

# Service Area Student Learning Outcomes (SA-SLOs)

Handbook

Version 1.0 – October 21, 2011



Foothill College

## MISSION STATEMENT

*Outcomes are connected with the college's mission.*

*We start with connecting our outcomes to the college's mission statement.*

### Foothill College's Mission Statement

A well-educated population being essential to sustaining and enhancing a democratic society, Foothill College commits itself to providing access to outstanding educational opportunities for all of our students. Whether through basic skills, career preparation, lifelong learning, or transfer, the members of the Foothill College community are dedicated to the achievement of learning and to the success of our students. We affirm that our unwavering dedication to this mission is critical to the prosperity of our community, our state, our nation, and the global community to which all people are members.

## INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (IL-SLOs)

*Service Area Student Learning Outcomes (SA-SLOs) are related the college's Institutional Level Student Learning Outcomes (IL-SLOs)*

*We continue by connecting service area student learning outcomes (SA-SLOs) to the Institutional Level Student Learning Outcomes (IL-SLOs), which when taken together with Program and Course Level Student Learning Outcomes (PL-SLOS and CL-SLOs), these outcomes aim to encompass the whole student experience at Foothill College.*

### Foothill College Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (IL-SLOs)

Foothill College recognizes that students will be expected by transfer universities, employers, and society to demonstrate knowledge and skills beyond those of a specific discipline. Foothill College has defined four core competencies (4-Cs) as its IL-SLOs.

#### **Communication**

Demonstrate analytical reading and writing skills including evaluation, synthesis, and research; deliver focused and coherent presentations; demonstrate active, discerning listening and speaking skills in lectures and discussions.

#### **Computation**

Complex problem-solving skills, technology skills, computer proficiency, decision analysis (synthesis and evaluation), apply mathematical concepts and reasoning, and ability to analyze and use numerical data.

#### **Creative, Critical, and Analytical Thinking**

Judgment and decision making, intellectual curiosity, problem solving through analysis, synthesis and evaluation, creativity, aesthetic awareness, research method, identifying and responding to a variety of learning styles and strategies.

#### **Community/Global Consciousness and Responsibility**

Social perceptiveness, including respect, empathy, cultural awareness, and sensitivity, citizenship, ethics, interpersonal skills and personal integrity, community service, self-esteem, interest in and pursuit of lifelong learning.

## CORE MISSION WORKGROUPS

*Defines the objectives and outcomes that reflect the college's agenda as related to the Institutional Level Student Learning Outcomes (IL-SLOs)*

*The Core Mission workgroups further reflect the institutional agenda as it relates to the key college missions of basic skills, transfer, workforce, and sustainability of resources. The Service Area Student Learning Outcomes (SA-SLOs) help inform the workgroups' efforts to document, promote, and encourage institutional assessment and planning that directly relate to these four core missions.*

Foothill College coordinates institutional planning through the Core Mission workgroups of Basic Skills, Transfer, Workforce and Stewardship of Resources. Program review and student learning outcome data are used to direct annual and multi-year objectives, make resource recommendations and drive new initiatives at the college. The workgroups prioritize efforts related to the Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (IL-SLOs) and support related initiatives at the program level. These four groups use a rubric to report their objectives, targets, metrics, and recommendations to the Planning and Resource Council (PaRC) via an annual Educational and Strategic Master Plan (ESMP) update.

For more information, see: <http://foothill.edu/president/governance.php>

## DEFINING SERVICE AREA STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SA-SLOs)

A **Service Area Student Learning Outcome (SA-SLO)** is a statement describing what a program or department does, delivers, or provides (a service) and what the student is expected to be able to know or learn (an outcome) from that service. These student outcomes are measurable, meaningful, and contribute to a cycle of assessment.

## WHY ARE SERVICE AREA STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SA-SLOs) IMPORTANT?

Service Area Student Learning Outcomes (SA-SLOs) are assessed so that there will be an on-going effort to improve the services provided to students and to determine if student needs are being met. This cycle of assessment reflects the college mission's stated commitment to student learning and success.

This process occurs by:

- Documenting and reflecting on students' current experiences;
- Measuring how and what students learn;
- Developing new and varied educational experiences to change students' knowledge, skills, behavior; and
- Revealing whether students master the skills and knowledge that our services and programs intend.

Source: BRIC Assessing Student Learning Inquiry Guide, The RP Group.

## WRITING STUDENT AREA STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SA-SLOS)

A robust SA-SLO includes a description of the service provided and an explanation of how the student will benefit, gain, or change from the experience.

Ask:

- Does the SA-SLO support the service area objectives (program mission, purpose statement, program review document)?
- Does the SA-SLO describe what the program intends for student to know, think, or do?
- Is the SA-SLO important/worthwhile (in that it supports the IL-SLOs of Communication; Computation; Creative, Critical, and Analytical Thinking; and Community/Global Consciousness and Responsibility)?
- Is the SA-SLO specific and measurable?
- Can the results from the SA-SLO be used to make decisions on how to make improvements?

Identify:

Population Group + Service Provided = Change in knowledge, behavior, or skills

Students (could a specific student population group) who (identify the service or program) should (demonstrate knowledge, behavior, or skills mastery).

Examples:

- Students who attend at least one counseling appointment will be able to identify their academic goals through the creation of an educational plan.
- Students who return signed accommodation letters will progress academically by demonstrating self-advocacy skills.
- Students who attend at least one financial aid workshop will avoid default on student loans.
- Students who apply online will be able to successfully navigate the registration process.

Bloom's Taxonomy is often used as a resource to describe what the student should gain from the service or program. His framework divides student learning into three categories, cognitive, affective and psychomotor. In writing SA-SLOs, these outcomes become what the student gains in knowledge, (cognitive), thinking/beliefs (affective), and skills (psychomotor).

The following is a partial list of verbs to consider:

demonstrate	identify	describe	display
attain	access	develop	articulate
exhibit	engage	adopt	navigate
define	commit	practice	recognize
employ	establish	evaluate	manage
gather	organize	plan	assess
work collaboratively	engage	incorporate	assist
apply	present	arrange	generate
explain	select	perform	compose
utilize	maintain	conclude	differentiate

Source: Bloom, B.S. (1984) Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Addison Wesley.

## ASSESSING STUDENT AREA STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SA-SLOs)

Service areas are reviewed as a part of Foothill College's annual program review process. Different data elements and quantitative/qualitative methods are used to review and improve the student learning outcomes. This assessment is an evaluative process, where the goal is to get an overall sense about whether the service provided is benefiting the student population.

### Assessment Method

Once an SA-SLO is identified, it is important that the student change be identifiable, meaningful, and measurable. Ideally, the process of assessment will be imbedded in data currently collected by the service area or at the divisional and institutional level.

Possible assessment methods include:

- Surveys (one-time or pre/post-test);
- Tests;
- Focus groups;
- Interviews;
- Rubrics; and
- Institutional/Divisional/Departmental/Program data (e.g. enrollment, usage, participation, etc.).

### **Survey Tips**

- Consider asking for self-reported information such as demographic characteristics, attitudes, opinions, values, experiences, expectations, behaviors, goals, and needs;
- Focus on a short and simple survey;
- Include instructions at the top of the survey along with the survey's purpose;
- Acknowledge that participating in the survey is optional;
- Start with straight-forward, easy-to-answer, non-threatening questions.
- All questions should relate to measure the SA-SLO, exclude questions that would gather information that would be "nice to know";
- Ask only one question at a time, avoid "and" statements, such as in "Do you like tennis and golfing?"; and
- Use open-ended questions primarily at the end of the survey; and
- Test the survey with others.

### **Test Tips**

- Can be used to determine if student retained knowledge as a result of a service or program;
- Include information based on interactions, participation in a workshop, etc.; and
- Should be short and simple to complete (e.g. multiple choice format).

Example:

To be a full-time student, you must be enrolled in how many units each quarter?

A) 10 units B) 12 units C) 14 units D) none of the above.

### **Focus Group/Interview Tips**

- Can be supplemental information, such as informing survey results;
- Plan on 30-45 minutes (no more than one hour);
- Gather anywhere from 5-10 participants (typically no more than 12 but can vary);
- Prepare a list of questions (typically no more than 5-6 questions);

- Make sure notes are taken (can have another person take notes);
- Identify themes in the responses (e.g. what topics get mentioned the most often?)
- Used to gather more in-depth data about the process (e.g. The data show that 75% of students report they have increased confidence in navigating the financial aid application process after attending a workshop, but these results do not explain in greater detail *why* or *how* the workshop led to their self-reported increase in confidence.);
- Allows for documentation about processes that may be difficult to capture using quantitative measures alone;
- Confirms interpretation of existing data and its analysis; and
- Use of interviews may be appropriate due to topic sensitivity or concern for group think (note that interviews are more time consuming than focus groups).

**Rubric Tips**

- Defines more subjective outcomes (e.g. Students who return signed accommodation letters will be able to demonstrate self-advocacy skills.);
- Ensures that the service area is in agreement about what is being assessed; and
- Helps quantify the quality of student learning.

Example: In the above example, demonstration of self-advocacy skills can be defined using a rubric. The service area should identify and agree on what are the “self-advocacy skills” the students should be able to demonstrate, and what characteristics would demonstrate poor, fair, good, and excellent mastery of those skills. Student success can be assessed using this rubric.

Assessment Target

In addition to identifying and measuring the change in student knowledge, thinking, or skill as a result of their experiences with a service or program, the SA-SLO assessment process should determine a specific target or outcome that serves as a goal for that service area.

Examples of possible SA-SLOs, assessment methods, and intended targets or outcomes:

Service Area	Service Area Student Learning Outcome	Assessment Method & Target
Admissions & Records	Students who receive one-on-one portal training assistance will be able to register successfully.	Method: Data (Number of trainings given and MyPortal usage data)  Target: Reported registration issues will decrease by 10%
Counseling	Students who attend a counseling appointment will be able to identify the educational goals available at Foothill College.	Method: Pre/Post Test  Target: 75% of students will distinguish between the requirements for Certificates, Associate Degrees, and Transfer after their first appointment.

Service Area	Service Area Student Learning Outcome	Assessment Method & Target
Disability Services	Students who return signed accommodation letters will be able to demonstrate self-advocacy skills.	Method: Data: Count of returned letters  Target: 80% of letters will be signed and returned.
Financial Aid	Students who attend at least one financial aid workshop will be able to successfully navigate the financial aid process.	Method: Data: Monitor default and delinquency reports, monitor the number of students who participate in workshops.  Target: 90% of students who attend an informative workshop will successfully manage their finances.
Student Life	Students who participate in the year-long leadership program will demonstrate an increased sense of social responsibility.	Method: Focus groups of club/ASFC members  Target: 90% of focus group students will be able to define social responsibility and provide examples of their civic engagement.

## WHY ASSESS SERVICE AREA STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SA-SLOs)?

The SA-SLO assessment cycle's purpose is to ensure that service area programs and services lead to student learning experiences. Foothill College's commitment to student achievement and success should be reflected both in and out of the classroom setting. The RP Group has identified four principles in thinking about assessment (emphasis added):

- Assessment is a **collaborative, dynamic, and continuous process** to **improve** courses, degrees, certificates, and programs. It is in **dialogue** among practitioners where the seed of true institutional improvement are sown.
- There is a considerable difference between using data for accountability and using it for institutional improvement. While there is a call for accountability ... the onus is on the institutions to **evaluate themselves to assure quality education** for our respective communities and to place value on improvement through reflection on assessment data.
- A **focus on learning** is the goal of teaching, research, and educational leadership. All professionals who interact with students play a critical role in **the way students learn and develop as individuals**.
- Assessment is **integrated** in our **daily** classroom and service practices and not something over and above what we already do. The solution lies in striking a balance between **making the**

**process thoughtful and meaningful** rather than simplistic and compliant while still dealing with the reality of our already taxed workloads.

Source: The RP Group, from <http://www.rpgroup.org>.

## REPORTING SERVICE AREA STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SA-SLO) ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

The SA-SLO cycle of assessment involves an annual report and evaluation of student learning outcomes. This approach will ensure currency regarding the service provided, strengthen the connection to the IL-SLOs, and demonstrate improved student learning through increased knowledge, change in behavior, or ability to perform a skill. SA-SLOs may be modified as needed. This process documents a continuous quality improvement approach that focuses on student achievement and success.

Foothill Colleges uses TracDat to maintain and organize a database of SLOs. This software program allows each service area to create, track, and reflect on their SA-SLOs. There are two key sections related to the SA-SLO assessment process. First, the “Assessment Findings” section reports on whether the anticipated target or outcome was met over the course of the year. It is a summary of the assessment, and can be quantitatively or qualitatively measured. Reflection on these assessment findings will inform the service area about whether the target was met by reporting on the data collected.

This screenshot displays a completed “Assessment Findings” field.

SA - Disability Resource Center > Assessment Findings > Edit Assessment Findings

Service Area SLO (SA-SLO): 1 - Accommodation Notifications : By requiring the return of signed accommodation letters -requiring a face-to-face conversation between the student and instructor- the student will demonstrate self-advocacy skills and ability to articulate his/her

Assessment Method: Data - Count how many signed accommodation letters are returned to the DRC.

Target: Goal is 80% return rate.

Assessment Findings: \* EXAMPLE: Only 73% were returned signed.

Assessment Findings Date: \* 10/3/2011 Result: \* Target Not Met

Year This Assessment Occurred: \* 2010-2011

Resource Request: A part-time classified person to follow up on students with letters.

Reflection/Action Plan | Related Documents

The “Reflection/Action Plan” section encourages a service area to report on possible implications from the findings. This field allows for some assessment analysis, by describing what worked, what did not, and what could be improved. Follow-up actions may be taken to improve the quality of the service area in order to further facilitate and promote student success. Therefore, there should be some notation regarding how this information is used, what dialogue resulted, and what decisions were made, if any. As noted earlier, this process allows for adjustments or revisions to the SA-SLO, the target/outcome, and the assessment methodology.



## SA-SLO TIMELINE

September 2011

- ALL Student Services Division Meeting: 9/22/11
- Presentation on SAO's and SLO's by Dr. Kate Mueller, Orange Coast College
- Review and finalize process with Instruction: 9/28/11
- Review and finalize new SS Program Review Template: 9/30/11

October 2011

- PaRC review and approval of SS Program Review Template: 10/5/11
- Meet w/institutional researchers to identify assessment tools: 10/11/11
- Reflections completed for 2010-11 due: 10/14/11
- Meet w/SS Deans and Directors to review new SS Program Review Template and update SA-SLOs: 10/19/11
- Student Services 2011-12 SA-SLO Handbook and matrices completed

November 2011

- Revised SA-SLOs for 2011-12 due: 11/04/11
- TracDat Training: 11/4/11-11/11/11
- Updated SA-SLOs due w/identified assessment tools: 11/18/11

December 2011

- Program Reviews completed on new SS Program Review Template due: 12/16/11
- Deans review all Program Reviews

January 2012

- VPSD & I reviews all Program Reviews and Resource Requests
- Division Resource Requests prioritized

## SA-SLO RESOURCES

Several of our colleagues and colleges have compiled invaluable information (this is a sampling):

Assessment Glossary, Tulsa Community College

<http://assessment.tulsacc.edu/IRAWeb/Assessment/AssessmentGlossary/tabid/82/Default.aspx>

Vocabulary for Assessment and Evaluation, Central Piedmont Community College

<http://www.cpcc.edu/learningcollege/learning-outcomes/vocabulary-for-assessment-and-evaluation>

Assessment Basics, Paradise Valley College

[http://www.pvc.maricopa.edu/AI/documents/Ass\\_sec1.pdf](http://www.pvc.maricopa.edu/AI/documents/Ass_sec1.pdf)

Cabrillo College

<http://pro.cabrillo.edu/slos/Assessment%20of%20Student%20Services.html>

Modesto Junior College

<http://www.mjc.edu/current/resources/student-services/health/service-area-outcomes.html>

Haywood Community College (Counseling specific outcomes)

[http://www.haywood.edu/counseling\\_services\\_ecds](http://www.haywood.edu/counseling_services_ecds)

Fullerton College

[http://slo.fullcoll.edu/PDFs/2010\\_FC\\_StudentServices\\_SLOs.pdf](http://slo.fullcoll.edu/PDFs/2010_FC_StudentServices_SLOs.pdf)

Orange Coast College

[http://www.orangecoastcollege.edu/about\\_occ/accreditation/StudentLearningOutcomes.htm](http://www.orangecoastcollege.edu/about_occ/accreditation/StudentLearningOutcomes.htm)

San Jose State University

[http://www.sjsu.edu/getinvolved/about\\_us/learning\\_objectives/](http://www.sjsu.edu/getinvolved/about_us/learning_objectives/)

Santiago Canyon College

<http://scccollege.edu/StudentServices/SLOs/Pages/default.aspx>

Cal State Long Beach

[http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/students/assessment/assessment\\_of\\_student\\_learning\\_outcomes/division\\_of\\_student\\_services\\_featured\\_student\\_learning\\_outcomes/list.htm#ASI](http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/students/assessment/assessment_of_student_learning_outcomes/division_of_student_services_featured_student_learning_outcomes/list.htm#ASI)

This handbook was designed for Foothill College. Content is based on research, previous and ongoing documents developed by Dr. Kate Mueller, Dean of Student Services at Orange Coast College. Revisions were made by Foothill College's Office of Instruction and FHDA's Office of Institutional Research & Planning.

All sources are current as of the completion of this handbook.

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