

GLENDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ACADEMIC SENATE
TASK FORCE REPORT

The following represents the general outline for an Academic Senate Task Force Report. Each task force shall decide the depth to which these items are to be addressed.

- A. Name of task force: Student Learning Outcome (**SLO**) Task Force (Denise Ezell, chair)
- B. Members of task force: Ramona Barrio-Sotillo, Sally Black, Sue Brinkmeyer, Joy Cook, Denise Ezell, Kathleen Flynn, Christina Harrell, Ed Karpp, Sid Kolpas, Jill Lewis, Deborah Moore, David Norton, Mark Romano, Scot Spicer, Jan Swinton, Lola Taylor
- C. Date formed: Spring 2004
- D. Executive Summary:

In spring 2004, the Senate formed the task force to examine student learning outcomes (**SLO**). WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges), one of the six regional accrediting associations in the United States, revised its standards with a new framework which emphasizes SLOs. In fall 2004, Denise Ezell was elected chair when Kathy Flynn was asked to head the Master Planning Committee.

The task force has been looking at the following:

- rationale for SLOs,
- ways other colleges have implemented SLOs, and
- ways to begin the process that may work best for GCC.

REPORT:

The main reason for examining student learning outcomes is to provide feedback to faculty so that we can improve our own teaching and services. More effective teaching and services to students help students to proceed through our courses in a timely manner and help students to achieve their goals.

The second reason for examining student learning outcomes is that faculty can determine their own assessment of student learning and avoid having standardized assessment instruments or practices imposed by outside agencies, as happened in K-12 districts statewide.

In the past ten years, federal and state governments have requested that educational agencies at all levels (elementary schools, high schools, colleges, and universities) measure what and how they teach and measure what students have learned to do or have retained as a result of attending classes or receiving services. At the elementary and secondary levels, when schools failed to address this issue, standardized tests were imposed. One can look at many of the mandatory exams at the elementary and secondary levels and see that teachers are now forced to teach to these tests and that their performance is measured, in part, by the result that their students achieve on these tests.

At the college level, faculty have the academic freedom to teach the material listed in the course outline using a variety of different educational approaches. There are no state or federal competency exams (though there are such exams for additional licensing in areas such as nursing and aviation).

So far, the only outside pressure on colleges to measure what students have learned has come from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior colleges (ACCJC), which has recently changed the standards by which community colleges are examined and accredited. Formerly, there were ten standards. The new standards are divided into four categories with an emphasis on the measurement of student learning outcomes.

Basically the standards ask us to explain, as part of our next report due in six years, how we as faculty measure what we do in the classroom and in our support services. In many programs, we are already measuring student learning outcomes, though many times we are not using these measurements within programs, departments, or services to improve what we do.

The Student Learning Outcomes Task Force of the Academic Senate of Glendale Community College insists that the academic freedom faculty have will be not only recognized but protected as we proceed to develop student learning outcomes.

In short, Glendale Community College has the opportunity to take control of how SLOs are implemented, with each department examining its own ways to measure student learning. The most IMPORTANT reason to examine student learning outcomes is to improve student learning. Evaluating student learning outcomes assists educators in the following:

- Setting standards according to changing student populations and learning needs;
- Identifying program strengths and weaknesses;
- Determining whether assessment methods enable students from all cultural backgrounds to demonstrate their skills; and, overall,
- Offering many ways to scrutinize our efficacy in the classroom and as an institution.

Furthermore, it helps us offer students a clearer understanding of expectations, both for the institution as a whole and for specific courses. Evaluating student learning outcomes also helps students to increase their awareness of their own learning, to make informed educational and career decisions, and to find connections between their learning and what they have to offer their community.

In most cases, specific instructors, departments, and administrative offices are already doing what needs to be done: examining goals and objectives, measuring student progress toward that goal, determining whether a certain standard of progress is sufficient to ensure success in the student's program, etc. [This means that working on SLOs is simply a matter of determining how to clearly demonstrate the objectives, progress toward goals, etc. or determining how to remedy possible problems. For example, a

department may want to examine and hone certain standards or methods of determining student benefit from a class or program.

TENTATIVE TIMETABLE

The process will begin with speakers and workshops. A general speaker is scheduled for early April to offer GCC faculty and staff an overview of the SLO process. Within the next year, a few representative members from various departments and sectors of the college will attend workshops. Those members will report back to their departments to share ideas and begin examining goals and objectives.

While a more detailed outline of work might be useful, the SLO Task Force has considered the need to be flexible in the development of future plans for the completion of this work. It thus proposes to offer the Academic Senate a proposed plan for each of the next several years on a year-by-year basis. Ideally this report would be presented to the Senate in the Spring term so that it can be approved in a timely fashion and used in the following year.

By the end of the five years, the campus should have finished the job of documenting what it does to improve student learning. Of course, the true work of SLOs continues as the education process must always be refined as changes continue to occur in technology, student makeup, workforce needs, and so on.

- E. Rationale for task force: The initial rationale for the task force was the request of the Senate. Because WASC revised its standards with a new framework emphasizing SLOs, GCC needs to be sure that we meet the standards WASC has set.
- F. History of task force: In spring 2004, the Student Learning Outcome Task Force, headed by Glenn De Lang, began examining SLOs and their implementation at GCC. In June 2004, Kathy Flynn was elected to chair this task force when Glenn De Lange left GCC for another position. In fall 2004, Denise Ezell was elected chair when Kathy Flynn was asked to head the Master Planning Committee.

The SLO Task Force met during the spring and summer of 2004 to examine the idea of using SLOs on campus and to define a set of governing principles for the implementation of SLOs at GCC. This set of governing principles was approved on July 13, 2004. The task force is currently forming a five-year plan for the gradual implementation of SLOs here at GCC. The timeline is subject to a number of factors that are dependant upon the decisions of other committees and individuals within the college. This timeline will become more specific as we move further along in the process.

California and GCC are actually behind many higher education institutions across the country in incorporating SLOs. In July 2004, President John Davitt received a letter from Barbara A. Beno, Executive Director of WASC, urging the college “to prepare itself to meet the new standards by actively reviewing their content and structure and by focusing institutional time and energy on addressing student learning outcomes and their assessment.”

G. Mission/goals of task force: The goal of the SLO Task Force is to introduce GCC to the process of SLOs by bringing in speakers and setting up workshops so that the process of learning about and implementing SLOs will be both comfortable and useful to the college employees.

H. Time line for completion of this preliminary report: Scheduled completion of report was July 2004. Subsequent reports will be presented to the Senate in the spring of each academic year.

I. Working definitions of terminology (phrases, acronyms):

These definitions appear in a report by the Academic Senate Research Committee (Draft, 10/03/04), the ACCJC (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, a division of WASC):

SLOs: “the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes that a student has attained at the end (or as a result) of his or her engagement in a particular set of collegiate experiences.”

Objectives: “the knowledge and skills for which students will be held accountable”

Outcomes: “the evidence of accountability”

These definitions come from the WASC/AAHE Collaborative Workshop on Building Learner-Center Institutions (Sept. 2004):

Mission: a holistic vision of the values and philosophy of the department

Goals: “general statements about knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values expected in graduates”

J. Rationale for use of definitions: These definitions are standard in discussing student learning outcomes and are used by accrediting associations and educational institutions nationwide.

K. Review of literature: A wealth of literature exists both online and in the form of booklets, brochures, and other publications from accrediting agencies and individual educational institutions. Information on the following is readily available:

- rationale for SLOs,
- the stages various institutions are in with regard to implementing SLOs,
- sample SLOs from specific academic departments and specific classes (including rubrics), and
- ways to begin the process of implementing SLOs.

It is not necessary to reinvent the wheel. See the bibliography for literature reviewed for this report.

L. Findings and recommendations: SLO’s should go forward on campus. A projected timeline was prepared by the task force.

M. Bibliography: The following sites are categorized and annotated for faster access to specific information.

Overview Sites

ACCJC core documents and publications, conferences, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges paper on accreditation standards, links to the materials and efforts from a variety of California community colleges now using the new standards for accreditation, materials from the CSUs, and national resources and guiding principles:
<http://www.cabrillo.edu/%7Etsmalley/learneroutcomes.html>

A list of **frequently asked questions** about student learning outcomes at Mesa Community College (including “Why Do We Have an Assessment Program?” “Who Is Assessed?” and “What are the Student Learning Outcomes for General Education, the Workplace, and Developmental Education?”):
<http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/organizations/employee/orp/assessment/FAQ.html#Anchor-What-3800>

An overview of SLOs written by a chemistry professor for *Learning Abstracts* on his community college’s process of working through implementing student learning outcomes called “Becoming a Learning College: Milestones on the Journey”—it includes sections entitled “The College As Its Own Critic,” “Assuming Collective Responsibility for Student Learning,” “Benchmarking Best Practices,” “Building a Culture of Evidence,” and “Defining and Assessing Student Learning Outcomes”: <http://www.league.org/publication/abstracts/learning/lelabs0303.htm>

Handbook on Outcomes Assessment for Two-Year Colleges (from College of the Desert—supported by the California Community College Chancellor’s Office Fund for Instructional Improvement Grant Program—includes assessment methods, what to assess, programs, majors, basic skills, examples of scoring rubrics, and links to websites):
[http://216.239.57.104/search?q=cache:5-RrOS_0jzEJ:www.collegeofthedesert.edu/uploadedFiles/AssessmentHandbookSpring03\(1\).pdf+%22student+learning+outcomes%22+%2B+%22noncredit+ESL%22&hl=en](http://216.239.57.104/search?q=cache:5-RrOS_0jzEJ:www.collegeofthedesert.edu/uploadedFiles/AssessmentHandbookSpring03(1).pdf+%22student+learning+outcomes%22+%2B+%22noncredit+ESL%22&hl=en)

A Workbook (how to come up with objectives and outcomes, sample outcomes for a variety of subject areas, sample rubrics, sample grading related to student learning outcomes, how to use data):
http://www.cabrillo.edu/services/pro/assess/assessweb/docs/SLO_OccupationalProgramAssessmentWorkbook.pdf

How other California community college campuses are implementing student learning outcomes: www.cerritos.edu/staffdev/Information/LearningOutcomes/HowOthers./html

A broad report on Student Assessment (Psych Dept) (includes “How Has the Department Assessed Its Student Learning Outcomes?” “What Has the Department Learned from the Assessment of Its SLOs?” “What Decisions Have Resulted from Reflections on These Assessment Findings?” and “Future Assessment Strategies”):
<http://www.planning.iupui.edu/prac/00-01schoolreports/science/Psychology.html>

Sample of a community college’s report on its learning outcomes (includes “Assessing and Documenting Learning Outcomes,” “Using Technology to Improve and Expand Learning for Students,” “Recruiting and Selecting a Learning-Centered Faculty and Staff,” “Orienting and Engaging Students in Learning-Centered Education”):
http://learningcollege.humberc.on.ca/critical_problems1.htm

A departmental action plan for implementing SLOs in a prep English class at Valencia Community College: <http://valenciacc.edu/unitplans/DAP/0304-005.pdf>

How to write Student Learning Outcomes (provides clear step-by-step instructions with lists of verbs to use to focus on what to examine in student learning):

<http://www.ksu.edu/apr/Learning/HowTo.htm>

A list of **correlations between institution's "Statement of Purpose," "Intended Student Learning Outcomes," "Tools for Assessment and Criteria for Success," "Summary of Data Collected," and "Use of Results"** for **MANY DISCIPLINES** (including Business, Technology, English, Health Science, Nursing, Spanish, ESL, Math, Biology, Chemistry, Geology, Physics, Computer Graphics, History, Music, Philosophy, Political Science, Sociology, Psychology, Studio Art, Theatre, and more) at Arizona Western College:

<http://www.azwestern.edu/assessment/divisions.php>

Measuring SLOs

University of Washington (<http://depts.washington.edu/grading/slo/SLO-Assess.htm>)

The Academic Senate Research Committee report
(www.academicssenate.cc.ca.us/Events/sessions/fall04/materials/AccreditationPaper.doc)

"An Assessment Framework for the Community College" in *Learning Abstracts*, Oct. 2004, Vol. 7, No. 10 (<http://www.league.org/publication/abstracts/learning/lelabs0410.html>):

Assessing Student Learning Outcomes (ways to measure outcomes, relationship between assessment and outcomes, possible problems with measurement, and more):

<http://depts.washington.edu/grading/slo/SLO-Assess.htm>

Samples of General Outcomes (that can be examined in a variety of classes, e.g. "Speaking & Making Oral Presentations," "Culture and Ethics," "Technological Literacy," "Critical Thinking and Problem Solving," "Responsibility/Leadership," "Living and Working Cooperatively," etc.—from a community college):

www.jccc.net/home/depts/6111/wite/assmnt/cogout/comspeak

www.jccc.net/home/depts/6111/site/assmnt/cogout/culture

Institutional SLOs & Program SLOs at various community colleges (has links to useful websites): http://www.gavilan.edu/research/reports/slo_handout_9-2004.pdf

Explanation of Rubrics & Sample Rubrics

"Using Scoring Rubrics in the CSU's":

www.calstate.edu/AcadAff/SLOA/links/using_rubrics.shtml

Biology Rubric from San Jose State University (called "Biology Curriculum: Info Comp Matrix"): <http://www.sjsu.edu/~cbhope/biology/infocomp/matrix.htm>

Biology: A table connecting general core values of the institution overall and specific course standards or outcomes: <http://www.sjsu.edu/~cbhope/biology/infocomp/bio1.htm>

Biology rubric: http://www.exemplars.com/pdfs/science_rubric.pdf

Samples of Specific Student Learning Outcomes:

Variety of SLOs (various disciplines) from the University of Hawaii (very clear but brief):
<http://www.uhh.hawaii.edu/uhh/genedfac/objectives.php>

Numerous SLO samples when you scroll down about halfway into document (other helpful information also):

<http://216.239.57.104/search?q=cache:MP5YmYGur94J:cai.cc.ca.us/SLOworkshops/Strand2/BakCollSLOHandout.doc+%22responsive+writing+assignments+throughout+the+course%22&hl=en>

General Student Learning Outcomes for a degree in Art:

www.dickinsonstate.com/Catalog/fine_arts/art_majors_minors.htm

Program goals for Studio Art and Art History (Cal State Bakersfield):

www.csub.edu/assessmentcenter/mgos/academic/hss/art_mgos.htm

Psychology program (from Central Missouri State—not class-specific):

www.cmsu.edu/hlc2004/resources/cehs/psy/psy_bs/a1_stu_outcome.htm.

Thorough document on **Psychology** Major Student Learning Outcomes with class breakdowns within (from Wells College): <http://aurora.wells.edu/~outcomes/psychology.htm>

AA degree in Psychology/Sociology— list of Intended SLOs, tools for assessment & criteria for success, summary of data collected, and use of results:

www.azwestern.edu/assessment/Divisions/SocScArtsHum/AA-PSY-SOC03.d

SAME AS ABOVE for Music: www.azwestern.edu/assessment/Divisions/SocScArtsHum/AA-MUS04.doc

Graduate in Education: <http://education.gsu.edu/pef/outcomes.PDF>

American History and Civilization (two freshman level courses—the alignment between the general education policy and SLO Goals & Objectives):

<http://gradstudies.csusb.edu/outcome/D1.pdf>

Math at a community college:

<http://66.102.7.104/search?q=cache:6A951NvH4wUJ:facweb.bhc.edu/academics/tlc/howellg/StudentLearningOutcome/Student%2520Learning%2520Outcomes%2520%E2%80%93%2520Math%2520100.ppt+Student+learning+outcomes+%2B+math&hl=en>

General outcomes for **Math** with specific list of courses that address those outcomes:

http://www.unt.edu/SACS/ie_academic/Math%20UG-%20BS.pdf

Library and media services: <http://www.tacoma.ctc.edu/library/infogrid.shtm>

A part of this site lists student learning outcomes/course objectives for **English 101**:

http://seattlecentral.org/faculty/lcohen/english_101.htm

Chemistry:

<http://programs.weber.edu/assessment/participants/student%20learning%20outcomes/chemistrylist.htm>

Brief list of **Astronomy** SLOs: <http://coe.sdsu.edu/portfolio/article08/>

Philosophy:

http://programs.weber.edu/assessment/participants/student%20learning%20outcomes/philosophy_list.htm

Miscellaneous

Newsletter article: “**Reflections: Assessment is Not About Exposing the Faculty**”:

www.colin.edu/planresearch/Newsletter%20September%202004.pdf

“Five Myths of Assessment” (some concerns raised and research to address concerns):

<http://66.102.7.104/search?q=cache:TVZvlHrPSjUJ:crpit.com/confpapers/CRPITV30Daniels.pdf+%22Five+Myths+of+Assessment%22&hl=en>

Getting Started

The following information is from Ball State University

(www.ksu.edu/apr/Learning/HowTo.htm)

The Ball State University's web site (<http://web.bsu.edu/IRAA/AA/WB/chapter2.htm>), which was accessed in the summer of 2003.

N. Attachments: None