February 2013

Dear Skyline friends,

Thank you for the tremendous effort to accelerate assessment so that our College can put its best foot forward next Fall when the accreditation team evaluates our efforts. From gathering information from multiple sources, we believe the Commission is expecting 100% of the courses and programs to have undergone a complete assessment cycle by Fall 2013. To attain that goal, we banked or deleted courses that weren't recently taught, and we've been assessing and entering what's been completed into TracDat. As a result of your efforts, 100% of our 672 courses have SLOs, 73% have ongoing assessment, and 100% of our programs have PSLOs. The kudos are yours.

… and now the challenge will be to sustain this energy while ensuring that assessment is meaningful. The latter is especially important because assessment results and subsequent action plans now weigh heavily in program review and by extension, planning and resource allocation.

To continue moving forward, departments are advised to **meet on the March 8 flex day** from **9- noon** to work on assessment. Especially important is to <u>analyze the results</u> and <u>act on the results</u> of the assessment, which is best accomplished by engaging in **dialogue** with your colleagues. While 73% of courses have ongoing assessment, only 36% have results, and even fewer have action plans, which strongly suggests that most departments need to take this last step in the assessment cycle before starting anew.

As Lao Tzu once said, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step." We've already taken this first step and more as we move toward assessing 100% of our courses, PSLOs, and ISLOs. The attached handout is intended to be your map, and the SLOAC Steering Committee members and Office of Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness your guides. Please let us know how we can be of further assistance.

Best,

    Sarah Perkins, Vice President of Instruction; David Ulate, Interim Dean of Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness; and Karen Wong, SLOAC Coordinator

SPRING 2013 SLOAC CHECKLIST

- ❑ **Assess** at least one SLO for all active courses this academic year.

- ❑ **By the end of Spring 2013, assess the PSLOs**. To do so, first you need to have mapped your course level SLOs to PSLOs and ISLOs on TracDat. Second, your department's TracDat Coordinator will learn from your division's TracDat leaders how to run reports in which course level assessments "roll up" to PSLOs. Third, use the aforementioned report to discuss any insights about the PSLOs during a spring division/ department meeting, and enter these insights into TracDat.

- ❑ **By the end of Spring 2013, create a three-year assessment schedule for all active courses in collaboration with the appropriate faculty and/or staff.** On the template below, schedule all course level SLOs to be assessed between 2013-2016. You may want to assess all of a course's SLOs in the same semester, or assess a course's various SLOs over the course of multiple semesters. Submit this calendar to Sherrie Prasad in the Office of the Vice President.

SPRING 2013 SLOAC TRACDAT CHECKLIST

- ❑ **Continually update TracDat so that it reflects what assessment plans and/or assessment cycles were completed.**

- ❑ **By the end of Spring 2013, run a report on PSLOs and enter your findings**. See above, "Assess the PSLOs."

- ❑ **Run a report** on the assessment that was completed in 2012-2013 for the annual program planning document.

LONG TERM PLAN

- ❑ **Assess** all SLOs for all active courses in a three year cycle.

- ❑ **Complete the annual program review.**

CREATING ASSESSMENT PLANS

Enter your assessment plans in TracDat, an on-line platform that serves as the central repository for all the SLOs, assessment plans, and assessment results of our three colleges. It is designed to facilitate and manage all the phases of the assessment cycle. Each department has a representative specially trained on TracDat who can help you create your assessment plan. See the SLOAC TracDat website for the list of TracDat departmental leaders.

Shown below are the six core elements of a course level assessment plan that you'll be asked to complete on TracDat. Answering these core questions in advance will help you move through the process of creating an assessment plan:

1. **SLO Name**

   This is the short-hand title for the student learning outcome.

2. **SLO**

   What is the student expected to do and/or know at the end of the course?

3. **Assessment Method Category**

   Which major assignment or activity will be used for the assessment? (e.g. exam, essay, survey, project, etc.)

4. **Assessment Method**

   This assessment method includes a description of the assignment or activity as well as the scoring method that will be applied and used to gather data (e.g. a rubric, check list, etc.). Only a brief description fits directly in TracDat, but any details, and

supporting documentation such as a copy of the assignment, survey, and/or rubric, may be uploaded into the document repository. Uploaded documents will be available as hyperlinks on the assessment report.

If you are using an exam or survey, identify which questions apply to which SLOs. Similarly, if you are using a rubric, indicate which parts of the rubric apply to which SLOs. Enter this information on to TracDat as well.

EXAMPLE: *Final essay scored with analytic rubric, specifically in the areas of critical thinking and development*

5. **Success Criterion**

What is the benchmark level of student achievement that is desired? What are the performance standards that determine whether or not a student has achieved a given level of knowledge or skill proficiency? How do you know when a student has achieved the knowledge, skill, or ability the SLO seeks to impart?

EXAMPLES:

Using a 5 point analytic rubric, at least 75% of the "Marine Biology" students will earn a minimum of 75 points on the final project.

Using a four point analytic rubric, the class will average 2.5 or higher on each of the criteria.

At least 70% of the "Beginning Keyboarding" students will be able to keyboard at least 30 wpm with no more than 3 errors on 3-minute timing.

6. **Schedule**

Which semester and year will this course be assessed?

After you finish completing these core elements for each SLO in your course, you may want to run a TracDat report that compiles all this information into a single assessment plan. As such, you can print, save it on your desktop to forward to your colleagues, and/or store as a file under the "Documents" tab on TracDat.

With your assessment plan written and stored on TracDat, you are now ready to apply your assessments in the classroom, gather the results, and record them on TracDat. [Your department TracDat representative](#) can help you record your results.

CONFIGURING AND ANALYZING ASSESSMENT DATA

Drafting SLOs and gathering assessment results are only the beginning; the substance in assessing lies primarily in analyzing the data and crafting an action plan, should students fall below the benchmark established in the success criteria. Thus, to complete the assessment cycle, you'll need to work with your colleagues to analyze the data and draw conclusions from the findings.

- In which areas did students excel?
- What issues and needs were revealed?
- What insights can you gain from the results?
- Did the assessment work, and if not, what needs to be revised?

Below are some useful tips and examples that have emerged from current assessment practices.

RUBRICS

Assessing multiple SLOs with one major project or activity and evaluating it with a rubric that encompasses all of the SLOs is efficient use of time and resources. The rubric also articulates what distinguishes the different levels of competency, which is useful for consistent grading and can inform students how their work is being evaluated.

- Be mindful of the SLOs as you create the rubric. Indicate which parts of the rubric pertain to which SLOs.
- Create an excel spreadsheet to enter the students' scores for each part of the rubric. The first column will be which student (e.g. 1, 2, 3, etc.), and the subsequent columns will be each of the rubric's criteria (i.e., thesis).
- To analyze the data, you can do so in two ways:
  - Calculate the average by using the formula. Compare the average score with the success criterion (e.g. The class will average 2.5 or greater.).

o Determine the percentage of students that scored 2,3, or 4 if those are passing scores, and then compare it against the success criterion (i.e., 75% of students will score at least "adequate" on the thesis.)

- This way of analyzing data enables you to see which skills students most struggled with. For instance, you may find that 98% of students had at least a 2.2 average, and yet the vast majority only scored 2. The graphic function on Powerpoint really helps to differentiate how students fared. For instance, the graphic below shows how well the students' thesis was on an English assessment.
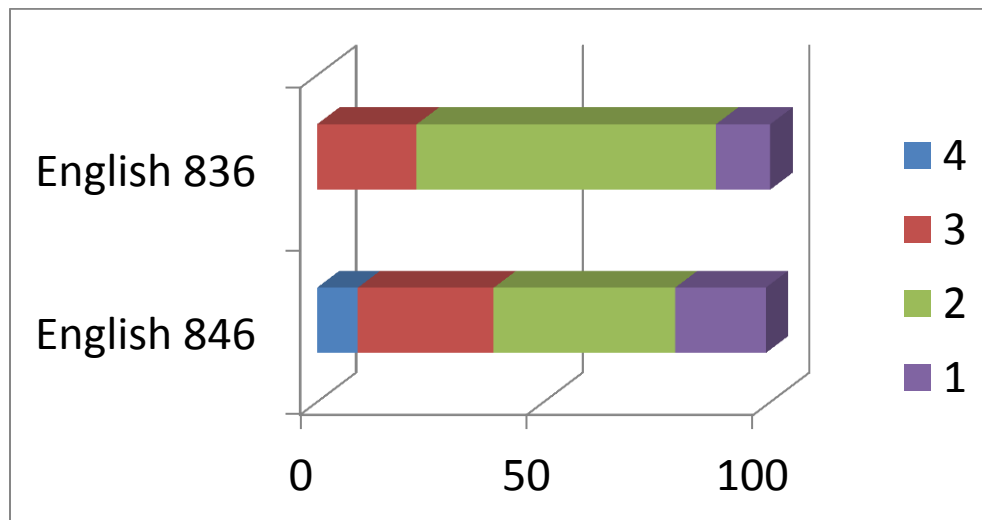
PRE/POST TESTS

Pre/post tests are a very useful means to measure how much students gained over the course of the semester since you document their starting and end point. The pre-test also helps students know what to anticipate and prioritize for the remainder of the semester.

- Be mindful of which test questions pertain to which SLOs. Faculty using this strategy typically assign two to three questions per SLO, and all faculty teaching the course that semester include those common questions on their exam(s).
- If you assign multiple choice, matching, and/or true/false questions on these tests, use scantrons so as to tabulate students' results.
- Your success criteria may simply note that you are looking for an overall increase in the percentage of students who answer the designated questions correctly, such as a 10% increase. And/or you may want to decide which percentage of students

overall answered the questions correctly, in addition to ensuring that the percentages from the post-test are higher than the pre-tests.

- The challenge that has emerged from using this assessment strategy is comparing the students who started the course with the students that persist until the end, when the post-test is typically administered. Work with what you have this semester if you didn't take this precautionary measure. But in the future, if you are asking multiple choice, matching, and/or true-false questions, you may want to consider using a scan-tron with students' names on both the pre and post-test so that you can remove the pre-tests from students who didn't persist.

SURVEYS

Surveys can be used to develop students' mega-cognitive awareness, as they're prompted to evaluate their competencies. The primary drawback is that students are assessing themselves, as opposed to a student demonstrating their competencies. In addition to home-grown surveys within a respective department, the Office of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness (PRIE) may have college-wide surveys they administered (such as the Community College Survey of Student Engagement) whose results are relevant to a particular instructional area.

Surveys also can be used to evaluate student services, such as which services they were aware of, which they used, how frequently, and how satisfied they were with each service. PRIE may have college-wide surveys they administered whose results are relevant to a particular service area.

- Be mindful of the SLOs as you create the survey. Indicate which questions from the survey pertain to which SLOs.
- The PRIE can help you to design and administer your survey. Easiest is to administer it with a scantron or via the internet, such as through NoviSurvey, for which the PRIE has a license.
- To analyze responses to multiple choice questions, you may want to determine the percentage of students who marked 2, 3, or 4 if all those scores suggest a level of competency in the knowledge, skill, and/or attitude.
- To analyze responses to open-ended questions, which may have captured an insight that your multiple choice questions didn't, you'll need to identify the themes that emerge from students' responses.

FOCUS GROUPS OR STRUCTURED GROUP INTERVIEWS (FOR ASSESSING PSLOs OR STUDENT SERVICES SLOs

Typically limited to six- to- ten participants, focus groups/ structured group interviews work especially well to gain insights about a program and/or service as a whole. Open-

ended questions can address curriculum, such as how well the required coursework prepared students for higher level courses, a position in that field, and/or transfer. Or they can pertain to advising, such as characterizing their advising experiences in the program, what they found useful, and what—if anything, they suggest be changed.

In focus groups, the facilitator may be more flexible and depart from the script of questions so as to follow promising leads that emerge from the conversation. In contrast, the facilitator in a group interview poses only the pre-generated questions. A focus group tends to yield a more in-depth analysis than a structured group interview.

- Be mindful of the PSLOs as you create the questions. Get feedback from the PRIE to design your questions since the quality of the questions will impact the validity of the responses, and also get feedback about whom to include in the focus group/ structured group interview.
- To analyze responses to open-ended questions, you'll need to identify the themes that emerge from students' responses.

GENERATING ACTION PLANS

Based on your analysis of the assessment results, discuss with your colleagues if any changes to pedagogy or assessment are warranted, and what additional resources are needed to implement these changes and others. As such, the purpose of an action plan is to:

- improve student learning;
- address the needs our assessments have revealed;
- create strong consistency in our courses;
- connect instructors with shared approaches and curriculum.

Any proposed changes in assessment, pedagogy, or plans to request additional resources should be recorded on TracDat under "Action Plan," and the annual program planning document. An effective action plan should:

- Address assessment results;
  - o specific actions plans are connected to specific SLOs and assessment results
- Develop as a result of an inclusive dialogue process;
- Provide specifics so that it is clear what will take place;

- o a plan includes what, when, where, & how
- Inform the next cycle of assessment;
    - o your next assessment might measure the effectiveness of your action plan to impact student learning

TracDat offers action plan options, though the list is hardly exhaustive. Among the possibilities are:

- Conduct further assessment;
- Use new or revised teaching methods;
- Develop new evaluation methods;
- Plan purchase of new equipment or supplies;
- Make staffing changes;
- Engage in professional development;
- Revise course sequence or prerequisites;
- Review course syllabus or outline;
- Other.

EXAMPLE 1

SLO: Students in CLAS 080 will have the skill, knowledge, and confidence to enter CLAS 100.

Assessment tool: Survey

Success criterion: 70% will strongly agree with Questions 5-9 of the 12 question survey.

Result: 60% of students strongly agreed with Q 5, 6, 7, 80% on Q9

Dialogue: Faculty reviewed the final exam and the results of the relevant questions addressed in the survey. Reviewing student work confirmed for faculty that students did have a strong grasp of the skills necessary to succeed at the next level. Faculty agree that students are learning course material without an awareness of the skills they were developing and the skills needed at the next level. Faculty decided to increase students' awareness of the course learning outcomes for the course they are enrolled in and explicitly link course assignments to outcomes.

Action Plan: The course syllabus will list major assignments that fulfill an SLO under each SLO. Faculty will list the SLO that is being addressed in assignments on assignment handouts. At midterm, students will self-assess their progress in achieving each SLO and indicate how prepared they feel to move on to the next class.

EXAMPLE 2

SLO: Students will identify and critically evaluate important ideas in short and book length texts.

Assessment tool: One-page assignment that students will complete after reading a text in which they: (a) identify the important ideas, and (b) evaluate how well the author supports his/her thesis.

Success criterion: a. 90% of students will identify 80% of the important ideas. b. 80% of students will earn a 3 or 4 on the "critical reading" part of the rubric.

Results: a. 86% of students identified 80% or more of the important ideas in the reading. b. 69% of students earned a 3 or higher on the writing assignment.

Dialogue: Discussion of the readings revealed that the faculty members were not in full agreement of which ideas in the readings were "important ideas." Faculty decided that in future assessments they would like to use a common reading (about four different readings were used for this assessment) and that the full group should determine in advance what the ideas would be regarded as acceptable answers. They felt that an adjusted list of important ideas that included more ideas would bring the student results for (a) closer to 90%. Discussion of the writing assignments revealed that students were more effective in summarizing than evaluating. Faculty agreed to address this skill in the 2013 assessment cycle.

Action plan: Choose a common text to conduct this assessment again in the near future. Prior to the next assessment, devote a department meeting to discuss how to help students evaluate texts, and gather more best practices if the current practices seem insufficient.

As is evident from the last example, the outcomes assessment model is based on continuous dialogue among faculty to ensure a systematic, ongoing cycle of assessment. The cycle is only complete after the results are documented, analyzed, and potential changes are discussed, recorded, and followed up. After a cycle has been completed on a course, the cycle begins again. Assessments may be repeated to compare one year to another, or a completely different assessment method may be chosen.

Once you implement this plan, results may not be radically different—at least initially, but you likely will find great value in talking with your colleagues about teaching and learning.

❖ special thanks to Language Art Dean Mary Gutierrez and Librarian Dennis Wolbers for their contributions to this section

ASSESSING AT THE PROGRAM LEVEL

All academic programs at Skyline have established PSLOs (Program Student Learning Outcomes), which have been recorded on TracDat and published in the College Catalog. PSLOs are statements (typically four or fewer) that summarize the essential skills, knowledge and attitudes that a student gains after completing the program. With PSLOs now established, it is important for faculty to examine how their course level SLOs help students fulfill the PSLOs.

Assessing PSLOs is done by aligning and applying course level assessment data to the PSLOs. This process is known as "rolling up" course level assessment to program level assessment. For this "rolling up" to happen, faculty and staff have "mapped" (i.e. aligned) course level SLOs to PSLOs on TracDat. This mapping identifies which course level SLOs are central for students to achieve the PSLOs.

Faculty are able to generate reports on TracDat that show relevant course level assessment results rolling up to each of the PSLOs. These reports can be used to identify patterns and draw conclusions regarding the central question asked by program level assessment: How well are students achieving PSLOs and how does the program curriculum contribute to student success at the program level? After faculty analyze and discuss the report, important findings and insights are recorded on TracDat, thus completing the PSLO assessment cycle.

Programs also have the option of conducting other types of program level assessment in addition to the rolling up process. For example, some programs may wish to administer an exit survey or facilitate a focus group with graduates or certificate recipients; evaluate a culminating experience such as a capstone project, performance, or portfolio, etc.

For the TracDat directions to configure and run PSLO reports in which course level assessment results roll up, see the 2012-2013 TracDat directions on the SLOAC Tracdat page.

THREE-YEAR COURSE ASSSESMENT SCHEDULE FOR _____DEPARTMENT			
	2013-2014	**2014-2015**	**2015-2016**
(F) Fall	Which course(s)' SLOs will you assess each semester? Consider listing courses that are "central" to the ISLO scheduled for assessment, such as "Citizenship" for Spring 2014.		
(SP) Spring			
ISLO Assessment Schedule	**(F) Information Literacy** **(SP) Citizenship**	**(F) Lifelong Wellness** **(SP) Effective Communication**	**(F) Critical Thinking** **(SP) Citizenship**