

**ACADEMIC SENATE
OF
THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY**

AS-2830-08/AA (Rev)
January 17-18, 2008

The Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)

- RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of the California State University (CSU) agree in principle that a voluntary system of accountability serves as one strategy to provide the public with information about learning outcomes and other comparable issues; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the CSU should continue to administer the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) for the current pilot commitment of two years; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That data from the CLA should be provided to all CSU institutions in a format that provides meaningful information on student learning outcomes to be used in the development of quality assessment programs; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the results of the two-year pilot of the CLA be assessed by CSU faculty as part of developing comprehensive plans for the assessment of student learning; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That additional student learning assessment instruments be developed and evaluated by faculty for use with or instead of the CLA as elements of a comprehensive plan to assess student learning outcomes.

RATIONALE: Last year the CSU administration agreed to participate in the Voluntary System of Accountability, a project of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). As part of this project the CSU agreed to administer the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) examination to first-year students and seniors at all 23 CSU campuses as a two-year pilot program.

The CLA is a project of the Council for Aid to Education. According to the Council, "The CLA uses the institution (rather than the individual student) as the primary unit of analysis. This means that the focus is on how the institution as a whole contributes to student development. Therefore, the CLA does not present another high-stakes test for individual students, but rather it aggregates the information to better understand the institution's role in promoting learning."

In addition, "[t]he CLA focuses on the value added provided by colleges and universities. When institutional quality is based solely on the students' scores on entrance examinations, there is no way to know what was learned after they matriculated; again, when student ability is only measured upon graduation, there is no way to determine the students' relative growth without knowing their starting point. It is only by comparing what students know when they start college with what they know when they finish that it is possible to assess the learning that actually occurred while in college." The CLA focuses on critical thinking, analytic reasoning, written communication, and problem solving.

Although the decision to pilot the CLA was not made by CSU faculty and CSU faculty representatives were not consulted about this decision, it is clear that the CLA could provide useful measures of student learning and thereby assist faculty efforts to improve

the education we offer. However, the results of the pilot need to be assessed by CSU faculty along with other potential assessment interests as part of developing comprehensive plans for assessment of student learning.

Approved Unanimously – March 6-7, 2008