



Appendix 4.A

Southwestern Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan

2015-2016

Introduction

This Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan (SLOAP) was developed in fall 2014 to document and standardize the process used by Southwestern faculty to implement a student learning outcomes assessment process across all of the College's academic programs. This process includes mapping and linking Course Outcomes to Program Outcomes to General Student Learning Outcomes (GSLOs), as well as developing multiple measures for course, program/discipline, and general education outcomes, and for collecting and analyzing data to document student achievement and learning of the outcomes. Analyzing that data will then result in positive changes in each course/program/discipline which will in turn lead to improved student learning outcomes the following year. This plan has then been updated and expanded through winter 2016 as the processes for collecting and analyzing outcomes assessment data continue to be refined. A subgroup of the Faculty Senate, made up of full-time faculty senators and part-time faculty, along with some administrators, now form the Outcomes Assessment Committee at Southwestern. They have collaborated over several months to help develop the processes used in this revised plan, and will continue to work to enhance and improve the outcomes assessment process at the College over the coming year.

Referring back to the NWCCU Standard 4.A.3 –

“The institution documents, through an effective, regular, and comprehensive system of assessment of student achievement, that students who complete its educational courses, programs, and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered, achieve identified course, program, and degree learning outcomes. Faculty with teaching responsibilities are responsible for evaluating student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes.”

The SLOAP directly addresses this standard. Measurement of success in meeting the above standard is being done in several different ways. As part of the Southwestern planning process, two additional Success Indicators (SI) have been developed from this plan to measure the College's success at achieving the LA.3 objective within the Learning and Achievement Core theme. The LA.3 objective states “Students demonstrate that they have met learning outcomes.” This was changed in winter 2016 from “students demonstrate that they have met institutional learning outcomes.” This change allows the College to measure success of all three sets of learning outcomes – course, program, and general education or institutional. This then more closely matches what is required in Standard 4.A.3.

Currently the College only has one SI that measures success of this revised LA.3 objective. SI 13 measures the percentage of students who pass the Technical Skills Assessments (TSAS) as reported to the State of Oregon Data for Analysis System and the internal assessment for programs and disciplines. Starting in 2016-2017, the College will be adding two additional SIs that measure the success at achieving LA.3. SI 52 will measure student achievement of the course and program outcomes. SI 53 will then measure student achievement of the general education outcomes. This way the SIs cover the measurement of all three levels of outcomes. This helps Southwestern connect the strategic planning process to the student learning outcomes measures.

Another measurement tool for determining success in achieving the outcomes assessment standard is one component of the Southwestern Program Viability process (explained more fully in the Mid-cycle Evaluation Report). This is the **Outcomes Assessment Rubric for Academic Programs**. This rubric is one of five indicators on a 100-point scale that measures Program Viability for all academic programs at Southwestern. Besides this rubric, program demand, program cost, program size, and program productivity are measured for all academic programs. The scale of this rubric is based on 20 points and consists of the same general steps found on the outcomes assessment process described below. During winter in-service 2015 and again in winter 2016, faculty completed this rubric to measure their progress in the outcomes assessment process. A summary of the results for all programs combined was compiled. The results showed that 57% of the academic programs scored 14 points (70%) or higher in 2015, with an overall average score of 13.7 points. In 2016, 74% of the academic programs scored 14 points (70%) or higher, with an overall average score of 15 points. This is an 8.7% increase in the average score from 2015 to 2016, and a 17% increase in the number of programs that scored 14 points (70%) or higher from 2015 to 2016. Faculty will complete the rubric each academic year to measure annual progress in their Outcomes Assessment Process. The goal is to have all academic programs at 14 points (70%) or higher by the end of the 2016-17 academic year.

A **SLOAP matrix** has also been developed to document the progress of Southwestern programs/disciplines in completing the seven step student learning outcomes assessment process for measurement of course and program outcomes, as well as progress toward measuring general education outcomes across campus. The SLOAP matrix will track the progress and success of each program/discipline in completing this cycle and documenting how changes to the curriculum or outcomes worked the following year.

Starting in 2016-2017, one of the faculty contract days is being moved from the fall in-service to the end of the spring term to provide an opportunity to have an Assessment Day on campus to review the outcomes assessment work accomplished during the academic year and plan what needs to be done the following year in each program. This will include all full-time and some part-time faculty.

Looking at the SLOAP process, **A Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Process Flow Chart** was developed to help faculty visualize the steps involved in fully developing an Outcomes Assessment process for their programs. This process has been reviewed in General Faculty meetings and at in-service meetings since fall 2014. It shows the progression of steps from the mapping of outcomes between the course, program, and GSLOs.

Student Learning Outcomes at the Course and Program/Discipline Level

At the end of fall 2014, out of a total of 35 academic programs that submit a program review every four years, 80% had developed clear and measurable course outcomes. By the end of fall 2015, 99% of the academic programs had developed clear and measurable course outcomes. These are listed on the course outlines which are approved by the College Instructional Council and kept in the Office of Instruction. These course outcomes are then included on the course syllabus for students to follow in their classes.

Looking at program/discipline outcomes, 100% of the 35 Academic Programs have clear and measurable outcomes. Faculty members continue to revise and update course and program/discipline outcomes through the Instructional Council approval process. All course outlines are on a four-year revision cycle so the process will continue to refine outcomes over the coming years. For all of the Associate of Science and Associate of Applied Science degrees and certificates, the program/discipline outcomes are in the College catalog. For the more general lower division collegiate disciplines, the program/discipline outcomes can be found on the College website.

The College has had separate lists of discipline outcomes listed in the catalog for every degree offered (AS, AAS, AAOT, AGS, OTM). In updating the catalog for the 2016-2017 academic year, these lists of discipline outcomes (listed as foundational outcomes, discipline level outcomes, etc.) will be pulled out of the catalog and one list of discipline outcomes will be inserted after the GSLOs and before the degree program templates. This should help reduce the confusion of having similar lists in multiple places in the catalog.

The SLOAP process focusing on course and program/discipline outcomes assessment on the flow chart is illustrated by seven distinct but related steps. A parallel process occurs to measure the student learning of the GSLOs which is explained below in the next section.

The mapping of student learning outcomes between courses, programs, and GSLOs has been done in different academic programs over the past years, but these efforts have not been consistently documented. All academic programs are working to complete the mapping of course to program to GSLOs. These steps and mapping templates then match steps 1-3 of the SLOAP process.

1. Map courses to program/discipline outcomes

Each Career-Technical Education (CTE) program and Lower Division Collegiate (LDC) discipline have mapped courses to each of the program- or discipline-specific outcomes. CTE programs have clearly defined outcomes. LDC disciplines, however, have not had specific outcomes for their discipline in the past. The LDC faculty have recently adapted the concept of programs to their discipline, allowing them to approve and develop discipline outcomes. These outcomes are based on the State of Idaho's 2014 General Education Matriculation (GEM) competencies.

2. Map program/discipline outcomes to General Student Learning Outcomes

Southwestern has five General Student Learning Outcomes: Communication; Computation; Creative, Critical and Analytical Thinking; Community/Global Consciousness and Responsibility; and Discipline Content. Through mapping, the CTE and LDC faculty identified which individual program/discipline outcomes introduce, reinforce, or measure proficiency of each General Student Learning Outcomes.

3. Map assessment tools to program/discipline and course outcomes

Also through mapping, the CTE and LDC faculty have identified which assessment tools (such as tests, projects, discussions, and labs) assess student proficiency in both program/discipline-specific outcomes and in individual course outcomes.

The next steps in the Southwestern Outcomes Assessment Process (4-7) utilize the **Course/Program/Discipline Assessment Report Forms**. The faculty were introduced to this template during winter In-service 2015 and again at fall in-service 2015. The plan was to use these forms for measuring student learning of the course and program/discipline outcomes. The goal for the 2015-2016 academic year is to complete this form using at least one measurement tool for all program/discipline outcomes in all programs/disciplines, with the longer term goal of completing the forms using multiple measurement tools for each program/discipline outcome. As the first set of forms are completed and data collected, a determination will be made as to the timing for repeating assessments on an ongoing basis.

The next step will be to use the same forms to measure student achievement of the course outcomes. This process will take longer to complete since most programs have at least 8-12 courses and 5-8 course outcomes per course. A pilot will be run in a sample of courses to document course outcomes assessment during the remainder of the 2015-2016 academic year. The Outcomes Assessment Committee will work to develop a schedule for 2016-2017 that will have all programs complete a sample of course outcomes assessments during the academic year, with the overall plan to have all course outcomes assessed within a program over a four year period, matching the timeframe for program reviews.

4. Develop measurable tools and criteria for each program/discipline outcome

Following the Outcomes Assessment Process, step 4 is then the first step to complete on each Course/Program/Discipline Assessment Report form. Focusing on Program/Discipline Outcomes, one measurement or assessment tool is listed on the form. At least one measurable criteria is noted on the form that demonstrates how it measures student

achievement of the program/discipline outcome. In most cases, multiple measurement or assessment tools should be provided for each program/discipline outcome which provides validity checks for the data collected (one form per measurement tool). The academic term where the tool is used and student data collected is then also shown on the report form.

5. Record measurement data

For step 5, data is collected using the measurement or assessment tool(s) and recorded on the report form under the results section. The level of success is described using the measurable criteria.

6. Analyze measurement data/verify benchmarks

For step 6, the analysis of the results is shown in the analysis section of the report form. Faculty analyze how well the measurement tool indicates the level of outcome achievement. Faculty also determine whether the results of administering the measurement tool meet the criteria set for indicating outcome achievement success. In other words, they decide how valid the results are in showing the level of student outcome achievement. This is a key step in the Outcomes Assessment Process, as it then leads to the improvement of learning and achievement in the classes and program.

7. Adjust outcomes/curriculum as necessary at the course and/or program or discipline level

Step 7 matches with the plan section on the report form. Here faculty members detail how they are going to use the data and its analysis to improve student learning outcome achievement and therefore learning. This section should include answers to the following questions:

- If the measurement tool is not correctly indicating the level of student outcome achievement, then what other tool(s) could or should be used instead to better measure student outcome achievement?
- If the measurement tool is determined to be correctly indicating student outcome achievement but results show a low level of outcome achievement, what changes in the curriculum should be made to improve student success at outcome achievement?
- What do the results from administering the measurement tool indicate about the curriculum used to teach this program outcome and the tool(s) used to measure the success of students achieving the outcome?

The next step is for faculty to then close the assessment loop by using the results from the report form to align their program with the budget and planning processes. Each fall, program faculty will incorporate results from the report forms into their program review, adjust their goals based on results, and determine if there are any budget needs for the following academic year based on the outcomes assessment results. This completes the outcomes assessment cycle, and it repeats again the following year to allow for continuous improvement of program outcomes and outcomes assessment.

Student Learning Outcomes at the GSLO Level

The GSLOs were revised at Southwestern in 2010 and are listed in the catalog and on the Southwestern website. They are:

- Communication: Students completing a degree will be able to demonstrate effective knowledge, skills, and attitudes in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, presentation of self and information.
- Computation: Students completing a degree will be able to demonstrate effective knowledge, skills, and attitudes in technology skills, computer proficiency, math proficiency, decision analysis (synthesis & evaluation), understanding of and ability to apply mathematical concepts and reasoning, analyzing and using numerical data.
- Creative, Critical & Analytical Thinking: Students completing a degree will be able to demonstrate effective knowledge, skills and attitudes using curiosity, learning strategies, information gathering, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, creativity, research, and problem solving.
- Community/Global Consciousness & Responsibility: Students completing a degree will be able to demonstrate effective knowledge, skills, and attitudes involving respect, citizenship, cultural awareness, interpersonal skills, ethics, lifelong learning, community service, self-esteem, integrity, and empathy.
- Discipline Content: Students completing a degree will be able to demonstrate effective skills and attitudes that are specific to a discipline or career.

They are listed on all course outlines and faculty must indicate which general student outcomes are addressed in each course. This serves as a beginning level of outcomes mapping.

To measure the student learning and achievement of the GSLOs, Southwestern is using three different instruments in 2015-16 as pilot projects to compare results then decide which instruments to use moving forward. The results from the three pilot projects will then be evaluated by the Outcomes Assessment Committee and reviewed by faculty to determine which process or processes will be implemented annually across the College starting in the 2016-17 academic year. The three processes include ETS (Educational Testing Services) Exams, Multi-State Collaborative Rubrics, and General Student Learning Outcomes Rubrics.

1. ETS Exams

The first process being piloted in spring 2016 will be three sets of tests purchased from ETS. The College will identify three groups of graduating students and administer one of the following tests to each group. These test results will also provide comparisons with students at other institutions across the nation:

- **Written Communication** examination evaluates college students' ability to demonstrate four key dimensions of written communication: knowledge of social and

rhetorical situations, knowledge of conceptual strategies, knowledge of language use and conventions, and procedural knowledge and skills.

- **Quantitative Literacy** test evaluates students' abilities to comprehend, detect, and solve mathematics problems in authentic contexts across a variety of mathematical contest areas: problem-solving skills and mathematical content.
- **Critical Thinking** test evaluates College students' ability to demonstrate two central aspects of critical thinking: analytical and synthetic skills.

2. Multi-State Collaborative Rubrics

The second process being piloted in spring 2016 will include using a set of value rubrics developed from the Multi-State Collaborative rubrics project. The Multi-State Collaborative to Advance Learning Outcomes Assessments (MSC) is an initiative designed to provide meaningful evidence about how well students are achieving important learning outcomes. Sponsored by the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEHO) and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), pilots the use of common VALUE (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education) rubrics applied by teams of faculty to students' authentic College work. The primary goal of the initiative is to provide data that will allow faculty and institution leaders to assess—and improve—the levels of student achievement on a set of cross-cutting outcomes important for all disciplines.

For Southwestern's own purposes, the College will assess a sampling of student assignments to measure written communication, quantitative, and critical thinking learning outcomes in connection with General Student Learning Outcomes. By the end of spring 2016 term, the College will select and assess a sample of student artifacts for each of the following three area rubrics:

- **Written Communication** is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve writing with many different technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.
- **Quantitative Literacy (QL)**—also known as Numeracy or Quantitative Reasoning (QR)—is a habit of mind, competency, and comfort in working with numerical data. Individuals using strong QL skills possess the ability to reason and solve quantitative problems from a wide array of authentic contexts and everyday life situations. They understand and can create sophisticated arguments supported by quantitative evidence and they can clearly communicate those arguments in a variety of formats (using words, tables, graphs, mathematical equations, etc., as appropriate).
- **Critical Thinking** is the habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.

3. General Student Learning Outcomes Rubrics

The Outcomes Assessment Committee compiled four General Student Learning Outcomes Rubrics from sixteen VALUE Rubric criteria and standards. Faculty will assess a sampling of

student assignments to measure communication; computation; creative, critical, and analytical thinking; and community/global consciousness and responsibility General Student Learning Outcomes. By the end of spring 2016 term, we will select and assess a sample of student artifacts for each of the following four area rubric areas:

- **Communication.** Students completing a degree will be able to demonstrate effective knowledge, skills, and attitudes in reading, writing, speaking, and listening presentation of self and information.
- **Computation.** Students completing a degree will be able to demonstrate effective knowledge, skills, and attitudes in technology skills, computer proficiency, math proficiency, decision analysis (synthesis and evaluation), understanding of and ability to apply mathematical concepts and reasoning, analyzing and using numerical data.
- **Creative, Critical & Analytical Thinking.** Students completing a degree will be able to demonstrate effective knowledge, skills, and attitudes using curiosity, learning strategies, information gathering, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, creativity, research, and problem solving.
- **Community/Global Consciousness & Responsibility.** Students completing a degree will be able to demonstrate effective knowledge, skills, and attitudes involving respect, citizenship, cultural awareness, interpersonal skills, ethics, lifelong learning, community service, self-esteem, integrity, and empathy.