

The Spotlight



From the Desk of Joan Sholars, SLO Coordinator

Odette Richardson, Editor

General Education Outcomes (GEOs)

By Joe Terreri, GEO Coordinator

The Relationship Between GEOs and SLOs

General education outcomes (GEOs), like student learning outcomes (SLOs), are statements that define specific, measurable results we expect from students that have undergone a learning experience here at Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC). The difference is that determining and assessing GEOs may involve cooperation among multiple disciplines, which reflects the nature of the Mt. SAC general education (GE) pattern. At least 24 units of GE coursework are required for a student to receive an Associate degree at Mt. SAC. These GE courses are grouped into five Areas (A-E) (see text box below) and students must complete courses in each GE Area with a letter grade of "C" or better.

GENERAL EDUCATION AREAS AT MT. SAC

A — Communication in the English Language (6 units)

B — The Physical Universe and Life (3 units)

C — Arts and Humanities (6 units)

D — Social, Political and Economic Institutions (6 units)

E — Lifelong Understanding and Self Development (3 units)

In Spring 2007 the Mt. SAC General Education Outcomes Committee began to meet. One function of this committee, in collaboration with faculty, was to design and implement a plan for the assessment of general education at Mt. SAC. Consistent with accreditation requirements, this is to be done through the creation and assessment of GEOs. A key initial assumption was that these GEOs reflect the purpose of GE at Mt. SAC. This purpose is well defined in the Mt. SAC general education philosophy. To see this philosophy, as well as more detail on other topics touched on in this article, visit the GEOs website at www.mtsac.edu/instruction/generaled/.

Getting Started

Area A is unique in that it is defined by two courses only: English 1A, Speech 1A, and their related honors sections. Areas B–E are comprised of a number of different courses from a variety of disciplines. The General Education Outcomes Assessment Plan 2009-2012 involved splitting courses within Areas B–E into six different multidisciplinary workgroups. Area A was treated as a special case where all GEO-related matters were derived from within the English and Communication Departments. For the multidisciplinary workgroups, a

(Continued on Page 2.)

DEFINITIONS

- *SLOs (student learning outcomes) are statements about what a student will think, know, feel or be able to do as a result of an educational experience.*
- *AUOs (administrative unit objectives) are statements about what a client will experience, receive, or understand as a result of a given service.*
- *GEOs (general education outcomes) are statements that define the knowledge, skills, and perspectives acquired by students who satisfy our general education requirements.*

GEO COMMITTEE

Joe Terreri—GEO Coordinator (Co-Chair)

Barbara McNeice-Stallard—Director, Research & Instit. Eff. (Co-Chair)

Kristina Allende—Faculty Rep., Area C

Debbie Borocho—Dean, Instructional Services

Priya Chaplot—Educational Research Assessment Analyst

Mary Johnson—Faculty Rep., Vocat'l. Ed.

Leisel Reinhart—Faculty Rep., Area A

Kate Scott—Information Technology Rep.

Joan Sholars—SLO Coordinator

(Continued from Page 1.)

two-hour workshop was designed that focused on two main goals. These were that:

1. in conjunction with the GEO Zones, course measurable objectives, and the philosophy of their respective Area, they will determine a common outcome to assess; and
2. the workgroup will come to a shared understanding of what student attainment of that learning outcome entails by developing a common scoring rubric and criteria for success.

The common outcome agreed to would then be the GEO for that workgroup. An additional plan feature is that this GEO could also function as a course-level SLO, thus satisfying two accreditation expectations with one assessment. Pilot workshops were conducted on November 11, 2008 for two of six workgroups (Area D, History and Political Science, and Area E). The remaining four workshops were conducted on March 6, 2009. Each of these meetings were facilitated by members of the General Education Outcomes Committee. All six workgroups met the goals of determining a GEO, developing a common scoring rubric for that outcome, and specifying criteria for success. The English and Communication Departments (Area A) have determined their GEOs, scoring rubrics, and criteria for success as well.

The Outcome

I want to acknowledge the exceptional faculty that participated in the creation of the college's GEOs. The workgroups worked diligently, and they deserve a round of applause for the outstanding job they did in furthering the goal of assessing general education at Mt. SAC. The end product are GEOs for all eight groups, which are provided in the table on page 3.

Some Follow-up Information

The Academic Senate has approved a plan and timeline for the assessment of GEOs at Mt. SAC. This plan can be found at <http://www.mtsac.edu/administration/senates/academic/documents/GEOPlan.pdf>. All department chairpersons with courses within the Mt. SAC general education pattern have been sent an e-mail requesting details on their department(s) timeline for GEOs assessment. If you are a faculty member in such a department, you can participate in the construction of this timeline. And if you teach GE courses, you will likely be involved in the actual assessment of the appropriate GEO. Through your participation in the GEOs initiative, you will not only have an increased understanding of the purposeful nature of GE at Mt. SAC, including the vital role courses you teach have in this endeavor, but will also share in the task of improving GE at Mt. SAC to the ultimate benefit of our students.

A GEO summary report will be presented to the Curriculum and Instruction Committee and Academic Senate as well as provided to the new Outcomes Committee for their fall meeting.

GEO Contact: Visit <http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/generaled/>.

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SLO Contacts: Visit <http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/outcomes/>.

- **Joan Sholars**, SLO Coordinator, x4610, jsholars@mtsac.edu (for information regarding SLOs).
- **Priya Chaplot**, Educational Research Assessment Analyst, x5505, pchaplot@mtsac.edu (for information about SLOs, AUOs and assessment).
- **Jennifer Tucker**, Educational Research Assessment Analyst, x4708, jtucker@mtsac.edu (for information about basic skills-funded SLOs, AUOs and SAs).

GEO ZONES FOR MT. SAC

- Critical Thinking and Reasoning
- Effective Communication
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Reading Competence
- Information Competence and the Effective Uses of Technology
- Personal Responsibility
- Social Responsibility and Cultural Competence
- Civic Engagement and Global Citizenship

GEOs Developed by Multidisciplinary Workgroup Areas

<p>GEO WORKGROUP MEMBERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The English Department • The Communications Department • Carolyn Alexander • Kristina Allende • Jeff Archibald • Stacy Bacigalupi • Julie Bray-Ali • Amrik Singh Dua • Dyrell Foster • Jennifer Garwick • Mike Goff • Lynda Hoggan • Carol Impara • Karyn Kakiba-Russell • Darlene Landeros • Lisa Ledeboer • Eddie Lee • Rasool Masoomian • David Medina • Beta Meyer • Bob Perkins • Malcolm Rickard • Cindy Shannon • Paul Sharpe • Ralph Spaulding • Bob Stuard • Crystal Lane Swift • Tyler Trull • Diedre Vail • Craig Webb <p>GEO COMMITTEE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joe Terreri (Co-chair) • Barbara McNeice-Stallard (Co-Chair) • Kristina Allende • Debbie Boroch • Priya Chaplot • Mary Johnson • Leisel Reinhart • Kate Scott • Joan Sholars 	<p>A English</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will be able to develop a thesis statement that advances a clear argument. 2. Students will be able to use textual evidence for support of their thesis. 3. Students will be able to evaluate the reliability of information from a variety of print and electronic sources.
	<p>A Communication</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will be able to perform basic speech delivery skills. 2. Students will be able to evaluate the reliability of information sources. 3. Students will critically evaluate public speeches. 4. Students will understand the need to adapt communication style to acknowledge the differences in others.
	<p>B Sciences</p>
	<p>Students completing relevant assignments in Area B courses will evaluate the impact of science on their daily lives.</p>
	<p>C Arts</p>
	<p>Students completing an assignment in Area C (Arts) courses will be able to analyze modes of artistic expression.</p>
	<p>C Humanities</p>
	<p>Students completing an assignment in Area C (Humanities) will be able to identify the influence of culture on human expression.</p>
	<p>D History and Political Science</p>
	<p>Students will be able to differentiate among changes in the American constitutional government over time.</p>
	<p>D Social, Political, and Economic Institutions (Electives)</p>
	<p>Students completing relevant assignments in Area D (Electives) courses will analyze the relationship between social, political, and/or economic institutions and human behavior.</p>
<p>E Lifelong Learning and Self Development</p>	
<p>Students completing an assignment in Area E courses will demonstrate meaningful self-evaluation related to increasing their lifelong personal well-being.</p>	