

CFE Negotiations Team

SLO Survey Responses

October 2013

This survey was sent to 473 members. We received 124 responses (a 26% response rate).

46% of the responses were from GWC

36% of the responses were from OCC

18% of the responses were from CCC

86% of the responses were from Full-Time Faculty

14% of the responses were from Part-Time Faculty

The main question -- Select one option below related to SLOs and a special agreement between CFE and the District that would include SLOs as part of your faculty evaluation.

73% of the responses said NO

27% of the responses said YES

61 additional comments:

My feelings are mixed here. If this is just something like "has this faculty member filed SLO reports", then that's fine.

Evaluating SLOs is part of my job, and whether I evaluate them or not should be fair game for my evaluations. However, if my students pass SLOs at a certain % is the requirement, then I have a problem with this, as it will totally destroy the point of SLO assessment as an honest evaluation of student learning. If I know that to keep my job that I must get 80% of students to pass the SLO question, I'm going to pick damn easy questions to ask my students. If, on the other hand, I know that keeping my job doesn't require me to have students pass my SLOs, then

I'll pick the best questions to evaluate if the students have learned.

Survey students in any classroom and you'll find that the C students generally believe they're doing A work and the A students generally grade themselves in the B-range. The reason is simple: the strongest students know what good work looks like and understand how far they have to go to achieve it and are therefore tough on themselves; the weak students frankly can't tell good work from bad and assume that if their current work is better than what they were doing a year ago, it must merit an A. Faculty members often fall in somewhere along a similar spectrum. Because SLOs don't contain a mechanism for adjustment based on individual instructors' standards, they are inherently unreliable. This unreliability is further complicated by the difficulties in assessing work in fields where the measurement of success isn't score-driven, such as the arts, literature, and writing. As a result, if the most demanding teachers grade harder, and the least demanding grade more generously (As and Bs for all! Yippee!), it is quite possible that emphasis on SLOs in instructor evaluation could ultimately reward mediocrity and penalize quality.

Using SLOs to make adjustments to teaching is far different from being evaluated based on student success -- including from students who refuse to make any effort of their own to be successful.

Several reasons. One, I believe this is a way for the district and/or the state to get around tenure. "Well, your class didn't do so well on their outcomes. It must be your fault as a teacher, so we'll need to let you go." Think, "No Child Left Behind". Secondly, I agree that we will begin teaching "to the SLOs, not

to the course" and the value of the class will be reduced to just a set of statistics.

ALL this is about is that we are participating, nothing more than that. It is simply a compliance deal and if we OWN it, we will be fine-perhaps even be disabused more in terms of the feedback process which I believe has many on our campus in an almost paranoid state. Please let go of the fear about this. Thanks for all your conscientiousness and hard work for the faculty-it is much appreciated...

To me, ACCJC's request only asks that we be evaluated on how effectively we assess SLOs, not the results of the SLOs themselves. I have no problem with this and think it's a reasonable request.

Many students are not serious when they complete the SLO pretest and post test. They sometimes rush through the questionnaire, adding check marks without even reading the statement!

SLO is justifying your existence by attempting to quantify the unquantifiable. The day I can select who my students are is the day I would be willing to have SLO attainment as part of my evaluation.

I am confused, is it just if we do SLOa's or not? Or if the data we get indicates if we are an effective teacher? There's no way 5 SLOa's translate into evidence of effective teaching of a 5 unit-transfer level science course so in that way they are useless. But since I am Chair and we are required to submit data it would be helpful if we could tie SLOa compliance into the evals - not the actual data but whether or not faculty (FT or PT)

comply. I have a difficult time getting SLOa info from some of the faculty in my Dept.

My achievement rates for students are high. This is because I teach performance based classes. Students present a portfolio at mid-term and at final. SLO's rarely if ever give insight into the processes of our curriculum or how students are doing. Students who cannot perform usually self exit the class by the 4th week. After that attrition is low and achievements are high because of the nature of what we teach.

I am strongly against including SLOs as part of the evaluations. I understand the concept, but I certainly don't agree with its application. I have been teaching in our system for more than twenty years, and I am one of the faculty who cares deeply about teaching and learning; I have done a lot of study and work in this area, including periodic classroom assessments that have nothing to do with my evaluations. I believe the current SLO reporting process of asking for grades in each class for each of the 3-4 SLOs that were specified for the class is NOT an accurate reflection of the students' learning, let alone an accurate reflection of teaching. If there were a teaching/grade assessment process that I believed actually reflected student learning, I would be more interested in participating. As it is, I am not. I don't understand how the SLO process is more effective than using the course outlines. Consequently, I am strongly against including any SLO factor as part of faculty evaluation. I do believe we need a more effective and more stringent process of tenure/faculty evaluation than the one we have now. SLO assessment does not fit my standards for either student learning assessment or faculty teaching assessment.

To be honest, I have never found SLO's to be very useful. I find grades, success rates, drop rates, etc. to be far more useful. Also, this is just one more thing that I'm going to have to do when I evaluate faculty. On the other hand it's not that big of a deal, and if I had to do it i could and would.

This should only include a faculty member's participation in the development and assessment of SLOs in his/her class, not anything to do with the results of that assessment.

SLOs are meant to provide guidelines and structure; they are especially useful for adjunct who are here for only a semester or two.

I do not feel that there is enough data to support that how SLOs are calculated and their final number has anything to do with student success.

It really depends on HOW the information is used. I don't mind a yes or no box on whether the faculty member participated. But there are too many elements of student success that are beyond the control of the faculty. Such as, the preparedness of the student enrolled in the class, the motivation of the student to attend and participate in class. The student choosing to do the assigned readings and homeworks. We are working with adults, who must accept the consequences of their choices. My teaching effectiveness cannot be evaluated on student behaviors that I cannot control. There is also the possibility of faculty, particularly part time, who are tempted to manipulate data, dumb down the class or otherwise engage in unethical behavior because they are worried that the SLO data will affect their jobs.

I don't want to recreate the "No Child Left Behind" fiasco here at GWC. I use the course SLO's as a guideline and goal in my classroom. However I cannot be held responsible for students achieving the SLO's.

Initially, we were told that SLOs were for faculty to do a self-evaluation on student learning. Connecting SLOs to our evaluations defeats the purpose of SLOs as we will now be just manipulating the system and playing a numbers game. In addition, SLOs for the same course at OCC could be entirely different from the SLOs at GWC. For transferable courses, I would think they would have to be the same. Also, we have only 3-5 maximum and general SLOs when in reality course learning objectives should include probably a hundred specific things the students need to know.

I'm okay with including the fact that I assess the student learning outcomes and make adjustments to my curriculum, teaching methods, and/or the SLOs to improve the outcomes. I am absolutely against being held accountable for the outcomes. A student's success depends upon a complex network of factors and teachers should not bear the burden alone.

Current evaluation process is satisfactory.

Ridiculous question. No where do I see wording to faculty taking the survey that the ACCJC REQUIRES this of faculty. You are misleading faculty by having them believe we have a choice. This reminds me of the GOP doing all it can to stall ObamaCare--stalling only makes faculty look like idiots! By wasting our time surveying us to see if faculty "want" this, you go against the state senate's stance on SLOs & faculty evaluations. For the record, I wish to be paid \$150K per year, be paid for all my months off, and never be evaluated by either students or

administrators. Where's my survey on those items?!
Exactly . . .!

Including SLO as part of evaluation will bring us one step closer to the use the SLO assessments (the ones gathered every semester) to measure instructor effectiveness. Even though ACCJC is stating not to be the intent of SLO assessments, here we are debating that very subject.

SLOs are here to stay (unfortunately) and if they must be around, we should be sure that people are assessing them, so including a "Did you do your SLO reports?" in an evaluation is not a terrible evil. But basing any type of faculty evaluation on how well students achieve SLOs in a given course should never, ever happen. This is for at least two very good reasons: if a class of students is flakey, poor performance on SLOs will obviously look bad for the instructor even though it is not his/her fault; and (more importantly) since there are no standardized ways of assessing or tracking SLOs, instructors can do whatever they want in evaluating them (especially if they are subjective, rather than objective) criteria, and can thus make the numbers come out pretty much however one wants.

I do not think that providing expectations of student success should be used as a measure of success for teachers. I am old enough to recognize that many students of today arrive in school with an unrealistic expectation as to their role in their own education. Feelings of unlimited entitlement accompany these students and no amount of wishful thinking on our part is going to instill responsibility on their part. SLO's are one more way that public education is being undercut by the for-profit education advocates.

I do not think SLO's improve instruction in any significant way. It simply adds more paperwork to an already heavy teaching load.

I have a strong preference against SLOs being used in any capacity in a faculty evaluation. The only way that I would concede on this issue is to negotiate to keep our current benefits.

My concern is whether the consideration would rate you on how well students did on SLO. This is because I attract many learning disable students and teach high risk classes, so the scores in my class would be lower. I fear faculty would lower SLOs level so they looked good. I think "participation" in developing, evaluating, and making decisions based on assessment, should be the only thing included.

I'm willing to do so, but we do this as a department, and I'd just as soon not have it added to everyone's evaluations. It's actually redundant for my department.

I would be happy to include a screenshot of my course showing that I distributed SLOs and a narrative from our department meeting that shows we spoke about how to improve SLO results.

SLO's have always been central to my teaching careers. I outline them carefully to my students to give direction to our journey together through the course material. No one has control over how or if students take in the information offered in class. It is a dangerous trend to link instructor employment to student grades. The body of research does not yet indicate nor lend support to a positive relationship between student grades and instructor effectiveness.

I teach students with intellectual disabilities. SLOs do not accurately represent or reflect individual goals and objectives.

I think caution should be exercised here so that the evaluation should be focused on how well instructors have constructed assessments for their SLOs and not on the "success percentage" of students attaining the SLOs for a course.

I don't have as much an issue with outcomes as with the definition of "success" on outcomes being set at 80% achievement or higher. Although theoretically SLOs are measured differently than graded assignments are, in reality measuring success at 80% means all students need a B or higher on all assignments for the instructor to be "successful" in achieving outcomes. Not all students are B level, nor should they be graded as such to meet an external standard of success. So rather than taking a chance to nurture a slower student we are motivating instructors to find ways to drop them early so the numbers won't "look bad" . Or worse, grades will be elevated giving students a false sense of accomplishment and fewer real skills to succeed outside of college.

All you have to do is include a question on the evaluation form like: "The instructor has developed activities/assignments that measure approved SLOs and demonstrates the steps he/she takes to ensure that students meet SLOs." The instructor could turn this in as a self-report measure (instructions could be provided for the evaluator to request this information). In this way, "effectiveness" could be measured by instructor effort to constantly improve by changing teaching techniques, participating in dialog, etc., instead of just reporting numbers of students who met or didn't meet SLOs. [On the adjunct evaluation form, there is a question about professional

development. I always ask them to send me a paragraph about their self-development. I can't observe it during an in-class observation so I need to rely on their self-report. If they aren't doing anything, then I can suggest some options.] NOTE: other employee groups must also meet this same SLO accreditation standard [and recommendation must be addressed] during their evaluations. An additional question could be added to their evaluation similar to the faculty evaluation: "The employee/manager demonstrates the steps he/she takes to ensure that students meet department/unit SLOs." Then the evaluations throughout the District would be parallel. I would be glad to assist with the wording and provide a rationale.

I agree that ACCJC has overstepped its authority in regard to this issue.

The SLO's per se are simply an extension of the course outline and if they are worked into the evaluation form in terms of how well they are being focused on in class, that is fine. But if student success in learning the SLOs is every used in the evals, there will be grade inflation and the quality and reputation of our education will plummet.

I vehemently agree with those faculty who believe that "attaching SLOs to evaluations is antithetical to quality teaching and that attaching numbers to the skill of teaching deceptively reduces teaching to a numbers game"

It is unhelpful and unfair to require SLOs as part of evaluations. As K-12 is moving away from this type of numbers game in evaluating teachers, why are we moving toward it? Students frequently come to college unprepared or have second language issues that cannot always be resolved in one semester--particularly true in basic skills classes. To evaluate a

teacher based even partially on SLOs teacher may lead to the "teaching to the test" problems that have caused the re-evaluation of these types of criterion in K-12.

I couldn't agree more with the already expressed viewpoint that SLOs are nothing more than a (perhaps) well intended, but, ultimately, short sighted bureaucratic hindrance to quality educational outcomes at the level of higher education.

Furthermore, the faculty efforts & energies devoted towards institutional compliance of SLOs could be better utilized in curriculum design & improvement, as well as in professional development. Perhaps an alternative would be to increase our professional development requirements of tenured faculty.

The issue of SLO's is far more important than a simple, yes or no response. The SLO's shift the idea of creative and inspiring teaching based to a large degree on what the human being, i.e. the instructor brings into the room to a more rigid, narrow model. We teach from WHO we are as much of WHAT we know. An individual WHO cannot be measured in an SLO. The Pierre Grimes of the world may not make it into education, for example, with the pushing of this new SLO(W!) model. To have education dictated by SLO's which on some level means politicians and controllers, our educational system is not a creative, breathing entity. It thus becomes a machine, sterile and more unyielding. When outcomes triumph process in education we are in deep trouble. I believe this SLO issue is the continued process of a state controlled society rather than a society developing from creative, free thinking individuals. Why not just have robots teach the classes - I mean really! I would be grateful for any efforts the Union can take to make decisions and operate in favor of my outlined perspective.

Since we rate our own students on the SLOs, making this part of our faculty evaluation process would encourage faculty to inaccurately score their students, which defeats the purpose of the SLOs at the department level. Our statistics would become meaningless. We have been told by administration since day one of SLO discussions that we never needed to worry; SLOs would not be part of our faculty evaluation.

I think that the ACCJC has overstepped their authority. SLO's should not be used as an faculty evaluation tool. We are often times working with students who have poor writing and math skills (through no fault of our own), and this is just as much a factor in poor outcomes, not just the teaching of content.

I have no issue with it, and at other schools I teach at in the past it was part of my evaluation.

I think SLOs should be included, especially since the college (courses, programs, everything) is reviewed by accreditation for SLOs.

3 comments: First, I agree that SLOs should be a part of the College plan to provide quality education to our student population to prepare them for transfer or to enter the workforce. In this respect, I think that SLO mapping at the course level, program level, and all the way up to the institutional level provide a definitive outline as to how the College plans to achieve its mission. In other words, I think that the mapping is a good thing. Secondly, notice that I said SLOs, not SLO assessments, should be part of a central college plan. I hold extremely guarded reservations as to the effectiveness of SLO assessments. As instructors, we are already constantly assessing student progress and making the necessary changes to our instructional methods and materials. To make us

document the process is just making already busy instructors write another piece of paper. There are a million other better ways that our College can improve our processes besides SLO assessments. For example, we can require mandatory online orientation to reduce student attrition in online courses, better communication of program requirements and matriculation processes by putting policies and procedures online, and other such student support measures that ultimately would lead to higher student success. Last, SLO assessments should no way be used as means to evaluate faculty or determine course offerings. Too many qualitative factors, many of them being innate sociological and cultural factors, enter into whether students achieve the stated learning outcomes. The instructor's assessment is only contained to factors within the classroom and thus does not capture all other considerations that affect a student's learning outcome. To use SLO assessments to evaluate an instructor would be akin to placing blame on an inner city Kto12 teacher for why only a small percentage of her students graduate when compared to a teacher in an upper middle class neighborhood where the community and municipality fully support the school and its teachers.

SLO's are a helpful tool for instructors. We learn a great deal about our methods and our students via SLO's, and they help us form goals. But they are not the same as education. To evaluate instructors based on SLO's applied to the open access population of community college students would tempt instructors to inflate grades or cheat, as has happened when similar criteria were used on elementary and high school teachers. It's also contrary to the higher, more advanced education that college is meant to be. It's not mandatory education.

I understand this is a big part of ACCJC recommendations. I would go recommend making it a box check where it asks do you use SLO assessment in your class. I am in the group that truly does not care one way or the other. :)

I would be fine with being evaluated on whether I am assessing SLOs and paying attention to them to modify my teaching. I would be definitely against having any kind of clause specifying a number of students that must meet the SLO or having a target improvement defined from year to year. This would be meaningless anyway, as I could write easier assessment questions that everyone could answer.

SLOs are 100% not indicative of the performance of an instructor. They may on some level help faculty see the areas where students are struggling, but any instructor worth his salt is already identifying those areas via assignments, quizzes and exams during the semester. The SLOs focus on isolated parts of a course and do not take into account the wider picture of learning. As a language teacher, it is unthinkable that an evaluation of any instructor would be based upon one SLO which could amount to one point of grammatical understanding while ignoring the fluency in other areas of a sentence, speech or composition. The reasoning behind SLOs and their introduction as a major player is random, manipulative and fundamentally flawed.

We need to begin a counter-campaign to roll back mandatory SLOs, mandatory testing, and misplaced emphasis on "outcomes." My students can no longer take a breath without asking me what their grade is. There is no longer any room in the system for learning.

No Child Left Behind directives, such as SLOs, have been proven quite ineffective for reasons noted in the CFE announcement. Thus, I oppose adding SLO assessment as part of our faculty evaluation, and, as noted, I agree that Accreditation has overreached its authority.

Despite considering SLO assessments a useful tool for improving my teaching effectiveness, I do not believe that _how I use SLOs_ should be part of my evaluations. I believe all faculty should be engaged in assessing their teaching effectiveness, and SLO assessments are one--among many--useful ways of going about this. I have no objection to being required to perform SLO assessments. However, I do not believe that _how I use SLOs_ should be part of my evaluations. What if I make a change in my teaching based on my SLO assessments and it doesn't change student performance? or it makes their performance worse? Will I be evaluated poorly for that? What if I and a colleague who both teach the same class agree to make the same change in instruction based on our SLO assessments (say we create a supplement study guide) and his students perform worse on the assessment than mine? Will he be rated negatively and I positively? The idea of including how I use my SLO assessments as part of my evaluations seems arbitrary, too easily manipulated for purposes other than improving student performance.

I agree that the ACCJC has overstepped their authority in making their recommendations. The management of CCCD will ultimately overstep their authority using SLOs as lever for more control and less responsibility to themselves. My prediction is that the faculty will cave in to the management and SLOs will be used as part of their evaluation. It is opening Pandora's box because the management will have no limits on how they will use them. This SLO thing is not coming directly

from faculty and therefore should not be supported especially since it has nothing to do (yet) with working conditions. It has to do with faculty and their students. If they are used it should come from faculty how they are to be used.

I understand why this survey is occurring, but I have to say that as a SLO coordinator (for awhile now), I am so frustrated that a clear recommendation from ACCJC isn't enough to show our faculty that we absolutely must include SLO participation on faculty evaluations. I can't believe there are people on our campus who actually fight and argue against participating in an activity that is so beneficial to students and to instructors! It was so embarrassing to have to sit in the visiting team meetings and have to explain to them that we had been trying to get this issue taken care of for years. The fact that we're still trying to get this evaluation component taken care of almost shocks me. It is very difficult to get people motivated to participate in SLO assessments when they know that all they have to do is whine about it to get out of it. My intention here - though it may seem otherwise - is not to complain. What I truly want to get across is the level of frustration that so many of us feel in this area. I expect that a lot of my cohorts will send you responses that talk about how this is the worst thing that could ever happen because managers will use it against us. Please clarify that managers won't be able to do this, that we'll only focus on SLO assessment participation versus results (ever!), and that this is a mandatory activity. Also, please feel free to contact the GWC SLOCs any time on this issue. We're all very firmly aligned on this front and are DYING to see this finally go through so that we can be in compliance with ACCJC expectations and recommendations. Thank you for everything that you can do to speed up this process.

I strongly disagree with the ACCJC recommendation to include any part of SLO's as part of a faculty member's evaluation. I believe they have overstepped by including such a suggestion.

This is a qualified yes: I am only interested as long as it is part of my self evaluation, does not include how many of my students meet the SLOs, and if there is something else negotiated that improves the working conditions of faculty.

I hate SLOs and all that crap but if they are going to use this in an evaluation then I definitely wish to know more about it.

But if we must to keep accreditation, then only in self review for a period of two years.

Yes ONLY to get past the ACCJC recommendation.

Belief in SLO's is the sigh of the oppressed teacher.