



Appendix A – Accreditation Self-Evaluation, Quality Focus Essay

Continuous quality improvement is a mark of institutional effectiveness. As part of its Accreditation Self-Evaluation process, College of the Siskiyous is asked to evaluate its programs and services in the continuous cycle of data analysis, planning, resource allocation and evaluation as it examines its effectiveness in accomplishing its mission in the context of student learning and student achievement. During that examination, it identifies areas of needed change, development, institutionalization, and expansion. Within the accreditation focus on continuous quality improvement, the institution identifies two or three areas coming out of the institutional self-evaluation on which the institution has decided to act (action projects), and which will have significance over a multi-year period. These projects are described in a Quality Focus Essay (QFE) which is included below. As it connects to the Institutional Master Plan (IMP), QFE Action Project #1 most clearly correlates with IMP Strategic Target #3 (Data Quality) while QFE Action Project #2 most clearly correlates with IMP Strategic Target #2 (Student Success).

Quality Focus Essay

As a result of the self-evaluation process there were two main areas that chairs of the planning committee, program review committee, accreditation liaison officer, and the vice president of instruction agreed needed further attention. These two areas have been problematic for the College for several years and the group felt that creating action plans for these areas as part of the Quality Focus Essay. The two action projects are:

1. Centralizing the collection of institutional data to better inform college-wide decision making.
2. Increasing the quality and consistency of assessment of student learning through Student Learning Outcomes.

Action Project #1: Centralize the Collection of Institutional Data to Better Inform College-Wide Decision Making

1. The Action Project:

The College will create a data system that integrates the currently separate data systems. After the College has created an integrated data system, the College will provide consistent and ongoing training for all employees who work with the data. The College will construct a data warehouse and an easily accessible, online dashboard for commonly used queries and data reports.

2. Supporting Data:

The College of the Siskiyous (COS) transitioned from a legacy system to Banner in 2010. The addition of Banner promised to add functionality and track more data elements than in the previous system. Employee turnover has been a problem with the comprehensive use of the system. Much of the functionality of the Banner system has not been fully utilized. Currently the process of gathering institutional data and use for campus-wide decision making is cumbersome. Institutional data also is housed in differing systems that have yet to be centralized. Student Services maintains data concerning student matriculation progress, and there is only one employee with the requisite knowledge to be able to extract the data. Furthermore, the data is inconsistent. Data entry in this corner of the system is dependent upon Counseling Office staff entering the data correctly; but data entry is inconsistent in its quantity and quality. Financial aid data is housed in a separate system. Curriculum data is in a different system. SLO assessment and Program Review data are maintained in a separate system. The College has recognized that data housed in separate locations with myriad employees responsible for its extraction is complicated and cumbersome and not convenient to access.

Data extraction from the Banner system is currently handled by the Argos query tool. It is adequate for the job, but is difficult for non-programmers to use, has a steep learning curve, and requires a working knowledge of the way fields are structured in Banner. For complicated queries, a programmer from IT is utilized. Due to high turnover in the IT department and across the College, there has been a lot of redundancy and duplication of effort. For example, researcher A tasks programmer X to write a complicated query E, which is then saved by a short and simple name that does not convey all the complicated code or data elements utilized. A year later, the new researcher B tasks the new programmer Y to write a similar query F. Since it is impossible to know what is in all of the preexisting queries without analyzing the code of each one manually, multiple queries are built that report similar data. Data challenges are further complicated by employee P who has been running the old query E to calculate something, and then employee Q uses the new query F after hearing about it from the new researcher. Due to slight differences in programming, the two queries might return slightly different results if, for example, one excludes non-credit courses and the other does not. Since there is not much documentation in older queries, inconsistency in data extraction is an ongoing problem.

An example of past under-utilization of Argos is data on student persistence. In the past, student persistence was calculated by manually comparing lists of students from two different terms. Since it was so difficult and time consuming to generate, these manual calculations were not done on a regular or consistent basis. The current researcher and programmer worked together in Fall 2015 to create an Argos query that doesn't just calculate persistence, but also includes key demographic information such as age, ethnicity, and gender. This information is included in the Student Achievement Data section of this report.

3. Institutional Areas Needing Change:

Every office and department at the College will benefit from improvements to data extraction and reporting systems.

In November 2015 the College contracted with Ellucian to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the use of the Banner system. The Ellucian team spent two days at the College conducting focus group sessions with administrative, academic, and student services groups to evaluate current practices within each division. The evaluation will focus on the best use of the Banner system and integration of multiple systems to allow the Research Office to create a data warehouse in which the Research Office will be able to provide consistent data to the College to inform decision making.

A data warehouse would also allow for the implementation of a dashboard. This would also enable employees to access information. It would also standardize many queries, provide needed consistency, and ensure that everyone is using the same definitions and query parameters. This would also prevent errors such as some queries that include summer data in the following academic year's data and some that include summer data with the preceding academic year's data.

4. Analysis of the Integration with College Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Effectiveness:

To further centralize the collection of institutional data, the supervision of the sole institutional researcher was reassigned. The researcher position had traditionally reported directly to the President, but under this structure the researcher appeared to be disconnected from the College's Program Review and planning efforts. Recently the researcher was reassigned to report to the Vice President of Instruction. Efforts are currently underway to centralize the Research Office in all of the planning data elements. The researcher will be responsible for the collection of Program Review results and results of SLO assessment data. This will allow the College to integrate more fully all of the student achievement and learning data, to combine the data for determining resource allocations, to utilize other student data indicators to get a larger picture of the impact of student success efforts, and to inform the college community and the Board about the achievement and success of our students. The centralization of all this data will allow the College to have more robust college-wide dialog about student achievement and success, about institutional performance metrics, about quality improvement projects or initiatives, and about measuring institutional effectiveness and accomplishment of the College's mission.

5. Related Standards of Accreditation:

Several Standards refer to increasing the use of data to inform academic quality and effectiveness. Specifically, Standards IB4, IB5, IB6, IB7, IB8, and IB9. Standard IC discusses integrity using documented assessment of student learning and evaluation of student achievement to communicate matters of academic quality. Standard IIC2 speaks to the importance of the using assessment data to continuously improve student support programs and services.

Action Project 1: Centralizing the Collection of Institutional Data to Better Inform College-Wide Decision Making	
Desired Goals / Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a centralized data warehouse to standardize the data available to the College, to better inform planning efforts and decision making, and to focus efforts on student achievement.
Actions / Steps to be Implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of current usage of college data collection • Clearer definitions on the responsibilities of the college researcher • Creation of a data warehouse • Regular cycle of data dissemination for Program Review and institutional effectiveness analysis
Timeline	Year 1: 2015-2016
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete evaluation of the Banner system • Begin to integrate the recommendations of the evaluation of the Banner system • Conduct training sessions for employees inputting data into the system • Develop common data definitions and a list of common reports for regular dissemination • Transition Program Review and SLO data results to the Office of Instruction • Create evaluation plan for assessment of Action Project #1
	Year 2: 2016-2017
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the first year integration projects of the Banner system • Determine actions to be taken based on the evaluation • Create data warehouse and common queries and reports for the Program Review process and other institutional effectiveness processes • Create a dashboard for accessing the data warehouse • Increase participation of units, areas, programs in the new processes
	Year 3: 2017-2018
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully implement redesigned data query processes with changes • Evaluate for effectiveness of integration with Program Review, institutional evaluation, planning, and resource allocation/budgeting • Adjust and/or address areas in need of improvement (as appropriate)
Responsible Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice Presidents and Deans of Instruction and Student Services: • Planning Committee, Instruction Council, Student Services Council, Academic Senate/Program Review Committee, Research Office
Assessment	An evaluative component is scheduled into the timeline for this project.

Action Project #2: Increase the Quality and Consistency of Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

1. The Action Project:

The College will re-energize professional development for faculty regarding student learning outcomes and assessment and their role in Program Review. The College will enhance mechanisms for collecting assessment data at the end of each term; these mechanisms will encourage analysis and reflection for improving student learning. The College will make a concerted effort to involve all part-time instructors in the collection and analysis of assessment data. The College will find or create a data system that will disaggregate assessment data for the purpose of helping faculty, Student Support Services staff, and Learning Support Services staff to identify achievement gaps between populations.

This action project is designed to address a deficiency in assessment reporting and analysis by providing professional development to all faculty to help them understand the student learning outcome process—by providing guidance on the development and assessment of SLOs, on using assessment data to better inform their decisions on continuous improvement of instructional practices that will lead to improvements in student achievement of the learning outcomes, on using assessment data to inform course or program revisions, and on connecting assessment results and analysis to improvement plans and resource requests in Program Review. This action project will also help the College make connections between student achievement of learning outcomes at the course level and degree completions at the program level.

2. Supporting Data:

On August 17th the College of the Siskiyous received a communication from the ACCJC that the College had been flagged for enhanced monitoring on the basis of its responses in the March 2015 Annual Report concerning student learning outcomes practice. In the 2015 Annual Report the College reported ongoing assessment in only 42% of its courses and in 78% of its programs. Clearly the College needs to focus efforts on increasing the ongoing assessment of student learning outcomes at the course and program levels.

College of the Siskiyous has learning outcomes for all of its active courses, program, certificates, and degrees. SLO development is required as part of the Curriculum Process—all courses, programs, degrees, and certificates must not only identify learning outcomes but must also identify the assessment methods that will be used to measure them. Faculty use the Curriculum Module of CurricUNET to submit course and program outlines, which are approved only when they contain appropriate learning outcomes and assessment methods. Both new and updated Course Outlines of Record (CORs) are reviewed by discipline faculty, by the appropriate Dean, by one member of the Curriculum Committee (in detail), by the Curriculum Committee as a body, and by other appropriate personnel for coding, General Education, Distance Education, and articulation. Program/Degree/Certificate outcomes and General Education outcomes are reviewed by appropriate faculty, and changes are submitted as needed.

Program Level SLOs are embedded in the courses required for a degree or certificate. When the faculty first embarked on the creation of Program SLOs in 2005, they determined that course-embedded program SLOs would be more feasible for assessment purposes than program-level assessments that students would have to complete outside of their courses. Course-level outcomes map to one or more program-level outcomes. However, the SLO Assessment Module of CurricUNET became difficult to implement. Course-level outcomes were difficult for many faculty to map to program-level outcomes using the CurricUNET software.

The 2015 SLO Assessments Tracking Report shows the percentage of courses for which assessment results were reported in CurricUNET for the 2014-15 Academic Year. The telling part of this list reveals that 95% of the unreported courses were taught by part-time faculty. Due to the composition of the institution, the College must rely heavily upon part-time faculty

to teach courses. The College has not developed a standard methodology for increasing part-time faculty participation in the assessment of SLOs.

3. Institutional Areas Needing Change:

It is evident that the institution needs to develop a process to ensure that all faculty, especially part-time faculty, participate in the assessment of SLOs. The lack of participation of part-time faculty seems to indicate that they may not understand the development and assessment of SLOs and particularly that they have not received proper instruction in assessing SLOs and entering the data into the CurricUNET system that the College currently utilizes for the collection of assessment data.

4. Analysis of the Integration with College Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional effectiveness:

Considering the large number of courses with unreported assessment data, the College cannot get a complete picture of student learning. Therefore, the issue must be addressed so that the institution can make proper decisions in regard to planning, resource allocation, and the effectiveness of the institution in accomplishing its mission.

5. Related Standards of Accreditation:

Several Standards refer to increasing the use of student outcomes data to inform academic quality and effectiveness. Specifically, Standards IB1, IB2, IB4, IB5, IB6, and IB8. Standards IC1 and IC3 discuss institutional integrity using documented assessment of student learning and evaluation of student achievement to communicate matters of academic quality. Standards IIA1, IIA2, and IIA3 speak to the importance of using assessment data to continuously improve student learning programs and services. Standards IIB3 and IIC2 address the impact that assessment of learning outcomes has on learning support services and student support services.

**Action Project #2:
Increase the Quality and Consistency of Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes**

Desired Goals / Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce with all faculty the process of developing learning outcomes for courses and programs, assessing student achievement of those outcomes, and using assessment results to make improvements to teaching and learning. All faculty will include a list of the approved learning outcomes on first-day handouts, will understand and utilize appropriate methodologies for properly and consistently assessing learning outcomes at the course and program level, and will be able to report and discuss assessment results in Program Review for the purpose of improving teaching and learning.
Actions / Steps to be Implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of the SLO development and assessment processes Professional development for faculty in the SLO process, especially for new and part-time faculty Consistent monitoring of SLO assessment and reporting in Program Review Regular faculty dialog concerning the SLO assessment data
Timeline	<p>Year 1: 2015-2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit Technical Assistance Application to the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative (IEPI) for assistance in evaluation of the institution's SLO processes Evaluate the current SLO processes at the institution Develop an implementation plan based on the evaluation of the current SLO process Develop Academic Senate FLEX day(s) for faculty wide dialog on the SLO development and assessment process Negotiate between District and Faculty Bargaining Unit compensation to ensure participation by all faculty, especially part-time faculty Make progress on the percentage of faculty participation in the SLO assessment process Develop process in which SLO analysis is more easily integrated and accessible within Program Review process Develop a Program Review Handbook <p>Year 2: 2016-2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the first year integration projects of SLO development and assessment process Determine actions to be taken based on the evaluation Continue to increase the percentage of SLO assessment participation Continue faculty wide dialog on SLO assessment data at Faculty Senate FLEX day(s). <p>Year 3: 2017-2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully implement redesigned process with changes Evaluate for effectiveness of SLO development and assessment process Adjust and/or address areas in need of improvement (as appropriate)
Responsible Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vice President of Instruction and Deans of Instruction: Planning Committee, Instruction Council, Academic Senate/Curriculum Committee/Program Review Committee, Research Office
Assessment	An evaluative component is scheduled into the timeline for this project.