



Last updated Spring 2015

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs) ASSESSMENT PLAN

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to layout the general approach GWC has chosen to carry out the assessment of expected student learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional levels. This is a living document that is regularly updated and revised to reflect current thinking and planning that is based on reviews of effective practices and on the results of periodic formal and informal reviews of the entire assessment process as it is implemented at GWC.

The assessment plan begins by outlining GWC's broad assessment philosophy and goals. Then, it progresses to detailed descriptions of how the College is organizing to assess SLOs at the course, program, and institutional levels. There are chapters addressing the roles and responsibilities of faculty and administrators; assessment activities scheduled for 2014-2015, the structure for reporting and maintaining SLO assessments; and resources and training needed. The plan concludes with a three-year assessment timeline.

1. Assessment Philosophy Statement

The GWC Assessment Philosophy was created through a collaborative effort facilitated by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee. The Assessment Philosophy was vetted through campus committees including Planning and Budget, Instructional Planning Team, Student Services Planning Team, Administrative Services Planning Team, Council on Curriculum and Instruction, and the Academic Senate. It was approved by the Academic Senate in April 2009 and is published below.

GWC Assessment Philosophy

The assessment process involves both gathering information and using that information as a means to improve teaching, student learning, student services, and administrative services. It includes making our expectations explicit and public, and setting appropriate criteria and high standards. It centers on systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; moreover, it enables us to use the resulting information to document, explain, and heighten performance. Assessment helps us create a shared academic culture dedicated to continually improving the quality of higher education. Thus, assessment is not a single set of actions, but an ongoing cyclical process, which permeates the institution.



What is assessment?

Assessment at GWC:

- consists of an ongoing systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of information
- helps us evaluate the degree to which we are fulfilling our mission
- focuses on assessment results to improve programs, services, teaching and learning
- includes Student Learning Outcomes, Process Objectives and Satisfaction Objectives
- facilitates broad communication and dialogue centering on outcomes
- includes both quantitative and qualitative data

Who participates in the assessment process?

Participants include:

- instruction, student support services, administrative services, and executive services
- individuals: faculty, staff, and managers
- groups: committees and programs/departments

How are the results of assessment used?

Results are used to:

- promote student success
- make improvements at the institutional, program, and course levels
- generate self-reflection, collaboration, and dialogue
- identify and respond in meaningful ways to student and community needs

Why assessment?

The process of assessment:

- empowers faculty, staff, and administrators to more directly and efficiently improve student learning
- generates information for proactive decisions within strategic planning
- creates opportunities to reflect as individuals and groups
- enables us to comply with external regulations and expectations

The results gathered in the Assessment process are not to be used to:

- impact an individual's evaluation in a manner inconsistent with collective bargaining agreements
- undermine academic freedom or professional rights

The GWC Mission Statement addresses the college's commitment to an intellectually and culturally stimulating learning environment for its students, and to prepare them to become lifelong learners. The GWC Vision Statement commits the college to endeavor to provide an optimum teaching and learning environment.



The culture of the college is not limited to its demographic characteristics. The scope of the college culture includes its demonstrated commitment to the shared governance process. This process promotes high quality education through an institutionalized practice of faculty, staff, administrative, and student collaboration, dialogue, assessment, analysis, and planning as it applies to the decision-making process and to the improvement of student learning.

The common thread running through these statements is the constant focus on the improvement of all facets of student learning as the college moves forward collaboratively to achieve its goals through academic, institutional, demographic, and technological challenges.

GWC subscribes to and follows the *Guiding Principles for SLO Assessment* developed by the Academic Senate for California Community College – adopted in Fall 2010:

Principle One: Faculty have the primary responsibility for developing assessment tools and determining the use of data that are collected, and there faculty engagement and active involvement in SLO assessment is essential.

Principle Two: Outcomes assessment is a process that should involve all appropriate participants at each level of the college, not just select groups or individuals.

Principle Three: SLOs and SLO assessment should be connected to the overall culture of the college through the college vision or values statement, program review processes, and college curriculum, planning, and budgeting processes.

Principle Four: SLOs should be clearly mapped and aligned throughout a course sequence and among various levels (course, program, institution) to achieve the most efficient and effective assessment.

Principle Five: SLO assessment should be as authentic as possible and should be minimally intrusive to the educational experience of student and the instructional planning and performance of faculty.

Principle Six: Rather than relying on one assessment method for all situations, effective assessment may benefit from a variety of methods, even within a single course, that can respond to different learning outcomes, teaching styles, and student learning needs.

Principle Seven: Assessment data do not exist in a vacuum and must be analyzed alongside all other factors that may impact achievement of outcomes.



Principle Eight: SLO Assessment processes and grading are different but mutually compatible activities and should complement rather than conflict with each other.

Principle Nine: Effective outcomes assessment requires a college commitment of sufficient staff and resources.

Principle Ten: SLO assessment of student learning outcomes is a process that is separate from faculty evaluation.

Principle Eleven: Faculty should engage in SLO development and assessment not because it is a requirement for accreditation but rather because it is good professional practice that can benefit programs and students.

2. Assessment Goals

Broad SLO Assessment Goals:

1. The College will continue to sustain Stage-4 “Sustained Quality Improvement” on all six areas set forth in the California Assessment Institute (CAI) rubric, “Sustained Change is Occuring.” These areas are SLOs, Dialogue, Organization, Institutional Commitment, Alignment of Practices, and Evidence.
2. Complete TracDat implementation by Spring 2016
3. Complete data input of all SLOs assessment from 2012-2014 academic years into TracDat for longitudinal comparison
4. Maintain at least at 90% level for faculty self-reporting that they participate in SLO discussions at least once or twice over the semester with colleagues

Course Student Learning Outcomes (cSLOs) Assessment Goals:

1. All cSLOs will be reviewed, aligned, and revised as necessary by the Spring 2016.
2. All courses will have at least 1 cSLO assessed every semester.
3. All cSLOs will be assessed by the end of program review cycle for 2016-2019.

Program Student Learning Outcomes (pSLOs) Assessment Goals:

1. All instructional programs will have in evidence by the end of Spring 2016, of all program SLOs assessment and have a plan for ongoing assessment for new program review cycle 2016-2019.
2. All programs will assess all pSLOs at least every three years.

Service Areas Outcomes Assessment Goal:

1. All service areas will assess all SAOs by Spring 2016 and have a plan for ongoing assessment for new program review cycle 2016-2019.

Administrative Unit Outcomes Assessment Goal:



1. All administrative units will complete at least one AUO assessment by Spring 2015 with a plan for completing all AUO assessment by end of Spring 2016 and ongoing assessment for new program review cycle 2016-2019

Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (iSLOs) Assessment Goals:

1. Increase different avenues for the college to engage in institutional Student Learning Outcomes

3. Roles and responsibilities

Course SLOs

Course level SLOs are those set forth in the Course Outline of record.

Course SLOs will be developed by discipline faculty and assessed by the faculty who teach the course.

Responsibilities of Faculty:

The primary responsibility of SLOs falls to the faculty, as they are the instructors of their courses and use assessments as part of their grading. Teachers need to communicate to their students, fellow faculty, the SLO Coordinator, in a continuous conversation of improving student learning. Ideally, each instructor evaluates at least one SLO from each course every semester. Some instructors may choose to evaluate different courses they teach each semester, rotating through their various courses systematically; or a department may instead opt to evaluate capstone or groups of courses each semester. We encourage a plan of assessing all of a program's courses so that the department has credible evidence when it comes time to do program reviews, which is a process done here at GWC every two years.

GWC Faculty members are expected to put SLOs on their syllabi and review these during the first week of class. A good practice is for faculty members to link the assessment activities in class to the specific SLO, allowing students to better understand which class assignments assess which SLO. Faculty also create an SLO Plan, deciding individually or with their respective departments, which SLOs to assess each semester. Once the SLO is assessed, faculty analyze the data, reflect upon the results, decide how to change/improve/maintain the given SLO, and complete the five-step form. The completed five-step forms are forwarded to the faculty lead, department chair, or respective SLO coordinator.

Responsibilities of Department Chairs/Faculty Department Coordinators:

Chairs/Coordinators have the roles of organizing department meetings with the SLO Coordinator, distributing information from the Coordinator to the department members, helping organize the department plan to assess key courses, collecting the SLO assessment five-step forms, and using these individual course assessments to evaluate the department program. Also, Chairs/Coordinators should lead the conversation regarding SLO alignment



forms of course to program SLOs and program to institutional SLOs. Lastly, Chairs/Coordinators will send all the completed five-step forms to the SLO Coordinator.

Responsibilities of the Council on Curriculum and Instruction (CCI):

CCI faculty members have a natural role in reviewing course SLOs, for they evaluate submitted courses for approval as the official course outlines of record. CCI members are expected to discuss SLOs with faculty members during Tech Review to ensure integrated course outlines that match the course SLOs to the description, content, activities, critical thinking verbs, and means of assessment. CCI also will review course SLOs to ensure proper placement of courses within general education (GE) areas, Areas of Emphasis, and Institutional SLOs (iSLOs).

Responsibilities of Administrators:

Administrators' role is to support a faculty-driven SLO implementation process that is embedded and on-going, by providing the necessary resources, such as sufficient release time and/or stipend. Administrators also facilitate campus-wide SLO dialog at committee and departmental meetings. Because SLO assessment is the heart of what the college does— instructors teaching and students learning—administrators are expected to ensure that SLO assessments are linked to institutional planning and resource allocation.

Responsibility of Institutional Researcher (IR):

In general, the IR's role is to support faculty's SLO assessment efforts and serve as a liaison to senior management. Specifically, he/she collaborates, on a day-to-day basis, with the faculty SLO coordinators to facilitate the development, assessment, discussion, and reporting of assessment activities. The IR Director works with senior management to procure necessary training, resources, and staffing to support the College's SLO assessment efforts.

Responsibilities of the SLO Coordinators (SLOCs):

SLOCs work with individual faculty members and departments to guide and support faculty in developing and revising program SLOs, creating authentic SLO assessments, and facilitating faculty dialog of assessment results. SLO Coordinators train faculty to map course SLOs to program and institutional SLOs, and they may suggest possible assessment plans of a program's course inventory. SLOCs attend college governance committees, such as the Academic Senate, Curriculum Council, Planning & Budget, ERC (Enrollment, Planning, & Retention), and IPT (Instructional Planning Team) to communicate with faculty and administrators, receive communication regarding SLOs, and facilitate campus wide dialogue. SLOCs also participate in training at various conferences and workshops, and they organize training workshops for the faculty. A SLO Assessment Repository will also be developed as a process to store and maintain assessment reports.

Program SLOs

Programs are defined as a certificates of achievement, certificates of specialization, AA Degrees, majors, areas of emphasis, and general education. The method for which program



SLOs will be assessed is determined by department faculty. The results of which are reported on the 5 step model reporting form and submitted to their SLO coordinator and included in their program review report.

Responsibilities of department faculty

- Align course and program SLOs
- Discuss the outcomes of the assessment process in their program review

Responsibilities of the Council on Curriculum and Instruction (CCI)

- Review course SLOs to ensure proper placement of courses within general education (GE) areas and the Areas of Emphasis. This accomplished by reviewing the degree of fit between course SLOs and the GE SLOs and again by reviewing the fit between the course SLOs and the Areas of Emphasis SLOs.

Responsibilities of the SLO Coordinator ,

- Facilitate department discussions developing and revising program SLOs
- Train faculty on the process of mapping course SLOs and program SLOs.
- Facilitate faculty dialogue on assessment results within departments and programs.

Responsibilities of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC),

- Compile and aggregate program SLO results from program review
- Provide a framework for the documentation of assessment and the integration of results in planning and decision-making across the campus.
- Coordinate the systematic campus wide participation in assessment planning, implementation, and reporting of findings.
- Consult with faculty in developing and implementing assessment programs.
- Review and provide feedback on assessment plans and reports as needed.
- Ensure program SLO assessment results, and the accompanying documentation of program improvement activities are integrated into departmental Program Reviews.

Responsibilities of administrators

- To support a faculty-driven SLO implementation process with necessary resources, and facilitate campus-wide SLO dialogue at committee and departmental meetings.
- Ensure that improvement of student learning is a visible priority in all practices and structures across the college (e.g., planning, program review).

Department Chairs/Coordinators

- Faculty chairs/coordinators have the primary responsibility for facilitating program level assessment of SLOs, leading the discussion (when needed) of the results, facilitate the mapping of course SLOs to program SLOS, and ensure the assessment process is properly documented in program review.



Deans

- Encourage and support faculty-lead, timely and ongoing development and implementation of program SLOs. Monitor the progress of program outcomes. Ensure program expectations and outcomes are published.

SLO Coordinator

- Train faculty and department chairs on effective assessment practice.
- Facilitate, when needed, department development and implementation of program SLOs.
- Facilitate the discussions to integrate course, general education and core competency SLO assessments where appropriate.

Vice Presidents

- Monitor the progress of SLO assessments. Encourage and support faculty-lead, timely and ongoing development and implementation of program SLOs.

IE Committee

- Provide a framework for the documentation of assessment and the integration of results in planning and decision-making across the campus.
- Coordinate the systematic campus wide participation in assessment planning, implementation, and reporting of findings.
- Consult with faculty in developing and implementing assessment programs.
- Review and provide feedback on assessment plans and reports as needed.

Institutional SLOs (iSLOs)

Institutional SLOs are defined as the core competencies (knowledge and skills) that are expected of all students whom have completed an Associate's of Arts degree at GWC. These core competencies were defined and approved by the Academic Senate, the Institutional Effectiveness committee, and the Student Success committee during the Spring and Fall terms of 2011.

During the 2011-12 academic year, all departments reviewed and identified which of their course SLOs align with the iSLOs. This alignment was documented on an alignment grid and submitted to their respective SLO coordinator. Since then, departments have continuously worked with their respective SLO coordinators to review, assess, and align their course SLOs with iSLOs.

Assessment of iSLOs is accomplished through the aggregation of course assessment results from courses aligned with the iSLOs. Two iSLOs are targeted per year (assess and aggregate course results in the fall, then analyze and discuss changes in the spring). Each iSLO is assessed once every four years (PR cycle). Below is the iSLO assessment schedule:



iSLO Assessment Schedule (Each iSLO is assessed once every four years)

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
1. Specialized Subject Knowledge (Majors)	x	x	x	X	x
2. Broad Knowledge		x		X	X
3. Analytic skills		x		X	X
4. Information competency skills	x			X	X
5. Quantitative skills			x	X	X
6. Oral and written communication skills			x	X	X
7. Applied Learning				X	X
8. Lifelong Learning	x		x	x	X

4. Assessment Activities

At the start of the Fall 2011 semester, the four new SLO Coordinators began developing a framework for the campus to follow in dealing with SLOs: a packet of documents distributed to major committees, individual departments, and various program leaders. The documents in the first packet included all of the following: a standard timeline, an introductory letter from the four GWC SLO coordinators, a list of higher level verbs appropriate for SLO development at various levels, the Academic Senate’s *Guiding Principles* sheet, the GWC FAQ sheet, alignment forms for both course- to program-level SLOs and course- to institutional-level SLOs, the SLO cycle flow chart, and the five-step models for both course- and program-level SLOs. By creating and distributing this packet, the SLO Coordinators created a uniform process for SLO assessment on campus. Every semester since then, the packet has been revised in order to address changing priorities and practices in instruction and student services.

SLO coordinators meet with individual department chairs and faculty and utilize the packet to facilitate dialogue about assessment activities for that particular semester. Faculty decide which SLO to assess for their courses that semester and collect results. Once the results have been aggregated at the departmental level, the departments evaluate the data and engage in conversations. This dialogue encourages improvements in two specific areas: higher levels of student success in subsequent semesters and improved instructional methods. Once the discussions have taken place, the departments complete the five-step forms, submit them to the SLO coordinators, and prepare to start a new SLO assessment cycle.

At the end of each semester, faculty also participate in a SLO dialogue survey developed by the Office of Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness. The results are shared in various committees including Institutional Effectiveness Committee, Council of Chairs and Deans, Planning & Budget, and Academic Senate. For the Academic year 2014-15, a few departments were selected to input SLO assessment in TracDat, however campus-wide training for SLO will be halted until implementation of TracDat v5 since this new version will address the changes in accreditation standards relating to SLO assessment, particularly assessment at unitary level.



The All College Meeting provides all college department opportunities to plan for the year. One of the activities relates to SLO assessment planning. Instructional, student services, and administrative services departments determine which outcomes they will assess for the year and who will be responsible for collecting results.

5. Structure for reporting and maintaining SLO assessments

Currently, the process is that all 5 Step Models (course and program) will be emailed to the appropriate faculty SLO coordinator, to be uploaded into the College SLO Dropbox. All raw assessment data will remain with the faculty lead and/or associated department chair. Additionally, department alignment and mapping grids will be emailed to a SLO coordinator and be uploaded to the campus SLO Dropbox. The Office of Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness (ORPIE) maintain an inventory of all SLOs assessment submitted to ensure that departments are not delinquent with assessment.

The College has also steadily rolled out the implementation of TracDat with a few selected departments to input SLOs assessment in TracDat. A ORPIE staff member has also been inputting previously submitted SLOs assessment into TracDat with a goal of inputting all paper form assessment into TracDat once the College is ready to roll out TracDat implementation campus-wide.

6. Resources and Training Needed

The resource and training processes both have as their foundation the definition of essential terms, ideas, and concepts related to assessment. GWC has addressed these needs through its publication of the Assessment Philosophy. Assessment resources are available directly from the SLOCS in one-on-one meetings or workshops, from the College Professional Development Resource Room, through Staff Development personnel, and ORPIE. In addition, SLO Coordinators are providing assessment training at department meetings, symposiums, CCI, Senate, CCD, ERC, Planning and Budget, and Strategies for Student Success Committee. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee along with the SLOCs have developed a repository of assessment resources within ORPIE's website.

The SLO assessment process must be embedded and on-going. To make this happen administrators must allocate appropriate funding, either stipend or release time, for SLO Coordinators and faculty taking lead positions within the departments and programs. Additionally, administrators must provide adequate funding for ORPIE and the institutional researcher. The support of this office is integral to institutionalizing the SLO assessment process.



7. SLO Activities Timeline

	Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Fall 2015	Spring 2016	Fall 2016
Conduct targeted department SLO training and assessment workshops (as needed)	X	X	X	X	
Review and update all current course and program SLOs and align course, program and institutional SLOs (as needed)	X		X		
Conduct SLO assessments in identified courses	X	X	X	X	
Aggregate, analyze and discuss changes to course SLOs	X		X		
Conduct SLO assessments in identified programs	X	X	X	X	
Aggregate, analyze and discuss changes to program SLOs (majors/certs)	X		X		
Conduct SAO assessments in identified student services areas	X	X	X	X	
Conduct AUOs assessment in identified administrative units		X		X	
Aggregate, analyze and discuss changes to institutional SLOs		X		X	
Self-Assessment of SLO processes		X		X	
Inventories of Assessment Activities	X	X	X	X	
ORPIE and SLOCs Training on TracDat v5		X	X		
Conduct workshop series on TracDat v5 for Chairs/Managers				X	X
Roll out ongoing training schedule for TracDat v5				X	X

8. SLO Accomplishment

- 97% of all active college courses have been mapped to program SLOs or iSLOs
- 87% of all active courses have been assessed at least one time
- 88% of all programs have been assessed
- 100% of all student services areas have at least one SAO assessed
- All administrative areas have established administrative unit outcomes with assessment plan for Spring 2015
- All iSLOs have been assessed, data comparison between Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 show student competencies in half of iSLOs have increased, particularly with iSLO 5. Quantitative skills.