DLO Summary Report

The Cal Poly Statement on Diversity

The Cal Poly statement on diversity begins with the following affirmation of the fundamental importance of diversity learning in the education of all Cal Poly students.

> "At the heart of a university is the responsibility for providing its students with a well-rounded education, an education that fosters their intellectual, personal and social growth. For students preparing to embark upon work and life in the 21st century, a critical element of a well-rounded education is the ability to understand and to function effectively in a diverse and increasingly interdependent global society. As noted in a recent statement from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), 'the argument for the necessity of diversity is perhaps stronger in higher education than in any other context... The ultimate product of universities is education in the broadest sense, including preparation for life in the working world.' In this regard, it is in the compelling interest of Cal Poly, the state, and the nation to provide our students with an education that is rich with a diversity of ideas, perspectives, and experiences."[1]

This conclusion about the critical role of diversity learning in the education of all Cal Poly students is supported by similar conclusions brought forward by the Academy, by the California State University system, and by the business community.

The DLO Assessment Committee

The Academic Programs office together with the GE Program charged the DLO Assessment Committee with the task of developing a plan for assessing student learning with respect to the four Cal Poly diversity learning objectives. The committee's charge included the following guidelines:
- Provide a direct assessment of student learning, as opposed to a campus climate survey
- Measure the totality of diversity learning at Cal Poly, as opposed to the learning that takes place in one course
- Pay specific attention to measuring the "value-added" of a Cal Poly education to student attainment of the diversity learning objectives
- Identify clear recommendations for improvement in areas where students are falling short of expectations

The DLO Assessment Committee commenced its work in the fall quarter of 2008. In the 2008-09 academic year, an assessment plan was developed, field tested, and revised. This process was based largely on the feedback received from Cal Poly faculty and staff. Three different versions of a questionnaire were developed: distinct versions for DLO 1, DLO 2 and DLO 3. Each of the three DLO-specific questionnaires included four short essay questions dealing with one of the diversity learning objectives. The committee decided to assess the fourth learning objective through a focus group protocol. Baseline data was collected from

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[1] "The Cal Poly Statement on Diversity," 6 June 2010, 17 Feb. 2011
<http://www.academicprograms.calpoly.edu/academicpolicies/Diversity-statement.html>.

freshman and juniors/seniors in the 2009-10 academic year. Simultaneously, rubrics for scoring student essays were finalized by the committee to prepare for scoring in Spring 2010.

At the start of the fall quarter of 2009 responses to the DLO questionnaire were collected from 320 freshmen students enrolled in ECON 303, ENGL 134 and ENGL 145. Some students responded to the questionnaires during class time; other students responded to online questionnaires. Responses from juniors and seniors were obtained during the fall and winter quarters from students enrolled in GE D.5 courses and from students enrolled in ECON 303, IME 482, KINE 411, MATE 481 and ME 430. Altogether approximately 380 in-class and online responses were received from juniors and seniors combined.

Employing the rubrics developed by the Diversity Learning Objectives Assessment Committee, members of the faculty and staff evaluated the student essays based on a 0 to 4 scale: 0 = No Response; 1 = Incomplete; 2 = Basic; 3 = Moderate; and 4 = Complex. The rubrics were designed based on the expectations for diversity learning by Cal Poly graduates that were established in Academic Senate Resolution 663-08. As indicated in the resolution, Cal Poly graduates are expected to demonstrate the ability to fulfill the diversity learning objectives. In keeping with Cal Poly's aspirations for excellence, it is reasonable to expect that Cal Poly graduates would attain a high level of achievement in their chosen fields of study and also with respect to the university's learning objectives. Consistent with these high aspirations, the committee expects that Cal Poly graduates should attain a "3 = moderate" or "4 = complex" level of diversity learning.

Focus group sessions based on a protocol designed to assess DLO 4 were conducted among the approximately 80 freshmen students enrolled in the Honors 100 course during the fall quarter of 2009. Focus group sessions were also conducted among the approximately 90 seniors enrolled in ECON 303 during the winter quarter of 2010. Based on transcripts of the focus group sessions, committee members identified key themes and sub-themes discussed by students. The list of student generated discussion themes has served as the context for the committee's conclusions about student knowledge, perceptions and beliefs about working together with people from diverse backgrounds.

Summary of the DLO Assessment Results from the Statistical Analysis of the DLO 1-3 Questionnaire Data

1. The value-added from the freshmen to the junior and senior cohorts

The findings based on comparisons of average scores and the percentage distribution of scores indicate that in general the level of diversity learning by Cal Poly juniors and seniors exceeds the level exhibited by incoming freshmen. The average scores of juniors, seniors, and juniors and seniors combined are higher than the average scores of freshmen, and these differences are – with the exception of the data from the in-class questionnaires – statistically significant. Moreover, 28.0% of the junior essays and 37.1% of the senior essays scored in the "3 = moderate" or "4 = complex" level, whereas only 11.5% of the freshmen essays met this expectation for student diversity learning.

On the other hand, the diversity learning exhibited in the majority of the junior essays and senior essays do not meet the expectations consistent with a high level of academic achievement. Altogether 72.1% of the junior essays and 62.9% of the senior essays scored

in the "2 = Basic" or "1 = Incomplete" or "0 = No Response" levels of attainment. Given the standards established by the university which are mirrored in the scoring rubrics, the evidence derived from the student essays does not support the conclusion that the majority of Cal Poly juniors or seniors are able to fulfill the diversity learning objectives with a high level of competence.

2. The overall contribution of the USCP program

The overall average score for juniors and seniors who had "not completed" a USCP course (2.02), is lower than the average score for juniors and seniors who had "completed" a USCP course (2.18), but this difference in average scores is not statistically significant. The percentage of student essays that meet expectations, with scores in the "3 = moderate" or "4 = complex" levels, is equal to 31.8% for juniors and seniors who had "not completed" a USCP course, and 38.1% for juniors and seniors who had "completed" a USCP course. Although the average score and percentage of essays that meet expectations are somewhat higher for students who had "completed" a USCP course, these overall assessment results are not indicative of a large positive contribution to diversity learning from the USCP program. However, it is important to note that this analysis provides a very general assessment of the USCP program, and is not a reflection of the quality of diversity learning that takes place in individual USCP courses.

3. The overall contribution of service-learning

The overall average score for juniors and seniors who had "not completed" a service-learning course (2.08), is lower than the average score for juniors and seniors who had "completed" a service-learning course (2.19), but this difference in average scores is not statistically significant. The percentage of student essays that meet expectations, with scores in the "3 = moderate" or "4 = complex" levels, is equal to 32.2% for juniors and seniors who had "not completed" a service-learning course, and 40.1% for juniors and seniors who had "completed" a USCP course. Similar to the USCP results, these overall assessment results are not indicative of a large positive contribution to diversity learning from the service-learning courses in general. However, the contribution to diversity learning of individual service-learning courses cannot be evaluated from this very general assessment of student participation in service-learning courses.

4. Other results derived from the statistical analysis of the DLO 1-3 questionnaire data

   a) The percentage of student essays that meet the expectations for student performance (a score in the 3=moderate or 4=complex categories) is 19.2% for CAFES student essays, 14.3% for CAED student essays, 44.8% for OCOB student essays, 27.9% for CENG student essays, 26.9% for CLA student essays, and 38.9% for COSAM student essays.
   b) The average score of the essays written by female students (2.13) exceeds the average score of essays written by males (1.88), and this difference is statistically significant at a p-value of 1%. 36.8% of the junior and senior essays written by females meet the expectations for student performance; whereas only 26.8% of the junior and senior essays written by males meet expectations.

c) The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results indicated that the explanatory power of ethnicity/race was marginally significant for the combined in-class and online data, but not significant when limiting the analysis to online data for juniors and seniors.

Summary of the Results from the DLO 4 Focus Group Data

The focus group responses reveal a negative student bias against diversity learning before students even enter Cal Poly. This is probably to be expected, since most individuals have a defined world-view that they do not like threatened. Once exposed to classroom content, results were mixed, with at least some students positive about their experiences, while others viewed them as being force-fed dogma. Virtually all students who spoke were positive about WOW week and other cultural events outside the classroom, and wished there were more such opportunities as well as more diversity on-campus in general.

A Gap between Aspiration and Reality

After examining the status of diversity learning on university campuses from across the nation, the AAC&U concluded that: "There is a troubling gap on campuses between aspiration and reality."[2] Despite the diligent efforts of many Cal Poly administrators, faculty, staff and students, it appears that Cal Poly is not exempt from this gap identified by the AAC&U. The evidence presented in this report suggests that there is still work to be done in closing a gap between Cal Poly's aspiration for the diversity learning of students and the reality about student attainment of the diversity learning objectives.

The DLO assessment results presented in this report do not support the conclusion that the majority of Cal Poly juniors or seniors are able to fulfill the diversity learning objectives with a high level of competence (as represented by a 3=moderate or 4=complex score).

This conclusion is also supported by findings from the 2008 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and from the 2008 Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE). These two reports present data concerning perceptions about the personal growth of Cal Poly students in understanding people of other backgrounds and in developing a personal code of values and ethics. The NSSE and FSSE findings indicate that:
- less than one-third of Cal Poly seniors agreed that their experience at Cal Poly had contributed "quite a bit" or "very much" to their personal growth in understanding people of other backgrounds;
- less than 20% of faculty members agreed that students' experiences at Cal Poly had contributed "quite a bit" or "very much" to their personal growth in understanding people of other backgrounds;
- less than one-half of Cal Poly seniors indicated that their Cal Poly experience had contributed "quite a bit" or "very much" to their "developing a personal code of values and ethics;"
- only one-third of faculty members agreed that students' experiences at Cal Poly had contributed "quite a bit" or "very much" to their "developing a personal code of values and ethics."

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[2] Dey vii.

<u>List of Recommendations</u>

Clearly further progress is required if the diversity learning aspirations and expectations of the Cal Poly community are to be met. Changes are required to improve student attainment of the Cal Poly diversity learning objectives. The committee believes that the initiatives of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) point the way for making progress, and the committee endorses a set of general recommendations from the AAC&U.[3] The committee also endorses long-standing recommendations presented in two reports: the report from the Cal Poly "Diversity in the Curriculum Task Force" (DCTF), and the report based on a review of the Cal Poly GE program, authored by Mary J. Allen of CSU Bakersfield, Trudy W. Banta of Purdue University, Indianapolis, and Harvey Greenwald, a former professor of mathematics at Cal Poly (RGEP).[4] In addition, we present our own specific recommendations. We have divided these four sets of recommendations into four categories: A) Leadership supporting diversity learning; B) Preparing faculty and staff to engage in diversity learning; C) Expanding student opportunities for diversity learning; and D) Assessment of diversity learning.

A. Leadership supporting diversity learning

- o   Diversity learning at Cal Poly should be supported by high-profile advocacy from the president, deans, and associate deans. (AAC&U)

- o   "The National Leadership Council recommends that broad-based leadership be developed in order to create campus cultures marked by an unwavering focus on the quality of student learning, by an ethic of continuous improvement, and by structures and rewards that support faculty and staff leadership on these issues." (AAC&U)

- o   "If assessment [of the GE program learning objectives] are to move forward at Cal Poly, the provost and his staff, as well as deans, chairs, and faculty governance leaders, must make a public commitment to GE and to assessment, and back up that verbal commitment with resources and recognition for those willing to assume leadership roles." (RGEP)

- o   Cal Poly should become a partner in the AAC&U's "Core Commitments" initiative. (DLO committee)

B. Preparing faculty and staff to engage in diversity learning

- o   Opportunities should be created for knowledgeable instructors, scholars and staff members to share their knowledge about successful curricular and co-curricular practices.[5] (AAC&U)

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[3] <u>College Learning for the New Global Century: A Report from the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education & America's Promise</u> (Washington D.C., Association of America's Colleges and Universities, 2007).

[4] "Diversity in the Curriculum Task Force Report," 9 Aug. 2010, 17 Feb. 2011 <http://diversity.calpoly.edu/reports/curr_task_force_report.html. Also Mary J. Allen, Trudy W. Banta and Harvey Greenwald, "Review of the California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, General Education Program" (Cal Poly, 2006).

[5] <u>College Learning</u> 48.

- The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) should continue to provide opportunities for faculty and staff to develop their ability to incorporate diversity in the curriculum. (DCTF)

- Cal Poly should initiate a visiting scholar program that brings to campus teachers from the liberal arts, professional, and technical fields who would provide models for incorporating diversity into the curriculum. (DCTF)

- "Closing the [assessment] loop generally requires collaboration with faculty, as well as their cooperation and flexibility. We suggest that, as much as possible, assessment leaders engage faculty whose courses may be affected by assessment results in the assessment of student work. After taking an honest look at students' work, these faculty are likely to have ideas to share, insights about effective solutions, and a willingness to revise their courses, if needed." (RGEP)

- Cal Poly working together with the entire California State University system should sponsor an award that each year recognizes an outstanding diversity learning college teacher, similar to the "Cherry Teaching Award" sponsored by Baylor University. (DLO committee)

- There should be greater alignment and integration of GE courses with courses in the academic majors that could potentially include a diversity learning component. (DLO committee)

C. Expanding student opportunities for diversity learning

- "The National Leadership Council recommends that every student engage in some form of field-based learning and that faculty and staff create opportunities for students to learn collaboratively and systematically from their field-based experiences." (AAC&U)

- "The National Leadership Council recommends that students be provided with recurring opportunities to explore issues of civic, intercultural, and ethical responsibility in the context of their broad studies of science, cultures, and society and, further, that these topics be connected to democracy and global interdependence." (AAC&U)

- "The National Leadership Council recommends that students be provided with guided opportunities to explore civic, ethical, and intercultural issues in the context of their chosen fields." (AAC&U)

- Diversity should be infused throughout the student's curriculum, including the GE program, the USCP program and major courses. (DCTF)

- "The GE committee [and the USCP committee] should find ways to encourage faculty from all colleges to develop or revise courses that can be added to the GE [and USCP] curriculum. This will increase faculty engagement in the program[s], give students more flexibility, help reduce bottlenecks, and take advantage of the polytechnic nature of the university." (RGEP)

- Cal Poly should adopt "high-impact educational practices" to promote diversity learning. (DLO committee)

D. Assessment of diversity learning
- o "The National Leadership Council recommends that assessments be linked to the essential learning outcomes identified in this report, that assessments be embedded at milestone points in the curriculum – including within students' major fields – and that assessments be made part of the overall graduation requirement." (AAC&U)

- o "The National Leadership Council recommends that each campus analyze its assessment findings to ensure that all groups of students are progressing successfully toward the expected learning goals." (AAC&U)

- o The diversity learning objectives should be included in a review of the Cal Poly general education program. (DCTF)

- o A program review of the U.S. Cultural Pluralism (USCP) program should be conducted "to discern if courses are meeting the USCP criteria and objectives, as well as reflect the intent of the diversity learning objectives." (DCTF)

- o The various Cal Poly assessment groups should work together to coordinate the assessment of student attainment of the DLOs. (DCTF)

- o The review of the GE program (RGEP) presents the following recommendations about the assessment of Cal Poly learning objectives:
  - ▪ "establish a multi-year assessment plan that specifies who is responsible for each year's assessments;"
  - ▪ "leaders should develop a plan that focuses on collecting valid, reliable assessment data; that makes efficient use of faculty time and campus resources; and that is sustainable;"
  - ▪ "direct assessment is essential to determine *what* students know and can do in relation to specified outcomes;"
  - ▪ "sources of indirect evidence gathered from questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups are essential to determine *why* students may not be learning all you had hoped they would in connection with the specified outcomes;"
  - ▪ "create a process to ensure that the integrity of GE [and USCP] courses are maintained after courses have been approved;"
  - ▪ "close the loop on each assessment study."

- o The effectiveness of diversity learning practices should be examined through pre- and post-assessments of student diversity learning in the courses where those practices are newly implemented. (DLO committee)

- o If Cal Poly moves forward with the acquisition of an electronic portfolio system, then this system should include student work that documents the growth in diversity learning by individual students. (DLO committee)

- o Data from employer surveys should be used to evaluate how much importance employers place on diversity learning and to report the employer's perspective on how well Cal Poly graduates are dealing with diverse work places. (DLO committee)

- o Cal Poly should conduct periodic assessment of the DLOs. (DLO committee)

The "Final Report" of the DLO Assessment Committee provides a detailed explanation for each one of these recommendations.