DID THE MAYANS KNOW?

Did the Mayans know about ACCJC and SLO Proficiency? I mean seriously, were they trying to give us a real heads-up regarding 2012?

According to the ancient Mayan calendar, 2012 will mark the end of our days: the coming of a great global cataclysmic event. According to YouTube (where all great facts are found) “Never before has a date in history been so significant to so many cultures, religions, scientists, and governments.” Volcanic eruptions, typhoons, glaciers, bombardments of flaming meteoric stuff, ACCJC coming down hard on community colleges that do not meet the SLO “proficiency” level……ok I just made that last part up, but seriously, were the Mayans onto something? Did we miss their deeper meaning?

These Mayan prophecies make one final prediction: the return of the “Shining Ones” who will save us all. In our case, do you think they meant the ASLO subcommittee? Our newly appointed SLO Officers? (see page 4) Or perhaps it is us, the LBCC faculty? After all, truly, we are the only ones who can save us from ourselves.

As noted in previous newsletters, I acknowledge the rumblings and grumblings and cries of illegal actions. I get it. It’s not even 2012 and we already have the makings of catastrophic events: budget cuts, salary cuts, more students, more work, more stress, more, more and more. We already have the “perfect storm” of work, student and stress overload in our laps as we enter this Fall 2010 semester. And now we are expected to be proficient by 2012? And what does this being “proficient” actually mean? The Proficiency level on the ACCJC rubric states:

- Student learning outcomes and authentic assessment are in place for courses, programs and degrees
- Results of assessment are being used for improvement and further alignment of institution-wide practices
- There is widespread institutional dialogue about the results
- Decision-making includes dialogue on the results of assessment and is purposefully directed toward improving student learning
- Appropriate resources continue to be allocated and fine-tuned
- Comprehensive assessment reports exist and are completed on a regular basis
- Course student learning outcomes are aligned with degree student learning outcomes
- Students demonstrate awareness of goals and purposes of courses and programs in which they are enrolled

How would you say you and your area’s SLO and SUO’s are lining up?

With 87% of Course Assessment Plans complete and only 37% of Program Assessment Plans complete, we have a long way to go. And yet, if we stay on the path outlined for us, and meet our deadlines…let me repeat…MEET OUR DEADLINES, we are on track to succeed. However, if we keep mucking about in the mud of indecisiveness and the “I don’t think THEY can make us do this,” and “it is not in our contract,” type discussions, then catastrophe is most certainly in our future. We must be clear…the big THEY is not OUR administration. The big THEY are at a much higher level (I’m so convinced the Mayans KNEW about this!!) This faculty driven ASLO process is because the state is requiring it of us.

Yes, it is extra work at a time when we might not be feeling benevolent. But the real question we must ask is, “How do we see ourselves as a faculty?” Do we see ourselves in 2012 sitting alone with smug grins because we refused to cooperate and therefore put the college in jeopardy? The college and “we” are not separate entities…so, by virtue, put ourselves in jeopardy? Will the Mayan calendar prove correctly catastrophic at LBCC or will, as some say, the Mayan calendar simply be the marking of a new era, a new

Continued on page 2
SOME BASIC INFORMATION

It has come to our attention that some of us don’t know how to FIND some BASIC info … so here goes!

To find SLO/SUO General Information:

Go to LBCC homepage; click on Faculty/Staff link; scroll down and find Outcomes Assessment (SLO & SUO) link; go to the gray column on the left side of the page and find—

- SLO information—you can find course and program level links. Within these you can find sample plans and rubrics and almost anything you need to help complete YOUR plans
- SUO information—click on the general information link to find just about anything you ever wanted to know about SUOs
- Resources & Links—click on this to access the newsletter and other important resources
- Course Assessment Plan template and Directions documents—SLO page, course level section, lavender alert icon near top of page
- Program Assessment Plan template and Training documents (SLO page, program level section, lavender alert icon, near top of page
- Sample Rubrics (SLO page, Assessment section, scroll down to the Examples of Course Level Rubrics, ‘other colleges’ heading, and … vóila!
- College Outcomes (LBCC Home Page—www.lbcc.edu—click on ‘about’ or just wait for the drop down menu)

Information is EVERYWHERE! If you still can’t find what you need … ask an ASLO Subcommittee Member

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15TH is the final deadline to submit ALL course assessment plans to: slo@lbcc.edu.

There will no longer be clerical help available to upload assessment information into TracDat as of October 31st, 2010.

The ASLO Subcommittee wants to know what you DON’T know so we can address the confusion together!!

Sample rubrics, course AND program assessment plans are available on the Outcomes Assessment (SLO & SUO) link.

Courses coming due for Course Review in 2010-11 should be collecting outcomes assessment evidence NOW!

Programs coming due for Program Review in 2011-12 should be collecting outcomes assessment evidence NOW!!

The deadline to submit all program assessment plans is WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1ST!!

WE are all in this together!

Please direct all questions to an ASLO Subcommittee Member.

dawn? Will we gaze into the future and see ourselves at a point of pride and satisfaction in a job well done, with of course, more to do? (This is, after all, a never-ending process!) What will our legacy be? How will we define ourselves?

The LBCC faculty I know will do the right thing. The LBCC faculty I know, while realizing we are behind today, will make the right moves to place us on the cutting edge, once again, in community college curriculum innovation and assessment. The LBCC faculty I know will begin to dialogue and share, compare notes and ideas, in an effort to bring us to the front of the line. Yes, our only reward may be the “warm fuzzy” of a job well done, (and compliance!), but the LBCC faculty I know takes great pride in delivering the best to our students. What is our slogan? We educate, we engage, we empower….and we also empathize, edify, effect, elucidate, endure, encourage (stop me now!!) … each other during the coming years in preparation for 2012; because we are the LBCC Faculty, and that is..... The Way We Are.
Welcome back to another challenging but exciting academic year. There has been some progress over the summer that I am happy to report. Perhaps most relevant is the institution of the SLO Officer Pilot Project for this year. (see page 4)

Currently there are 27 designated colleagues who are providing guidance, management, and resource support to faculty as departments engage in the ongoing outcomes assessment process. All faculty contribute to this process but these individuals have additional duties and responsibilities to the department and the process. Consequently, a summer training event was held. On August 3 and 4 32 colleagues participated in the SLO Officer Training program while 10 colleagues engaged in a truncated training on August 12, 2010. Electronic and hard copy resources, spreadsheets, a PowerPoint presentation, samples, and actual hands-on practice with TracDat was provided.

Course Outline and TracDat

The outcomes box in the course outline database is now a display only field.

- Having information in two separate databases is always problematic for coordination and alignment.
- Since TracDat is a purchased product while the course outline database is proprietary TracDat has priority.
- Since the outcomes assessment process should be the route to update/refine/delete/add outcomes that will be the initiation point.

SLOs can now only be changed through the Outcomes Assessment Process and that means TracDat. The SLO Officers have been trained on how to manage this procedure. Don’t have an SLO Officer? This is another reason to reconsider the efficacy and need for someone in this position for your department. In the meantime contact an ASLO Subcommittee member with any such inquiry.

The IT Department has been working diligently to coordinate these two databases and has established and committed to a monthly maintenance protocol.

Expediency

The previous “warning” status for the College included concerns about the outcomes standards and progress; though this was not the sole reason for the issuance of the “warning” status. However, there is a 2012 “proficiency” deadline established by ACCJC for outcomes assessment. Proficiency means using assessment evidence to improve student learning at all 3 levels of the college—course, program, and institution. Therefore, to reach that point we MUST begin to start collecting evidence and reporting results and actions. These are columns 4 and 5 in the course SLO assessment plan template. Then we MUST get program SLO assessment plans in place and start collecting evidence.

The ASLO Subcommittee has been using and continues to use an Accreditation Blueprint endorsed by the Academic Council to guide the structure and timelines. This blueprint sets benchmarks for the college to make consistent and steady progress toward this 2012 deadline. Every step along the way leads to another, and this path will ultimately take us to our destination. But delays only put more pressure on you and the system. This blueprint can be found on the Outcomes Assessment website.

The Outcomes Assessment Process is faculty-driven but the current pace is influenced by ACCJC. It would be preferable if we had time to gradually ease ourselves in to a thorough understanding and universal acceptance of this process, complete with time to discuss and investigate each item. Sadly we are not in that position. Perfection is not possible; a dynamic process is in place that can help guide progress and support refinements. Take advantage of that functionality. Use this framework to develop the assessments and your understanding as we go. But start the process by submitting overdue assessment plans and collecting assessment evidence for analysis and action.

Current Status

A listing of course and program assessment plans that are still due was sent to all full time faculty on June 29, 2010 from the ASLO Subcommittee in an effort to facilitate direct communication about our efforts and progress. The SLO Officers have the most resent list of overdue assessment plans.

Continued on page 7
While many of you were spending your last days of summer tanning, lounging and sipping exotic drinks, 26 SLO Officers participated in 16 hours of intense training. For two full days, the newly appointed SLO Officers were provided with SLO and assessment resources for the course and program levels, specific department information about the current status and needs of individual departments, suggested planning approaches to systematically implement the Outcomes Assessment Process, process expectations for meaningful assessment evidence, and practical engagement with TracDat, the college’s database for SLOs. Whew!!

The SLO process is multi-layered. While ALL faculty (including the SLO officers) are contributing to the assessment of SLO process within their programs and departments, the SLO Officers have additional responsibilities to their assigned area in the form of:

- servings as a resource for all phases of SLO information
- providing guidance and suggestions to department colleagues
- serve as a trained peer reviewer for submitted ASLO information according to process protocols
- establishing an internal management structure to the departments she or he is responsible
- facilitating outcomes planning through internal and external communications
- uploading SLO information (assessment and other data provided by area faculty) into TracDat in a timely manner, according to the published deadline schedule

These extra duties warrant reasonable compensation and are the basis for the SLO Officer position. The SLO Officers, in addition to the mandated summer training, will be participating in already scheduled future trainings for this academic year.

Please take the time to thank your SLO Officer today! While all faculty are working hard on outcomes assessment, these faculty have taken on the task of keeping their departments moving forward positively!
"Faculty must own assessment and live it in the context of each student. If faculty do not own outcomes assessment, there will be minimal impact on teaching and learning and therefore, on student achievement, which is supposed to be the point."

Amid continuing debate, and sometimes disagreement, about the value and wisdom of measuring student learning outcomes in higher education, a few areas of consensus are slowly emerging.

One is that faculty members are usually too little involved in setting their institutions' strategies for assessing student learning and in using the results of those efforts to change teaching and learning practices. Another is that without meaningful involvement by the faculty, efforts to assess student learning are close to meaningless.

Those dueling realities suggest a pretty big problem for what might be called the assessment "movement": If campus leaders can't figure out a way to more meaningfully involve faculty members in their institutions' efforts to gauge the quality and extent of learning, the campaign is likely never to take hold.

That problem is seemingly being engaged everywhere you turn these days. Patricia Hutchings confronts it in an essay published this spring by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, in which she examines why many professors have often viewed the learning outcomes movement with suspicion, describes a slight change in the weather on that front, and suggests how higher education leaders might build on that progress. The paper follows a survey released last year by NILOA that found, among other things, that campus leaders considered involving faculty in assessment to be one of their greatest challenges.

And the same themes were all over the agenda at last month's meeting in Chicago of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The agenda featured a slew of sessions on the role of the faculty in assessment ("Developing Faculty Engagement in Teaching and Assessing General Education Outcomes," "Involving Faculty in Campus-wide General Education Assessment Strategies," "Regular Program Assessment by Motivated Faculty -- a Win-Win!"), and the role of the faculty came up in virtually every major discussion during the days-long meeting.

Assessment and Accountability

Hutchings's paper, "Opening Doors to Faculty Involvement in Assessment," cites several major reasons why faculty members have been slow to embrace the idea that measuring student learning is not only necessary, but actually in their best interests. Chief among them is the fact that while "assessment was seen first and foremost as an educational practice" in its early days, Hutchings notes, it has often been championed by politicians and others outside academe as a way to hold higher education accountable for its performance.

Given the fierce protectiveness with which people tend to view their professional responsibilities, that has often made assessment seem like a tool that could be used against professors, to prove that they're not doing a good job. Not surprisingly, that hasn't exactly encouraged them to get with the program. "From the faculty point of view, [assessment] looked a lot like someone else's agenda -- and not an altogether friendly someone else, at that," Hutchings writes.

The language commonly associated with assessing student learning -- "accounting, testing, evaluation, measurement, benchmarking, and so forth" -- hasn't helped, drawn as it is from "business and education, not the most respected fields on most campuses," Hutchings writes. "[I]t is striking how quickly assessment can come to be seen as part of 'the management culture' rather than as a process at the heart of faculty's work and interactions with students."

The structure and rewards of faculty work, as they are currently set up, also make assessment a hard sell, Hutchings writes. Teaching in general is undervalued and rarely emphasized in graduate programs, and "reflecting on educational purposes, formulating learning goals, designing assessments and exams, and using data for improvement" are little examined in many faculty development programs, as well. And the tilt of many campus tenure and promotion systems favoring research over teaching and institutional service means that younger professors often have little incentive assessment to invest their time and energy in such activities -- habits that may be hard to break later on.

Lastly, but importantly, Hutchings argues, professors may look around and see assessment activity making relatively little difference on their campuses, making their reluctance to jump into the fray "a rational decision." "The fact remains that the benefits of assessment are uncertain and that faculty facing rising demands on their time and energy must make choices," she said.

Hutchings sees hope in some recent developments, notably the increasing breadth and quality of scholarship on teaching and learning, the slow but steady expansion of campus policies that reward teaching effectiveness, and the emergence of better tools to help colleges and instructors gauge their students' progress and learning. Her recommendations -- including building assessment activities directly into the "regular, ongoing work" of instructors and...
students in the classroom, more clearly recognizing assessment work as legitimate scholarship – are designed to build on that progress.

**Building From the Ground Up**

The role of the faculty in furthering (or fighting) the assessment of student learning outcomes was a common topic at the Higher Learning Commission meeting, where national policy makers and rank and file faculty members alike seemed to agree that they were beginning to see increasing acceptance, if not exactly welcoming, of the need for professors to play a role in the right kind of assessment.

"We still haven't turned the corner in trying to engage the faculty the way we would want to," Peter T. Ewell, vice president of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems and a founder of NILOA, said in a presentation at the accrediting meeting. There has been some progress, he said. "The English professor used to say, you can't do this. Now, the English professor is reluctantly saying, 'Yeah, it's got to be done.' But we're still not at the point of authentic faculty ownership."

That's because too much of the assessment rhetoric still focuses on institutional accountability rather than on the importance of working from the classroom level up to improve how, and how much, students learn, Molly Corbett Broad, president of the American Council on Education, told the Higher Learning Commission crowd. "If the chain of logic [behind learning outcomes assessment] begins from an accountability perspective, the focus is on the institution, and if it is primarily an institutional measure, it is potentially disconnected from how individual faculty members teach.

"Faculty must own [assessment] and live it in the context of each student," Broad said. "Because if faculty do not own outcomes assessment, there will be minimal impact on teaching and learning and, therefore, on student achievement," which is supposed to be the point, she said.

In one of the numerous sessions about engaging faculty meaningfully in assessment activities, officials from Blackburn College described their efforts in the 2008-9 academic year to "reframe assessment" in the wake of an earlier, largely failed initiative that had been seen by many professors there as "an external attempt at standardization and control," said Sam Meredith, a political scientist there who helped lead the effort. "We were hoping to move from a standardized test that we would get from outside to be used for reporting, to something that was an integral part of the teaching process," built on and integrated into a revision of the general education goals that the Illinois liberal arts college had just completed, Meredith said.

Blackburn officials used pressure from the college's accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission, as a "stick" that helped them argue that "there was a fairly firm mandate that we had to achieve," and that they were in a position to "design a process to achieve our own goals in a way that fulfilled that mandate, too," he said.

The college's relatively small size ("Our faculty can get in a single room and look at each other," Meredith said) enhanced (but did not make easy) the process by which humanists and scientists and others came to agreement on a common set of goals for critical thinking, writing and multicultural understanding, creating "rubrics" for gauging when students had achieved those goals, and then building assignments designed to test the rubrics into each and every course.

The process is ongoing, and the college is just beginning to collect solid data to help it decide how to adjust its curriculum to improve students' mastery of the desired learning outcomes.

But Blackburn has already achieved its primary goal, said Provost Jeffery P. Aper, of helping faculty members to see assessment not as an "occupying force," but "as an organic part of their work."

---

**REMEMBER ... REMEMBER ... REMEMBER ... REMEMBER ... REMEMBER ... REMEMBER ... REMEMBER ... REMEMBER ...**

**ASLO Subcommittee Members** are available to answer questions and assist with assessment course and program plans ... Contact a member today!

**Course SLOs** should now be included on your syllabi!

If it is to be ... it is up to ME!

All faculty are needed and responsible to make valuable contributions to our Outcomes Assessment Process!
Course Level

The faculty has contributed to the substantial progress in meeting our May 14, 2010 goal. Currently 87% of course assessment plans have been submitted. Please email the course assessment plans to slo@lbcc.edu. The recent efforts of the following departments and programs should be acknowledged in this endeavor. Congratulations to: Administrative Assistant program, DMI program, Math department, R/TV program, Read department, Culinary Arts program, Accounting Program, TART program, Business Management program, CD department, International Business Program, Music department, Floral Design Program, and Fire Science program (as of August 6, 2010).

The ASLO Subcommittee would like to sincerely thank the department faculty who have engaged in these professional responsibilities in a timely manner. Your commitment to the development of a meaningful process to support student learning at this educational institution is much appreciated.

Those remaining course assessment plans should be submitted by October 15, 2010 to take advantage of the waning clerical support we have for this portion of the process.

Program Level

If all of your program’s courses are submitted then go ahead and develop an assessment plan for your instructional programs and submit as you did for course plans. Every program needs to develop an assessment plan (don’t forget the program mission statement too). You may view this template, the directions, Program Review cycle, and suggestions on the SLO Program Level page or contact an ASLO Subcommittee member or your SLO Officer for guidance.

The faculty has contributed to the noticeable progress in this area too. Currently 37% of program assessment plans have been submitted. Program assessment plans are due by December 1, 2010. However, the October 15 due date should be considered; let the clerk do the uploading for you. If that is a possibility please email the program assessment plans to slo@lbcc.edu by that date.

The recent efforts of the following departments should be acknowledged in this endeavor. Congratulations to: Business Administration Department with all eight programs submitted.

If you or your department needs help, please contact me at kanderson@lbcc.edu so that I can make time to visit. I can come to a department meeting, work with small groups, or one-on-one with any faculty member. Just let me know.

Greetings from the ASLO Chair

Continued from page 3

Academic Senate Motion — May 8, 2009

A motion was moved/seconded/unanimously/passed to accept Resolution 44:2 Student Learning Outcomes as amended for second reading.

WHEREAS Long Beach City College was placed on warning by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges due to deficiencies in the college’s program review process and in the development and assessment of student learning outcomes, and

WHEREAS the development and assessment of student learning outcomes is an effort that must remain under faculty control and under faculty direction in all cases and thus requires an inclusive effort with broad faculty participation, and

WHEREAS student learning outcomes, when developed properly and used as intended at the course, program, or institutional level, can be an important tool for assessing student performance and improving instructional approaches, and

WHEREAS in all cases, including the use of student learning outcomes in evaluations, faculty evaluations are intended for self-evaluation and to encourage professional growth and should be conducted in an environment that recognizes this intention; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Long Beach City College Academic Senate encourages all faculty members to participate in the college’s efforts regarding the assessment and development of student learning outcomes, with the understanding that SLO data would not be used against individual faculty members.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Long Beach City College Academic Senate recognizes the importance of student learning outcomes and supports college efforts to further the development and assessment of SLOs at the course, program, and institutional level.