**Striving for Useful and Sustainable Outcomes Assessment**

**Department of Second Language Studies**

Bonnie Sylwester and Kenton Harsch

---

**Process**
- Select outcomes to be assessed
- Identify areas for improvement
- Select evidence
- Analyze and present results
- Develop rubric
- Rater training / standardization session

**Department of SLS Assessment Process**

- 1st SLO Assessment Cycle (AY 2013-2014)
  - SLOs: 1 and 3
  - Evidence: Professional philosophy statement and cover letter
- 2nd SLO Assessment Cycle (AY 2014-2015)
  - SLOs: (NEW SLOs) 1 and 4
  - Evidence: Academic paper

---

**Impacts on Courses and Curriculum**
- Identification of the general need for more coherent curriculum, better scaffolding, guidelines and rubrics to guide students and instructors
- Key assignment (professional philosophy statement) identified for addressing SLO 3 (revised SLO 2); Adjustments made to SLS 485
- New rubric developed for professional philosophy statement, more specific instruction, guidelines, and feedback given to students

---

**Impacts on SLOs and Curriculum Map**
- Removal of SLOs 1 and 9 (Rewritten into introductory statement and goal.)
- Changes to assessment courses for (new) SLOs 5 and 6.

---

**Impacts on Outcomes Assessment**

**Curricular Issues Raised for Further Consideration**
- Are sociocultural issues and approaches to SLS being adequately addressed in the current UG curriculum? Should SLS 302 be changed? Another course added?
- Is (new) SLO 3 addressed adequately in the curriculum?

---

**Challenges and Strategies**

**Scheduling**
- Challenges:
  - Meetings were scheduled on a meeting-to-meeting basis. However faculty schedules made it difficult to find a time when everyone could meet.
  - Meetings times were often rescheduled due to unexpected events and pressures. This resulted in few opportunities to meet.
- Strategies:
  - The committee develops a schedule for regular monthly meetings before the beginning of the semester.
  - Meetings are not rescheduled. They take place even when key members cannot attend. This keeps the process moving forward throughout the semester.

**Expertise**
- Challenges:
  - Dept. faculty lacked expertise in the formal outcomes assessment process.
  - Faculty could “check the boxes” for compliance purposes, but making it a process that leads to meaningful change requires extra expertise.
- Strategies:
  - A PhD student with expertise in evaluation and assessment has been hired as an assessment GA.
  - The assessment GA works closely with the program coordinator to ensure data gets used in a meaningful way.
  - The GA consults MAO when extra assistance is needed.

**Workload**
- Challenges:
  - The program is short staffed; faculty lack time for assessment.
  - Reliance on TA’s and part-time instructors – lack of faculty to take on program development and assessment tasks.
  - No individual had assessment as a primary responsibility in their workload.
- Strategies:
  - The assessment GA has assessment as a primary responsibility, makes sure the process moves forward.
  - The GA takes on both skilled and menial assessment tasks to reduce workload for others.

---

**Striving for Useful and Sustainable Outcomes Assessment**

**Ongoing Concerns**

- Prioritizing outcomes assessment leaves little time for other BA Committee issues; other matters are being constantly postponed
- Will it be possible to find skilled assessment GAs in the future?
- Funding for GAs or assessment specialist in the future?
- How to involve more faculty in the process, yet keep the process manageable?