GE/ULO SUMMARY

Prepared by Doug Keesey, GE Director, in consultation with the GE Area Chairs, and the ULO Consultants

GE Self Study > Review of GE Educational and Objectives > Move to GE Focused Learning Objectives

In order to prepare to assess student learning in GE courses, Cal Poly's 2001 GE Educational Objectives and Criteria were reviewed. Based on conclusions reached in the 2006 GE Self-Study and confirmed by the GE Program Review Evaluators, the existing GE Educational Objectives and Criteria were determined to be too numerous and too vague to assess. The recommendation was to create a set of more focused GE Learning Objectives. During 2006-08, the following occurred:

- The AAC&U developed its LEAP Learning Outcomes, which were adopted as the CSU GE Learning Outcomes in EO 1033 (Chancellor's Office Executive Order 1033, a revision of EO 595 governing all CSU GE Programs).
- Cal Poly developed a new University Mission Statement and University Learning Objectives
- The colleges reviewed and revised their learning objectives (e.g., writing ability, global understanding, ethics) to meet their accreditors' expectations.

Approval of Focused GE Learning Objectives

The new Focused GE Learning Objectives, officially approved in 2008, were devised to align with the

- AAC&U/CSU GE Learning Outcomes
- Cal Poly's University Learning Objectives, and also, to the extent possible,
- the colleges' learning objectives in order to increase the integration of students' learning experience within GE and the major programs.

Mapping of GE Learning Objectives

The Focused GE Learning Objectives were then mapped onto GE courses (by GE Area) in terms of where each learning objective is introduced and developed. (Graduation-level mastery of the learning objectives would be demonstrated in senior-level major courses.)

Integrated Program Review for GE, Major and Co-Curricular Activities

Rather than having a separate GE assessment effort, it was decided to integrate the assessment of GE courses with the assessment of major courses and co-curricular activities through a revised approach to Academic/Integrated Program Review and by means of the ULO Project. The Academic Program Review process was redesigned to include curriculum mapping of each student's path through GE and major courses, plus co-curricular activities. These maps are intended to serve as the basis for discussions between major programs and GE, plus Student Affairs, to identify gaps in student learning and to make recommendations for filling those gaps and improving student attainment of the University Learning Objectives.

A new Integrated Program Review process was piloted, which involves collection of student assessment data to serve as the basis for discussion, holding of joint meetings of major and GE faculty with ULO Consultants and GE Area Chairs, combined faculty scoring sessions, and recommendations for "closing the loop."
The ULO Project

The University Learning Objective Consultant and Committee effort was launched to improve student learning at Cal Poly and to align with the current WASC Self-Study which emphasizes the integration of student learning and its assessment.

- The ULO Committees are composed of primarily faculty but also staff from across divisions: GE, major departments, and Student Affairs. It is the Committees’ charge to help draw together and coordinate ULO work being done by the different divisions. The Committees also serve as a central repository for information on the teaching, learning, and assessment of the ULOs. To take one example, “How well are Cal Poly students writing? How is this measured? Have there been measurable improvements?”

- The ULO Committees, with campus-wise input, devise scoring rubrics so that the assessment of student learning will be valid and reliable across the different divisions and throughout a student’s academic career. In this way, we can track students’ development as they achieve growth in the attainment of the learning objectives. For purposes of accountability, we can also determine the value added by a Cal Poly education.

- The ULO Committees analyze the assessment data and then close the loop, advising the three divisions on where specific pedagogical and curricular changes can be made in order to improve student learning. Importantly, the Committees, working with the Center for Teaching and Learning, offer faculty development workshops, which serve as a central venue for conversation across divisions and which provide teaching strategies showing faculty how to implement changes. This approach provides for robust faculty engagement with an assessment process that leads to potentially improving the learning environment.

- Once faculty have made changes, the ULO Committees coordinate another round of assessment to determine how much student learning has actually improved, as measured against the baseline established during the previous assessment. The assessment process is thus ongoing and sustainable.

What is the work of the ULO Consultants?

The vision, in brief: The three divisions—GE, the major departments, and Student Affairs—are partners in helping students to achieve the University Learning Objectives. As students take GE and major courses and engage in co-curricular activities, they should be able to perceive the entire curriculum as a coherent and mutually reinforcing learning experience. The ULO Consultants will work to coordinate the educational efforts of all three divisions and, in relation to each ULO, to advise them on

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Pedagogy</th>
<th>Curriculum</th>
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Based on knowledge of best practices and on evidence of student learning gathered through direct and indirect assessment, the Consultants will identify specific ways to improve student attainment of the ULOs. Pedagogical suggestions will be conveyed electronically and through CTL workshops. Curricular suggestions will be conveyed to the appropriate curriculum committees, most intensively during the academic program review.

ULO Consultant Tasks In Detail > Each ULO Consultant will:

- help to integrate campus-wide efforts (GE, major, co-curricular) to assess student learning in the university learning objective (ULO);

- advise on pedagogical and curricular improvements related to the ULO based on the assessment data;

- help develop, and advise faculty on the use of, a scoring rubric or other assessment methods related to the ULO, including facilitating norming sessions and discussions of assessment results;
• engage the ULO committee in reviewing scoring sessions where the ULO rubric was applied in order to ensure validity and reliability;

• analyze student learning data reported by the faculty to pinpoint areas in need of attention from an institutional perspective, and make recommendations to programs when asked to;

• help programs to develop survey questions on the ULO and to analyze the results;

• organize faculty development workshops on the ULO through CTL;

• develop a website with information on the ULO;

• inform the Academic Assessment Council and the GE Governance Committee quarterly and provide an annual report/presentation to be shared with the Academic Assessment Council, the College Assessment Councils, the GE Governance Committee, and the Academic Senate;

• be receiving support from the Provost and from the offices of Academic Programs, General Education, and the Center for Teaching and Learning

8 University Learning Objectives will each have a ULO Consultant:

- CLO - Aesthetic Appreciation/Creative Thinking
- DLO - Cultural Diversity/Global Understanding
- ELO - Ethical Reasoning
- HLO - Physical/Psychological Health
- LLO - Lifelong Learning (Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Information Competency)
- OLO - Oral Communication
- SLO - Scientific/Mathematical Understanding/Problem Solving/Sustainability
- WLO - Writing Proficiency

3 Phases (3-Year Cycle):

Phase I: Rubric and Assessment
Phase II: Analysis and Feedback
Phase III: Pedagogy and Curriculum

Three ULO Consultants (in the areas of Diversity, Lifelong Learning, and Writing Proficiency) are already at work during 2008-09. Three more Consultants (in the areas of Ethics, Oral Communication, and Science/Math/Problem Solving/Sustainability) are planned to begin work in 2009-10, and then two more Consultants (Creative Thinking and Physical/Psychological Health) in 2010-11.

The work of each Consultant occurs in phases over three years. To take as an example one important aspect of this work (direct assessment), the first year is devoted to devising a scoring rubric and using it to assess student work. The second year involves analyzing the evidence of student learning and providing feedback based on this evidence. The third year emphasizes CTL workshops and other methods of helping to make changes in pedagogy and curriculum to improve student learning (closing the loop). At the end of the third year, this cycle recurs: Phase I begins again with another assessment of student work to measure the progress made since the initial “baseline” assessment conducted three years ago.

DIVERSITY (DLO) 2008-09 Progress Report

Dan Villegas, ULO Consultant for Cultural Diversity and Global Understanding,
Work with the DLO (Diversity Learning Objective) Committee during 2008-09
During the 2008-09 academic year, the DLO Committee held weekly meetings to develop an assessment plan. We were directed to pay specific attention to measuring the “value added” by Cal Poly with regard to the Diversity Learning Objectives, and this focus necessitated assessment of first year and graduating students. We developed our plan with the intention that the assessment process should lead to clear recommendations for improvement with regards to student achievement of the DLOs. To learn as much as possible about best methods for assessing the DLOs, our plan relies on diverse strategies of assessment. We proposed to assess three of the DLOs with the use of DLO-specific short essay questions and assessment criteria.

For example, the assessment mechanism for DLO 3 involves providing students with a scenario about a proposed low-income housing project to be built in a high-income area in a town described in ways similar to actual demographic and class patterns in San Luis Obispo. Students are then asked to write four short essays responding to questions about how different groups might potentially be impacted by the project and how diverse perspectives on the project might be incorporated into the decision-making process.

We proposed to assess the fourth DLO using an interview process based on focus group protocols. In order to establish a benchmark for measuring the value added of a Cal Poly education, we implemented a “pilot assessment” that included all graduating students enrolled in GE Area D5 courses during the spring 2009 quarter. 32 course sections with approximately 300 graduating students were included in this pilot assessment. The responses to the short essay questions were evaluated by faculty and staff evaluators during scoring sessions held on May 24, June 6, and June 26.

We will be conducting an assessment of first year students during the fall 2009 quarter and then follow up with an assessment of graduating students during the spring 2010 quarter. Our timeline is presented in the table below.

**Timeline**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 5, 2009</td>
<td>DLO Assessment Plan circulated to University to solicit feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 24, 2009</td>
<td>Faculty feedback submitted to Dan Villegas (chair)<a href="mailto:dvillega@calpoly.edu">dvillega@calpoly.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 15, 2009</td>
<td>Pilot assessment plan finalized with faculty feedback incorporated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2009</td>
<td>Initiate pilot assessment of graduating students [data collection]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer 2009</td>
<td>Analyze data, revise assessment plan based on pilot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>Initiate assessment of first year students [data collection]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
<td>Assessment of graduating students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>Report of the findings derived from the DLO assessment based on the fall 2009 and spring 2010 assessment data</td>
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</tbody>
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**Members of the DLO Committee**

- Barbara Andre, International Education and Programs
- Camille O’Bryant, Kinesiology
- Denise Campbell, Student Affairs Administration
- Devin Kuhn, Religious Studies (Philosophy) and Women’s and Gender Studies
- Elizabeth Meador, College of Education
- Jane Lehr, Ethnic Studies and Women’s and Gender Studies
- Herlina Pranata, Counseling Services
- Martin Shibata, Career Services
- Dan Villegas, Economics (DLO committee chairperson)
- Mary Whiteford, Academic Programs

**LIFELONG LEARNING (LLO) 2008-09 Progress Report**

Navjit Brar, ULO Consultant for Lifelong Learning (Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Information Competency)

Work with the LLL (Lifelong Learning) Committee during 2008-09

Following a quarter (fall 08) long consultation, research, and analysis, the lifelong (LLL) working group, composed of five faculty members from various departments (namely, Agriculture, Engineering, Library, and Theater & Dance), prepared a document (winter 09) to provide insight into definition, attributes, and measurable outcomes of LLL. The document also
The Lifelong Learner possesses the below attributes and is someone who:

1. Seeks improvement and takes positive independent personal responsibility
2. Possesses an ability to organize and plan
3. Is information literate and thinks critically
4. Can communicate effectively
5. Has the ability to interact well in team and individual settings
6. Identifies needs and stays current in his/her professional field.

During winter 2009, the LLL document was shared with various campus entities. In addition, the analysis of NSSE, YFYE, and WASC survey data as it related to LLL questions was conducted. Based on the feedback received from various campus entities and survey data analysis, it was identified that most of the above attributes were already being integrated into GE or major courses and co-curricular activities except attribute 3, information literacy.

The working group recommended that integration of information literacy program into GE and/or major courses become the major focus of LLL during 09/10 and 10/11. The recommendation was then presented to library faculty who plan to finalize their library instruction program and measurable learning outcomes for freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors during summer 2009, to be implemented during fall 2009. In addition, information literacy online tutorials are in development and are targeted to be integrated into GE A1 and A3 courses.

Various assessment methods will be used, such as an in-class survey to find out what students learned; a faculty survey to determine whether student papers reflected use of scholarly materials; an iSkills (ETS) test during spring 2010 to identify information and technology literacy level of freshmen/sophomores and juniors/seniors.

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**WRITING PROFICIENCY (WLO) Progress Report 2008-09**

Brenda Helmbrecht, ULO Consultant for Writing Proficiency,
Work with the WLO (Writing Learning Objective) Committee during 2008-09

**I. Writing Learning Outcomes (WLO) Assessment Goals**

- to promote effective, evidenced-based writing education across Cal Poly’s Disciplines, including General Education courses.
- to ensure that students graduate Cal Poly with stronger writing skills than they demonstrated upon entry

**II. Direct Assessment: Collecting Student Work**

We collected work from three educational stages: first-year writing classes, 200- and 300-level GE writing-intensive courses, discipline-specific senior courses. This tiered approach permits a wider view of students’ writing abilities than can be gained by looking at writing development at a single developmental stage. We also gain a better understanding of where writing happens as well as the type of writing tasks assigned to students.

To compare work across courses and class levels, we collected expository/argumentative essays of at least 4-6 pages in length. Work was scored with the same Expository Writing Rubric that was developed by the WLO committee during the previous academic year. Writing was collected from the following stages/courses:

**Stage One – First Year (collected fall 2008)**

- GE A1: ENGL 134: 11 sections
- GE A3: ENGL 145, 149: 8 sections

Work was read and scored in winter 2009 by the WLO committee and composition instructors.

**Stage Two – Sophomores, Juniors (collected winter 2009)**

- GE C1: 11 sections
• GE C2: 4 sections
• GE C4: 5 sections
• GE D5: 7 sections

Work was read and scored in winter 2009 by the WLO committee and GE instructors.

Stage Three – Seniors (collected spring 2009)

• Senior level discipline-specific courses (10 sections of 400-level courses in COSAM, CLA, and ARCH)

Work will be scored in fall 2009

III. Indirect Assessment Objectives (Surveys):

Using survey monkey, I piloted a survey that had been developed and vetted by the Council of Writing Program Administrators that will ultimately be given alongside NSSE. Students in the above listed classes were emailed a link and asked to complete it. We received nearly 400 responses and intend to distribute the survey to a wider audience during the 2009-2010 academic year. The survey helps us better understand the students’ impressions of both their writing ability and their writing education.