

ASSIST OSCAR Advisory Committee
May 11, 2005 – ASSIST Coordination Site (Irvine)
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Attending: Diane Glow – San Diego Miramar College
Barbara Hoblitzell – UCOP
John Karras - CSUCO
Dale Leaman - ASSIST
Cathy Robin – ASSIST
Dawn Sheibani – UCOP (via telephone)
Phil Smith – American River College
Jeff Spano - CCCCCO
Eric Taggart – ASSIST
Cynthia Turner – CSU Dominguez Hills
Christian Villasenor – UC Santa Barbara
Starling Walter - ASSIST

This was the first meeting of the ASSIST OSCAR Advisory Committee. Ken Nishita from CSU Monterey Bay was unable to attend due to a last minute scheduling conflict. The following is a summary of the agenda items that were discussed by the group. For further information or questions, please contact Eric Taggart (949) 824-4385.

The meeting was called to order at 10am by Eric Taggart.

1. Review of the OSCAR Advisory Committee Charge

After a brief welcome and introductions, the committee reviewed its charge as established by the ASSIST Board. There was brief discussion to clarify where the OSCAR Advisory Committee fits within the overall organization of ASSIST and ASSIST processes. It was agreed that any significant OSCAR-related enhancements to ASSIST be reviewed by the OSCAR Advisory Committee, possibly as part of the ASSIST Software Development Framework process when appropriate.

It was also noted that this committee is not responsible for providing advice to the CSUCO regarding the CSUCO OSCAR Review System that currently facilitates IGETC, CSU GE-B, and CSU AI review.

2. Review Current System Capabilities and Services

Coordination Site staff reviewed the features and status of the following OSCAR-related components:

- OSCAR web-based system
- Loading outline data from campus systems
- OSCAR training – online and live
- Interface with CSUCO OSCAR IGETC/CSU GE system
- OSCAR UC TCA Review System

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Committee members discussed various details to gain a more consistent understanding of the OSCAR-related components of ASSIST about which they will be providing the ASSIST Board with advice. The group expressed interest in seeing a brief overview of the CSUCO OSCAR IGETC/CSU GE Review System at their next meeting.

During the review of OSCAR, the Coordination Site referenced that better language was still needed for the “More Info” buttons throughout OSCAR. UCOP and CSUCO will follow-up with developing this language.

It was also suggested that it may be useful to provide OSCAR users with a link to the ASCCC course outline of record guidelines. The Coordination Site will follow-up to identify an appropriate web link.

There was initial discussion about various data elements in OSCAR that do not necessarily align with Title V regulations or the ASCCC model outline. These were specifically identified and discussed further under agenda item # 4.

3. Review status of request to the Academic Senate CCC for comments on OSCAR

The committee reviewed and discussed the June 3, 2004 “Request for Comment from the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges” document that the Coordination Site prepared in response to ongoing discussions with various ASCCC members. This document was requested by the ASCCC prior to the ASSIST Board creating the ASSIST OSCAR Advisory Committee and it outlined a number of initial issues related to OSCAR about which ASSIST was seeking input from the ASCCC in order to guide future enhancements to OSCAR. Items discussed in the document include:

- Review and approval of the course outline data elements used in OSCAR (including the “telemediated” question);
- Considering a more comprehensive electronic format for transmitting course outline data;
- Requests to enable public access to outline information in OSCAR;
- Requests to expand OSCAR to be a repository for any CCC course outlines; and
- Requests to expand OSCAR to support other articulation initiatives.

Eric Taggart reported that the ASCCC Curriculum Committee has been discussing this document and provided some initial feedback. More feedback is expected to be forthcoming after the Summary 2005 ASCCC Curriculum Institute. The group discussed this feedback and the related issues, many of which were discussed later in the day’s agenda.

4. Review current OSCAR data elements for appropriateness

The group reviewed the current list of data elements included in OSCAR. These elements were identified three years ago by the original OSCAR Advisory Committee that was coordinated by CSUCO. That committee included CSU, UC, and CCC representatives who identified the various data elements that were desired to support review of courses for IGETC and CSU GE-B. These initial data elements were drawn from actual outlines submitted by campuses for IGETC/CSU GE-B review and from information that CSUCO/UCOP desired in order to support IGETC/CSU GE-B review. However, they were not specifically checked against Title V requirements or the ASCCC model course outline. Most elements requested are a subset of the official course outline of record. But, OSCAR outline information does not represent the complete official outline of record at colleges.

With this better understanding of the scope of course outline information in OSCAR, the committee identified the following issues related to the specific data elements currently in OSCAR:

- The “telemediated” question in OSCAR does not align with Title V specifications or the ASCCC model course outline – and the term “Face-to-Face” for lecture/lab hours is a concern
- Lecture/Lab hours are often identified per term instead of per week
- “Lab Content” is often included under “Course Content” at some colleges and “Lab Hours” are not always identified separately from “Lecture Hours”
- “Honors Description” is not part of Title V course outline specifications or the ASCCC model course outline
- OSCAR does not include a place for “Advisories”, “Recommended Preparation”, or “Enrollment Limitations” and some aspect of these elements may be useful for articulation review
- OSCAR does not include a separate place for “Student Learning Outcomes”, although many colleges are including this information in the “Course Objectives” data element of OSCAR

The committee discussed additional “distance education” issues with course outlines and articulation review at some length.

In order to help resolve the “distance education” issues related to OSCAR, the committee recommended that the ASSIST Board consider asking the respective three individual Academic Senates and/or ICAS to establish:

- Guidelines for how distance education aspects of courses would ideally be represented in community college course outlines of record
- Guidelines for how universities are to interpret distance education aspects of courses in articulation review (major prep, general education, IGETC/CSU GE-B, etc.)

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In order to help resolve other inconsistencies identified between OSCAR, Title V regulations, and the ASCCC model course outline, the committee recommended drafting a set of proposed changes and distributing them broadly for comment. The proposed changes would be aimed at meeting community college requirements and most common practices while at the same time providing universities with the level of information they require to make articulation decisions.

Both of these recommendations will be forward to the ASSIST Board for the June 6 meeting.

5. OSCAR as an “open” repository of course outlines

The committee discussed various issues related to enabling broader access to course outline information in OSCAR.

First, the committee agreed that OSCAR was not designed to represent the complete outline of record and no one is currently requesting that OSCAR be expanded to represent “complete” outlines. The intent of OSCAR is to facilitate articulation review and not to provide a general purpose tool for sharing complete outlines. Based on this, there were numerous concerns about enabling full public access to the course outline data in OSCAR. The committee agreed to not recommend enabled unfiltered public access to outline data in OSCAR. If there were a future request to include “complete” outlines in OSCAR, there would need to be substantial discussion of related issues and appropriateness within ASSIST.

However, the committee also discussed the benefits that college and university articulation officers would gain by having password protected access to the course outline information submitted by colleges in OSCAR. With adequately secured access, articulation officers would be able to view-only the outline data in OSCAR that was submitted by any college. This would especially help CSU and UC articulation officers in their regular course articulation processes. Such access would probably be granted via the existing ASSIST Articulation Maintenance Reports web site where college and university articulation officers already have password protected access to a wide variety of special reports from the ASSIST database. The committee discussed concerns about the “version” of course outlines in OSCAR, including issues with multiple versions of a single course’ outline and OSCAR not necessarily including the most current course outline. The committee agreed that articulation officers are in a position where they would be able to understand these issues and would still benefit from expanded access. The Coordination Site will add the committee’s recommended enhancement to the list of ASSIST requested enhancements, however this is a very long list and there may be other items with a higher priority.

If this enhancement is implemented at some time in the future, the committee recommended that guidelines for appropriate use be established (possibly in cooperation with CIAC) in order to help manage expectations and limit unintentional misuse of the information.

6. Use of OSCAR for CSU's LDTP project

John Karras and Eric Taggart reviewed the specific changes to OSCAR that are soon to be proposed by CSU in order to support part of the LDTP project. With the proposed changes, community colleges would be able to use OSCAR to submit course outline information for review by CSU faculty and staff for courses to be qualified as meeting the requirements of new CSU statewide common course descriptors. The committee discussed this topic further and noted that it would be preferable if CSU statewide common course descriptors matched closely with what CSU faculty expect to see in college course outlines for applicable courses.

7. Request from Ventura College (open repository and data element changes)

Eric Taggart referenced information submitted by Ventura College regarding OSCAR as an open repository and possible changes to OSCAR data elements. The committee addressed these topics earlier in the meeting. Eric will send a response to Ventura College providing more information about the discussion and thanking them for their submission.

8. Electronic format for exchanging course outline data

The committee discussed the possibility of a standard electronic format for exchanging course outline information. The general idea is for some organization to establish a common comprehensive electronic format that all colleges and vendors would support so that vendors would not drive such activities. With a common electronic format, colleges could implement a single method to allow the exchange of each others outlines more easily and submission of outline data to other agencies such as universities, the system offices, etc.. It was noted that the data extract specifications used by colleges to submit outline information to OSCAR do not include all of the data elements of official course outlines of record and are therefore insufficient to meet the larger need. The committee agreed that while development of such a format appears to be a good idea, it is beyond the scope of OSCAR and ASSIST to lead such an effort. Such an effort would be more appropriate for the ASCCC. If such a format is developed at some time in the future, the committee agreed that OSCAR should accept course outline data submitting using it.

9. End-user evaluation of the OSCAR web site, processes, and training

The Coordination Site reported that they are developing annual user satisfaction surveys for all ASSIST components, including OSCAR. The results of the OSCAR components of the survey will be shared with the committee for general reference and further discussion.

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10. Next Steps

The committee agreed to have Eric Taggart report on the committee's work and various recommendations (including distance education in course outlines) at the June 6, 2005 ASSIST Board meeting.

The committee agreed to have Eric continue follow-up with the ASCCC regarding last year's request for comment on OSCAR issues.

The committee agreed to hold their next meeting in early fall 2005.