APPLYING ACCJC GUIDELINES TO SLO/ASSESSMENT: 2012 PROFICIENCY INTO PRACTICE

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Examples and Resources

Compiled by
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The following resources are examples of practices that, in my opinion, demonstrate proficiency on the ACCJC SLO rubric. To gather them, I looked at winners of RP’s POWER (Promising Outcomes Work and Exemplary Research) Awards, examples from RP’s BRIC Inquiry Guides and presentations from the Academic Senate of California Community Colleges Accreditation Institutes and the Strengthening Student Success Conference. These examples were judged as commendable by SLO experts across the state.

HOWEVER, their inclusion here does not imply that they have been endorsed by the ACCJC. A college’s SLO assessment processes are judged as part of a complex review by the ACCJC’s visiting teams and then by the Commission itself. Using one or all of these practices does not guarantee that a college will be judged as proficient on the Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness, Part III: Student Learning Outcomes, or on the Accreditation Standards.

Furthermore, while it is wonderful to learn from and be inspired by the approaches used by other colleges, it is important to adapt them to fit the culture of your institution. I haven’t seen a single method that can be “borrowed” completely, without tweaking.

Finally, while the ACCJC standards relate WHAT the Commission expects should be done to be proficient, they don’t spell out HOW to do it. Many different approaches can be used. No single assessment method is the only and right way. I’ve tried to select examples that show an array of approaches.

One last note: I did not believe that two of the bullets on the proficiency rubric needed examples so you will not find them here. So far, I have no other methods to alert students to SLOs beyond having them on syllabi and in the college catalog. Let me know if your college is using another approach. The bullet about financial resources is crucial, but every college is doing this in its unique way under the current budgetary constraints. This bullet point is a good starting point for discussion but perhaps not one for examples at this time.

Marcy Alancraig
### Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness – Part III: Student Learning Outcomes

(See cover letter for how to use this rubric.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Implementation</th>
<th>Characteristics of Institutional Effectiveness in Student Learning Outcomes Updated May 2011 (Sample institutional behaviors)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Awareness</strong></td>
<td>• There is preliminary, investigative dialogue about student learning outcomes.</td>
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<td>• There is recognition of existing practices such as course objectives and how they relate to student learning outcomes.</td>
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<td>• There is exploration of models, definitions, and issues taking place by a few people.</td>
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<td>• Pilot projects and efforts may be in progress.</td>
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<td>• The college has discussed whether to define student learning outcomes at the level of some courses or programs or degrees; where to begin.</td>
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<td><strong>Development</strong></td>
<td>• College has established an institutional framework for definition of student learning outcomes (where to start), how to extend, and timeline.</td>
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<td>• College has established authentic assessment strategies for assessing student learning outcomes as appropriate to intended course, program, and degree learning outcomes.</td>
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<td>• Existing organizational structures (e.g. Senate, Curriculum Committee) are supporting strategies for student learning outcomes definition and assessment.</td>
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<td>• Leadership groups (e.g. Academic Senate and administration), have accepted responsibility for student learning outcomes implementation.</td>
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<td>• Appropriate resources are being allocated to support student learning outcomes and assessment.</td>
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<td>• Faculty and staff are fully engaged in student learning outcomes development.</td>
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<td><strong>Proficiency</strong></td>
<td>• Student learning outcomes and authentic assessment are in place for courses, programs and degrees.</td>
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<td>• There is widespread institutional dialogue about the results of assessment and identification of gaps.</td>
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<td>• Decision-making includes dialogue on the results of assessment and is purposefully directed toward aligning institution-wide practices to support and improve student learning.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Appropriate resources continue to be allocated and fine-tuned.</td>
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<td>• Comprehensive assessment reports exist and are completed and updated on a regular basis.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Course student learning outcomes are aligned with degree student learning outcomes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Students demonstrate awareness of goals and purposes of courses and programs in which they are enrolled.</td>
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<td>Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Student learning outcomes and assessment are ongoing, systematic and used for continuous quality improvement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Dialogue about student learning is ongoing, pervasive and robust.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <em>Evaluation of student learning outcomes processes.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Evaluation and fine-tuning of organizational structures to support student learning is ongoing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Student learning improvement is a visible priority in all practices and structures across the college.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Learning outcomes are specifically linked to program reviews.</td>
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sc: 5/25/2011
Proficiency: Student learning outcomes and authentic assessment are in place for courses, programs and degrees.

Course Examples

1. Glendale Community College

   One example of changes at the course level includes work done at Glendale Community College, which began with a simple linkage statement between assessment and grade distribution data—"For the rest that passed with a C or better, they all achieved the stated Student Learning Outcomes." The process evolved beyond using this —grades for data‖ approach to more defined SLO assessment. By the third assessment cycle, faculty were able to focus on more specific outcomes. For example, the faculty observed that in general, students did worse on the questions that had to do with the vocabulary related to the chapter themes than the vocabulary that dealt with calcos, idiomatic expressions, —Spanglish‖ and homophones. This finding indicated that the students were paying attention to the problems that heritage speakers tend to have and that homework and in-class activities were generally effective, but students did not spend much time studying vocabulary. This information provided specific valuable feedback to adjust teaching practices.

2. Cabrillo College
   From the Cabrillo College SLO Website (http://pro.cabrillo.edu/slos)
   Course Assessment method

   The Faculty Senate developed a course-embedded assessment method to assess the Core Four and the SLOs for individual courses. Extensive details about this process can be found in the Instructional Planning Workbook on this web site. In general, faculty:

   - Choose one major assignment that measures aspects of one of the Core Four or specific course SLOs.
   - Assess the assignment using a rubric that articulates specific standards and criteria.
   - If the assignment is a major exam, faculty instead look at specific groups of questions that address the SLO or core competency.
   - Faculty evaluate the results of the students’ assessments, note what student needs and issues were revealed and how the assignment or teaching activities could be altered to improve student learning.
   - Faculty dialogue about their results in department meetings, sharing their assignments, their evaluation of the results and their ideas for improvement, including what assistance the college could provide to improve student learning.
   - Program chairs record the issues and suggestions that arise during the discussion on an Assessment Analysis form. In keeping with the Cabrillo's assessment philosophy
that assessment is not "a means to evaluate individual faculty or staff," no individual instructor's name or results are recorded on the form. Instead the overall departmental results are summarized and its plans to improve teaching and learning are the main focus. These plans then form the basis for any funding requests and are attached to the department’s Instructional Plan. After review by the Council for Instructional Planning, the analysis forms are forwarded to the SLO Assessment Review Committee.
**Proficiency:** Student learning outcomes and authentic assessment are in place for courses, programs and degrees.

**Program Examples**

1. **Speech Department at Contra Costa College**  
   **2011 Power Award winner for Outstanding Program Outcomes Assessment**

   Description from the handout for this year’s POWER awards and POWER awards nomination materials. For more detailed information and a brief case study, see http://rpgroup.org/content-2011-power-awards.

   When SLO implementation was first discussed eight years ago, the Speech department immediately met with full and part-time faculty, administration, and the college researcher. With the contributions of all involved, SLOs for each course were created with a corresponding rubric. Each semester the students complete pre and post-tests, then the researcher analyzes the test scores to determine the degree of student learning. The department develops a SLO outcome report that forms the benchmark for future semester data preparation. Finally, the instructors discuss the reports ensuring the assessments are utilized for course improvement. Gathering student perceptions as part of the SLO process helped validate whether faculty’s perceptions of confidence matched those of the students, making SLO assessment more meaningful and accurate. By ensuring that adjunct faculty are paid to participate in SLO training in venues such as flex days and actively engaged in developing and refining measures, adjunct faculty have become leaders in gathering, analyzing, reporting, and communicating SLO assessment data.

2. **Biology Department at Bakersfield College**

   From the BRIC Assessing Student Learning Outcomes Inquiry Guide  
   (downloadable from http://www.rpgroup.org/BRIC/InquiryGuide/SLOs)

   In 2002-2003 the Bakersfield College biology department, organized as a single academic program by discipline, began examining its program and curricular student learning outcomes. This outcomes perspective guided faculty to conclude that the biology department really served three significant programs of study contributing to different outcomes.

   The majority of students taking biology were pre-allied health, followed by the next largest number of students only taking a single course for general education, and distantly followed by a handful of Biology majors, most of whom never completed an associate’s degree. The outcomes and expectations for students taking only one course to meet a general education science requirement differed significantly from outcomes for pre-allied health students and biology majors.
It was evident that a single set of outcomes and a single degree for all students taking biology was not reasonable. The intensity, breadth, focus, and depth of study varied significantly for each pathway. The Biology Associate of Science degree was reframed in the context of student learning outcomes as a Biology Associate of Science degree with an emphasis in Human Biology (the pre-allied health track) or a Biology Associate of Science Degree with an emphasis in Biology (for majors). The program assessments used for each degree were different because the final outcomes were different. The General Education Biology (GE) course became part of the GE program and was assessed as a course. Data were used to improve success and curriculum in all three biology pathways.

Aligning outcomes with the degrees increased the number of biology degrees awarded ten-fold (see table in the BRIC Inquiry Guide). Students expressed extreme satisfaction in graduating and being awarded a degree for completing an educational pathway that truly represented an accomplishment and completion of a course of study with explicit outcomes.

3. GE at Solano College
   From the SCC Assessment Method Workbook (downloadable from http://www.solano.edu/slo/index.html)
   - The General Education program is treated as one complete program. Any transfer courses, and the basic skills classes that build the skills that lead to transfer, are part of that program. Unlike some other schools, individual transfer or basic skills departments are not considered separate programs with their own student learning outcomes.
   - The student learning outcomes for the GE program are the four college core competencies. The Core Four are also the SLOs for our AA and AS degrees.
   - The on-going Program Review (and Curriculum Review) process will be used as the vehicle for this assessment process. SCC is currently on a four-year cycle of Program Review, and we are considering a change to a four-year cycle for Curriculum Review. Departments/Divisions will link their plans for improvement and budgetary requests to their SLO assessment results.
   - Assessment method: Same as Cabrillo’s for course level assessment (see above)
Proficiency: Student learning outcomes and authentic assessment are in place for courses, programs and degrees.

Degree Examples

1. College of Marin
2009 POWER award winner for Institutional Outcomes

Research at the College of Marin led the entire college to re-think the use of "butts in seats" measures and to look instead at what each program was trying to achieve for students and align measurable goals with outcome assessment. As a result of research and vision, Marin re-organized the college around student pathways: basic skills/ESL; transfer; career and occupational training; and personal growth and enrichment. Outcomes were written for each pathway. For example, —Full-time transfer students will be able to complete their programs and transfer within two years.‖ Baseline data and longitudinal data track the progress of each pathway to demonstrate student success (and non-success).

Three years ago, the College of Marin Academic Senate went through a radical transformation in thinking about the way they measured their success. The college had traditionally looked to input measures to determine the success of programs: head count, WSCH/FTE (load), class size. Research prepared by a faculty member and presented to the Senate led to an understanding that program effectiveness would be captured better if they looked at output measures including: job placement, number of transfers, the success of transfer students, the number of degrees granted, the efficiency of programs, completion rates, ESL transitioning, and student satisfaction.

2. GE: Skyline College and El Camino College
See materials from the 2011 Strengthening Student Success Conference Presentation From Canoeing to Dragon-boating: Moving from Course Level to GE Assessment Methods, soon to be posted on the RP Group website (http://www.rpgroup.org)
Proficiency: Course student learning outcomes are aligned with degree student learning outcomes.

Examples

1. **Skyline College mapping process**
   Departmental faculty are asked to map courses and program outcomes to institutional outcomes on a simple form. See an explanation, instructions and the form itself on page 33-35 of the SLOAC Framework, a 74 page pdf document, downloadable at: http://www.skylinecollege.edu/facstaff/GovCommittees/sloac/framework.html.

2. **El Camino College mapping process**
   When faculty fill out the simple Student Learning Assessment Report form at El Camino College, they must map the course SLO they have assessed to a program SLO and a college core competency. You can download this user friendly form from this address: http://www.elcamino.edu/academics/slo/forms.asp.

3. **Cabrillo College mapping process**
   Cabrillo houses its SLOs on the Course Outline of Record. The college worked with CurricUNet to modify their curriculum program so that faculty must map each course to the institutional outcomes that it serves (called the college core competencies). Each course usually maps to more than one competency. Since the CurricUNet program is not open to the public, contact Marcy Alancraig, SLO Coordinator at Cabrillo, for more information about how this was designed at maalancr@cabrillo.edu.
**Proficiency:** Comprehensive assessment reports exist and are completed and updated on a regular basis.

**Examples**

1. **Santa Monica College**  
   **2011 POWER award winner for GE assessment**  
   Santa Monica college has created a home grown electronic system for collecting SLO data and generating reports. One of the advantages of this system is that it requires student ID numbers, which then allows faculty to disaggregate course assessment results and consider the affects of “other factors that may influence student performance, such as number of semesters in college, English level, math level, online versus on-campus status, class time of day, race, and gender” (from the write up about POWER award winners passed out the POWER award pre conference meeting). More information about this innovation will soon be available at [http://rpgroup.org/content-2011-power-awards](http://rpgroup.org/content-2011-power-awards).

2. **Sierra College**  
   Sierra College is using TracDat to create comprehensive assessment reports. For more information and examples, see the College’s user friendly SLO page at [http://www.sierracollege.edu/aboutus/SLO/index.html](http://www.sierracollege.edu/aboutus/SLO/index.html).

3. **Solano College**  
   Solano College has created their own reporting forms for SLO assessment. You can take a look at a blank form and see examples of filled out forms if you go to their SLO homepage page at [http://www.solano.edu/slo](http://www.solano.edu/slo).

4. **Comprehensive Assessment Reports from Around the Country – Bob Pacheco and Fred Trapp**  
   Bob Pacheco and Fred Trapp have assembled examples of comprehensive assessment reports that are being used outside of California. They presented their findings in a Power Point presentation at the 2011 RP Conference. You can download the presentation and explore their myriad of sources by going to [http://www.rpgroup.org/resources/comprehensive-assessment-reports-best-practice-examples-around-country](http://www.rpgroup.org/resources/comprehensive-assessment-reports-best-practice-examples-around-country)
Proficiency: There is widespread institutional dialogue about the results of assessment and identification of gaps.

Examples

1. Cabrillo College SLO Assessment Review Committee
A shared-governance committee reviews the assessment results from all areas of the college, analyzes the results, looking for issues that apply college-wide, and writes a yearly report that goes to the decision-making groups on campus: The Governing Board, the College Planning Council, the Faculty Senate, the faculty and classified unions and the Student Senate. If an issue comes to light that the ARC committee feels must be discussed, it convenes college think tanks and forums to propose solutions to the problem. For more information and for copies of the yearly reports, go the Cabrillo College SLO website at: http://pro.cabrillo.edu/slos.

2. Chaffey College: SLO Down Newsletter
Chaffey College fosters dialogue about assessment results through an entertaining newsletter written by the Outcomes and Assessment Committee. This delightful and often funny newsletter keeps the campus abreast of SLO developments and results. You can sample Chaffey’s DOWN newsletters by going to http://www.chaffey.edu/slo/slo_down.html.
**Proficiency**: Decision-making includes dialogue on the results of assessment and is purposefully directed toward aligning institution-wide practices to support and improve student learning.

**Examples:**

1. **Consumnes River College: Program Overview and Forecast Format (PrOF)**
   Consumes River College has linked SLO assessment to program review through their PrOF process. SLO results are recorded electronically and used for Program Review which then proceeds through the college budgeting process. For more information, click on the Instructional Program draft link on their college planning website at: http://www.crc.losrios.edu/Faculty_and_Staff/Shared_Governance_and_Other_Committees/College_Planning/New_Draft_PrOF_Forms.htm

2. **Fullerton College Planning Process**
   Many colleges have incorporated SLO assessment into their budgeting and planning process. Fullerton has developed a visual map that shows this in a clear and profound way. Take a look at their visualization of this complex college process by going to http://staffwww.fullcoll.edu/bcordell/FCPlanningProcess9-17-10.pdf.