January 9, 2009

To: Planning Council, Divisions, and Taft College Academic Senate  
From: Geoffrey Dyer, SLO Coordinator  
Re: Integrating Program SLOs into Program Review

The Standards

ACCJC Standard II.A.1.c states that “The institution identifies student learning outcomes for courses, programs, certificates, and degrees; assesses student achievement of those outcomes; and uses assessment results to make improvements.”

Additionally, ACCJC Standard II.A.2.b states that “The institution relies on faculty expertise and the assistance of advisory committees when appropriate to identify competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, programs including general and vocational education, and degrees. The institution regularly assesses student progress towards achieving those outcomes.”

The visiting team and commission will be evaluating Taft College’s use of SLOs with the ACCJC “Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness—Part III: Student Learning Outcomes.” Per the September 9, 2008 letter from Barbara Beno, President of the ACCJC, “The Commission further expects that institutions now be at the Development level or above in Student Learning Outcomes. . .” (2) That level of the rubric includes the following criterion “College has established authentic assessment strategies for assessing student learning outcomes as appropriate to intended course, program, and degree learning outcomes” (3).

How Others Have DEALed with the Standards

Coastline Community College, last accredited in 2007, dealt with the standards by incorporating evaluation of program SLOs into their program review process. II.A.1.c of Coastline’s Self Study states that “Learning Outcomes for all programs are reviewed and evaluated as part of the Program Review Process . . .in 2003, under the leadership of the Program Review Committee, the College initiated a systematic process to increase the use of direct measures of student learning outcomes.” The study also states that “During the past three years, Program Review has phased in discussion and implementation of an SLO assessment cycle. Initially, programs under review were required, at minimum, to report on actions they had taken to identify expected learning outcomes, to generate faculty dialog, to solicit input from appropriate community constituencies, and to train faculty on the SLO process. Effective with the 2006-07 cycle, the Program Review process has been modified to place increased emphasis on the measurement and use of outcomes. Review teams are required to report on actual outcomes at the course and program levels and discuss how information gleaned from the analysis of outcomes will be applied to further improving instruction” (102-3).

Riverside Community College, last accredited in 2008, has adopted a similar process. In section II.A.1.c of Riverside’s Self Study, the process is delineated. “The district created a District Assessment Committee and a district-wide Program Review Committee in spring 2001. These committees established procedures and guidelines for the program review process . . . Further, this formal
procedure requires that all programs and disciplines develop and implement the initial assessment of these outcomes by the end of the current program review cycle” (67-8).

Proposal for the Consideration of Senate

Add a component to Taft College’s existing program review template which asks divisions to evaluate program SLOs. The SLO Coordinator can work extensively with discipline appropriate faculty in advance of Program Review to help articulate and align program SLOs. This way, divisions would have freedom in articulating program SLOs and assessments. Also, the invaluable expertise of discipline faculty would determine the appropriate outcomes. At its best, this process would yield insight into necessary resources required for improving outcomes. At its least, the adoption of this process would bring the campus into alignment with accreditation standards.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey Dyer