West Hills College, Coalinga

Outcomes Handbook

FY 2018-2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CSLOs)

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES (PSLOs)

PART VIII: APPENDIX: "STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT: A HIGHER PERCEPTION OF LEARNING" HANDBOOK

PART I:
Student Learning Outcomes

What are Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)?

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) at West Hills College Coalinga are the overarching, expected learning results for students that we aim to achieve across our institution. Data from SLO analysis provides a lens for us to explore and measure the **quality** of student learning on campus.

SLOs are primarily *student-focused* and they are *measurable* across a variety of contexts. Designing, measuring, evaluating and refining student learning outcomes help to inform other college processes used **to increase student success, enhance the quality of our programs, allocate resources efficiently, meet our mission, and continually improve.**

Because colleges have different processes and histories, the terminologies and frameworks for SLOs can vary. At WHCC, we measure our expected SLOs at the course level, the program level (degree and certificate), and the institutional level. We also have other areas we measure: our general education courses as a group, our learning outcomes delivered through student services, and our outcomes at the administrative unit level.

This handbook is designed to provide answers the basic questions you might have about student learning outcomes at our college! This guide will walk you through the processes we have in place for:

- **CSLOs** (Course Student Learning Outcomes)
- **PSLOs** (Program Student Learning Outcomes)
- **GESLOs** (General Education Student Learning Outcomes)
- **SSOs** (Support Service Outcomes)
- **AUOs** (Administrative Unit Outcomes)
- **ILOs** (Institutional Learning Outcomes)

Who facilitates SLOs?

Everyone at WHCC has a role to play in SLOs—students, staff, faculty and administration. SLOs, and the assessment of them, provide the goals of student learning and tell us how we are doing as an institution. Therefore, it is important that everyone is involved in discussions regarding the assessment of SLOs and SLO data. Everyone should be part of the decisions we make that are informed by assessment processes.

Student Learning Outcomes and their assessments are designed to be publicly accessible and shared across all constituent groups and governance bodies at WHCC. SLOs are reported and discussed in departments, divisions, councils, and committees. We are committed to providing information to students and the public, and our website provides quantitative SLO data at the program, general education, service area, and institutional level.

The Student Learning Outcomes Committee (SLOC), under the purview of the Academic Senate, helps to facilitate continuing assessment process and dialogue across the institution. The SLOC is comprised of faculty representatives and an Administrative Assistant.

The **Curriculum Committee** also plays a crucial role in SLOs. Course learning outcomes are part of the course outline of record.

What is an SLO "assessment cycle"?

In order to have effect, SLOs must be measured and assessed. SLOs need design, measurement, analysis, and refinement. SLO assessment is a *process* that aims to improve student learning.

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges has provided the following diagram that depicts the feedback necessary to make SLOs meaningful and effective. In performing outcomes assessment, the analysis may provide new ways to clarify or modify SLOs as well as indicate the student learning happening in a given context.

Closing the Assessment Loop

Develop, modify, or review a curriculum, course, program, or service

Develop or modify Student Learning Outcomes SLOs

Design and Measure Student Learning as a result of the Curriculum, Course or Program

Collect, discuss, and analyze data.

Determine refinements based on outcomes data
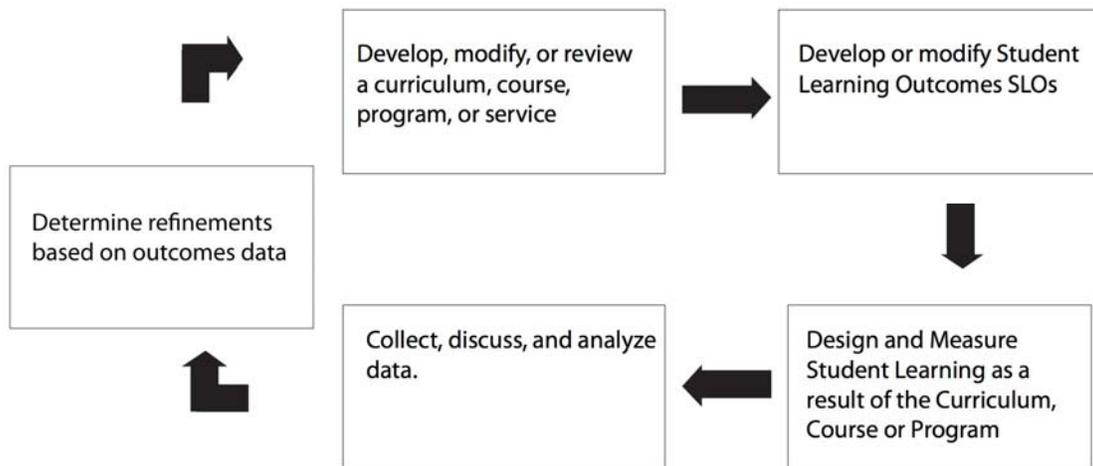
PART II:
Course Learning Outcomes

What is a Course Learning Outcome (CSLO)?

Course learning outcomes are the "big ideas," skills, or competencies students should be able to articulate, put into action, or utilize (theoretically or pragmatically) after their course experience. As a general institutional practice, at WHCC, the SLOC has recommended that faculty construct 3-6 CSLOs per course or at least the approximately the number of units for the course. For example, a 1 unit course can have 1-2 CSLOs.

What is the difference between a course "objective" and a "course learning outcome" (CSLO)? When faculty construct or adjust their curriculum, performing what is known as a "course outline of record" update, part of the process includes affirming both the course *objectives* and the course learning *outcomes*. Sometimes, the difference between objectives and outcomes can be difficult to discern, as they both play an important role in the learning process.

The ASCCC has written an "SLO Terminology Glossary" to help local academic senates and faculty in understanding and communicating the lexicon of assessment. In this glossary, the difference between objectives and outcomes is made as follows:

- **Objectives** are small steps that lead toward a goal; for instance, the discrete course content that faculty cover within a discipline. Objectives are usually more numerous and create a framework for the overarching Student Learning Outcomes which address synthesizing, evaluating and analyzing many of the objectives.

- **Student learning outcomes** are the specific observable or measurable results that are expected subsequent to a learning experience. These outcomes may involve knowledge (cognitive), skills (behavioral), or attitudes (affective) that provide evidence that learning has occurred as a result of a specified course, program activity, or process. An SLO refers to an overarching outcome for a course, program, degree or certificate, or student services area (such as the library). SLOs describe a student's ability to synthesize many discreet skills using higher level thinking skills and to produce something that asks them to apply what they've learned. SLOs usually encompass a gathering together of smaller discrete objectives (see definition above) through analysis, evaluation and synthesis into more sophisticated skills and abilities.

CSLOs, then, comprise the *measurable* evidence of student learning that occurs as a result of taking classes through West Hills College Coalinga. The CSLOs for any given course are expected to be attained when students are successful, and they are the skills, competencies, or "big ideas" faculty want students to comprehend and utilize during and after their learning experience.

Where are CSLOs stored, and are they publicly accessible for students and the community?

CSLOs for each course can be found in three locations:

- *First*, CSLOs are primarily housed in Elumen, WHCC's electronic curriculum and SLO management system. Any additions, changes or assessments of CSLOs take place in Elumen.

How are CSLOs written?

At WHCC, CSLOs begin with a standardized phrase adopted by the SLOC and the Academic Senate:

- *<u>Use Bloom's Taxonomy!</u>* When creating and modifying CSLOs that capture the "big ideas" of a course, faculty should draw on Bloom's Taxonomy <u>action verbs</u>. The original 1956 *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* identified six major categories of cognitive skills and abilities, including knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. It also identified affective and psychomotor domains of learning. While the 1956 version has since been a bit revised, what is important are the key words and verbs that can be associated with different levels and evidence of learning complexity. There are several internet websites that can aid in providing lists of verbs to use in building outcomes.

- *<u>Make them measurable.</u>* Generally, CSLOs—and all SLOs—need to be measurable: they should be able to be assessed in a way that provides <u>qualitative and quantitative</u> data. Faculty should be able to report how many students assessed were successful (quantitative data), and faculty should be able to provide narrative of the results, including a description of the assessment context (qualitative data). Both kinds of data will aid in a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the assessment, as well as evidence of student learning.

- *<u>Plan for authentic assessment.</u>* The ASCCC defines authentic assessment as something that "simulates a real world experience by evaluating the student's ability to apply critical thinking and knowledge or to perform tasks that may approximate those found in the work place or other venues outside of the classroom setting." Such a definition indicates that the best kinds of assessment may not merely be multiple choice questions on a test; at WHCC, we aim to assess CSLOs through scenarios that engage critical thinking, conceptual understanding, and active production.

What are some useful examples of CSLOs being assessed at WHCC?

How can CSLOs be modified or changed to make them better?

What can we learn from the assessment of CSLOs?

One of the primary goals of CSLO assessment is to provide insight about how learning might improve in a given course—whether it be online, in a classroom, or happening in another context.

Dialogue and analysis is central to the process. At WHCC, there are some courses that have only one section, and many courses that have multiple sections taught by full-time and part-time faculty. When a course is scheduled for assessment, all sections of the course must be assessed, so this requires departmental planning and conversation

Assessing CSLOs and talking about them—especially in department meetings or as a group of faculty who teach a particular course—is to converse about the outcomes of a course and to strategize ways to improve equity and student success.

- What kinds of instructional styles, methods, or activities are working for faculty in the classes?
- What are some of the obstacles?
- Where or when are students having problems with the material?
- What might help students be more successful?
- What kinds of resources might be needed?
- Are there differences in student achievement rates and SLO rates?

Broad dialogue across the college, and throughout our governance bodies, is a key feature of the SLO process at WHCC. The Outcomes Assessment workgroup is charged with helping facilitate dialogue about SLOs that lead to institutional improvement and student success.

Analyze, plan, and evaluate curricular or pedagogical changes to improve student success at the course level.

After the inputting of data for course learning outcomes, instructors have the ability to analyze their outcomes. Individual instructors and departments can strategize curricular or pedagogical modifications to increase student learning and success, and can evaluate the previous course. This is an important step in continuous quality improvement. Modifications and strategies at the course level should be included in program review for continuing analysis.

CSLOs provide us with foundational data that can help us make better institutional decisions.

CSLOs and their assessment provide different data than student achievement rates. CSLOs help to inform faculty what students are learning in the classroom, and provide a measure of the quality of learning at WHCC.

Our CSLOs are mapped to inform our program learning outcomes (PSLOs), general education learning outcomes (GESLOs), and institutional learning outcomes (ILOs). The data from CSLOs provides us with a lens on how we are doing in terms of our program, general education, and institutional learning. These measures are used in program review and institution-wide reports (such as our data dashboard) to inform the college and our community on the quality of student learning on our campus.

By incorporating SLOs into the program review and embedding discussions about disaggregated institutional data, we can make more informed decisions and provide resources to improve student learning.

When are CSLOs assessed?

CSLO, SSO, PSLO, GESLO, SAO, AUO, ILO
Assessment and Program Review Two-Year Cycle

The CSLOs are assessed every four semesters.

How are CSLOs assessed?

CSLOs are assessed by all full-time and part-time faculty teaching sections of a course during a semester when assessment is scheduled. Full-time and part-time faculty should discuss the kinds of authentic assessment tools (essay, exercise, problem, etc.) that can provide measurable results for all sections of a course. In terms of when to assess during a scheduled semester, faculty can assess their CSLOs when it is best seen fit during their class—and at a time when authentic assessment might be best practiced.

Faculty enter CSLO assessment results into *eLumen* in order to provide data that can be disaggregated for analysis.

<u>Qualitative Analysis:</u>

After inputting CSLO data, the following "Reflection Template" opens up for faculty in *eLumen*, so that qualitative analysis and planning can be performed at the course level:

What does CSLO data and assessment inform?

CSLO data and assessment inform program review, curriculum and resource allocation. CSLOs are utilized so that faculty and the college can improve programs and student success. The data from CSLOs provide longitudinal data so that faculty can track learning over time and examine disaggregated results. The data from courses is utilized in Program Review, used to inform curriculum changes, and drawn on to make resource requests.

CSLO assessment data is the primary source for assessing Program Learning Outcomes, General Education Learning Outcomes, and Institutional Learning Outcomes. CSLOs are mapped to inform our program learning outcomes (PSLOs), general education learning outcomes (GESLOs), and institutional learning outcomes (ILOs). The data from CSLOs provides us with a lens on how we are doing in terms of our program, general education, and institutional learning. These measures are used in program review and institution-wide reports (such as our data dashboard) to inform the college and our community on the quality of student learning on our campus.

By incorporating SLOs into the program review and embedding discussions about disaggregated institutional data, we can make more informed decisions and provide resources to improve student learning.

| CSLO Assessment | Program Review and SLO Analysis | Curriculum Modifications, Resource Requests | Evaluation and Continuous Quality Improvement |
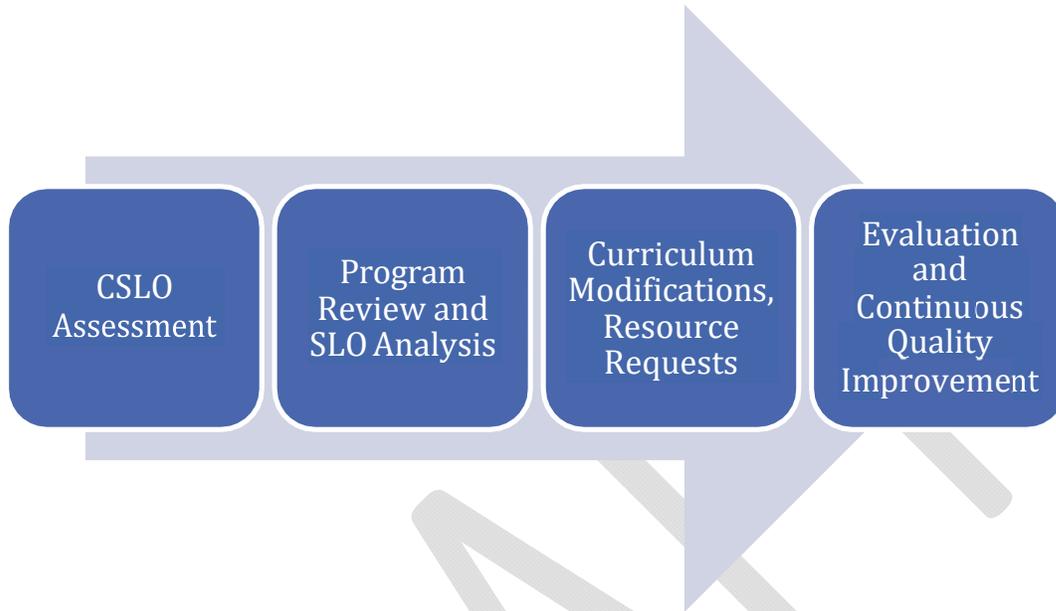
CSLOs are the building blocks for program and institutional improvement.

PART III:
Program Learning Outcomes

What is a Program Learning Outcome (PSLO)?

Program learning outcomes are the skills, competencies, and "big ideas" students should be able to articulate, put into action, or utilize (theoretically or pragmatically) after the completion of a degree or certificate. As a general institutional practice, at WHCC, the SLOC has recommended that faculty construct about 2-3 PSLOs per degree or certificate.

What is the definition of a program? The ASCCC's "SLO Terminology Glossary" notes that "program" can be confusing:

> In Title 5 §55000(g), a "Program" is defined as a cohesive set of courses that result in a certificate or degree. However, in Program Review, colleges often define programs to include specific disciplines. A program may refer to student service programs and administrative units, as well.

Programs, then, can come to mean different things.

> *PSLOs and Programs.* When we talk about PSLOs at WHCC, we mean the learning outcomes that would be the expected *measurable* evidence of student learning that occurs as a result of taking classes through West Hills College Coalinga. The PSLOs for any given program are expected to be attained when students are successful, and they are skills, competencies and "big ideas" faculty want students to comprehend and utilize during and after their learning experience.

> *Program Review.* When we talk about Program Review at WHCC, we broadly mean program as a department or area; in other words, departments or areas are responsible for a cohesive program review and an analysis of their offerings and contributions.

Program Review, written by academic departments, contains the analysis of all department PSLOs and their respective degrees and certificates. PSLOs, in other words, inform Program Review. Academic departments analyze their specific "programs"—meaning degrees and certificates—in their broad Program Review. Program Review by academic departments include an analysis of their PSLOs (as well as GESLOs and ILOs) alongside other data, rounding out their report into a cohesive document that encompasses all areas of student learning and recommendations concerning how to improve.

Where are PSLOs stored, and are they publicly accessible for students and the community?

PSLOs for each program can be found…

How are PSLOs written?

PSLOs should draw on the same kinds of principles as CSLOs (see the previous section, "How are CSLOs written?"), including the use of Bloom's Taxonomy and an emphasis on measurability (*qualitative* and *quantitative*).

PSLOs should be written in ways that strategically correspond to CSLOs: the data from CSLOs should quantitatively and qualitatively inform PSLOs. Part of the process of continual assessment improvement is working on the relationship between course and program learning outcomes. After completing assessment cycles, departments should examine the relationships between their CSLOs and PSLOs in order to provide adequate and meaningful data from both.

What are some useful examples of PSLOs being assessed?

The SLOC has recommended the following examples:

How can PSLOs be modified or changed to make them better?

PSLOs should be periodically examined throughout the assessment and curriculum update processes. If faculty agree on modifications, changes can occur in two ways.

What can we learn from the assessment of PSLOs?

The assessment of PSLOs isn't only a snapshot of how students understand the material in a program and its sections. **One of the primary goals of PSLO assessment is to provide insight about how learning might improve in a given program—whether it be online, in a classroom, or happening in another context.**

As with CSLOs, dialogue is central to the process (see section, "What can we learn from the assessment of CSLOs?"). But, PSLOs are a different kind of level, and they are designed to bring together data on a set of related courses that, when successfully completed, lead to a degree, certificate or award. Both full- time and part-time faculty that teach courses inside of a program should discuss how students are meeting the program learning outcomes through the courses they take.

Rather than understanding success as program completion, PSLO assessment provides insight into what students are actually learning in relation to the big ideas of the courses and the program they aim to complete. In Program Review, PSLO data is disaggregated so that faculty can analyze how student populations are learning inside of their programs, and departments can focus more strategically on equity and success.

How are PSLOs assessed?

The data for PSLOs is generated through CSLO assessment:

- *Course learning outcomes are mapped to PSLOs.* When faculty assess their PSLOs, they draw on CSLO assessment data. The beginning of this process relies on the creation of a "map" for each degree, certificate or award done inside of *eLumen*. Faculty complete the mapping process in *eLumen*, relating each CSLO statement to any analogous PSLO statements. In other words, if a CSLO helps to fulfill a PSLO, faculty mark the corresponding box, thereby delineating a relationship.

PSLO assessment data (quantitative and qualitative) is analyzed in Program Review. In Program Review, faculty are asked to analyze the results of the disaggregated PSLO data. The analysis includes: setting a goal for PSLO success, examining whether or not the goal was achieved, constructing an action plan for overall PSLO improvement, analyzing equity gaps in PSLO performance, and constructing an action plan to address equity gaps in PSLO outcomes.

__When are PSLOs assessed?__

PART IV:
General Education Student Learning Outcomes

What is a General Education Student Learning Outcome (GESLO)?

<u>Where are GESLOs stored, and are they publicly accessible</u> for students and the community?

What can we learn from the assessment of GESLOs?

How are GESLOs assessed?

The data for GESLOs is generated through CSLO assessment:

Courses are mapped to GESLOs. When faculty assess their GESLOs, they draw on CSLO assessment data. Faculty complete the mapping process in *eLumen*, relating each CSLO statement to any analogous GESLO statements. In other words, if a CSLO helps to fulfill a GESLO, faculty mark the corresponding box, thereby delineating a relationship.

When are GESLOs assessed?