshops on SLO and assessment issues.	Organized by VP of instruction and ALO	Completed, summer 2002
Faculty workshop on SLOs and Assessment	Introduce faculty to the language of learning outcomes and assessment. Mandatory meeting of all faculty.	Ad hoc committee of the Faculty Senate led this workshop	Completed, Planning Day, Oct. 10, 2003

<b>TASK</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>WHO is responsible?</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Faculty FLEX activity	Follow-up to the October 2003 Planning Day, more discussion of assessment strategies. Ideas for assessing outcomes were presented. Few faculty volunteered to attend.	2 <sup>nd</sup> ad hoc committee of the Faculty Senate (members of the Accred. Steering Committee)	Completed during FLEX Week, January, 2004.
VTEA Accreditation/Learning Outcomes Planning Workshop	A one-day workshop sponsored and funded by VTEA, attended by one faculty member, one counselor, and three managers.	Local team organized by Dean of Voc-Tech	Completed February 2005
Assessment Worth Doing institute	Training in SLOs and assessment, sponsored by the RP Group of the California Community Colleges.	3 members of the faculty attended	Completed August 2005
Faculty/Staff Learning Communities	To address faculty and staff need for more information about creating SLOs for courses, programs, and the institution, discussion groups will study a text on outcome-based learning and then meet with the author for further discussion.	VP of Instruction	Begins Sept. 2005; to be completed Nov. 2005 when the author visits the campus for a one-day workshop
<b>Phase Two: Establish institutional processes for SLO development and assessment</b>			
Review official course outlines for SLOs	All official course outlines submitted for new courses and for course revisions or updates are reviewed to ensure that they include SLOs and assessment examples that measure the stated SLOs.	Curriculum Committee	Ongoing, beginning January 2004,
Revise Instructional Program Review processes and forms	Revising the process began May 04 to include more attention to SLOs and a program's assessment of those SLOs. A proposal went forward to Senate 03/17/05. Proposed changes to Program Review were accepted unanimously.	Ad hoc Senate committee and VP of Instruction	The new review process will be used for all programs beginning Fall 05.

<b>TASK</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>WHO is responsible?</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Revise faculty evaluation processes	Revising the process to include assessment of SLOs began Sept. 03. The new process for tenured faculty was approved by the Senate Oct. 04, then by local CCA/CTA Apr. 05.	Ad hoc committee of Faculty Senate	The new process must now be part of negotiations for 05-06; some faculty have volunteered to pilot the new process Fall 05.
SLO Implementation Plan	Identifies roles, responsibilities, accountability, and an organizational structure to accommodate the college's need to implement SLOs and assessment. Approved by Faculty Senate 03/17/05. Approved by PAC 03/22/05.	Developed by ad hoc committee of the Faculty Senate.	The plan was tabled informally during Summer 2005 as restructuring the Instruction Area took precedence.
<b>Phase Three:</b> Identify student learning outcomes for Courses, Programs, General Education, certificates and degrees, Student Services			
Outlines for New Courses	Whenever the official course outline for a new course is submitted to Curriculum Committee, the committee reviews the outline to ensure that it contains SLOs and assessment strategies that clearly measure those SLOs.	All faculty, Area Directors, Deans, Curriculum Committee	Ongoing, beginning January 2004
Course Updates and Revisions	Whenever a revised or updated official course outline is submitted to Curriculum Committee, the committee reviews the outline to ensure that it contains SLOs and assessment strategies that clearly measure those SLOs.	All faculty, Area Directors, Deans, Curriculum Committee	Began January 2004 but ended January 2005
Program Review	When a program undergoes Program Review, all programs and all course outlines in those programs will be monitored for SLOs. If SLOs do not exist for the program, SLOs will be created as part of the review process.	Program faculty, Area Directors, Deans, VP of Instruction	Ongoing, beginning Fall 05.

<b>TASK</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>WHO is responsible?</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Establish SLOs for General Education	Through much dialogue among faculty members across the campus, a GE philosophy was created and then SLOs established to support that philosophy.	Senate ad hoc committees: GE Philosophy Comm. (Fall 03), GE SLO Comm. (Spr 04), Diversity Comm. (Fall 04-Spr 05).	Philosophy adopted by Faculty Senate Jan. 04. GE outcomes adopted Sept. 04. Diversity SLOs added and adopted Apr. 05.
Student Services	The various units within Student Services have established outcomes.	Student Services Council	Student Services were first established in June 2002, then revised and updated in February 2004.
<b>Phase Four:</b> Assess the achievement of the outcomes—how do we know?			
Pilot assessment activities	Three departments will conduct pilot assessment projects beginning fall 2005. Ongoing assessments for next several semesters will generate data to be used for course and program improvements.	English faculty, Physics/Engineering faculty, and Psychology faculty	First round of pre-tests given Aug. 2005.
<b>Phase Five:</b> Incorporate assessment results into planning processes to make improvements			
Strategic Master Plan and institutional planning process	All institutional committees that feed information into the Strategic Master Plan will report assessment results as appropriate for their area. These data will drive the planning process and institutional improvements.	President and Vice Presidents	Spring 2006 and ongoing

## PHASE ONE: TRAINING

Training is an ongoing issue. The college has offered a few training opportunities for staff and faculty, especially faculty, to inform them of issues surrounding SLOs and assessment and to train them in the development of SLOs and authentic assessments. The college has also sent members of the staff and faculty to off-campus training opportunities. Attendance for these training sessions has been spotty at best. The only training attended by the whole faculty has been a 2.5 hour workshop in October 2003. Seeing a need for more participation by the whole faculty, the VP of Instruction has formed learning communities that will meet during Fall 2005 to discuss more deeply the importance of SLOs and assessment in COS programs and courses.

### AAHE Assessment Conference, Boston

July 2002

The first group to receive training was the Steering Committee for the 2004 accreditation self study and visit. As a result of attending this conference, members of the committee began

discussing issues of SLOs and assessment and how to implement them on the campus. The discussions were tied to the accreditation evaluation process at the time, but these few began bringing discussions of SLOs and assessment into more arenas on campus beyond accreditation: the Faculty senate, Curriculum Committee, Student Services Council, program review processes, and faculty evaluation processes.

**Faculty workshop on SLOs and assessment**

**October 2003**

As the accreditation evaluation process was in full swing, it was time to invite the full faculty into the discussion on SLOs and assessment. At the October Planning Day, a mandatory meeting of the faculty was held to train them on issues relating to SLOs and assessment. Of the full-time faculty, 100% attended this workshop. Most of the discussions centered on definitions more than applications. Running out of time, the faculty called for continued workshops on the issue so that they could learn how to implement SLOs and assessments practically in their programs and courses.

**Faculty FLEX activity**

**January 2004**

During two half-day workshops, faculty received more information about how to design and utilize SLOs in their classes and programs and how to design authentic assessments for their SLOs. Of the 52 full-time faculty members, 12 attended the first session and only 10 attended the second. These FLEX activities were geared toward curriculum and program development. They coincided with the Curriculum Committee's new requirements that all new course proposals and course updates include SLOs and examples of authentic assessments.

**VTEA Accreditation/Learning Outcomes Planning Workshop**

**February 2005**

A small team from College of the Siskiyous attended this training session: one faculty member, one counselor, and three managers. As part of this training, the participants developed an SLO Implementation Plan. They took this implementation plan back to the college where it was discussed and fine-tuned by an ad hoc SLO and Assessment Committee of the Faculty Senate. The implementation plan was approved by the Senate and was one of the considerations during discussions of the hiring of a new VP of Instruction and during discussions of restructuring the Instruction area of the college.

**Assessment Worth Doing Institute, Berkeley, CA**

**August 2005**

Three members of the full-time faculty attended this five-day intensive institute sponsored by the RP Group of the California Community Colleges. The faculty gained more information regarding SLOs and assessment at the course level, program level, and institutional level. They also gained more insights into the directions in which COS should be moving. They will use their newly gained information as group facilitators in the Faculty/Staff Learning Communities.

**Faculty/Staff Learning Communities**

**September to November 2005**

Because faculty participation in SLO and assessment training has been meager, the new VP of Instruction is mandating all full-time faculty members to participate in small group dialogue on SLOs and assessment, studying through the book *The Outcomes Primer*, by Ruth Stiehl, culminating in a one-day workshop in November facilitated by the author. Staff members from the campus, especially select members of Student Services staff will also participate in these discussion groups. The purpose of this project is to move the campus towards institutional and

programmatic outcomes and then building strong course SLOs that directly impact the more global outcomes.

## **PHASE TWO: ESTABLISH INSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES FOR SLO DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT**

### **Review official course outlines for SLOs**

According to the minutes of the Curriculum Committee, October 21, 2003, every official course outline submitted to the Curriculum Committee as part of a new course proposal, a course update, or program review will be scrutinized for SLOs and assessment strategies beginning Jan. 1, 2004. As a result, many courses were reviewed for SLOs and assessments, and many were caught and returned to the originators for revisions. Members of the committee served to help faculty create SLOs if they were having trouble doing so.

As Curriculum Committee members prepared for this increased rigor in their monitoring of official course outlines, they engaged in much dialogue regarding the nature of SLOs, criteria for evaluating SLOs, and criteria for evaluating the assessment examples listed on the course outlines. Committee members came to consensus on what exactly they would look for in the course outlines. The committee designated particular members to take on specific tasks, such as one person to monitor SLOs and another person to monitor assessment examples.

In August 2004, Curriculum Committee changed leadership as well as much of its membership. Those who were responsible for scrutinizing SLOs and assessments stepped down as their term of service came to an end. The new leadership and membership no longer emphasized SLOs and assessment in all courses. The interim VP of Instruction who came on board during Fall 2004 also did not have a history with the previous Curriculum Committee's emphasis on SLOs and assessment. And then the new VP hired in April 2005 also was not aware of the Curriculum Committee's work from the year before. Minutes of the Academic Senate, January 27, 2005, actually state, "Course revisions will no longer be required to incorporate SLOs prior to approval. New courses will continue to be required to develop SLOs." (*Course revisions* is informal terminology for the formal Course Update process.) In other words, only new courses would be reviewed for SLOs. The shift in emphasis reveals a shift in focus: that any course designated as a general education (GE) course should have SLOs that match the new GE SLOs, which were approved and adopted by the Senate on September 4, 2004.

### **Revise Curriculum Development Handbook**

According to Curriculum Committee minutes from October 21, 2003; according to a November 5, 2003, email dialogue between the Faculty Senate president and the chair of the Curriculum Committee; and according to the last Self Study document, the Curriculum Committee had planned to make changes to the Curriculum Development Handbook to include more training information about how to incorporate SLOs and assessment into official course outlines. The task was not completed by the end of the Fall 2003 semester and still has not been completed. The Curriculum Development Handbook still needs to be updated to reflect changes in COS's

understanding of SLOs and assessment, but now the changes to the Handbook should be based on the results of faculty understanding that grows out of the Fall 2005 Learning Communities.

#### **Revise Program Review processes and forms**

During Summer 2004, work began on revising the Program Review reporting process so that it would inform faculty better what changes need to be made in their programs to improve student success and to improve student achievement of SLOs. The purpose of revising the Program Review process was also to make sure that Program Review reports provide data and analysis that are meaningful and useful for program improvements. As part of this revision, attention was paid to how programs and courses can report student achievement of SLOs. An ad hoc committee of the Faculty Senate worked on revising the Program Review process and the Program Review Report form. The changes were brought to and approved by the Senate as a whole at their March 17, 2005, meeting. Instruction Council next approved the revisions to the process at their April 4, 2005, meeting. The revised process and forms went to the President's Advisory Council and to the Board as information items.

The revised process and forms go into effect beginning with all programs that need to be reviewed during the 2005-06 academic year.

Student Services Program Review processes will be revised during the fall 2005 semester to include SLO's. Current annual planning documents include a review of SLO's for student service areas.

#### **Revise faculty evaluation processes**

In September 2003, an ad hoc committee of the faculty Senate began working on a revision of the tenure evaluation process. Part of this revision was influenced by the statement in the new Accreditation Standard III.A that "Faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving stated student learning outcomes have, as a component of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing those learning outcomes." The revised process created by the ad hoc committee, however, did little to include SLOs and assessment in a meaningful way as part of faculty evaluations. Nevertheless, the Faculty Senate approved the changes at its October 14, 2004, meeting and forwarded the changes to the faculty bargaining unit for approval. The Faculty Association (CCA/CTA) approved the changes in the evaluation process at their April 28, 2005, meeting.

Although the revised faculty evaluation process looks at faculty members' success with SLOs and assessment very minimally, it is hoped that individual faculty members will take it upon themselves to include more discussion of SLOs and assessment in their dialogues with their peers and in their self-evaluations, even though they are only minimally required.

This issue will need to be revisited after faculty engage in more dialogue within their Learning Communities on SLOs and assessment, planned for Fall 2005.

### **SLO Implementation Plan**

In November 2004, the SLO Steering Committee was formed as an ad hoc committee of the Faculty Senate. The function of this committee was threefold:

- 1) Formulate a campus-wide plan for implementation, criteria for measurement and review of Student Learning Outcomes in the instructional programs, student services and learning support services.
- 2) Make recommendations about timeline and structure.
- 3) Address preparation and training.

The committee worked on their charge during the spring semester, creating an implementation plan that was approved by the Faculty Senate March 17, 2005.

## **PHASE THREE: IDENTIFY STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR COURSES, PROGRAMS, GENERAL EDUCATION, CERTIFICATES AND DEGREES, STUDENT SERVICES**

### **Outlines for New Courses**

Beginning in January 2004, every official course outline submitted to the Curriculum Committee for new course proposals has been scrutinized for SLOs and assessments. As a consequence, faculty have paid close attention to the development of SLOs for their courses, especially for new courses. Some faculty are better at developing SLOs than others; and some area directors have been stronger at encouraging and helping faculty develop those SLOs for courses. However, more work needs to be done in training all faculty, including adjuncts, on how to develop SLOs for courses and programs. Training will continue as the full-faculty plus selected staff members engage in the Fall 2005 small group learning communities. After the culminating meeting with the author of the book being used for the training, no further specific training opportunities have been proposed or planned. However, the college (primarily the Office of Instruction) recognizes that the need for training in SLOs and assessment will continue, and more workshops and learning communities will be presented as needed.

Since this process was begun in January 2004, 34 new courses have been reviewed and approved, including the SLOs and assessments.

### **Course Updates and Revisions**

Between January 2004 until January 2005, every official course outline submitted to the Curriculum Committee for course updates or revisions has been scrutinized for SLOs and assessments. During that year, 74 course outlines were reviewed and approved.

### **Program Review**

During the 2004-05 academic year, no programs were scheduled to undergo Program Review. This allowed the Senate ad hoc committee to revise the Program Review process. During the 2005-06 academic year, the following programs will be reviewed: Theater, Business/Economics, Computer Science, Nursing (LVN), Early Childhood Education/Family Consumer Science, Welding, Varsity Athletics/Recreation/Physical Education, and Engineering/Physics/Physical Science. All programs undergoing review this year will follow the new process, which includes analysis and evaluation of SLOs, student achievement of those SLOs, assessment practices, and



using assessment results for program improvements. All programs undergoing Program Review will develop program-level SLOs if such outcomes are not already in place.

The new Program Review process requires a comprehensive review to occur once every six years. During interim years, each program must complete an annual mini-review. Although each program will establish its program-level SLOs, it has not yet been determined how much detail these annual mini-reviews will report regarding student achievement of SLOs. The 2005-06 academic year will be the first year that these annual mini-reviews will be required. Three pilot programs—English, Physics, and Psychology—have elected to assess specific SLOs through the year. It is expected that in their annual mini-reviews these pilot programs will report their baseline assessment results in this first round of annual mini-reviews and that next year, after making improvements either to instruction or to the assessments, they will report in their next mini-review their new assessment results.

#### **Establish SLOs for General Education**

SLOs for the General Education Program were established at the beginning of the 2004-2005 academic year. Officially approved by the Faculty Senate on September 9, 2004, the general Education Philosophy and General Education SLOs are used as benchmarks for whether College of the Siskiyous courses developed as part of other programs are accepted into the General Education program. The General Education philosophy expresses the overarching goals of the General Education Program. This philosophy is now published in the new 2005-2007 College Catalog.

During August and September 2005, the Curriculum Committee has been redesigning the forms and processes that faculty members will use when they submit courses for review. One such form pertains to the General Education SLOs, which faculty must address if they are submitting a course to be included in the GE list. This form requires that faculty ensure that course SLOs align with the college's General Education SLOs. The new forms and processes will be required beginning October 2005.

#### **Student Services**

Student Services units first established SLOs in at the Student Services Retreat, June 2002, when the college began preparing for its 2004 Accreditation Visit. Those outcomes were reviewed and updated in February 2004 to make sure everything was in order when the Accreditation Visit took place. In May 2004, the Student Services SLOs were discussed at the annual Student Services Retreat. Student Services staff wanted to group SLOs into themes. At their retreat, Student Services staff established seven themes.

However, it is recognized that there is still need for training on SLOs. Ten members of Student Services staff just returned from a Conference on Learning (September 25-30, 2005) at Valencia Community College, Orlando, Florida, which is considered one of the vanguard community colleges that has implemented SLOs and assessment across its institutional practices. In addition, select members of the Student Services staff will participate in the Fall 2005 Learning Communities which will study the text *The Outcomes Primer*. It is expected that after this

additional training. Student Services will devise more global outcomes for students and realign and revise their current unit-based SLOs to fit those global outcomes.

## **PHASE FOUR: ASSESS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OUTCOMES—HOW DO WE KNOW?**

### **Pilot assessment activities**

Faculty in three pilot programs (English, Physics, and Psychology) will begin assessing specific outcomes in their courses starting fall semester 2005. The English faculty will assess students' learning of information competency skills in the Freshman Composition course, and they will assess students' developing writing skills in the Fundamentals of Writing course (one level below Freshman Composition). In the Mechanical Physics course, faculty will assess students' ability to analyze how the laws of physics apply to a broad range of everyday phenomena. In the Introduction to Psychology course, faculty will assess students' understanding of the differences between psychology and common sense.

Faculty involved in these pilots will share their experiences with the rest of the faculty in August 2006. It is hoped that the resulting discussions will encourage and inspire faculty in other programs to engage in more meaningful assessment practices in their courses and programs. Feedback from the faculty in these three pilot programs will also help determine how SLOs and assessment results will be incorporated into the annual mini-review process and reporting.

Though Student Services have had SLOs established for several years now, they are still working on an assessment plan. It is expected that after the several training opportunities this fall, Student Services will also pilot some assessment strategies beginning spring semester 2006.

## **PHASE FIVE: INCORPORATE ASSESSMENT RESULTS INTO PLANNING PROCESSES TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS**

### **Strategic Master Plan and Institutional Planning Processes**

During 2004-2005, the College was involved in a large-scale strategic planning process. Though processes for SLOs and assessment have not yet been *fully* developed across the campus and incorporated into the planning process, their inclusion in the process is highly anticipated. Of the twelve institutional goals established in the Strategic Master Plan, published April 2005, the first two goals center on student learning.

Goal #1: To have at least 75% of the students in each course meet each learning outcome in the course.

Goal #2: To achieve at least a 75% success rate for all courses at COS.

These goals imply that the college will be heavily involved in assessing student learning outcomes course by course and program by program. Thus, instructor by instructor and department by department, assessment results will be used to improve instruction so as to assist more students in achieving the learning outcomes established for each course, for each program, and for the institution as a whole.

In Spring 2006, the first data derived from the pilot projects will be reported on. These data will be used to plan for and to implement improvements in courses, in programs, or in the institution as a whole, depending on the feedback revealed by the data. Thus begins the *complete* cycle of establishing learning outcomes, assessing student achievement, analyzing the data and providing feedback, planning improvements (perhaps setting new outcomes), and implementing improvements, and then continued assessment, feedback, plans, and improvements.