

Joint Statement

Of the

**Academic Senates
San Diego City, Mesa, and Miramar Colleges**

And the

American Federation of Teachers Guild, Local 1931

Statement on SLOs: **Faculty Will Not Erode Their Legal Rights**

Academic Freedom is a bedrock principle in higher education, as has been recognized and embraced by the Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges, the AFT Guild, and the San Diego Community College District.

In acknowledging both the core value of academic freedom and that faculty are the subject matter experts in their fields of expertise, the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC) concedes that Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) assessment must be faculty driven. This AACJC approach to SLOs as faculty driven has been written into policies on assessment adopted by the colleges through their respective shared governance procedures.

While, from the beginning, many of us have objected to the very notion of SLO assessment on principle, we have cooperated with initial discussion and planning, recognizing the political realities we face and the hammer of accreditation. Now, as the process has become clearer, we have come to see that our skepticism has been well-founded.

Accordingly, the Academic Senates of San Diego City, Mesa, and Miramar Colleges join with the AFT Guild in affirming the following positions:

- (1) Any attempt to impose standardized definitions of success or assessment outcomes violates academic freedom;
- (2) In the initial discussion and implementation of student learning objectives and outcomes assessment, the purpose of said assessment was to evaluate student learning and if necessary address pedagogical or curricular concerns; hence, all initiatives to change the purposes of said assessment, without full agreement among all stakeholders, represents a breach of the faculty's good faith. It follows, accordingly, that no program funding shall be tied to SLO data and reporting;

- (3) Workload issues arising from implementation of SLO data collection and reporting are substantive and have not been resolved through the collective bargaining process. The diversion of resources associated with any linkage of SLOs to program funding also is subject to collective bargaining and shared governance decision-making processes. Initiatives by some administrators to mandate SLO assessment implementation by fiat, outside of the collective bargaining process and without full consent of shared governance stakeholders, are not only illegal, but represent bad faith negotiations by the District;
- (4) AB 1725 and the state's Education Employment Relations Act preclude the linkage of faculty evaluation to extraneous data, including SLOs. By extension, any decision to fund or defund departments and/or programs, on the basis of SLO data and reports, would breach the separation of SLO assessment and faculty evaluation as mandated by statute and the collective bargaining agreement.

There is a link between the faculty's upholding the principle of academic freedom and resisting administrative attempts to violate contractual provisions on workload. In the face of some administrative strategies to move SLO assessment beyond the realm of pedagogy to program evaluation and resource allocation, we recommend that faculty decline to perform tasks that erode their rights, as established in law and the collective bargaining agreement. Specifically, we advise that faculty not participate in any activities which;

- (1) Increase the workload of the individual faculty member;
- (2) Impact the evaluation of faculty, and/or their programs;
- (3) Affect the allocation of resources in such a way that the terms and conditions of the faculty member's employment are changed in any manner.

If an accrediting body chooses to put the accreditation of any college or continuing education center at risk based on the accrediting agency's insistence that the college or continuing education center violate the law or the collective bargaining agreement in order to secure its accreditation, the AFT Guild and the California Federation of Teachers will seek legal redress in court.