

Special points of interest:

- Aspen Institute visited our campus on April 5th
- Faculty, staff, and administrators were invited for interviews with the team
- A full report will be sent back to us in a few months
- The goal of this visit was to help us identify best practices and ideas that promote student success

Aspen visits our District

On April 5th, 6th, and 7th representatives from the ASPEN Institute: College Excellence Program conducted a site visit for Woodland Community, Yuba College, and district services. The Aspen Institute is an educational and policy studies organization based in Washington, DC. According to their website, their mission is “to foster leadership based on enduring values and to provide a nonpartisan venue for dealing with critical issues.” We as a district were able to invite these experts thanks to our participation in the first round of IEPI (Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative—One of the many acronyms I discussed in the previous issue of *The SLO Lane*) and the resources made available to us as a district to help improve student success. According to the Aspen Institute their “site model is intended to support reflection on the effectiveness of practices associated with improving student outcomes.” The teams of researchers and practitioners with extensive community college experience and in-depth understanding of excellent practices among Aspen Prize winning colleges spent 2.5 days with us and interviewed leadership, staff, faculty, students, community partners, and others. Aspen will be providing us with a detailed report in a few months. The goal of this visit was to help identify our best practices, share ideas from other schools, and provide us with data that can ignite campus wide dialogue.

During their visit to Woodland, many faculty, administrators, and staff had an opportunity to meet and discuss ideas. As the SLO coordinator and VP of our Academic Senate I had the privilege to participate in one of the interviews. The time we had together was too short. It was easy to get into lively conversations about processes, outcomes, best practices, etc. Personally, I walked away from the interview with several ideas that I have already started to discuss with our SLO committee.

Additionally, the timing for this visit and the upcoming report is fortunate for our institutional planning. We are in the process of developing our new college Educational Master Plan (EMP). Many of you may have already been part of various activities to initiate this work. The report from Aspen will be an excellent piece of evidence to inform our discussion about how WE see ourselves moving forward as we employ the “Completion by Design” methodology.

Completion by Design

“Completion by Design” is a phrase you maybe hearing around campus and in meetings. You might be wondering what is it. As we develop our new EMP the idea of “Completion by Design” will become more frequent in our conversations. The methodology is a holistic approach to student success by understanding the student experience and where students may lose momentum in their educational path. In essence, it is a collaborative, systemic approach to education. Faculty, staff, administrators, and students work to create integrated institutional policies, processes, and practices to improve student performance and completion outcomes.

During our college convocation in August 2015, Dr. White introduced this philosophy and method during an activity where we imagined the full student experience from “Connection”, “Entry”, “Progress”, and “Completion.” Within each of these categories there were robust discussions about how policies, practices, and processes maybe a contributing factor to student progress. Colleagues at our Lake County Campus and Colusa County Campus have also started to apply this method to their local planning. We will use this information as we develop our EMP, integrated planning, and budgeting. The SLO committee is currently considering new strategies for collecting our institutional outcome data that will address requirements for the accreditation standards, but will also be additional support as we assess our institution through these stages.

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Assessment Method Highlight:

Simulations

Assessment during a student's performance during a role-play or simulation may provide excellent opportunities to evaluate decision making in action. Also, this can provide an opportunity to reflect on various approaches and theory application in practice. Simulations can be used in a variety of disciplines. However, there is abundant research around the success of this technique in the medical field and other CTE (Career Technical Education) areas. Many of us already use this technique in our instruction, however, we may not have taken full advantage of the data that can be collected during these activities.

A benefit to using a simulation is that you can scale the hypothetical situation to fit a specific concept/outcome, or expand to encompass several course objectives that interrelate in application. A "hands-on" approach can inform you how comfortable and competent a student maybe in the application of their knowledge.

To take full advantage of this type of activity, it is important that there are clear instructions, rules, and expectations for how the simulation will run. After the simulation, it is ideal to provide a debriefing and allow an opportunity for reflection by the participants (either about their own performance and/or those of other participants). Using this technique, along with other methods of assessment, could provide a rich analysis. Do not be afraid to incorporate both formative and summative assessments, use of observation, and secondary assessment tools.

Because of the versatility of simulation activities, you can adapt this technique for almost any course or learning activity.

Adjunct Corner

By: Stephanie Touchman (Adjunct Representative)

I have been a member of the SLO committee for a little over a year now. I would like to share what I've learned while serving on this committee and spending time with my fellow SLOers. Mainly, why student-learning outcomes are so important. As teachers, we try new strategies and some are good and we continue to use them and some are bad and we abandon them. Teaching is an evolving process where we are always tweaking how we teach. However, the only way to really know if a new strategy is "good" is by measuring it, and using SLO data is a perfect way to measure if your new teaching strategy is effective. You might be surprised to find that your favorite strategy isn't always the most effective!

-Stephanie Touchman: stouchma@yccd.edu
(WCC Biology Adjunct Instructor)

SLO Tips and Reminders

- Programs that will be going through a full program review in Fall 2016 may want to start collecting program-level data and/or reviewing course SLO data that support program outcomes now.
- Be sure to submit and/or upload into TracDat your SLO results by **May 26, 2016** (Same day all grades are due from instructors).



WCC SLO Coordinator:
Christopher Howerton

E-mail: chowerton@yccd.edu
Phone: (530) 661-5771

A word from your SLO Coordinator...

I would like to share with you an observation I had during spring break. This year my husband and I spent the week in New Orleans. During our visit we were treated to a true New Orleans' style parade. As I reached for beads that were being tossed, I had an "ah-ha" moment. I was successful in my efforts to collect beads when the people on the floats made eye contact with me and worked with me to make a successful exchange.

You might be asking yourself, why is this important? I started to think of the parade like a college and each float was a course (or educational activity) and the beads were the outcomes, lessons, and achievements.

We as educators have to be proactive and at times adjust our strategies so that students will have

more success at reaching our established goals. Basically, we're in this together. What makes for a successful exchange of knowledge is not just throwing our metaphoric beads, or students grabbing frantically at our content, it's a partnership.

Assessing our outcomes inform us as an institution how we can adapt so that our students will be more successful.

This semester has been busy for me and our SLO committee. You may have noticed our new SLO posters in various buildings on campus. I would like to thank Brandi Asmus for her assistance with this project.

Additionally, as a college we are in preliminary discussions regarding preparation for our next Accreditation cycle. Not only has ACCJC updated the standards for evaluation (some changes affect SLOs), but they have also redesigned

their training processes for new faculty evaluators, and training resources for colleges. I was selected to attend one of the new faculty evaluator training sessions in February and most likely will be assigned to an accreditation team in the Fall. Also this fall, WCC will be participating in a regional accreditation training offered by ACCJC.

I would like to highlight a new addition to our newsletter. In this issue of *The SLO Lane* we are happy to introduce "Adjunct Corner" where we will include updates and observations from our adjunct member of the SLO committee. She is a great resource and connection with our adjunct faculty and the SLO committee.

Finally, I hope that you are able to enjoy the last few weeks of our semester, and have a stress free semester break.