

Natural Sciences Division SLO Meeting
September 15, 2022
LS 101

Jim Noyes, Nancy Freeman, Mohamad Abbani, Shimonee Kadakia, Zeke Murdock, Polly Parks

Jim Noyes asked if anyone was having problems with the changes to the Nuventive software used to input SLO reports. No one was aware of any problems. He encouraged faculty to refer anyone having problems to him and said he would update the “how to” guides.

Jim Noyes gave an update about the status of Gateway courses. Gateway courses are courses that most students in a program take or have a large number of students. In Spring 2022, the Assessment of Learning Committee (ALC) asked that all Gateway courses be assessed in the Canvas course management system so that SLO data could be extracted. The ALC has been trying to find ways to relate SLO data to demographic data about students to comply with state requirements to determine if outcomes are inequitable and address disparities as part of the SLO process (if there are inequities). Because this is a new process and of the challenges it presented, the ALC eventually reduced the requirement to assess all Gateway courses, and asked for a few Gateway courses in each division to be assessed. Only the Earth Science department assessed their Gateway course. The Earth Science department received a waiver to assess using Qualtrics instead of Canvas.

There were problems assessing Gateway Courses in Canvas, and this will be revisited. Jim Noyes needs to turn in Earth Science data to the ALC. Perhaps Qualtrics will be a better way to gather the needed data.

Mohamad Abbani expressed the desire for Institutional Research (IR) or another organization at El Camino College to collect and produce the needed statistics from SLO assessments. He said that at Santa Monica College instructors submit questions for SLO assessment, and an organization on campus produces online assessments using them. The students take the assessments online, and the organization then gives instructors the statistics they need to modify instruction and suggest other improvements. Jim Noyes noted that such a process would make it much easier for El Camino College to collect and link the data needed to identify disparities in outcomes.

Nancy Freeman discussed how the large number of part-time instructors is reducing the effectiveness of the SLO process in the Biology department. The part-time instructors submit data to her, and she files the reports, but it is hard to implement changes when the instructors may vary from semester to semester. In addition, the process may not be meaningful when results may change from semester to semester with changes in instructors. (She also noted the extra work for her to submit all the SLO reports.)

Zeke Murdock reported that Physics 12 is not being offered, and that he has very little data from Physics 2A. It will need to be reassessed in Spring 2022.

Shimonee Kadakia noted that the outcomes from online and traditional courses may be quite different, and perhaps SLO data from each need to be analyzed separately. She also described a “use the telescope” that cannot be assessed in online courses. Shimonee Kadakia said that she needs to create SLOs for Astronomy 15 and insert them into the Astronomy timeline.

Shimonee Kadakia said that she felt like it was not worthwhile assessing PLOs in her department, because few students take more than one astronomy classes. This means she has little data, so no firm conclusions can be drawn. Jim Noyes suggested that the Astronomy PLOs could be based around a theme, something important anyone taking an astronomy course should know about astronomy at the end of the semester. For PLO assessment she could combine data from different courses related to that theme. He gave an example: the Earth Science department's "a student's relationship with their environment" PLO. He also noted that SLOs and PLOs can be changed to make them more meaningful (and their timeline of assessment can be modified). Shimonee Kadakia noted that the Astronomy department is undergoing program review, and Jim Noyes said that this would be a good time to make modifications. After deciding what to change, she should consult him on how to file the paperwork.