

General Education Outcomes at Mt. SAC: Plan 2009-2012¹

Approved by the Academic Senate on May 28, 2009

INTRODUCTION

General education outcomes (GEOs) are statements that describe the knowledge, skills, and perspectives intended to be achieved by students who satisfy Mt. SAC's general education (GE) requirements by taking courses that fall within the GE sequence. Per **Mt. SAC's revised GE Philosophy Statement**,

General education is the distinguishing feature of higher education. It is a broadly-based core of humanistic knowledge and abilities, the acquisition of which is the distinctive characteristic of the educated person. General education courses emphasize the ability to reason, to examine issues from different perspectives, to challenge authority, and to communicate ideas logically and confidently. They instill open-mindedness, respect for differences among people, and knowledge of self. By exposing students to different fields of study, general education courses provide an understanding of the human condition and of human accomplishments and encourage a lifelong interest in learning.

Mt. SAC's Academic Senate Resolution 2008-13² directed the General Education Outcomes Committee (GEOC)³, and then was re-written to direct the proposed merged SLO and GEO Committee^{4 5}, to suggest a plan and timeline to monitor, facilitate, document and evaluate the process of both the determination and assessment of college completing course-level Mt. SAC GEOs⁶, assessment and use of assessment results. Although the proposed new Outcomes Committee will take on this charge in fall 2009, it is important for GEOC to provide planning directives to guide to the new committee members and keep the momentum.

The purpose of Academic Senate Resolution 2008-13 is to respond to both internal and external conditions affecting the use of GEOs at Mt. San Antonio College:

- **Internal:** The college's mission statement, "to support [students] in achieving their personal, educational, and career goals in an environment of academic excellence," is our overriding impetus. And to contribute toward the achievement of goals such as:

¹ Special thanks to the Student Learning Outcomes Committee of whose SLO Plan was used as the basis for this plan. Also thanks to the GEO Coordinator, Joseph Terreri and the GEO Committee as most of their efforts are represented in this plan.

² <http://www.mtsac.edu/administration/senates/academic/uploads/0813GEOPlan.pdf>

³ <http://inside.mtsac.edu/organization/committees/generaled/>

⁴ <http://www.mtsac.edu/administration/senates/academic/uploads/0812SLOGEOMerge.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.mtsac.edu/administration/senates/academic/uploads/FullSenateMinutes030509approved.pdf>

⁶ GEOs can be used as course-level SLOs. See <http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/generaled/>

- **College Goal #2:** The College will prepare students for success through the development and support of exemplary programs and services.
- **College Goal #8:** The College will encourage and support participation in professional development to strengthen programs and services.
- **College Goal #11:** The College will improve effectiveness and consistency of dialogue between and among departments, committees, teams, and employee groups across the campus.
- **External:** The accrediting agency for California Community Colleges (ACCJC)⁷ uses the application and integration of GEOs as an integral part of its accrediting standards (see Resource Section at end of report).

Although we believe that the fundamental drive behind the GEO process should always be the improvement of student learning, we must also respond to accreditation mandates that require the visibility of specific components that reflect the appropriate institution-wide application of GEOs:

- The creation of GEOs for all active GE courses⁸
- Full transparency of GEOs (see resources at end of paper for related accreditation standards and Academic Senate’s web site for related resolution)

The process of guiding the development and measurement of GEOs must remain the responsibility of faculty. We also believe, however, that the best planning occurs when we encourage and support appropriate input and support from all college constituencies (i.e., managers and classified). Through this collaboration, we become a more efficient and effective team.

Because the GEO process includes the assessment and improvement of student learning, it is also an integral element of institutional planning at Mt. SAC (see Appendix A). Within this context, the foundation of department planning comprises clearly articulated goals related to the improvement of student learning as well as the delivery of unit services. The integrated planning process allows for documentation of efforts related to these goals, to improve our institutional effectiveness, and is essential to the thoughtful use of our complex and sometimes limited resources.

Our ultimate goal is institutional effectiveness—the effective establishment and improvement of student learning.

⁷ www.accjc.org

⁸ We define “course-level GEOs” as any SLO that crosses two or more courses and has an Intended Outcome statement as well as a clearly articulated Means of Assessment (columns 2 and 3 in the Nichol’s 5-column model—see Appendix B). All active courses include all credit courses listed in the catalog.

PROPOSED GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

The next table outlines the goals, activities and timeline need. The logistics of some of the actions will need to be reviewed before implementation can occur (e.g., placing GEOs in the catalog; transparency of GEOs). It is understood that consultation and coordination with appropriate committees/constituents across campus will be necessary.

The goals stated in the table below are a total fraction of the eight Workgroups that will have completed a particular activity:

1. Area A English
2. Area A Speech
3. Area B Science
4. Area C Arts
5. Area C Humanities
6. Area D US History and American Institutions
7. Area D Social, Political and Economic Institutions
8. Area E Lifelong Learning and Personal Development

A Workgroup will have met a goal related to assessment or use of results if at least 60% of the courses within the Workgroup Area have completed the task. In the end, the goal is that all courses (100%) under the Mt. SAC GE Areas are to do assessment and evaluate the results for their GEO for course-level and program-level review. The other courses that will be examined include:

9. Mathematics /MATH 71
10. Reading /READ 90 & AmLa33R
11. Physical Well Being (PE-X and DNCE).

Table 1. Activities & Timeline	Dec 2008	June 2009	Dec 2009	June 2010	Dec 2010	June 2011	Dec 2011	June 2012
Goal 1: By December 2010, 100% of courses will complete at least one GEO assessment cycle. (related to college goal #2 & 11)								
Convene workgroups to create one GEO, one criterion for success and one common rubric for each GEO Area. Continue monthly communication and follow-up to facilitate full assessment	2/8	8/8						
GEOs included in the college's program review document through the course-level review tab as an SLO		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Complete assessment of GEO		Area A	Areas E and D1	Areas B and D2	Area C			

Table 1. Activities & Timeline	Dec 2008	June 2009	Dec 2009	June 2010	Dec 2010	June 2011	Dec 2011	June 2012
Complete workgroups to review compilation of findings, use of results ⁹ and congratulate and evaluate including GE Courses mapped to GEOs, GE Zones, and inclusion in e-PIE. Each GEO will be assessed once every four years at a minimum			Area A	Areas A, E and D1	Areas B and D2	Area C		
Facilitate workgroups for assessment of concrete competencies for AA Degree Requirements (Read, Math, Physical well-being) and put into e-PIE			Read90 AmLA33R, Math71	Physical Well Being (PE-X and DNCE)		_____	_____	_____
Goal 2: Each semester, the GEO Coordinator will continue to create opportunities for dialogue, communication and professional development campus-wide to facilitate, evaluate and report on the GEO process. (related to college goal #2, 8 & 11)								
Follow-up and meetings weekly/monthly with Areas/Divisions, Chairs and Deans (attend Division meetings, etc.) on process and progress	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Continue partnerships with GEOC, Academic Senate and others to facilitate the work. Provide monthly updates to Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) for Academic Senate (AS)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Coordinate and facilitate campus professional development opportunities (via TLC (cross-over credit), POD, Division/Dept meetings, etc.) ^{10 11}	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Document, evaluate and make suggestions for improvement to the process and achievement of goals (e.g., norming session for using rubrics; college goals) Publicize it and report to IEC, C&I, AS and the campus community		√		√		√		√

⁹ The amount of time required to review the findings and propose use of results may take more than one semester.

¹⁰ <http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/generaled/resources.html>

¹¹ http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/generaled/assessment_plan.html

Table 1. Activities & Timeline	Dec 2008	June 2009	Dec 2009	June 2010	Dec 2010	June 2011	Dec 2011	June 2012
Using e-PIE and other means, create reports to document GEOs and the assessment cycle per AS Transparency Resolution. Provide documentation for accreditation		√		√		√		√
Recommend to C&I and AS process improvements (e.g., multiple means of assessment; direct or indirect assessment)		√		√		√		√
Evaluate and keep up-to-date websites for GEOs	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Work with campus community to publicize GEOs	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

The GEO Coordinator is the person responsible for overseeing these tasks and timelines. The Coordinator will work collaboratively with the GEO Committee (and in fall 2009, the proposed Outcomes Committee), Academic Senate and other faculty members to engage in a team effort to achieve these tasks. A specific work plan example can be found in Appendix C; it was this work plan that was used in fall 2008, winter 2009 and spring 2009 to coordinate and drive the GEO activities.

As mentioned earlier, for this process to be institutionalized, there needs to be a team effort. As such, it is hoped that the division deans and chairs provide assistance as needed to facilitate the process. Their assistance is needed to compile the information on the courses assessed under their areas and to guide the dialogue and use of results.

In consultation with faculty, each division dean and chair responsible for a course should indicate by June 2009 the status of their GEO assessment and their continuous plan and timeline for assessment (e.g., such as a four-year cycle aligned with course review). The division should be able to report on the summary data for each course. The division dean and chair should use the GEOC Reporting form to provide summary data and feedback to GEOC via the Research and Institutional Effectiveness office. Some questions to consider when providing feedback might include:

1. Did we have a positive or negative experience doing the GEO assessment? Why?
2. What did we learn? How does what we learn impact us as teachers and the curriculum?
3. How could the GEO Assessment process and reporting be improved?
4. How could I use the results in my Planning for Institutional Effectiveness (PIE) program review process?

5. How does our division plan to use the results related to this course and the Mt. SAC General Education curriculum?
6. What changes would we recommend to the Mt. SAC General Education assessment plan for the next semester?
7. What changes are needed to the Mt. SAC GE Philosophy statement?
8. Any other thoughts to share?

Each division dean and chair should maintain the records necessary to show assessment and use of results for each course. The chairs are further encouraged to record course-level assessment into e-PIE and include all resources needed paying particular attention to the use of results section called "action".

Using the information collected at the end of each semester, the GEOC will review the summary reports from each course and will compile the data, write an overall summary report, and review the findings by GEO Area with the faculty, deans and chairs. GEOC will review the plans and discuss recommendations for changes such as course-level changes/discussion, GE Area level changes/discussion and overall GE discussion (e.g., changes to philosophy statement, courses in the GE pattern and any other relevant issues).

As appropriate, a meeting will be called for faculty, deans and chairs to attend each fall and spring to review the results, to celebrate the achievements and discuss action needed to improve the process and student learning. Reports will be given to IEC, C&I and Academic Senate each fall and spring semesters.

If a course has been evaluated in one semester and re-evaluation is not immediately needed, then there is no need to evaluate it again for a few years. If the area already has a course-assessment timeline, the faculty may consider adhering to it as much as possible and discussing any timing questions with the GEO Coordinator. For assessment help and/or process questions, faculty may feel free to contact the GEO Coordinator or any member of the GEO Committee including the research office.

RESOURCES

In order to accomplish this work, the GEO Coordinator will need to adhere to timelines and concrete, directive tasks – including creating the templates and materials - with a goal toward intensive project management techniques (i.e., reviewing the plan, protecting the plan, keeping to the plan, accomplishing the plan and documenting and evaluating the progress and process). It is recommended that the GEO Coordinator continue to work with the GEO Committee and that the new, proposed, merged SLOC and GEOC committee adhere to the tasks at hand and to ultimately achieve the goal of creating opportunities for faculty to demonstrate GEOs and creating a collegial opportunity for self-reflection, congratulations and improvement.

Overall, in order to accomplish this GEO plan it is clear that the following will be needed:

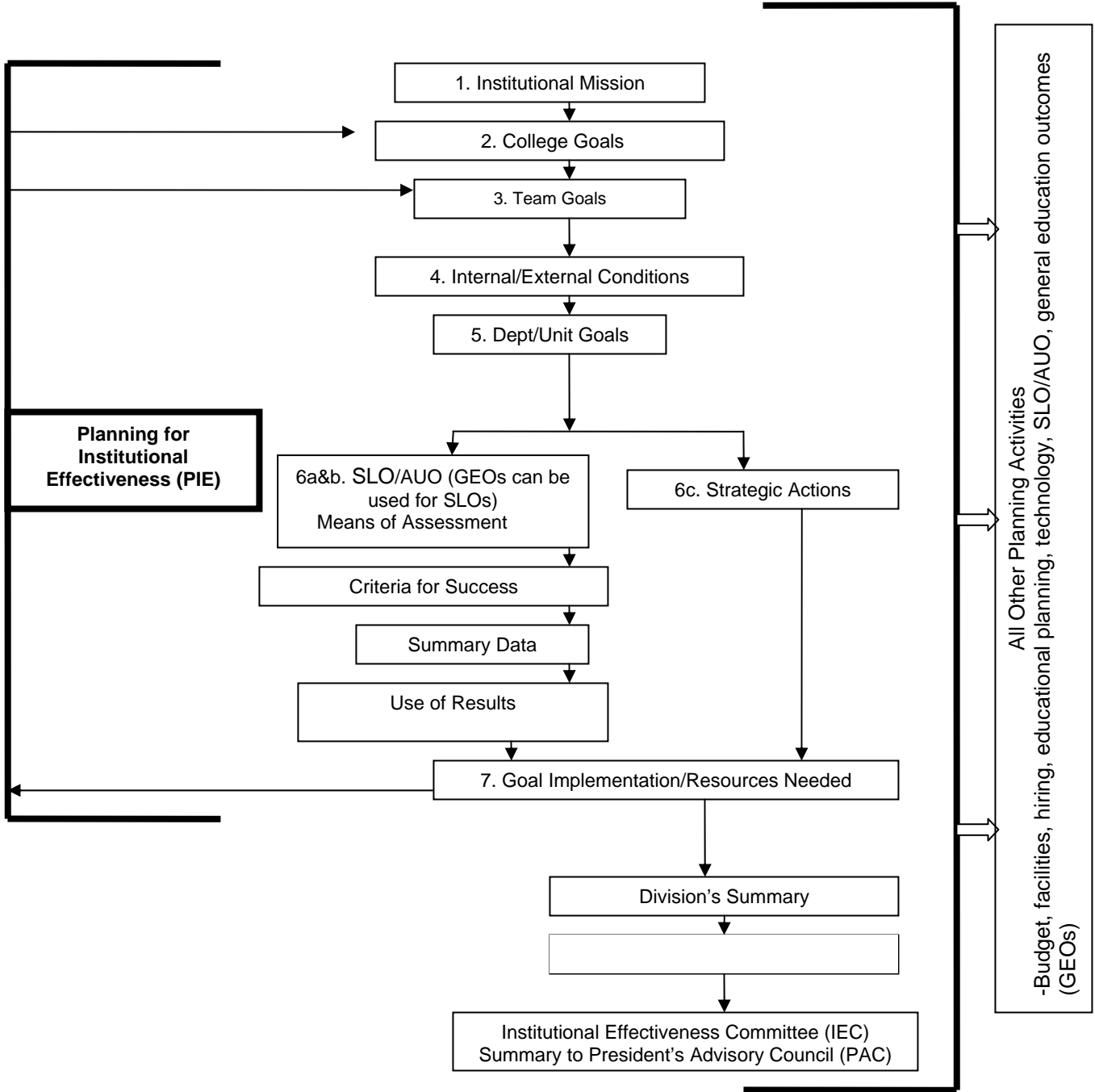
- ✓ GEO Coordinator
- ✓ Faculty perspectives
- ✓ Faculty facilitation
- ✓ Educational Research Assessment Analyst from the research office
- ✓ Deans' and chairs' advocacy and facilitation

CONCLUSION

Although this plan includes timelines, it should be noted that planning resides at the unit level and is assumed to be continuous and flexible as conditions change at the college and in the broader environment. We expect, similar to any planning exercise, slight changes as necessary. Large changes in the plan, would, of course, need to be first reviewed by Curriculum and Instruction Council and Academic Senate.

GEOC believes that this plan, while ambitious, is necessary in order to adhere to the fundamental drive behind the GEO process, which is the continual assessment of and improvement of student learning with the continued understanding of accreditation mandates. Faculty members are doing SLOs and to some degree their GEOs and their assessment every day. It is time to provide a venue and plan for their documentation, exploration, collaboration and celebration. We hope this plan is of value to the proposed Outcomes Committee as well as Curriculum and Instruction and Academic Senate.

APPENDIX A MT. SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE PLANNING FRAMEWORK



APPENDIX B

Nichols' 5-Column Model for SLO/AUO Development and Assessment (now more commonly known as part of Mt. SAC's program review process called Planning for Institutional Effectiveness (PIE))

Mission & Goals	Intended Outcome(s)	Means of Assessment and Criteria for Success	Summary of Data Collected	Use of Results
The mission of the program, department or administrative unit.	What will the student think, feel know or do as a result of a given educational experience?	What are the criteria for success? What tools will be used to establish and measure success?	Summarize the findings.	<p>What do the data tell us about our process?</p> <p>What, if anything, do we need to do to our program, department, or course to improve student learning?</p> <p>What resources are necessary?</p>

Appendix C

Mt. San Antonio College Plan for GEO Assessment in Fall 2008, Winter 2009 & Spring 2009

Five Column Model of Plan (updated as of April 24, 2009)

Unit Goal	Intended Outcome/objective	Means of Assessment and Criteria for Success	Summary of Data Collected	Use of Results
Develop and assess GE Outcomes	The GEO Committee prepares facilitators to lead the workgroups in their creation of the GE outcomes and assessment plans. (Strategic Action)	The training will take place at the 11/4/08 GEO Committee meeting.	In fall 2008 and winter 2009, facilitators were trained and workshop materials were prepared, reviewed and edits made.	In fall 2008, winter 2009 and spring 2009, the materials were used to advertise the workshops via the GEOC and facilitators.
Develop and assess GE Outcomes	Each workgroup will establish GEOs and an assessment plan. (SLO)	<p>100% of the eleven (11) workgroups will establish GE outcomes and assessment plans by March 15, 2009.</p> <p>Of the GE outcomes and assessment plans created, 80% will meet the criteria in a checklist established by the SLO Committee (see the SLO/AUO Guidebook). The GEO Committee will evaluate the work by April 15, 2009.</p>	<p>In fall 2008 and spring 2009, 8 area workgroups were convened.</p> <p>8 groups have a GEO, means of assessment and criteria for success. Of these 8, 100% pass the checklist criteria.</p> <p>The competency workgroups (3) will be addressed in fall 2009.</p> <p>We did not meet the 100% goal.</p>	Faculty took the GEOs, etc. back to their areas for discussion and worked with GEO Coordinator to create an implementation timeline. Attendance at the workshops was low and so further evaluation is necessary.

Project Execution Template (updated as of April 24, 2009)

Phase	Objective	Action	Target Dates & Update
GEOC planning	Adopt this GEO plan, including 8 areas or units of GEO assessment corresponding to the 8 required GE areas of study and 3 additional areas of required achievement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Area A English 2. Area A Speech 3. Area B Science 4. Area C Arts 5. Area C Humanities 6. Area D US History and American Institutions 7. Area D Social, Political and Economic Institutions 8. Area E Lifelong Learning and Personal Development <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mathematics /MATH 71 2. Reading /READ 90 3. Physical Well Being (PE-X and DNCE) 	Approve via email by 10/14/08. 8 areas were contacted. The achievement areas will be contacted in fall 2009.
GEOC Planning	Communicate plan to Deans, Chairs, and other key constituent groups to support recruitment of strong workgroup representatives.	Joe will contact Debbie to get on agenda for Wed morning Instruction Team meeting. Liesel will adapt talking points into a flyer/handout for general consumption.	By 10/22/08. Completed
Phase I: Single-course workgroups: GEO composition and assessment planning	Bring together representatives of Math 71, ENGL 1A, SPCH 1A, READ 90 to identify existing course-level SLOs suitable as GEOs and the timeline for assessment.	Joe will facilitate. If possible, adopt existing course-level assessments for the "single course" degree competencies for institutional assessment purposes. Facilitate composition of additional GEO/SLOs for these courses and agree to assessment timeline of at least one GEO/SLO per course by spring 2009.	First meeting by 10/15/08 One or more GEO/SLO written per course - with assessment plan - by 12/1/08. English 1a and Speech 1A were completed. Rest will be done in fall 2009.
GEOC planning	<p>Confirm workgroup facilitators and representatives for 7 multi-disciplinary workgroups (see listing at end).</p> <p>Develop handouts and other materials for 7 multi-disciplinary workgroups (see list at end of document).</p>	<p>GEO Committee rep. will contact chairs/deans to identify persons with disciplinary expertise and authority.</p> <p>Joe will coordinate the creation of these materials, starter templates, and instructions. (Debbie has already begun a good draft of this)</p> <p>Recruit new GEOC members with</p>	<p>By 11/4/08. Done.</p> <p>By 11/4/08. Done.</p> <p>At 11/4/08 GEOC meeting. Done.</p>

Phase	Objective	Action	Target Dates & Update
	Conduct training of GEOC committee reps as workgroup facilitators	strong SLO experience. Determine step-by-step plan for workgroup success.	
Multi-disciplinary workgroups: GEO composition and assessment planning	<p>Workgroup meetings/composition of GEO/SLOs.</p> <p>Attendees = identified discipline representatives AND anyone from a GE discipline who would like to participate and assist.</p>	<p>Scheduling of workgroup meetings by GEOC reps. Use a model similar to that of the A.A. degree faculty groups last year.</p> <p>In the session, using the GEO zones, suggested GEOs AND the defined GE outcomes of the accreditation standards AND the Mt. SAC GE philosophy as guiding tools, define one (or a few) central, unifying GE outcome statements that could be applied to any GE course in the Area.</p> <p>Workgroups also work to establish assessment criteria that will characterize any assessment chosen by the faculty at the course level. The assessments themselves are not identical and can be chosen locally, but they must adhere to the standards set for the GE workgroup.</p>	<p>First meeting between 11/5/08 and 12/4/08</p> <p>Ongoing facilitation, as needed. GEOC reps will facilitate/consult.</p> <p>May require second meeting before 3/15/09 to determine assessment rubrics</p>
GEOC Planning	Development of criteria for success	The GEO Committee will review assessment plans (see 5-column model above)	By April 15, 2009. Done during workshops.
All 11 workgroups: GEO composition and assessment planning	Completion of GEO composition and assessment planning for all 11 workgroup areas.	GEOC rep maintains progress chart to ensure at least one GE outcome statement is attached as an SLO at the course level to every course each of the 11 areas, and that each of the 7 multi-disciplinary areas has a common rubric or other common assessment plan.	By March 15, 2009 Not yet completed.
GEO/SLO Assessment	GEO/SLOs are measured at the department level as part of regular SLO process and reported in e-PIE	GEOC rep monitors progress in e-PIE.	Spring 2009. Ongoing
Assessment	Summary report (11 areas)	Committee reviews.	June 2009
GEO Use of Results	Report of findings based on data	GEO committee evaluates overall progress, designs feedback mechanisms to Area groups, and perhaps makes recommendations for institutional changes.	Summer 2009

***Multidisciplinary Workgroup Representatives:**

1. Physical Well Being: DNCE & PE
2. Area B Science: ASTR, CHEM, GEOG, GEOL, METO, OCEA, PHSC, PHYS, AGOR, ANAT, ANTH, BIOL, MICR, PSYC
3. Area C Arts: ART, AHIS, ARCH, DN-T, ID, MUS, PHOT, SPCH, THTR
4. Area C Humanities: CHIN, ENGL/LIT, FRCH, GERM, HIST, HUMA, LATN, ITAL, JAPN, PHIL, SIGN, SPAN
5. Area D US History and American Institutions: HIST & POLI
6. Area D Social, Political and Economic Institutions: AGAG, AGFR, ANTH, BUSC, CHLD, GEOG, HIST, JOUR, POLI, PSYC, SOC, SPCH
7. Area E Lifelong Learning and Personal Development: AD, BIOL, CHLD, COUN, LEAD, FCS, NF, PE, PSYC

RESOURCES: ACCJC Standard II.A.3 Related To GEOs

Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services

The institution offers high-quality instructional programs, student support services, and library and learning support services that facilitate and demonstrate the achievement of stated student learning outcomes. The institution provides an environment that supports learning, enhances student understanding and appreciation of diversity, and encourages personal and civic responsibility as well as intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development for all of its students.

A. Instructional Programs

The institution offers high-quality instructional programs in recognized and emerging fields of study that culminate in identified student outcomes leading to degrees, certificates, employment, or transfer to other higher education institutions or programs consistent with its mission. Instructional programs are systematically assessed in order to assure currency, improve teaching and learning strategies, and achieve stated student learning outcomes. The provisions of this standard are broadly applicable to all instructional activities offered in the name of the institution.

II.A.2. The institution assures the quality and improvement of all instructional courses and programs offered in the name of the institution, including collegiate, developmental, and pre-collegiate courses and programs, continuing and community education, study abroad, short-term training courses and programs, programs for international students, and contract or other special programs, regardless of type of credit awarded, delivery mode, or location.

b. The institution relies on faculty expertise and the assistance of advisory committees when appropriate to identify competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, programs including general and vocational education, and degrees.

The institution regularly assesses student progress towards achieving those outcomes.

f. The institution engages in ongoing, systematic evaluation and integrated planning to assure currency and measure achievement of its stated student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, programs including general and vocational education, and degrees.

The institution systematically strives to improve those outcomes and makes the results available to appropriate constituencies.

II.A.3. The institution requires of all academic and vocational degree programs a component of general education based on a carefully considered philosophy that is clearly stated in its catalog. The institution, relying on the expertise of its faculty, determines the appropriateness of each course for inclusion in the general education curriculum by examining the stated learning outcomes for the course.

General education has comprehensive learning outcomes for the students who complete it, including the following:

- a. An understanding of the basic content and methodology of the major areas of knowledge: areas include the humanities and fine arts, the natural sciences, and the social sciences.
- b. A capability to be a productive individual and life long learner: skills include oral and written communication, information competency, computer literacy, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis/logical thinking, and the ability to acquire knowledge through a variety of means.
- c. A recognition of what it means to be an ethical human being and effective citizen: qualities include an appreciation of ethical principles; civility and interpersonal skills; respect for cultural diversity; historical and aesthetic sensitivity; and the willingness to assume civic, political, and social responsibilities locally, nationally, and globally.