

Gavilan College Student Learning Outcomes Guidelines

The Gavilan College Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) committee along with the Academic Senate and Administrative Leadership agree that the following statements reflect a mutual understanding of the philosophy and activities related to Institutional, Program, and Course learning outcomes.

What is assessment?

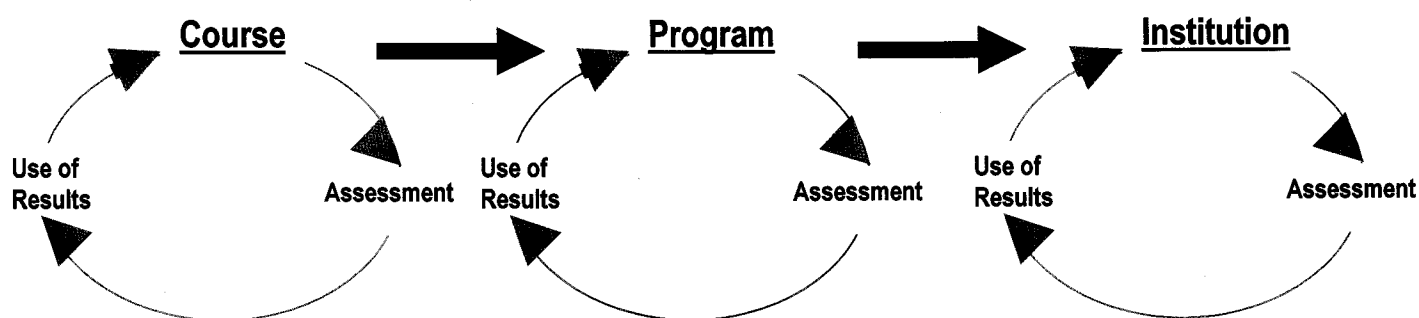
Assessment of SLOs is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. This process includes the following: making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance. Assessment helps us create a shared academic culture dedicated to assuring and improving the quality of higher education (AAHE Bulletin 1995).

Student Learning Outcomes assessment occurs at the course, program, and institutional levels. The assessment process involves both gathering information and using that information to modify and improve teaching and student learning. Thus, assessment is not a single cycle of steps, but an ongoing process, which ideally permeates the institution (See Diagram 1).

Who will develop the processes of assessment?

The responsibility of developing and assessing student learning outcomes shall reside with the Faculty and Support Service staff. Gavilan College Faculty and Support Service staff will develop the criteria by which student progress is evaluated. They will be assisted in this process by administration and the SLO coordinator.

Diagram 1: *Student Learning Outcome Assessment process.*



What will we use assessment for?

At Gavilan College, we will use assessment of student learning outcomes primarily to understand, and thereby improve, student learning through informed decision making and planning. More specifically, we will use assessment to:

- ❖ Improve services, feedback, guidance, and mentoring to students in order to help them better plan and execute their educational programs.
- ❖ Help design and improve programs and courses to better promote student learning and success.
- ❖ Identify shared definitions and measurable benchmarks for evaluating student outcomes to more coherently and effectively promote student learning.
- ❖ Help us understand how groups of students experience the college differently so as to respond appropriately to the needs of all students.
- ❖ Help us understand how our different courses and programs affect students over time so that we can better coordinate and sequence the student's experience to produce more and deeper learning.
- ❖ Provide staff and students with opportunities to reflect on their practice and their learning.

What will we not use assessment for?

Individual institutions make individual choices about how they will use the tools of student learning assessment. Gavilan College will not use assessment:

- ❖ As an end in itself, merely to be accountable to outside parties.
- ❖ Punitively or as a means of determining faculty or staff salaries or rewards.
- ❖ To answer all questions or strictly determine program decisions.
- ❖ In a way that will impinge upon the academic freedom or professional rights of faculty. Individual faculty members must continue to exercise their best professional judgment in matters of curriculum development, grading, and discipline.
- ❖ As the answer to all questions about all students.

What is the college's role in assessing student learning?

The College will provide the necessary support structure, including: a SLO coordinator, office space, support staff, and an activities budget.

How will we approach the assessment of student learning?

The following guidelines will govern the methodology and approach we will employ at Gavilan College to promote assessment of student learning:

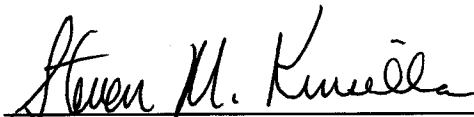
- ❖ We will seek multiple methods of assessing student learning rather than relying on any single method.
- ❖ We will assess those skills, attitudes, behaviors and knowledge that our faculty, in consultation with the College, judges to be important and valuable.
- ❖ We need not directly assess all students in order to learn about the effectiveness of our programs and policies.
- ❖ We will not assume that assessment is only quantitative. Indicators of student learning can also be expressed by qualitative methods such as narratives, performances, or portfolios.
- ❖ Where appropriate, assessment processes and instruments will be designed to accommodate and encourage creativity and originality shown by students.
- ❖ We will clearly explain the purposes of assessment so that staff, students, and the community can clearly see why assessment is being used, as well as the rationale for choosing each individual form of assessment in its particular context.
- ❖ Each discipline will develop their own assessment plan schedule for course and program outcomes and reassess on a regular basis.
- ❖ We will assess the ongoing progress of students throughout their experience at the college.

This document is based on the work done by Palomar College, Modesto Junior College, and College of Sequoias.

Nothing contained in this document shall add to, substitute, replace, abridge, supersede, or in any way change or alter Board Policy or the terms and conditions of the classified, adjunct, or full-time collective bargaining agreements. Should a conflict arise between the guidelines contained herein and any of the collective bargaining agreements, then the terms and conditions of the appropriate collective bargaining agreement shall prevail.



Academic Senate Chair 11/5/08
Date



College President 11/6/08
Date



Vice President of Instruction 11/7/08
Date



SLO Coordinator 11/5/08
Date