Participation of Adjunct Faculty in Outcomes Assessment

Instructional programs rely to varying degrees on adjunct faculty not only for specialty course offerings but also for required courses. The more such a program relies on the adjunct faculty in this regard, the more collaborative participation in the Outcomes Assessment Process should occur.

It is recommended that in such situations the full-time faculty explain the implementation protocols for both the course and program levels, the integration of outcomes assessment with program review, the importance of SLOs and their assessment in terms of improving curriculum effectiveness, and in this work’s contribution to the College’s accreditation status. Adjunct faculty’s perceptions and insights are valuable since typically such faculty have broad exposure to outcomes assessment at other institutions. A program’s full-time faculty members should initiate and maintain the needed collegial dialogue.

Participation in various aspects of the assessment of SLOs might occur through email exchanges, optional attendance at a department meetings, required Flex Day projects, or embedded within a department’s electronic share forums designed for such interactions. Full-time faculty should encourage adjunct faculty to participate in the development and assessment of SLOs as appropriate. To that end the Flex Committee has agreed that this type of ASLO engagement by the adjunct faculty warrants Flex credit. (Adjunct faculty will need to complete the required paperwork according to published protocols.) Whether viewed as an inducement or validation of such scholarly work, the participation of adjunct faculty with the ASLO process is supported by Flex. Also full-time faculty might emphasize to adjunct faculty the importance of demonstrating familiarity with the Outcomes Assessment Process as an employment advantage throughout the community college system.

Additionally, departments are encouraged to create assessment processes that create as little supplemental work as possible for adjunct faculty. Course-embedded assessments, use of technology to assist with assessments, clearly organized management of the department’s assessment protocols and processes, and appropriateness of SLOs in quality and quantity all indicate regard and appreciation for their contributions of time and effort. Moreover, establishing a culture of evidence within the department for such work would reflect that all faculty value emerging insights from the assessment evidence; provide clear specificity in their intentions and goals as related to this process; that the information derived about learning outcomes is seen as an integral part of department decision making; and that the Outcomes Assessment Process is but a vehicle for educational improvement.