

# **Student Services Learning Outcomes Assessment Cycles Handbook**

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Sept. 2011

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Cycles (SLOAC)  
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<p><b>Student Services Learning Outcomes Assessment Cycles (SSLOAC)</b> SSLOACs are directly related to academic support services provided to <u>students</u>.</p>
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Administrative Unit Outcomes Assessment Cycles (SSLOAC)  
AUOACs are directly related to college operations and non-academic services.

## **Premises of Student Service Learning Outcomes Assessment Cycles**

- Learning takes place every time a student comes in contact with a service program.
- SSLOAC is De Anza College's commitment to an ongoing, cyclical, improvement process.
- The focus is not on the services a program provide but on the outcomes of those services for students. SSLO statements are not a listing of what a program does - They are what the students will be able to know, do, or feel as a result of what a program does.
- SSLOAC are always a team process. SSLOAC are everyone's responsibility and never the responsibility of just one person.

**Outcomes assessment is not just an exercise to simply produce a product - It is an ongoing cyclical process leading to constant purposeful innovations to improve teaching and learning and student success.** (See Appendix A)

## **SSLOAC Basics:**

## PHASE I: Identify outcomes and write an SSLO statement

## PHASE II: Assess the SSLO statement

## PHASE III: Reflection and Enhancement

# **PHASE I: Identify outcomes & write an SSLO statement**

### **De Anza's definition of a SSLO Statement**

A Student Services Learning Outcome statement is an overarching, clear, and assessable statements that identifies and defines what a student will be able to know, do, or feel at the successful completion of a specific procedure, activity, or service.

### **Step 1: Identify Outcomes**

- Form an SSLO team from within the program. (A program is a department or area that currently conducts Program Reviews).
- As a team, write down or list the services the program provides.
- Discuss the services with each other and group them into common areas or themes.
- Select each grouping and identify the main outcome(s).

### **Step 2: Write the SSLO Statement**

- Continue to dialogue with colleagues and come to consensus on the concrete things that you expect students to be able to know, do, or feel after interacting with your process, activity, or service.
- Write your SSLO statement using active verbs that can be assessed. Keep in mind that verbs like "know" and "understand" are very difficult to assess. (See Bloom's Taxonomy in Appendix B). For example:
  - SSLO Sample 1 "A student will know the student services offered at De Anza College." This is a difficult SSLO to assess. How will I know that the student knows? How many services should the student know about to indicate the outcome has been met?
  - SSLO Sample 2 "A student will be able to (name, identify, or describe) at least five student services offered at De Anza College." In this sample the outcome can be measured and I know at what level I can consider the outcome has been met. The SSLO statement points to the assessment method. I know I will have to use a method that will reveal the student's ability to (name, identify, or describe) the college's student services.

*Tips for writing good SSLO statements:*

- *Is the SSLO a fundamental result of your service and consistent with your program's mission/purpose?*
- *Will the students understand the SSLO statement?*
- *Think about Phase II when writing the SSLO statement. How will you assess the SSLO statement in such a way that you will know that the student has achieved or obtained the desired outcome? Can the SSLO be assessed? Is it measurable the way it is written?*
  - *How will you know that the students know?*
  - *How will you know that the students can do it?*
  - *How will you know what the students feel about it?*
  - *Does the SSLO statement use active verbs like identify, name, describe, outline, etc.? (See Bloom's Taxonomy in Appendix B)*

### **Step 3: Link the SSLO Statement to the Mission, Institutional Core Competencies (ICC) and/or Strategic Initiatives (SI)**

Now that the SSLO is written it needs to be linked to the College's Mission and Goals. This exercise requires the SSLO statement to be linked to the College's Mission, ICC, and/or SI statements.

**EXERCISE:** Go to the SSLO Web site at: <http://deanza.edu/slo/ssloinfo.html> and use the SSLO Linking Matrix to identify relationships between your SSLO statement and those specific Mission, ICC, or SI statements that will be assessed by the SSLOAC. There are three sheets in this Excel spreadsheet. There is one sheet for the Mission statements, one for the ICC statements, and one for the SI statements. Save the completed document and email it to Jim Haynes, SSLO/AUO Coordinator at: [haynesjim@deanza.edu](mailto:haynesjim@deanza.edu)

*(Important Note: Link the SSLO statement only to those specific Mission, ICC, or SI statements that will be assessed by the SSLOAC. There may be a tendency or desire to check off as many links to the Mission, ICC, or SI as possible. If in this exercise you identify a Mission, ICC, or SI statement that your program addresses but you have no SSLO statement to assess - repeat Phase I and write a new SSLO statement for that process, activity, or service.)*

### **De Anza's Mission Statement:**

De Anza College provides an academically rich, multicultural learning environment that challenges students of every background to develop their intellect, character and abilities; to realize their goals; and to be socially responsible leaders in their communities, the nation and the world.

De Anza College fulfills its mission by engaging students in creative work that demonstrates the knowledge, skills and attitudes contained within the college's

### **Institutional Core Competencies:**

- Communication and Expression

- Information Literacy
- Physical/Mental Wellness and Personal Responsibility
- Global, Cultural, Social and Environmental Awareness
- Critical Thinking

### **De Anza's Strategic Initiatives**

- Outreach
- Individualized Attention to Students
- Cultural Competency
- Community Collaborations

## **PHASE II: Assess the SSLO Statement**

### **Step 1: Set a Timeline for Completing SSLOACs**

Each program controls their calendar and schedules of:

- Which SSLO statements to assess each year
- When an SSLO assessment will be conducted,
- Who will conduct it, and
- Who will tabulate the findings.

The only college timeline requirement is that all SSLOAC in a program be completed at least once between Comprehensive Program Reviews (see "closing the loop" below). The college has adopted a six-year Comprehensive Program Reviews process supported by Annual Program Review Updates (APRU) between CPRs. This gives each program five years between Comprehensive Program Reviews in which to complete at least one assessment cycle (SSLOAC) for each SSLO statement. This is a minimum timeline requirement. However, it is the desire of the College to foster a "**Culture of Inquiry**" where we are constantly striving for more information about our students and our programs to improve our services to students. Therefore, it is recommended that SSLOAC be conducted as often as possible as long as the information produced is meaningful and results in continual program improvements.

### **Step 2: Chose an Assessment Method**

For SSLO, the most common assessment method is to conduct surveys. Focus groups, cumulative projects, or exit interviews can also be employed particularly if the program has a specific end point. Tracking student's academic success is another way to assess a program's SSLO (GPA, student's success rates, retention rates, persistence rates, etc.) Since SSLO is an ongoing and cyclical process, programs have the opportunity to reassess outcomes, try different assessment methods, and "drill down" in future assessment cycles to get more information before drawing actionable conclusions.

Suggested Assessment Methods:

- **Surveys**  
Surveys can be locally developed or you can choose to use a standardized survey. Survey Monkey is a good on-line survey service. Surveys are good for assessing attitudes and perceptions of students. It is not necessary to assess every student in your program. A random sampling of 25% of the students is an acceptable guideline.
- **Focus Groups**  
Focus groups are good for assessing attitudes and perceptions of students. (Note: Use caution when dealing with issues or subject matter involving student's right to confidentiality and privacy)
- **Cumulative Projects**  
As a student completes their participation in your program, portfolios, capstone projects, and presentations can be used to assess the SSLO.
- **Exit Interviews**  
Assessing SSLO when a student has gone through the service, process, activity, etc. is a good way to get immediate feedback. Exit interviews can be conducted in person, or by phone, email, texting, etc.
- **Database-Tracked Academic Indicators**  
GPA, transfer rates, graduation rates, service usage, persistence, retention, etc. are all assessable attributes. The Institutional Research Office is an excellent resource for conducting this kind of assessment.  
Contact the Institutional Research Office at: <http://deanza.edu/ir> - or -  
Mallory Newell - [newellmallory@deanza.edu](mailto:newellmallory@deanza.edu) or ext. 8777

*Assessment Tips:*

- *Collect data from a representative sample rather than everyone in the target population. (The general rule for surveys is to collect information from a random sampling of 25% of the students in the program.)*
- *Have assessment stem from the activities you already do. If you already conduct student satisfaction surveys, embed questions related to outcomes attainment.*
- *Team up with other areas with similar outcome statements to share assessment methods.*
- *From the beginning, design activities and outcome statements with assessment in mind.*
- *Jim Haynes, the SSLO Coordinator is available for help at: [haynesjim@deanza.edu](mailto:haynesjim@deanza.edu) or ext. 8954*
- *Mallory Newell, the College Researcher is available for help at: [newellmallory@deanza.edu](mailto:newellmallory@deanza.edu) or ext. 8777 (<http://deanza.edu/ir>)*

**Step 3: Determine a Target for Success**

Sometimes called a goal, threshold, or benchmark, a target for success is an indicator that the desired outcome has been successfully met. For each SSLO to be assessed, what results will indicate that the outcome has been met? Depending on the method of assessment, this could be a survey result (i.e. 80% of the students surveyed will indicate that the outcome is met), a portfolio score (i.e. 70% of the students will score a 80+ on the portfolio rubric), a focus group tally (70% of the focus group members met the

outcome criteria), or academic tracking (i.e. after completing the program 65% of the students increased their GPA the next year compared to a control group that did not participate in the program).

Targets may be arbitrary at first but as more SSLOACs are completed a clearer target indicator should emerge. SSLOAC is a process leading to constant purposeful improvement. Target for Success indicators are determined by each program and can be adjusted over time. (i.e. if results of the first SSLOAC met the first target of 65%, implement some improvement plans and set the bar a little higher for the next SSLOAC - 70%). Programs may want to consult with their colleagues at other colleges that are using similar outcomes and assessment tools to determine acceptable benchmarks.

If a SSLOAC target is consistently met at high levels and the program feels there is little room for improvement it may not be necessary to assess the SSLO repeatedly. If a SSLOAC target is consistently not met even at low levels the program may want to implement improvement plans and assess the SSLO often.

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**Remember:**

**"Everyone is a learner when it comes to assessment."**

**"If you wait until you are an assessment expert you'll never get started."**

**Embrace the slogan: "Just Do It!"**

**Step 4: Collect the Findings from the Assessment**

The data generated from the assessment method needs to be collected and tabulated into a format in preparation for Phase III of the SSLOAC.

**Record Keeping:** As of the beginning of the 2011-12 academic year, it is still the De

Anza practice for each program area to document & retain their assessment results. This usually entails keeping a copy of the assessment instrument and a tabulation document of the data collected. A digital system to capture and report all outcome activity is in development (see TracDat below)

## **PHASE III: Reflection and Enhancement**

### **Step 1: Reflection**

As a team, reflect on the assessment findings and consider the following:

- Has the target outcome been met?
- What does the data tell you about the program services, activities, or processes? Are the program services, activities, or processes producing the expected results (outcomes)? Do the findings point to any significant strengths or weaknesses? Are the findings detailed enough to identify areas that need improvement?
- What does the data tell you about the SSLOAC process itself? Was the SSLO statement easy to assess? Should the SSLO statement be rewritten? Did the assessment method yield significant results? Was the assessment instrument adequate?
- After an analysis of the assessment results, begin to identify any program services, activities, or processes enhancements that could lead to better outcome results.

### **Step 2: Enhancement**

As a team and based on what the outcome assessment has revealed, determine what enhancements are needed to improve:

- What can be done within the program services, activities, or processes to enhance and improve student outcomes?
- Are there any new resources that will be needed for enhancement and improvement initiatives?
- Are there any changes that need to be made to the SSLOAC process itself? (revise the SSLO statement, choose a different assessment tool, more time to meet as a team? etc.)

# CLOSING THE LOOP

Now that the SLOAC has been completed and the program has a plan of action to enhance its services to students - share what has been learned and planned with the rest of Student Services and the College. This includes any requests for resources in order to address outcome assessment results and plans for enhancement.

This is accomplished through the **Program Review and Resource Allocation** process.

De Anza has adopted a six-year, outcomes-based, **Comprehensive Program Review (CPR)** process supported by **Annual Program Review Updates (APRU)**. The primary composition of the APRU is a summary of the SLOAC, SSLOAC, and AUOAC for that academic year including any additional resource needs for the coming year.

The last CPR was conducted in 2008-09

The first APRU were submitted in 2009-10

The second APRU were submitted in 2010-11

The next APRU is due in 2011-12

The next APRU is due in 2012-13

The next CPR is due in 2013-14

## TracDat

- TracDat is an online digital database system that will be used to keep track of and document all of the SLOAC, SSLOAC, AUOAC, and Program Review activity of the College. TracDat was obtained in the summer of 2011 and should be fully operational by the spring of 2012.

- Each program will have a TracDat account to plan and conduct SSLOAC and to generate reports.

- TracDat will be used to build APRU and CPR reports.

If there are any questions related to SSLOAC or AUOAC, contact Jim Haynes, De Anza College's Coordinator of Student Services Learning Outcomes and Administrative Unit Outcomes.

haynesjim@deanza.edu

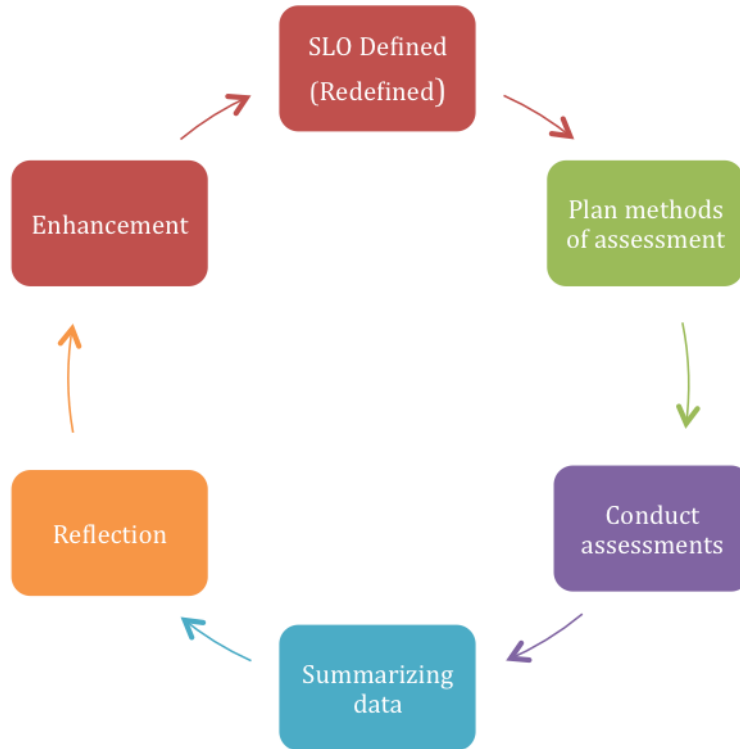
408-864-8954

Student Learning Outcomes Website: <http://deanza.edu/slo>



APPENDIX - A

The Assessment Cycle for SLO, SSLO, or AUO



APPENDIX - B

Bloom's Taxonomy

QuickTime™ and a  
decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.