



# Growing Your SLO Experiences

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# Outcomes for this Presentation

- How the model evolved?
- Who were involved? (The Cast of Characters)
- What was learned over the last two years?
- What is happening now?
- Why was it meaningful?
- Q&As

# How the Model Evolved?

## Prior to 2008

- A faculty led SLO Implementation Team was charged with the grassroots effort of integrating Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Administrative Unit Objectives (AUOs) into the college.
- The Nichols' Five-Column Model (Mission/Goals, Intended Outcomes/Objectives, Means of Assessment/Criteria for Success, Summary of Data, and Use of Results) is adopted by the Team. This provides a consistent venue for the college's SLO/AUO evaluative efforts.
- An Educational Research and Assessment Analyst (ERAA), a new research department position, is hired primarily to assist faculty with SLO assessment. (*See job description in the Materials Packet.*)

## **Prior to 2008** (continued)

- The SLO Implementation Team chairperson is succeeded by an SLO Coordinator and then a GEO Coordinator (in Fall 2007), both on 60% reassigned time.
- The SLO and GEO Coordinators begin reporting directly to the Director of Research and Institutional Effectiveness (RIE) because of her knowledge of and involvement in college assessment and evaluation.
- The college administration and faculty leadership realize the necessity to meet external accountability measures (e.g., 2012 ACCJC accreditation rubric) and document their SLO progress in the college's 2010 accreditation self-study. Consequently, achieving learning outcomes goals are moved into high gear during the 2008 and 2009 years.



# SLO Levels at Mt. SAC

- Course-level SLOs – All active credit, non-credit, and community services courses
- Program-level SLOs – All active degrees and achievement/skills certificates
- College-level GEOs – General Education (GE) pattern Area (A-G) courses

## Years 2008 and 2009 Timeline Highlights

### Spring 2008: **THE PLAN**

- The SLO Coordinator with the SLO Committee create a **Course-Level Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Plan**, which provides incremental goals for reaching their first major target: At least 75% of all active courses will have at least two (2) SLOs with means of assessment and criteria for success by June 2009. The Academic Senate approves and institutionalizes the *Plan* in May 2008.

### Fall 2008: **BRINGING IN MORE COLLEGE RESOURCES**

- The Educational Research Assessment Analyst, et. al., creates a learning outcomes resource document entitled **The SLO/AUO Guidebook**. A group of faculty, managers, and classified professionals across campus finalize the *Guidebook* before it is approved by the Academic Senate on September 8, 2008. This becomes the vehicle for even greater assistance from the research department.

- The Information Technology (IT) Department develops a course-level SLO documentation mechanism within the college's electronic Planning for Institutional Effectiveness (ePIE) program review software (TracDat) that allows departments to enter their five-column SLO assessment efforts thus centralizing the SLO process. During December the first draft of an initial SLO data report (number of SLOs in ePIE) is produced by IT. It takes a few more months before the data is ready to share with the campus.

### Spring 2009: **INCREASING RESOURCES, VISABILITY, & COMMUNICATION**

- The first edition of ***The Spotlight*** newsletter, created in the research department, debuts in February 2009. It focuses on department experiences with SLOs/AUOs from its development stage to the means of assessment and learned outcomes/objectives stage. A ***Coordinator's Corner*** keeps the campus updated on the SLOs goal activities, and a ***Did You Know...*** section provides learning experiences hosting frequently asked questions, glossary terms, and more. The newsletter is provided to faculty and staff attending the college's Flex Day events as well as SLO/GEO presentations.
- In March 2009, the first edition of many brief **white papers** to come provides faculty self-help bite-size steps for fulfilling their SLO and GEO assessment processes as well as answering questions that are brought up during SLO and research employees' work with faculty or SLO Committee discussions. In addition, interested faculty met on GEOs to discuss their creation and documentation.

- The first ***SLO Progress Report Per Division/Department ePIE Summary Report***, using data that was entered into ePIE (TracDat), is revealed to the college community in April 2009. Departments and divisions now know firsthand where they stand as it relates to the overall SLO goals achievement.
- Approval of Academic Senate Resolution 2009-02: Transparency of SLOs/GEOs (April 2009) encourages faculty to share knowledge about the development, evaluation, and use of results of SLOs/GEOs and recommends that the administration assist faculty in the sharing of good practices.
- The GEO Coordinator with the GEO Committee generates a ***GEO Plan*** and timeline through 2012, which is approved by the Academic Senate on May 28, 2009.
- GEO efforts and experiences are integrated into *The Spotlight* newsletter with its own full-length feature in June 2009.

## Summer-Fall 2009: **MOVING UPWARD**

- The ***Mt. SAC SLOs Annual Report for 2008-09, Part I: Course-Level SLOs*** is published in July and communicated to the campus in August.
- As a result of an Academic Senate resolution, the SLO and GEO Committees are merged into one **Outcomes Committee**. It is chaired by the SLO Coordinator.
- The addition of the ***GEO Coordinator Corner*** segment is introduced into *The Spotlight* newsletter in September 2009 and the focus for the fall term turns to Program-Level SLOs and College-Level SLOs (GEOs).
- Also in September 2009, an Academic Senate passed Resolution 2009-02—Transparency of SLOs/GEOs (April 2009) recommending that SLO/GEO data in ePIE is made accessible to all college employees through a read-only option in the college's Banner portal is made available to employees as well as students. (*See Unit Course Assessment Report in the online resources section of the Materials Packet.*)
- The Academic Senate approves the ***Student Learning Outcomes Plan Addendum*** on October 1, 2009. This addendum outlines their SLO goals for Course- and Program-level SLOs through June 2013.
- A ***General Education Outcomes Assessment 2008-09 Summary of Findings*** report is released to the campus in October 2009 and documents the college's GEO efforts from spring.

# Who Was Involved? The Cast of Characters

## Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Coordinator

- Oversees the implementation of Course-level and Program-level SLOs (see *job description in Materials Packet*). Assists faculty and departments with their SLO processes including individual, department, and Flex Day training activities.
- Chairperson of the SLO Committee (and now the Outcomes Committee, which merged into one group beginning Fall 2009). Is a member of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, a governance planning body.
- Provides regular SLO updates and recommendations to the Academic Senate. Works closely with RIE and reports to the Director of RIE.

## General Education Outcomes (GEO) Coordinator

- Oversees the implementation of College-level GEOs (see *job description in Materials Packet*). Assists faculty and departments with their GEO processes including individual, department, and Flex Day training activities.
- Chairperson of the GEO Committee (until it merged into the Outcomes Committee beginning Fall 2009).
- Provides GEO updates and recommendations to the Academic Senate. Works closely with RIE and reports to the Director of RIE.

## **Educational Research Assessment Analyst (ERAA)**

- Assists the faculty and college employees with their Nichols' Five-Column assessment processes (*see job description in Materials Packet*).
- Conducts individual and group learning outcomes training efforts for faculty, departments, divisions, and during Flex Day activities.
- Is a full-time classified professional position reporting to the Director of RIE.

## **Director of Research and Institutional Effectiveness (RIE)**

- Oversees the overall college learning outcomes efforts (*see job description in Materials Packet*).
- Is an accreditation co-chairperson for the college's 2010 accreditation self-study.
- Meets regularly with the SLO and GEO Coordinators.
- Was a member of the SLO and GEO Committees, and is a member of the current Outcomes Committee. Is a member of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, a governance planning body.

## **Research Assistant**


- Oversaw the creation and coordination of the communication efforts (e.g., newsletters, white papers, progress reports, webpage postings) during 2009.
- Provided the "so what" factor necessary in creating meaningful and relevant communication documents.
- Is a full-time classified professional position reporting to the Director of RIE.

## Other Cast Members

- IT Department – specifically Kate Scott who oversees the electronic Planning for Institutional Effectiveness (ePIE) process software (TracDat).
- Members of the Outcomes Committee – Provided abundant dialog. Assisted with the implementation of their *SLO Plan* and in providing the SLO Coordinator with department faculty perspectives in what was needed to make the process more effective for faculty.
- Academic Senate – institutionalizing SLO/GEO processes and discussions through resolutions.
- Division Deans/Associate Deans – Assisted their departments with understanding SLO and ePIE processes through division meetings and Flex Day trainings. (See *The Spotlight newsletter featured article, May 2009.*)

# What Was Learned Over the Last Two Years?

- Developing baby steps through the introduction of white papers combined with department/ division progress report summaries gleaned from IT's SLO data reports helped faculty ease into each milestone set by the Academic Senate. All involved were consistently interested in how well their department/division was doing each time a progress report was released. This provided a "healthy" competition between departments/divisions in addition to helping correct discrepancies in the report since the results were made transparent to the campus.
- Provide leadership, but at the same time create leaders. Leaders are located all over campus; you just have to provide them the encouragement to come forward. In this case, each edition of *The Spotlight* newsletter featured an article from faculty or managers involved in SLOs or GEOs and their distinctive experiences and perspectives in attaining the various SLO levels. Their personal input provided the "see, I'm not alone" touch we all need to hear every so often.
- Have fun with the SLO process. For instance, our Animation Department had a unique spin on their SLO experience so we followed suit in the presentation of the newsletter for that month (August 2009). Some faculty found it a hard act to follow, but "that's animation."

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- Communicate regularly, in various venues (e-mails, newsletters, one-to-one, Flex Day activities) and with a consistent, recognizable format. Campus e-mailed announcements and posted documents to an SLO website is encouraged and helps keep the message out front plus important resources available.
  - Don't be afraid to offer a challenge when incremental goals are not reached. You may be surprised with the outcome. *(See the May 2009 newsletter, page 2 challenge, and July 2009 annual report for 2008-09, page 5-6 results).*
  - Always consider acknowledging/thanking those who provide their assistance in one way or another via e-mails and published documents. Do so encourages others to get involved.

# What is Happening Now?

- With the ERAA moving on to a higher level position in October 2009, the RIE Department was unable to rehire for this position due to the current economic restrictions.
- The SLO Coordinator is producing the communication documents (e.g., *The Spotlight* newsletters, white papers, progress reports) with the Outcomes Committee acting as the editor.
- Now that many faculty leads have gone through the whole assessment cycle using ePIE, the Outcomes Committee can focus on quality control and will be reviewing the accuracy of the SLOs entered into ePIE to find further ways to resolve problems and improve processes.
- IT is working on creating a way for end users to print their own SLO progress reports within the ePIE software process. They are also trying to integrate the entire GEO documentation process into ePIE.
- The GEO Coordinator's reassigned time was reduced to 40% in Spring 2010. The Outcomes Committee is considering the merging of the two learning outcomes coordinator positions into one Outcomes Coordinator position for Fall 2010.

# Why was it meaningful?

- Everyone involved saw that through dialogue, collaboration and communication, great things could be and were accomplished. This has encouraged more collaboration on campus and increased the visibility of the research department, especially by faculty, significantly.
- Job descriptions and Online Resources provided in the Materials Packet.
- Q&As

Thank you for attending.