A. Governance Structures

It was noticed that many of the structural impediments extant in larger university centers aren’t necessarily present in our two-year and four-year institutions. Smaller departments are often able to work in consensus. Voting seems to be worked on when necessary for hiring and policy members.

Within departmental governance, sometimes competing goals and agendas may occur among languages within the language department. Sometimes creating equity in treatment of the different languages in the department can be an issue. The speakers at the table seemed to represent that their departments were very collegial ways – mostly with full time faculty driving most decisions; larger departments have more of structure, but directed more than tenured faculty. Other adjunct and non-tenured faculty had a voice in the instructional decisions relating to their language(s) and departments.

In terms of governance, it was noted that more limitations and constraints were perceived as coming from SUNY policy and a lack of input into the formulation and articulation of these policies by local campuses in shaping the final policies of SUNY Central – In other words, many of the limitations/constraints stem from SUNY policy.

Table participants agreed that the lack of resources was by far the biggest obstacle to innovation than governance issues either within the department or the institution.

B. Issues/Possibilities Within Department:

Two-tiered faculty did not create big obstacles to reform in most of our SUNY institutions. There seemed to be sufficient channels for dialogue about pedagogy, policy and curriculum.

NCATE and other accreditation processes were noted as driving dialogue within and between departments as much as anything.

Articulation between levels – regarding sequence, texts, etc. often involves input from instructors at all levels.

In some campuses, tenured faculty teaches at all levels to promote articulation and quality control at all levels of instruction.

Encouragement to grow has been accomplished by using staff development resources to send folks to CARLA and other in-services workshops and institutes and encouraging this type of growing opportunity for faculty at all levels and ranks.

Collaboration within the department also happens through offerings of extracurricular activities run through the department. (Clubs, Film nights, festivals)
C. Among Departments:

Technology resources have provided a commonality for collegial learning and sharing among departments and have driven much innovation. Within institutions innovation can be supported within and across departmental boundaries through common in-service opportunities related to teaching practice and technology integration.

Service learning, required college-wide humanities courses can present opportunities for dialogues with other disciplines.

Another issue was raised regarding articulation among high school programs, community colleges, four-year colleges and university centers in terms of expectations and outcomes. It was suggested that the common benchmark of the ACTFL Proficiency guidelines could be used to verify achievement and qualify students for placement and exemptions.

NCATE accreditation has promoted dialogue between language departments and the school of education.