**Standard 2.A.2.b**

**Section:** The institution relies on faculty expertise and the assistance of advisory committees when appropriate to identify competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, programs including general and vocational education, and degrees. The institution regularly assesses student progress towards achieving those outcomes.

*How competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes are determined, including the role of faculty and of advisory committees.*

Student learning outcomes and competency levels are measured by students’ ability to pass into higher levels of academic study, ability to enter a licensed profession, to advance in one’s current profession or to move from non-credit coursework into a for-credit program. Course-level student learning outcomes are currently called “learning objectives” and are defined in individual course outlines.

All vocational departments at CCSF are required to use advisory committees to identify competencies that program graduates need to have in order to enter the labor market. *(Carlotta Del Portillo, September 27, 2004)* Many use these committees to help determine how student learning outcomes should be assessed, and this is required of programs needing outside accreditation. For example, the Diagnostic Medical Imaging program uses advisory committees to measure success in areas such as on-the-job competency and professionalism of recent graduates. *(CCSF Diagnostic Medical Imaging Program Goals, Associated Outcomes and Benchmarks.)*

Some vocational programs are using the DACUM model through the college-run California Resource Center. This process gathers input from the field and helps determine measurable areas in the curriculum. It is up to the department to then use these findings to measure student learning outcomes. *(Suzanne Korey, CRC Coordinator. October 4, 2004)*

There is no requirement of academic programs to use advisory committees. Nonetheless, there is extensive faculty involvement among the departments (both vocational and academic) that are assessing student learning outcomes. It is the faculty members who determine the need for, design the techniques of and implement the systems for assessing learning outcomes.

Examples:

The **Photography department** faculty have worked together to determine the standards and evaluation techniques of the learning outcomes of their students during Flex Day meetings and Curriculum Integration Workshops. By and large, student learning is assessed by evaluation of the photographic work students are producing. *(Robert McAteer, Photography Department Chair. October 13, 2004)*

In the **English department**, most instructors use written final exams for their courses, none of which are uniform. Additionally, English 94 has a Common Exam. This exam is not required to pass the class, but it gives the instructor and student a point of reference to judge the student’s ability to successfully complete the major tasks taught in the class. It counts for no more than 10% of the student’s grade. The English department voted to move their graduation requirement from English 94 to English 96 in part because results from the Common Exam suggested that students who passed English 94 were generally not prepared for college level English. *(Karen Cox, October 26, 2004)*

The **English as a Second Language** department assesses outcomes in both credit and noncredit divisions. Credit ESL has end-of-semester tests in reading/writing/grammar for the core R/W/G courses: ESL 110-150. The course outlines recommend that the combined test scores equal only 25% of the grade. They also have a common composition final for ESL 82 and the course outline recommends that this be only 20% of the grade. Noncredit ESL has end-of-semester reading and listening tests for ESL N3200, 3400 and 3600. It is recommended that
students pass both tests before being promoted to the next level unless the instructor sees a valid reason to not do so. In noncredit they also use the CASAS test to assess students attainment of life skills competencies, but not to assess individual student progress. Instructors use results of the test to tell them which competencies need more coverage in class.

Summary data are produced at the end of each semester for the end-of-semester tests in both credit and noncredit. Copies of the reports are available to all instructors in meeting minutes. Workshops were held in Fall 2004 to provide faculty the opportunity to review the results of noncredit tests and discuss the implications these results might have for staff development, change of instructional focus, and so on. Campus Curriculum committees and the Noncredit ESL Curriculum Committee will review results of these workshops and make recommendations to the chair for any changes to be made in assessment instruments, curricula, and other areas. The credit ESL Curriculum Committee reviews results of the testing and makes recommendations to the chair for any changes that may need to be made in assessment instruments, curriculum, etc.

The credit curriculum was completely revised 2 1/2 years ago. One of the many things considered when this change was made was data from success rates of students in ESL courses and subsequent English courses. Changes included moving to integrated reading/writing/grammar core courses and increasing the hours of instruction at some levels. The ESL department continues to consider changes that may be needed as they look at assessment results each semester in credit and noncredit. (Sharon Seymour, October 20, 2004)

**How CCSF has structured the relationship between student learning outcomes, and competency levels for degrees, certificates, programs, and courses**

The relationship between student learning outcomes and competency levels has recently begun to be formally structured within the institution. The college-wide Curriculum Committee is currently revising course outline requirements to include measurement of student learning outcomes. (Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes, 10-20-04) The Program Review Committee is currently planning to include student learning outcome assessment as one of the areas of department- and program-level self-study. (Brian Ellison, October 13, 2004)

In vocational departments which are training students to enter fields which are licensed, learning outcomes are largely determined by the students passing the licensure examination given by outside agencies. Such programs include Diagnostic Medical Imaging, Licensed Vocational Nursing, Registered Nursing, and Dental Assisting.

**The clarity of the student's path to achieving the student learning outcomes required of a course, program, degree, certificate. How well CCSF achieves and evaluates the effectiveness of learning at each level.**

Students have a clear path in achieving the outcomes required of certificate, programs and degrees, although it is expressed mainly by traditional means. The courses required in each major and certificate are clearly listed in the CCSF Catalog in the form of a recommended semester-by-semester sequence of coursework. The path to fulfilling the general education requirements for a degree are also spelled out in the college Catalog. The catalog is available in print and online via the college website. (CCSF 2004-2005 Catalog, http://www.ccsf.edu/Catalog/)

Beginning with the 2005-06 Catalog, some departments are including learning outcomes statements in their program descriptions. This is optional.

The path to student success at the course level is articulated to the student by means of the instructor’s syllabus. The syllabus must include an overview of the course, required materials, course requirements, a calendar of important dates, the instructor’s grading policy and attendance regulations. (CCSF Faculty Handbook, appendix F) According to a recent student
focus group, most instructors are providing this information as required. (*Standard 2a Student Focus Group September 24, 2004, transcript*)

The student's path to success is also guided by advice from college counselors and advisors with individual departments, peer-mentoring groups, instructors in College Success, as well as in student orientations to the college and programs.

**Rating**

Needs improvement.

CCSF has no institution-wide system for evaluating the effectiveness of learning at every level, though there are explicit plans for system-wide measurement of student learning outcomes (*College Performance Indicators Report 2003-2004, Annual Institutional Plan City College of San Francisco 2003/4*). While certain departments have taken on such evaluations and use the data to better achieve student learning effectiveness, and changes are being discussed in the Curriculum Committee and Program Review Committee as mentioned above, an institution-wide effort must be made.

**Suggestions**

There are many areas of student learning outcomes that could be easily measured. For example, the Non-Credit ESL department offer Vocational ESL courses which prepare students to enter for-credit vocational programs. Competency for students in those courses should be measured by the student’s ability to pass into the for-credit vocational program.

In addition, CCSF needs to implement student learning outcomes at every level. In order to do this, faculty will need to be educated about how the changes need to be made and our current system can be adapted. The effort to implement these changes must be institution-wide.

As the ones who will make this happen, the faculty will require tremendous support in implementing SLO assessment. More workshops like the two all-day workshops given by the Office of Research, Planning and Grants in 2003 on the subject of SLO assessment will be needed. It may be useful to release faculty from other duties for training in SLO assessment with the goal of becoming resource faculty to their programs and departments.

The faculty also needs to be reassured that assessments showing negative results will not be held against them personally when they indicate a greater failing of the program or college. They should be made aware of the programs and departments in which SLO assessment has made a positive difference to students and faculty. They should also not be put in positions where SLOs are tied to program funding.

Any college-wide standards must be flexible enough to be adjusted to the individual audiences (e.g., classroom) being assessed while measuring the appropriate outcome. Care must be taken to avoid implementing an over-arching system which measures learning form the viewpoint of the dominant culture. Any systems put in place must show sensitivity to and be relevant for the extremely culturally-diverse student body at CCSF. It is recommended that the college use existing resources such as the Multicultural Infusion Project and its facilitator Jacquelyn V. Reza, Ed.D. as advisors in this process.

The goals of the students should also be taken into consideration when setting outcomes standards. There is a only a little evidence of student input currently in the process, such as the recent online Student Survey of 20,000 CCSF students. (*The Office of Research Planning and Grants*)