

## The Big Picture

by Katie Townsend-Merino & Daniel Peck

What do planning structures, budgeting processes and SLOAC have to do with each other?

### The seismic shift of new(ish) Accreditation Standards.

*To quote Obama (and justify the lengthy article): . . .*

**very rarely will you hear me simplify the issues.**

*To quote David Bowie: **Ch-ch-ch-ch changes***

*To quote Benjamin Franklin: **When you're finished changing; you're finished.***

We find ourselves in the midst of unprecedented change at every level. Sometimes we anticipate that change, and sometimes it comes even more quickly than anticipated. And sometimes, even as you think you understand what the demands for change are, those requirements change again. All we can say now is that living in unprecedented times of change is uncomfortable much of the time, painful at its worst and exhilarating at its best.

Foothill has recently begun serious implementation of student learning outcomes, but last week we learned our efforts will have to be doubled. President Miner received a strongly worded letter demanding that the college demonstrate "extraordinary effort" in the implementation of a college wide (instruction, student services and administrative services) student learning outcome and assessment cycle from the Accrediting Commission. Although Foothill's Midterm Report was accepted, it was done so with a significant requirement of a Follow-Up Report due October 15, 2009 detailing progress in meeting Recommendation 4 regarding student learning outcome implementation. This report demands immediate action, stating bluntly that "the Commission is concerned that at the current rate, Foothill College will have difficulty meeting . . . compliance with standards related to student learning outcomes and needs to accelerate its efforts . . . The institution's relative inaction on this matter to date means extraordinary work must be done to comply." Colleges are expected to comply with recommendations in the first

two years, and Foothill is four years beyond the 2005 recommendation. For more about the only recently enforced two-year rule see the Academic Senate Rostrum article at [http://www.asccc.org/Publications/Rostrums/Rostrum02\\_08.pdf](http://www.asccc.org/Publications/Rostrums/Rostrum02_08.pdf).

While some may have perceived a degree of leniency with the Commission in past times, the Accrediting Commission itself is being held to the fire to ensure that all member institutions meet the exact requirements for accreditation. In the past two meetings of the commission (June 2008 and February 3 2009), 14 institutions have been placed on warning based on their evaluation visit, and 3 have been placed on probation—several are now on "show cause". It is our firm goal to be one of the institutions receiving direct reaffirmed accreditation. For more on how we can pragmatically accomplish this in Instruction, see our accompanying article in this newsletter.

At the same time, student services and administrative service areas will also develop complete SLOACs as required by the Accrediting Commission—same deadlines for all of us! Is this a large task? Indubitably. Is this a task that can be completed? Yes. We are Foothill. You will, however, have help. Lots of it!

Implementing a vibrant SLOAC carries immediate urgency, but there is also more that must be done. The Accreditation Standards have themselves changed—collapsing what was once covered in ten standards, down to four. Vice President Richard Galope will be acting as our Accreditation Liaison Officer, while Dolores Davison and myself act as Accreditation Co-Chairs. We will shortly begin forming our accreditation teams (to begin real work next Fall, but looking at the recommendations colleges have been receiving in recent months,

it is clear that another major requirement for full accreditation is truly comprehensive and integrated planning and budgeting cycle that is based on student learning. Simply put, the Commission wants to see that resources are allocated based on sound and integrated planning that is anchored in comprehensive program review—i.e., is based on student learning needs (which you will be letting us know in your SLO reflections). Our increasingly diminished funding must be demonstrably related to help the institution support learning.

Integrated planning is a core requirement and we are not waiting to receive a recommendation to move forward in this realm (indeed we are already expected to be at the highest level of performance here, yikes!). Our students face an increasingly complex and dynamic world, where change is truly a constant. If we are to prepare them to thrive in this fluid environment, we must be adept at navigating change ourselves. But, in keeping with the recent White House shift, let's make it 'Change we Can Believe In'. In fact, we believe that faculty and staff will actually look forward to how new structures will increase open and transparent planning/budgeting and how it values shared governance—all voices, with authority, making recommendations to the President. Please review the DRAFT graphic showing the structural elements we know to be necessary to meet the required level of integrated planning and budgeting. Note that the college plans and resource allocations will be tied to YOUR program reviews at its base, which will be linked to our soon to be determined college Strategic Planning goals. See also that the details have not been worked out, and we will invite the full input and participation of everyone on this campus in determining the final structure—help us build a structure YOU can believe in. As I have noted before, I have no desire to become known as “Katie: Queen of Bureaucracy”, so I am optimistic in my belief that we can collaboratively invent new structures that benefit in our institution. Towards this end, an integrated planning and budgeting Task Force will be convened shortly and our senates will be appointing representatives from faculty, staff and students—we anticipate a new planning/budgeting structure to be agreed upon by June 2009. We believe that by enacting new structures in Fall 2009, we will be well positioned for our Accreditation visit in 2011. Of course, in my geeky way (I think this is the GOOD part of the new standards, not just a response to the commission) I believe we will be building systems that folks have faith in and support our efforts toward student learning. Will it be a bureaucratic

process or opportunity to make things happen? It's our choice.

WHAT strategic planning goals you might ask? As an institution we must collectively decide our common goals leading to where we would like to be in 3 years or so. Thus, a constituent-based Educational and Strategic Master Planning Task Force will be created to shepherd through the process of updating our Educational Master Plan and developing a common vision of the future—complete with goals (by June 2009) and action plans (by December 2009). We will launch visioning will be led by Kurt Hueg in April. At the same time, our new Institutional Researcher, Daniel Peck, will be conducting internal and external scans to inform our core planning assumptions. Multiple iterations of goals will be refined and revised in response to reaction from our constituent groups—look out for communications from your senates.

So . . . lots to do. Good, bad and ugly. What does this entail from you? For instructional faculty, it is course level SLOAC work (supported by this office), and feedback on the planning structures and Strategic Planning goals.

**For those of you who just cannot get enough of this, please download the following documents at:**

<http://www.foothill.edu/staff/irs/newsletter.html>

1. The plan to plan the Educational and Strategic Master Plans
2. The plan to plan new Integrated Budget/Planning structures
3. A visual of the type of planning structure we would develop together
4. The Planning Rubric from ACCJC – reminder we have to be at the Sustainable level (pdf, 348KB)
5. The recent letter from ACCJC asking us to engage in “extraordinary efforts” on SLOs and document that effort by October 15
6. The letter from ACCJC documenting the recent actions it has directed towards CC's in California and others
7. The Foothill College Accreditation 101 initial plan and informational handout

## An Invitation

by Rosemary Arca



### The Winter Convocation: Focus on Teaching: Reflecting on What Works in the Classroom

Friday, February 27, 9:00-Noon  
in the Hearthside Student  
Lounge across from the  
bookstore

Join us in a highly interactive, hands-on meeting focused on great teaching and the challenges of the classroom. Using photography and lenses as our theme, we'll talk about focusing our SLOs on what goes on in our classrooms. We'll begin the day with coffee and pastries and hear new Vice President of

Instruction, Katie Townsend-Merino describe her vision for SLOs and Instruction.

Next, we'll enjoy images provided by Kate Jordahl and Ron Herman, our own photography experts. They'll explore the strategies they use to "compose" an image and discuss ways they think about focus and perspective when they photograph.

Then we begin our most important work-our Focus on Teaching. This is powered by your concerns, insights and successes. Here's how we're thinking about the morning.

The goals for the day are really simple and are derived from the "Great Teachers Seminar" philosophy that faculty are their own best experts.

- To celebrate good teaching
- To inspire faculty to venture

beyond the limits of their own disciplines and environments in search of the universals of teaching.

- To discover realistic, creative approaches to teaching and learning.
- To stimulate the exchange of information and ideas within the college by building communications networks among faculty.
- To promote introspection and self-appraisal by providing a supportive environment in which participants may seriously reflect on their attitudes, methods, and behavior as teachers-all in a non-evaluative setting.
- To renew the commitment to student learning

The afternoon is an ad hoc and optional work session, Q&A, writing community focused on getting SLOs written.

*Stay or go as needed.*

## We Can Do This

by Rosemary Arca

### Quoting the Grateful Dead: We Will Survive Channeling Rosie the Riveter: We Can Do This

First, let's take a moment to acknowledge the angst of our newly-accelerated timeline for completing our SLOACs before the October 15 ACCJC Follow-Up report deadline. We do have work to do and we're busy and to be honest, a little frustrated by the time crunch. Really...what are they thinking! We were looking forward to having the two years to accomplish these goals.

That said, we can do this and the college is committed to providing support and time to make this happen.

Let's think about our strategies for accomplishing this in terms of familiar if onerous tasks we've already mastered. Do these sound familiar to you? And do you recognize the tack you or others have taken to take these tasks on?

**Task:** Writing a thesis/dissertation/research project

**Strategy:** Employed by **Someone We Know.**

Set up a work plan and rewarded self for completing parts. It's amazing what how much can get done between a morning latte and a lunch with Perry Mason reruns.

**Task:** Achieving Tenure

**Strategy:** Went through the hoops and endless evaluations to that final recommendation for tenure. Some griping along the way. Came to terms with this is just what's needed to do to achieve career goals. Hung out with colleagues who were experiencing the same things. Vented.

**Task:** Grading exams

**Strategy:** Looking at the work in aggregate was too hard. (Who wants to contemplate 60 essays to grade)? Broke the task into parts with planned breaks in between. Each task was accompanied by a beverage of choice or Cheetos (or for Someone Else We Know taking a shower or washing floors).

Clearly, these are familiar and sometimes frustrating things we have to do.

So what about this SLOAC task. Learning from our colleagues, we'll employ the strategies above:

1. First and most importantly, using the advice of the faculty on the Academic Senate (some of who have participated already in

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<http://www.foothill.edu/staff/irs/>

## We Can Do This *continued...*

half day workshops), the Office of Instruction has cleared their Friday calendars to meet with divisions, departments and teams to get this job done!

2. We've outlined the task in manageable chunks. We'll do SLO writing that supports your interest in what your students learn, then Assessment strategy building beginning with how you already assess the students in your classes, then (the interesting part) analyzing your data and reflecting with your colleagues on what you have learned. See the benchmarks and due dates in the Timeline and Support article.

3. We are building a new, interactive, streamline form that will be available shortly.

4. We encourage you to ask us questions, vent to us, work together with colleagues, ask for what you need. We've scheduled and will schedule as requested Coffee Conversations with us to work one on one. PIE Wednesday where individuals and departments can meet with us to get this done in an hour's worth of concentrated effort rewarded by pie.

5. Division work sessions where we'll bring SLO models, assessment examples, etc targeted to the exact things you're teaching. You can edit existing models instead of re-inventing them.

6. Committed to supplying beverages and other rewards for work process and completion of tasks. See the LA 36 course/ 1 PAA unit for the Tasks, and the Spring Convocation/Teaching Fair.

## Timeline & Support

by Rosemary Arca

### Timeline

*This timeline has been designed with the accreditation report date of October 15 in mind. We've had to work backwards to accommodate board meeting deadlines, summer writing time, and reasonable (and we know compressed) SLOAC development time.*

April 24 is the Completion due date for two or more SLOs for all courses.

June 30 is the Filing due date for the Assessment and Reflection of 1/3 of the SLOACs.

### Support

#### At Your Service Work Groups

Call Katie (7209) or Rosemary (7543)

to schedule a work group. We'll bring SLOAC models and assessment examples for your courses. Katie is a geek and actually ENJOYS helping faculty use their current class assessment processes as SLOAC assessments! Many Instructional Deans have scheduled time for these in March—thanks.

#### Every Wednesday 12-1PM Rm1929

Pie Wednesdays are ad hoc development sessions for any stage of SLOACs Let us know ahead and we can bring specific models for your area

#### February 27 9-12 Hearthside

Convocation on Reflection on Teaching!! Let's focus on what YOU do for a bit. We will stick around after for more assessment and SLO' building talk if

anyone would like!

#### LA 36

This course provides 1 unit of PAA credit for attendance at SLO-focused workshops, development meetings, convocations and Coffee Conversations. Call 7543 for details.

Tell us what you need and we'll try to facilitate your SLO completion process. Watch the Admin Office bulletin board for our completion target and progress measure!

Reminder: New interactive online forms are on their way. If you have already completed a DARED form, no worries—we will be your data entry clerks and convert your information to new forms!

## The SLOAC Menu (nod to Counter Burger)

by Rosemary Arca

If you've ever eaten at a Counter Burger you know that you can build a burger to your own specifications by making a series of choices. Choose the bun, choose the meat, choose toppings, and choose a sauce. The power of choice indeed.

With the SLOAC design process, you have an equally interesting series of choices. Here's the SLOAC Menu:

1. **Choose** 1- several outcome(s) for your course. Think of the most important concepts or skills you'd like one of your student to remember four years from now OR think of a pedagogical challenge you'd like to resolve in that course. Write your outcome around those ideas.

2. **Choose** a formative or summative assessment to measure the outcome. Do you want to shape student learning within the quarter (the former) or describe student success at the end of the quarter (the latter).

3. **Choose** assessments efficiently: Whatever your assessment goal, use assessment measures you already have embedded in the course—tests, rubrics, essays, projects, observation checklists, surveys, etc. The Classroom Assessment Techniques (CAT) work of Cross and Angelo provides effective and quick formative assessment ideas. Each division has a copy of that book.

4. **Choose** when, how and with whom you'll reflect on

the data you've gathered in the assessment cycle. Want to meet as a team, a department, or a group of colleagues? It's your choice! Make the reflection meaningful to your goals then tell us not only what you thought about what you've learned but also if you're prompted to change content, teaching method, assignments, assessments, or even the SLO as a result.

**And that's a SLO! Once written, then it is filed with the Office of Instruction and scheduled for the AC part of SLOAC, the assessment cycle which occurs on a rotating basis. For this year, one-third of SLOs need to be assessed to meet our benchmark required by ACCJC.**

We wish we could ring a bell (ala It's A Wonderful Life) every time an SLO gets filed ,but we don't think that would actually contribute to learning. That said, you can imagine a bell rung each time you give an SLO its wings! Or, you can find that just a bit over the top, take a deep breath, say thanks to your colleagues with whom you worked and celebrate in the manner in which you are accustomed.

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