

## WRITING AND USING LEARNING OUTCOMES— POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS

The list below provides some action steps for developing and enhancing student learning outcome assessment plans and strategies and for making use of the plans for communication within and outside of the department.

### Talk with others

- Brainstorm what an **ideal graduate** would know, understand, be able to do (and/or . . .).
- Define the **essential features of your academic program** and think about how they help shape student beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes.
- Describe skills/qualities of **successful alumni** of your program.
- Examine **curricular and co-curricular experiences** provided to students in the program and the skills, attitudes, beliefs that they use and develop.
- Share **ideas about teaching and learning** in your discipline—e.g., teaching strategies, teaching philosophies, theories of learning, research on learning in the discipline, principles or assumptions about teaching and learning, etc.

### Seek Models & Resources

- Check for lists of standards/competencies/qualities available from web sites or other resources from **professional organizations**.
- Look at student learning outcome statements from **other departments** or on campus or at other universities.
- Consider surveys or other sources for lists of skills and qualities expected of your graduates by **graduate/professional schools, employers,** and others who will interact alumni of your programs.
- Review **documents** (brochures, fliers, web pages, catalog descriptions) for recurring themes related to outcomes/goals.
- Look for **connections** between institutional, college-level, and Liberal Arts Core goals and discipline-specific applications of those goals.

### Make Use of Inventories and Taxonomies

- Teaching Goals Inventory (Angelo and Cross)**  
<http://www.uiowa.edu/~centeach/tgi/index.html>
- Bloom's Taxonomy**  
<http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html>  
<http://www.coe.uga.edu/epltt/bloom.htm>
- Taxonomy of Significant Learning**  
<http://www.ou.edu/idp/significant/WHAT%20IS.pdf>

### Review/Revise/Refresh

- Review goal statements and/or learning outcome statements with committee, students, stakeholders
- Revise wording of selected goal statements and/or learning outcome statements
- Develop/revise/replace learning outcomes for selected goals
- Reduce number of goal statements and/or learning outcome statements
- Create systems for regular review of outcome statements.

### Connect learning outcomes with the curriculum

- List learning outcomes from every syllabus for the program and look for connections with program outcomes
- Map where and how learning outcomes are addressed in required and elective courses for the program
- Gather feedback from students in each course for their perceptions of the learning outcomes that were addressed

### **Determine ways to use learning outcome statements**

- Locate current statements of learning outcomes in the catalog, on the web, in brochures.
- Check for completeness, consistency, and currency of statements related to learning goals and outcomes, in their various locations.
- Decide how and where you can place information about learning goals and outcomes for the use of current and prospective students and other stakeholders.
- Think about ways to increase student awareness of intended learning goals—e.g., new student orientation, campus visits, scholarship programs, “spotlights” on student achievement, etc.

### **Review/develop assessment strategies**

- Match assessment activities with outcome statements (remembering that one activity may measure several outcomes).
- Look for ways to embed assessment activities within courses.
- Search for standardized instruments or “home-grown” instruments that could be borrowed or modified.
- Review assessment plans from related departments within and outside of UNI to see what strategies are being used.
- Review available data—e.g., from the Office of Institutional Research.
- Consider assessment schedules and timeframes (not every outcome needs to be assessed every year)
- Develop benchmarks or standards desired for student achievement for each learning outcome.

### **Create Supporting Structures**

- Assessment committee (membership, responsibilities, terms of appointment, etc.)
- Procedures for reporting (who, how, what, when)
- Strategies for connecting assessment data with curricular change processes
- Systems for tracking changes resulting from assessment activities
- Reward/recognition for faculty and department achievements related to student learning

### **Increase Visibility & Awareness**

- Send faculty members to conferences or workshops related to assessment—and ask them to report on what they learned.
- Create plans for informing new faculty members of departmental learning outcomes and goals.
- Share assessment information and achievements at departmental meetings.
- Link the department homepage to the assessment web page.
- Create an assessment web page for the college/department.
- Organize opportunities for faculty to share ideas about teaching and learning.
- Provide information to students what assessment involves and why it is important