

## **San Diego City College Philosophy Statement Assessment of Student Learning and Administrative Outcomes**

San Diego City College's mission statement, priorities and institutional competencies describe our commitment facilitating student success. One means to fulfill this mission is through the use of assessing Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Administrative Outcomes (AOs). Constituents engage in reflective practice in the divisions of Instruction, Student Services, and Administrative Services and use results to improve student learning.

As such, San Diego City College stands by the American Association of Higher Education's (AAHE) "Nine Principles of Good Assessment," the first principle being that "Assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle for educational improvement." San Diego City College is well aware that in any evaluation of student learning, the use of SLOs is only one component. They do not represent a comprehensive evaluation of student learning.

The Council for Higher Education (CHEA) Board of Directors' Statement of Mutual Responsibilities for Student Learning Outcomes (September 2003) prudently affirms that "judgments about quality are complex and must be based on a range of factors, including the purposes, resources, processes, and values of an institution...In applying these guidelines, it is imperative for accrediting agencies-- as well as the institutions and programs they accredit-- to avoid narrow definitions of student learning or any standardized measures of student achievement." It is also important to factor in societal, economic, health, and family issues which frequently impact student learning as much as what transpires in the classroom. Because much that goes on in the classroom cannot be subject to quantitative measurement solely, qualitative assessment should also be used to measure student learning.

San Diego City College also agrees with the mandate of the Academic Senate of California Community Colleges that a successful Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Cycle (SLOAC) must engage and be driven by faculty. (ASCCC Resolution 2.01 F04 *Insistence that SLO Design Originate with Local Faculty*). The responsibility for teaching and learning lies primarily with faculty, who are well versed in their disciplines, invested in student learning, and knowledgeable about the principles of their respective professional associations and licensing boards. Therefore, faculty must be the ones to develop explicit statements of what students will learn at the course, program, and institutional levels, develop assessment tools, *interpret data and determine the implications* of data. The use of SLO data at the department or course level will not be prescriptive or intrusive on the principle of academic freedom (ASCCC Resolution 2.01 F03 *Protection of Academic Freedom and Privacy of Students and Faculty*). SLOs are not used to discount or replace the input of disciplinary experts.

The aforementioned does not obviate the importance of collaboration among faculty, classified staff, administrators, and students to achieve our institutional priorities. On the contrary, San Diego City College recognizes that the SLO and AO assessment Cycle "foster wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community [student and administrative services staff, and students] are involved" (AAHE assessment principle #6). Clearly, discussion is enhanced with participation by all parties with a stake in improving student learning.

San Diego City College is also committed to institutionalizing the SLO and AO. Information about outcomes is an integral part of planning, program self-review and decision-making on the campus. SLO or AO data are never to be used to evaluate individual faculty (or staff) (ASCCC

Resolution 2.01 F03 *Protection of Academic Freedom and Privacy of Students and Faculty*; American Federation of Teachers Article 15 of collective bargaining agreement). Assessment data are components of the process but are decidedly not the sole determinants in the budgetary process. San Diego City College has an ongoing, consistent process of Program Review and Master Planning for the review, planning and allocation of resources. SLO/AO data are not used to either reduce or suspend program funding.

Accordingly, San Diego City College affirms the AAHE's assessment principle #7: "The point of assessment is not to gather data and return 'results': it is a process that starts with the questions of decision-makers, that involves them in the gathering and interpreting of data, and that informs and helps guide continuous improvement." It is reaffirmed that many areas of instruction and learning cannot be measured and evaluated in a quantitative manner. Indeed, some disciplines and forms of instruction are best measured by qualitative evaluation and the judgment of disciplinary experts. The decisions about the development and application of SLOACs are the collective responsibility of discipline/program faculty. AOCs are the collective responsibility of office staff and administration.

The responsibility for the interpretation and local implementation of Student Learning and Administrative Unit Outcome Cycles shall remain within the purview of individual faculty/department/ programs or student and administrative services units. In order to manage the increased workload associated with developing and implementing outcomes assessment the Institutional Assessment Committee faculty co-chairs will, at the request of departments use their reassigned time to assist departments with this work