

Program Learning Outcomes

- What do we expect our graduates to know/be able to do?
- How does the curriculum address these outcomes?
- How do we measure these outcomes?
- How do we communicate them to our students?

Why are we doing this?

- Help us ensure quality of our programs
- Help us focus our programs
- Help our students understand what they are learning, which helps them learn better
- This guidance is particularly important for first-generation students
- Help our students understand what skills they will have upon graduation, for employment or graduate school
- Help us improve our programs based on what is working well and what isn't
- It benefits our campus

WASC

- Western Association of Schools and Colleges
- Accreditation is required for students to get federal financial aid
- Our 10-year accreditation review is upcoming
- Following national trends, the review process has changed completely since our last review
 - From self-improvement to compliance
 - From open-ended to checklists
- Campus focus on items that are also intrinsically good things for us to do
- Learning outcomes were expected at our previous review — we really have to have them in place for this review, all the other UC campuses already do

WASC Timeline

- Faculty developing PLOs since Spring 2013
- Some programs started assessment in Summer 2014, the rest starting this year
- Institutional report due February 26, 2015
- Off-site review May 7, 2015
- Site visit October 13-15, 2015

MCD Biology PLOs

- Demonstrate knowledge of how biochemistry, genetics and molecular biology are used to elucidate both the function of cells and their organization into tissues.
- Recognize that biology has a basis in chemistry, physics, and mathematics.
- Present advanced knowledge in the specialized fields of molecular and cell biology.
- Describe how the scientific method is used to explain natural phenomena.
- Generate hypotheses, evaluate data, and design experiments to investigate a scientific problem.
- Understand safe laboratory practices and perform basic molecular biology techniques.
- Use effective oral and written language skills to communicate scientific data and ideas.

Defining Learning Outcomes

- Both discipline-specific skills/knowledge as well as contextualizing and extending general education skills such as critical thinking, communication, and quantitative reasoning
- May include ethics, values, and/or cultural competencies
- Outcomes should be measurable
- Outcomes must relate to required classes
 - Each required class should cover/assess at least one outcome
 - Each outcome should appear in at least one required class
- Consider published standards for the discipline
- Consider outcomes at other UC programs

History PLOs

- Demonstrate knowledge of a basic narrative of historical events in a specific region of the world.
- Demonstrate knowledge of scope and thematics across different periods, transnational, regional or transcultural history.
- Distinguish primary and secondary sources; understanding and evaluating historical ideas, arguments, and points of view; and evaluating competing interpretations and multiple narratives of the past.
- Gather and assess primary historical evidence and compiling bibliography.
- Provide constructive and effective critiques of other students' work and completing a shared research project.
- Present clear and compelling arguments, based on critical analysis of diverse historical sources, and effectively communicate interpretations in written essays and/or other media.
- Develop a research question and completing a well-supported piece of historical writing about it.

Film & Digital Media PLOs

- Demonstrate employment of research skills, including the use of appropriate print and technology sources in the discipline, to construct effective arguments.
- Understand the pre-production, production, and postproduction digital media and filmmaking process.
- Demonstrate the relationship between different types of form and meaning through the creation of film and digital media projects or the critical analysis of them.
- Work collaboratively to produce a film or digital media project.
- Demonstrate broad knowledge of film and media history internationally.
- Analyze, interpret, and critique films and media from a variety of theoretical perspectives using the critical vocabulary and methodologies of the discipline.
- Demonstrate scholarly writing skills appropriate to the discipline of film and digital media.
- Articulate and defend their research and practice in a critical environment.

Faculty Ownership

- Learning outcomes are defined by the faculty, are owned by the faculty
- PLOs are discipline-specific
- Living document, can be updated as the faculty feel necessary
- Contrast to standardized approach seen in K-12 and CSUs

Other Levels of Learning Outcomes

- Course Learning Outcomes
- General Education
- Institutional Learning Outcomes
- Core Competencies

Core Competencies

- Written Communication
- Oral Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Information Literacy

Assessment

- Goals of assessment are quality assurance and **program improvement**
- Focus on **cohort** of students, does the cohort meet expectations?
- Not tracking of individual students
- Focus on graduation competencies
- Provides feedback to the department on student learning—where are students doing well, where are they doing less well?

Assessment

- Assessment can be seen as research about teaching
- When we do research we:
 - State a hypothesis
 - Collect data
 - Evaluate our hypothesis
- Outcomes assessment applies a similarly rigorous approach to our hypotheses about student learning

Focus on PLO Assessment

- Campus focus is on PLO assessment
- Discipline-specific, faculty-owned
- Build into existing assessment structures
- Most value for the effort
- Complements existing course-level assessment

Communication of PLOs

- Posted on the department webpages
- Links from central webpage:
<http://planning.ucsc.edu/irps/assessment/>
- Need to be communicated to the students
 - Students should be able to articulate where they are in the program
 - They should understand why they are taking the classes they are
 - They should understand how each class fits into the whole curriculum

Connections to Advising

- Comparing PLOs can help with choosing a major
 - What are the expectations for the major?
 - What skills will be learned that may improve employability?
- Provides guideposts for learning during the major
- Helps students see the program from the classes
- Particularly valuable for students from families with less understanding/experience with college (e.g., first-generation students)