

MEMORANDUM

August 1, 2007

To: All Faculty

From: Rick Osburn, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Re: IMPORTANT: New Syllabus Requirements for Fall 2007

UT Tyler is scheduled for its reaffirmation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in 2009/2010. One of the more important areas in which we must be in compliance is the assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (SLO).

The outside SACS reviewers will be looking for SLOs not only for each academic program at the undergraduate and graduate level, but also for each course. They also will be looking for how we determine whether students are actually learning what we say they should. And, most importantly, we must demonstrate that through a learning outcomes assessment process we have made changes to our programs and courses.

Since the last SACS review in 2000, the Office of Institutional Research, and specifically Shari Koukl, has been working with academic departments to establish Institutional Effectiveness plans at the program level through the Lotus Notes database. However, in the past several years, programs have been a bit lax in completing the IE plans.

The articulation and evaluation of student learning outcomes is now a major component of the SACS review. We must demonstrate that we are in compliance with the SLO requirements for at least 2 years before the compliance document is sent to SACS in September 2009.

Therefore, effective Fall 2007 each course syllabus must explicitly state student learning outcomes. The SLOs should also be reviewed with your students at the beginning of the semester. Attached you will find an example of how SLOs are stated in a syllabus.

If you already have completed your Fall syllabi and incorporating SLOs would be burdensome at this point, then you may add an extra page to the syllabus with the SLOs.

Further, each faculty member must develop a means of assessing whether those outcomes are being met and should incorporate feedback from the assessment process the next time the course is offered.

Assessing Student Learning Outcomes is not new to the faculty at UT Tyler. Most of you have been doing this to some extent at the program level for a number of years. The only difference is

that we are now taking what we have been doing at the program level and moving it down to the course level.

The process of developing course-based student learning outcomes will likely vary from course to course. In some units SLOs will be developed by individual faculty. Where there are multiple sections taught by multiple faculty, a collegial process should be used to develop SLOs. And, in several departments with multiple sections of core courses, the SLOs may already exist as part of the core curriculum assessment process.

Ideally, course-level SLOs should connect with the program-level SLOs that most departments already have. If your department does not have program level SLOs, those will need to be developed this fall. More information on that process will be forthcoming.

Also, at the beginning of the semester, you are expected to post your syllabi on your personal or departmental web pages—another SACS requirement.

At some point in the fall or spring, we will have software in place for reporting SLOs as well as for posting course syllabi to the internet. We will share details of this process as soon as it becomes available.

Attachments

xc: Rod Mabry, President
Academic Deans
Donna Dickerson
Lou Ann Berman
Shari Koukl