

SAN DIEGO MESA COLLEGE
PROPOSAL: STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT
(SLOAC) CYCLE

Approved: Academic Senate – May 23, 2005; President’s Cabinet – May 24, 2005.

INTRODUCTION

San Diego Mesa College has adopted a set of six overarching, non-discipline specific, student learning outcomes (SLOs) for the Associate degree and a process, described in the “genesis” paper, that outlines the proper uses of SLOs by faculty. The initial phase of the college’s work on SLOs focused on this aspect. During the past twelve months, the Research Committee in collaboration with the Flex Subcommittee, has focused on providing workshops about outcomes, assessment, and best practices with the intent of extending the base of faculty, staff and administrator who are informed and knowledgeable about SLOAC. To this end, starting in August 2004, two days of each flex period are now devoted entirely to workshops on these topics.

Mesa College received a commendation in the 2004 accreditation evaluation report that stated: “The college has undertaken an extensive process of internal dialogue and self-discovery in regard to the issue of student learning outcomes, demonstrating a notable professionalism in undertaking a difficult task...” Moreover, the report made several recommendations that incorporated student learning outcomes. These recommendations addressed: the implementation of “an integrated process for planning and resource allocation, grounded in data from program reviews (which should include data on student learning outcomes) and student learning outcomes assessment” [recommendation 1.1]; strengthening the “dialog about student learning by articulating specific goals with respect to the educational effectiveness of the college, and stating the goals (and supporting objectives) in measurable terms so that the degree to which they are achieved can be determined, widely discussed and planning for improvement can take place” [recommendation 1.2]; and “complete the work on student learning outcomes which it has begun so effectively in the areas of instruction and student services and ensure that work on student learning outcomes is undertaken in all of the areas of the college in which the standard calls for it.” [recommendation 3.1]

Therefore, the next phase for the college is to identify program-level SLOs for all programs and to engage in assessment. The Academic Program Review Committee has recommended that program review process be modified to include the identification of program SLOs and assessment. The eleven (11) programs that begin Year One Program Review in fall 2005 will be the first to undergo this process. To assist, training will be provided to program faculty, lead writers, deans, and academic program review committee liaisons. The training will commence on August 23, 2005 with several basic workshops followed on August 24th by an all-day workshop conducted by Norena Badway on assessment and what it means for individual disciplines.

The recommendation for Mesa College’s implementation of the student learning outcomes and assessment cycle is aligned with the already-existing academic program

review process and timeline. Quantitative assessment data will be examined in years one, three, and five. Over a five-year time period, each program will engage in a self-reflective analysis of program goals and SLOs, an examination of the curriculum to determine the match between the actual and desired goals and SLOs, assessment of the degree to which students are achieving these, and, finally, program and course modifications as identified by assessment. The last activity, program and course modification, does not have to wait until the cycle is complete, but could occur at any stage of the process as gaps between program goals, program curriculum, and student achievement are identified.

It is important to note that all program faculty will be engaged in the SLOAC process. The academic program review process is the vehicle to report on SLOAC activities and, as called for by the academic program review process, the lead writer will be responsible for addressing the SLO questions in the program review report. However, all program faculty will be engaged in the actual development of SLOs, their assessment, and decisions about program and curriculum modification that result.

MAJOR ACTIVITIES AND TIMELINE FOR SLOAC

Year One

a) Identification of the program(s) by the discipline

What constitutes the program in question?

Does the program consist of all courses in the discipline?

Does the program constitute the catalog degree and/or certificates?

Is the program focused on major preparation?

Is the program focused on general education?

Is there more than one “track” in the program and should they be considered separately?

b) Identification of program goals

(Teaching Goals Inventory. Classroom Assessment Techniques by Cross and Angelo, 2nd Edition, Jossey-Bass, 1993; available on CD from Chris Sullivan and Bill Grimes)

Through the process identified in Teaching Goals Inventory or a similar process, the program faculty should identify a set of 6-12 program goals.

Program goals should include some or all of the Mesa College six Associate degree SLOs.

They may also include additional goals specific to the discipline.

c) Review of quantitative data provided in academic program review

Assess program review quantitative data in the light of program goals.

Year Two

a) Curricular review for program goals

In which courses are the goals taught?

Does the curriculum include subject matter that assists in meeting program goals?

Is the curriculum emphasis or extent of coverage appropriate?

Is the emphasis consistent across all sections of a course?

How are program goals connected to individual course student learning outcomes?

How are students informed of the student learning outcomes for courses and programs?

b) Develop plan for curricular revision to address gaps

Identify program goals that are not adequately covered in the curriculum and determine what curriculum modifications are necessary to courses or program requirements.

Develop a plan and timeline for accomplishing these modifications.

Year Three

a) Assessment of how well students are achieving the program goals and SLOs

Quantitative Data

Review, analysis and recommendations of quantitative data from institutional research

Program specific surveys of current students and graduates (assisted by research)

Qualitative Assessment (review of data provided in the program review process)

What qualitative assessment methods will be used in assessing students' achievement of SLOs?

Rubrics

Sampling a cross-section of students' work

Authentic assessment: portfolios, displays and performances, oral reports, written reports

Holistic scoring techniques

Course-embedded assessment

b) Continue with course and program modifications.

Years Four and Five: Implementing assessment findings

a) Continue with curricular and program revision

b) Implement new teaching methodologies

c) Review of quantitative data provided through the academic program review process