

Campus Update on Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment, Spring 2012

Much progress was made by the campus this semester to keep the momentum going on institutional and program student learning outcomes (SLOs) and assessments. In this message, I am writing to update you on the work done following the January faculty development workshop on the Lumina Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) and the subsequent survey on campus-wide SLOs.

Institutional Level

A working group, consisting of representatives from the Faculty Senate, Assessment Committee, Curriculum Committees (graduate, undergraduate, and WCCC), related HLC committee chairs, academic department heads, and Academic Affairs, used the faculty survey results to 1) develop institutional student learning outcomes for the baccalaureate and associate degree levels and 2) identify methods to assess those outcomes. After much discussion by the group, the four areas of the student learning outcomes (SLOs) most widely shared across all programs at CMU and WCCC are listed below with the associated DQP category shown in parenthesis:

Associate: The CMU/WCCC associate degree graduate will be able to:

- locate, gather and organize evidence on an assigned topic addressing a course or discipline-related question or a question of practice in a work or community setting (applied learning; specialized knowledge);
- use program-level mathematical concepts and methods to understand, analyze, and explain issues in quantitative terms (intellectual skills – quantitative fluency);
- make and defend claims in a well organized, professional document and/or oral presentation that is appropriate for a specific audience (intellectual skills – communication fluency); and
- identify and gather the information/data relevant to the essential question, issue and/or problem and develop informed conclusions (intellectual skills – critical thinking).

Baccalaureate Degree: The CMU baccalaureate degree graduate will be able to:

- construct a summative project, paper or practiced-based performance that draws on current research, scholarship and/or techniques, and specialized knowledge in the discipline (applied learning; specialized knowledge);
- analyze data critically, reason logically, and apply quantitative analysis methods correctly to develop appropriate conclusions (intellectual skills – quantitative fluency);
- make and defend assertions about a specialized topic in an extended well-organized document and an oral presentation that is appropriate to the discipline (intellectual skills – communication fluency); and

- identify assumptions, evaluate hypotheses or alternative views, articulate implications, and formulate conclusions (intellectual skills – critical thinking).

The above list is a working draft at this time and will be refined over the next year. Further, this process is not complete as there are other SLOs that will be considered, based on feedback from the faculty survey and at the January session: information literacy, ethics and resource stewardship. In addition, a working group will be developed in AY 2013 to consider how these institutional SLOs relate to our existing ten general education goals. For that reason, the current general education reporting process will continue to be on hold through AY 2012 - 13.

Finally, ETS' Proficiency Profile will be piloted during the next academic year as the assessment tool. This instrument was selected because it contains elements for assessing each of the intellectual skill areas noted in the above list and can provide the most useful reports on student performance. Details on its administration through a capstone course/culminating experience are being finalized.

Program Level

Many of you have participated in articulating program SLOs and planned assessments. Initial review of these indicates that there have been some excellent discussions held by faculty regarding what our students should be able to do upon completion of a program. Most of the programs did a very nice job of identifying an appropriate number of SLOs and articulated them using simple language to identify observable, realistic and attainable behaviors. A few need some minor revision, but most departments are well on their way to articulating SLOs and assessments for programs as well as identifying how each course in the curriculum helps a student achieve each outcome.

The current drafts of program-level SLOs will be refined over the next 6 – 12 months. Additionally, reporting on student learning outcomes will be integrated into the program review process, reducing the reporting burden on academic programs. [Outcome data](#) will be reported during the program review process and then again at the midpoint between review cycles. The attached chart summarizes how the two processes will be brought together and the cycle for reporting outcomes. Program reviews were on hiatus this year as we worked to better identify program SLOs and assessments. The [six-year program review cycle](#) will begin again in fall 2012 and is attached as well as posted on the new Assessment Page on the CMU website at <http://www.coloradomesa.edu/assessment/index.html>.

Your active participation in these activities has been appreciated and demonstrates your interest in improving our programs and institution. As you might expect, there is more work to do in the coming academic year and beyond. The energy and interest in the process has been tremendous and I look forward to continuing our progress.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Lay
Faculty Assessment Coordinator