

Dr. Dianne Van Hook, Chancellor
College of the Canyons
26455 Rockwell Canyon Road
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

Dr. Van Hook,

The purpose of this correspondence is to formally request the assistance of the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative and to request a Partnership Resource Team visit the College of the Siskiyous. We are confident that a team can provide assistance and guidance in areas which we feel will be integral to the effectiveness of our institution.

The College of the Siskiyous is a small rural college that serves approximately 2,800 students each semester. The College's service area encompasses approximately 6,300 square miles in Siskiyou County and a small portion of Shasta County. The College of the Siskiyous main campus is a 260 acre complex in the City of Weed. We have a college center in the City of Yreka, approximately 30 miles north of the main campus.

Because of our size, a few areas that the College of the Siskiyous does very well and we're proud of is to provide intensive student support services, our student services staff and counselors are available for student access with little to no wait time. We also dedicate a significant portion of our resources to provide academic support to students. We have an Academic Success Center with at least 2 faculty, 2 expert instructional aides and many tutors available to students 29 hours per week. Students rarely wait for assistance in this center.

One of our premier programs, due to our geographic location, is our Fire Technology Program. We partner with Cal-Fire to train students in wildland fire and traditional structure firefighting. This area is particularly sensitive as the community of Weed was devastated by the 2014 Boles fire.

The two primary areas that we are requesting assistance with concern our collection and use of data to not only make proper decisions with but to determine our ability to assess student learning. We have many software systems that we collect data in, but in many cases, the software is not compatible or we do not have the technical ability or resources to determine how to make them compatible.

Data extraction from our student information system, Banner 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 our Information Technology department is utilized. Due to past personnel struggles in the Information Technology department and across the College, there has been significant redundancy and duplication of effort. There is no consistent

database for which the college researcher can draw from nor confidence in the data sources we do have.

Another significant area of concern related to data and software is our record of assessing SLOs. The college currently utilizes CurricUNET as our curriculum management, program review, and SLO assessment tool. Problems with this software exist with its functionality, it can be frustrating and difficult to the user, which in this case is primarily faculty. Our experience is that the faculty, especially the adjunct faculty have not been properly trained in developing SLOs, assessing SLOs, and reporting SLO 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 its 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.

Our SLO data tracking reveal that 95% of the unreported courses were taught by part-time faculty. Due to the geographic location of our institution, we 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. Additionally, CurricUNET has compatibility problems with our student information software, so at this time we are unable to properly disaggregate the limited SLO data we have.

Area of Focus

We are requesting the Partnership Resource team to help us develop a data collection plan, a plan for us to collect SLO data, train faculty in SLOs, integrate SLO data into program review and ultimately increase the effectiveness of our institution. Without proper data, we cannot hope to focus on and evaluate areas of improvement.

The ideal time for the first visit would be May 2016, before faculty leave for the summer or the beginning of Fall 2016.