

Mt. San Antonio College Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) Annual Report for 2008-09 Part 1: Course-Level SLOs



Annual Report Written By: Odette Richardson, Priyadarshini Chaplot, and Joan Sholars

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It truly has been an eventful as well as productive 2008-09 year for student learning outcomes (SLOs). The past year has witnessed the following accomplishments:

- ◆ Successful attainment of the *Mt. SAC SLO Plan* goal. According to the *Mt. SAC SLO Plan*, the college had the following expectation: at least 75% of all active courses will have at least two (2) SLOs with means of assessment and criteria for success by June 2009. At the end of the 2008-09 academic year, the college not only met the 75% goal, it exceeded it with 79.1%.
- ◆ Provisions of trainings and other opportunities to facilitate the development of SLOs and integration with the ePIE (annual program review) process via twenty-nine (29) department and two (2) division meetings, two (2) Flex Day presentations, and two (2) Professional and Organizational Development sessions.
- ◆ Development of numerous communications for the campus community via three (3) memos of the *SLO Highlight*, five (5) issues of *The Spotlight* newsletter, and three (3) whitepapers, which reported on the college's status on SLOs, highlighted the SLO experiences of various departments and divisions, provided direction on common areas of confusion, and relayed possible techniques and strategies for SLO development and implementation.
- ◆ Collaboration with the Academic Senate to pass key resolutions merging the SLO and GEO Committees, created a *Mt. SAC GEO Plan*, and enabled the transparency of SLOs/GEOs to the campus community.
- ◆ Construction and execution of customized ePIE reports to track the college's progress on goals set in the *Mt. SAC Course-Level SLO Plan*.
- ◆ Participation at various external conferences, including the *WASC Retreat on Student Learning and Assessment II* and the *RP Group Strengthening Student Success* conferences, to continue to build a knowledge base about SLOs, general education outcomes (GEOs), and basic skills.

The next year will prove to be even more interesting and productive.

We invite you to read the full Mt. SAC SLO Annual Report for 2008-09 on the following pages.

Before the Year Began

In Spring 2008 the Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC) Academic Senate adopted the *Course-Level Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Plan* (<http://www.mtsac.edu/administration/senates/academic/documents/SLOPlan.pdf>) that gave the college a goal indicating that at least 75% of all active courses will have at least two (2) SLOs with means of assessment and criteria for success by June 2009. To help the college achieve this goal, the SLO Coordinator, the Educational Research Assessment Analyst, and the SLO Committee along with the Research and Institutional Effectiveness (RIE) Office and Information Technology (IT) Department were charged with educating and supporting faculty and staff in developing and assessing SLOs.

This ambitious goal kicked off what would prove to be an eventful year including opportunities for growth, Academic Senate resolutions, the value of transparency, and the actual progress toward the 75% SLO goal.

Opportunities to Learn and Grow

College Staff

Over the 2008-09 academic year, various individuals attended external events that provided new insights and perspectives to propel the SLO efforts on campus. The new SLO Coordinator, Joan Sholars, attended the *Basic Skills Initiative Summer Institute* in Newport Beach and learned about the relationship between SLOs and basic skills.

Early in October 2008 Joan Sholars, Barbara McNeice-Stallard (Director, Research and Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation Management Co-Chair), Priya Chaplot (Educational Research Assessment Analyst), Jennifer Tucker (Educational Research Assessment Analyst), Kristina Allende (English Faculty and Accreditation Faculty Co-Chair) and Lisa DiDonato (Basic Skills Project Manager) attended *The Research and Planning Group for California Community College's (RP Group) Strengthening Student Success Conference*. Fifty-seven breakout sessions presented the attendees with a rich array of student learning evidence-based practices from which to choose as well as learn how faculty members and researchers can work collaboratively to explore the depth of student learning. The new SLO Coordinator learned how to write SLOs and help faculty write SLOs noting that writing SLOs were only the initial step to a continuous developmental process.

Later in October Joan Sholars, Barbara McNeice-Stallard and Priya Chaplot together with Jim Jenkins (Associate Dean, Humanities and Social Sciences Division and SLO Committee member) and Liesel Reinhart (Forensics Director and GEO Committee member) attended the *Western Association of Schools and Colleges' (WASC) Retreat on Student Learning and Assessment II Conference*, which focused on SLOs and GEOs (General Education Outcomes) and the connection between them, sparking discussion about ways to integrate the SLO and GEO processes to engage the faculty and avoid duplication of effort. Additionally, the attendees learned what other colleges were doing, compelling them to consider that the SLO and GEO Committees should be merged due to their common intentions for the campus.

In January 2009 Barbara McNeice-Stallard went to the *Academic Senate for California Community College's Accreditation Institute*. This event focused on SLOs and the roles of faculty members.

Finally, the *Community College Association's Winter Conference* SLO workshop in early February 2009 for the SLO Coordinator and an RP Group sponsored *SLO Coordinators/Researchers Regional Meeting* at Mt. SAC in mid-March 2009 for the Mt. SAC Research and Institutional Effectiveness (RIE) Office rounded out the external SLO learning opportunities for the year.

College Faculty

Faculty and departments were trained individually, at department meetings, and/or at division meetings on how to write SLOs/AUOs (administrative unit objectives) and how to document their progress into their existing planning efforts and into ePIE. A record of the training sessions conducted by Joan Sholars and/or Priya Chaplot during 2008-09 is listed to the right.

Further training was offered to faculty and other college employees in February 2009 at the Mt. SAC Flex Day workshops entitled *(SLOs+GEOs+BSI+DE)/ACCJC=?* and *Developing Student Learning Outcomes*. These two sessions, the first one was offered twice, discussed the connections between SLOs, GEOs, basic skills, research, and accreditation and were facilitated by Joan Sholars, Priya Chaplot, Barbara McNeice-Stallard, Joe Terreri (GEO Coordinator), Jennifer Tucker, and Kristina Allende. The second session helped participants develop outcome statements for their courses and build assessment plans to assess those SLOs.

2008-09 TRAINING AND SUPPORT SESSIONS

By Joan Sholars:

- Accounting & Management
- Arts Division

By Joan Sholars & Priya Chaplot:

- Arts Division
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Early Childhood
- Journalism

By Priya Chaplot:

- Animation
- Auxiliary Services
- CalWORKs
- Continuing Education—Adult Basic Education
- Continuing Education—Adult Diploma Program
- Continuing Education—Basic Skills Lab
- Continuing Education—High School Referral Program
- Dance
- Distance Education—Online Support
- Family and Consumer Sciences
- Fashion Design
- Geography
- Human Resources
- Humanities & Social Sciences Division (*two sessions, one of which was in conjunction with ePIE training provided by Kate Scott, IT*)
- Library
- Marketing
- Music (*in conjunction with ePIE training provided by Kate Scott, IT*)
- Office Technology (*in conjunction with ePIE training provided by Kate Scott, IT*)
- Political Science
- Professional & Organizational Development
- Respiratory Therapy
- Scholarships
- Special training to Accreditation Faculty Co-chair and the Research & Institutional Effectiveness Office
- Theatre
- Title V Retreat

Academic Senate Resolutions

The Mt. SAC Academic Senate adopted several resolutions throughout the year involving SLOs and GEOs including:

◆ **Resolution 2008-12: SLO/GEO Merge**

This resolution merged the Student Learning Outcomes Committee with the General Education Outcomes Committee and directed the new committee to develop function and purpose statements.

- ▶ **Outcome:** During the Spring 2009 term, discussions between the SLO and GEO Committees took place to prepare for the merger. The purpose and function statements for the merged SLO and GEO Committee were approved by the Academic Senate on May 28, 2009. The Outcomes Committee will commence meetings in Fall 2009.

◆ **Resolution 2008-13: General Education Outcomes Plan**

This resolution directed the General Education Outcomes Committee to develop a plan and timeline facilitating the creation and documentation of general education outcomes.

- ▶ **Outcome:** The General Education Outcomes Committee generated a *GEO Plan* and timeline through 2012, which were approved by the Academic Senate on May 28, 2009 and is located online at <http://www.mtsac.edu/administration/senates/academic/documents/GEOPlan.pdf>.

◆ **Resolution 2009-02: Transparency of SLOs/GEOs**

This resolution encourages faculty to share knowledge about the development, evaluation and use of results of SLOs/GEOs and recommends that the administration assist faculty in the sharing of good practices.

- ▶ **Outcome:** During the Spring 2009 term, instructional deans and associate deans shared this development with their faculty members. The IT Department presented a set of options to facilitate the transparency of SLOs and GEOs. The final decision will be made during Summer 2009 and the SLOs and GEOs will be transparent across the college starting in September 2009.

The Value of Transparency

The importance of sharing SLO process experiences and keeping the SLO progress transparent to the college community became a major priority during the spring term. With this in mind, means of gathering SLO data and distributing the information were developed.

During the year Kate Scott (Information Technology) created four (4) data reports extracted from the college's electronic Planning for Institutional Effectiveness (ePIE) program to help with identifying where departments were within their five-column course-level SLO planning process. In addition, Odette Richardson (Research and Institutional Effectiveness) created *The Spotlight* newsletter, which was unveiled to the campus via email in February 2009 showcasing campus SLO assessment efforts. The monthly newsletter included a featured author each issue who identified his/her area's progression towards the creation of SLOs. It also included a *Coordinator's Corner* section to keep the campus abreast of changes that were taking place and a *Did You Know...* section to provide learning experiences hosting frequently asked questions, glossary terms, and more.

In April 2009 a series of short whitepapers were introduced to the campus and fashioned after its companion *Spotlight* newsletters with the intention of assisting faculty with ways of achieving all parts of their SLO assessment while answering their reoccurring questions. Also launched in April was a sequence of monthly SLO progress report summaries detailing the numbers and percentages each department/area and division had reached in their SLO development, which were created by Odette Richardson using Kate Scott's ePIE data extract reports.

As a result of these items, the SLO Coordinator and the SLO Committee were able to communicate with the College through the following memos, newsletters and documents presently located on the Mt. SAC SLO website:

1. September 2008 SLO Highlight http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/outcomes/newsletter/2008-09_slo-highlight.pdf
2. October 2008 SLO Highlight http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/outcomes/newsletter/2008-10_slo-highlight.pdf
3. November 2008 SLO Highlight http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/outcomes/newsletter/2008-11_slo-highlight.pdf
4. February 2009 *The Spotlight*—Feature author Professor Jonathan Hymer, Electronics and Computer Technology Department http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/outcomes/newsletter/2009-02_spotlight.pdf
5. March 2009 *The Spotlight*—Feature author Professor Stacy Bacigalupi, Psychology, Education Department http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/outcomes/newsletter/2009-03_spotlight.pdf

6. April 2009 *The Spotlight*—Feature author Professor Kristina M. Allende, English, Literature and Journalism Department
http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/outcomes/newsletter/2009-04_spotlight.pdf
7. May 2009 *The Spotlight*—Feature author Humanities and Social Sciences Division Associate Dean Jim Jenkins
http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/outcomes/newsletter/2009-05_spotlight.pdf
8. June 2009 *The Spotlight*—Feature author General Education Outcomes Coordinator Joe Terreri
http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/outcomes/newsletter/2009-06_spotlight.pdf
9. Whitepaper—*Sampling Techniques for Assessing Course Level SLOs*
http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/outcomes/newsletter/whitepapers/2009-04_sampling_techniques.pdf
10. Whitepaper—*Developing Rubrics*
http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/outcomes/newsletter/papers/2009-05_developing_rubrics.pdf
11. Whitepaper—*SLOs: The Syllabus and the Course Outline of Record*
http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/outcomes/newsletter/papers/2009-05_syllabus.pdf
12. Progress Report Per Division (April 2009)
http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/outcomes/newsletter/2009-4-20_progress_report.pdf
13. Progress Report Per Division (May 2009)
http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/outcomes/newsletter/2009-5-20_progress_report.pdf

In addition to the SLO activities already reported, the college has been engaged in additional activities peripherally related to SLOs. They are as follows:

- In developing its 2010 accreditation self-study for the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges/Western Association of Schools and Colleges, the college has been researching, discussing, and documenting its SLO endeavors as related primarily to Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services, but also generally to the other three standards. The previous SLO Coordinator (Darrow Soares), the current SLO Coordinator, the Educational Research Assessment Analyst, and the Director of Research and Institutional Effectiveness have researched, collected, and prepared a narrative on the status of SLOs and GEOs across the campus.
- Demonstrations of the SLO management capabilities of the TracDat software tool, which is used for the college's electronic Planning for Institutional Effectiveness (ePIE) program review process, have been formally presented to interested colleges by Kate Scott and Priya Chaplot. These colleges included West Hills College-Coalinga and Cypress College. In addition, electronic resources were provided by Barbara McNeice-Stallard or Priya Chaplot to Cerritos College, Napa Valley College, East Los Angeles College, Long Beach City College, Palomar College, Western University of Health Sciences, Fullerton College, Shasta College, Heald College, Chaffey College, C.A.M.P. Research (a regional institutional researchers and planners group), and the RP Group. Furthermore, the Mt. SAC Research and Institutional Effectiveness Office collaborated with The Carnegie Foundation to produce an article on the various technological tools supporting assessment management. The article can be found at <http://www.changemag.org/May-June%202009/full-assessment-town.html>.
- Weekly assessment updates by Barbara McNeice-Stallard have been provided to the Instruction Team managers. These updates share new developments, the college's status on assessment, and offer opportunities and resources for assistance with SLOs and GEOs.
- SLO/GEO campus workgroups and related activities have been coordinated with these key individuals: Joe Terreri, Barbara McNeice-Stallard, Kristina Allende, Debbie Boroach, Priya Chaplot, Mary Johnson, Liesel Reinhart, Kate Scott, Joan Sholars, and Jennifer Tucker.
- In order to evaluate the effectiveness of SLOs at the college, the SLO Committee engaged in an initial Norming Retreat to build a collective comprehension of an effective SLO process. At the May 2009 session, the committee members examined a sample set of real course-level SLOs and, through extensive discussion, synchronized their individual understandings of effective SLO statements, means of assessment, criteria for success, summaries of data, and uses of results. The intention of this retreat was to build a shared understanding through which the committee could analyze larger sets of campus SLOs. General trends of the campus' progress and challenges as well as recommended changes will be shared with the Academic Senate in order to provide additional resources as necessary.

- Revisions were suggested to the SLO Coordinator’s job description and duties for the 2009-10 academic year by Barbara McNeice-Stallard and Joan Sholars.

Deserved Recognition: A Year in Retrospect

Faculty, with the help of division deans and associate deans, have worked hard over the past year developing SLOs for the courses in their departments. In his May 2009 *Spotlight* feature article, Jim Jenkins, Associate Dean of the Humanities and Social Sciences Division, provided insights into their division’s development of SLOs. Interestingly, his statements offer, in part, an explanation for the escalating SLO labors and successes experienced this year. He wrote:

“What we struggled with in this division was what the *relationship* was between SLOs and what we were already doing in classes. What we were actually struggling with was meaning-making.... This first hurdle of meaning-making was the largest of the several we have had to address as a division. Our successful “leap” over it was facilitated by several activities that worked together to create a dynamic dialogue among the faculty: (1) workshops and hours of individualized assistance by the Research and Institutional Effectiveness Office staff with faculty *and* division deans; (2) permanent agenda space for SLO discussion at division meetings; and (3) a division macro-management process providing support but encouraging departmental-level exploration and dialogue. The single most important element in this part of the process has been the recognition of measurable objectives as foundations for SLOs. When that recognition occurred, our development of meaning was ensured.”

What was learned from this past year of “SLO-making” was that when presented with a challenge, the faculty, administration, and staff rise to the occasion through collaboration, coordination and assistance. Without everyone working together toward a common goal, the successes achieved and documents produced this year would not have been realized. In addition, by presenting and demonstrating SLO assessment in multiple ways (e.g., presentations, personalized training, individual and group discussions, newsletters, whitepapers, and progress reports), the college and particularly the faculty have gained the knowledge necessary to meet their difficult SLO challenges. Ownership of this process has moved from a centralized few to the departments and divisions. This shift was necessary to ensure that the process would be meaningful and sustainable.

The considerable progress in SLO creation and assessment development was evident this year through the documentation that has occurred in Mt. SAC’s online ePIE planning process. In one of the earliest ePIE data extract reports (December 29, 2008) from IT, figures indicated that the college started with 42.3% of its active courses having at least one SLO attached to it. Only five months later (May 20, 2009) an updated data extract report revealed that the college had *doubled* its percentage of active courses having an SLO to 84% *even with incurring* a 15.8% increase in the number of active courses that had been entered into ePIE during the same period (*see table below*).

PROGRESS OF COURSES HAVING AT LEAST ONE RECORDED SLO IN ePIE		
	December 29, 2008	May 20, 2009
No. of Courses with an SLO	653	1,514
Total Active Courses in ePIE	1,542	1,786
Percent of Courses with an SLO	42.3%	84.8%

While early data extract reports documented the college’s progression from creating one course-level SLO en route to developing a means of assessment and criteria for success for each, it did not stop there. By the end of the academic year, new ePIE data extract reports captured the college’s achievement in creating not just one, but more than one SLO for each active course and a requisite means of assessment for each. This latter SLO growth marked the college’s start in documenting the Academic Senate’s Spring 2008 75% goal issue.

But the College was not yet finished. In a May 2009 *Spotlight* newsletter, the college community learned that:

- 84.8% of courses had at least one SLO reported;
- 80.9% had one means of assessment for at least one SLO;
- 79.9% of active courses had more than one SLO per course; and
- 71.8% of courses had a means of assessment for at least two (2) SLOs.

Hearing that the college had only reached 71.8% and not the 75% means of assessment goal for which it was striving, a final SLO challenge was issued. Could the campus successfully meet the 75% means of assessment challenge by the end of June 2009? With only one month to go before spring classes were to end and during a time when students and faculty were focusing on fast approaching end-of-the-year deadlines, the official results would come with the July 2009 SLO data extract reports.

The results? Not only did the college meet the 75% goal, it exceeded (with 79.1%) the means of assessment and criteria for success for two (2) course-level SLOs goal put out by the Mt. SAC Academic Senate the spring before. Furthermore, two of the areas who have the highest number of active courses in their division, namely the Continuing Education Division with 355 courses and the Technology and Health Division with 332 courses, recorded close to 100% completion rates in creating SLOs and means of assessment as shown in the table below.

Mt. SAC STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLO) PROGRESS REPORT PER DIVISIONS									
JULY 2009 ePIE REPORT PARTIAL SUMMARY									
Division	Total Crs in Unit	WITH AN SLO				WITH MORE THAN ONE SLO			
		Courses		Means of Assessment		Courses		Means of Assessment	
		No. of Crs	% of Total Crs in Unit	No. of Crs	% of Total Crs in Unit	No. of Crs	% of Total Crs in Unit	No. of Crs	% of Total Crs in Unit
#1 -- Continuing Education	355	350	98.6%	350	98.6%	350	98.6%	343	96.9%
#2 -- Technology & Health	332	325	97.9%	316	95.2%	325	97.9%	314	94.6%
#3 -- Physical Education	161	147	91.3%	147	91.3%	145	90.1%	125	77.6%
#4 -- Library/Lrng. Resources	24	24	100%	22	91.7%	24	100%	12	50.0%
#5 -- Humanities/Social Sci.	259	236	91.1%	215	83.0%	222	85.7%	180	69.5%
#6 -- Natural Sciences	188	166	88.3%	158	84.0%	153	81.4%	141	75.0%
#7 -- Business	248	210	84.7%	194	78.2%	194	78.2%	173	69.8%
#8 -- Student Services	17	14	82.4%	13	76.5%	13	76.5%	12	70.6%
#9 -- Arts	197	123	62.4%	116	58.9%	117	59.4%	107	54.3%
College Grand Total	1,786	1,514	89.6%	1,531	86.0%	1,543	86.6%	1,408	79.1%

What's more, of the 65 academic unit areas identified in ePIE, 22 units (33.8%) achieved 100% completion in all four categories measured (1. Course with an SLO; 2. Course with Means of Assessment; 3. Course with More than One SLO, and 4. Course with Means of Assessment for > One SLO) while another 13 unit areas (20.0%) met or exceeded 75% in all four categories for a total of 53.8% of the academic unit areas recorded in ePIE (*shown in the table on page 7*). Because there are unit areas that have recorded low completion rates, the need for personalized assistance will be addressed in 2009-10. The data in the table above and the table on page 7 are available in its entirety in the July 2009 Progress Report, which is located at <http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/outcomes/newsletter/>.

2008-09 SLO COMMITTEE

Joan Sholars—Faculty, Mathematics / SLO Coordinator (Chair)

Kristina Allende—Faculty, English / Accred. Faculty Co-Chair	Jim Jenkins—Associate Dean, Humanities & Soc. Sci. Division
Gloria Ayala—Faculty, ESL (Continuing Education)	Eddie Lee—Faculty, Counseling
Priya Chaplot—Educational Research Assessment Analyst	Barbara McNeice-Stallard—Dir., RIE / Accred. Mgmt. Co-Chair
Elaine Emanuel—Faculty, Office Technology	James Ocampo—Director, Assessment & Matriculation
John Gardner—Faculty, Psychiatric Technician	Darrow Soares—Faculty, A/C, Water & Welding
Karelyn Hoover—Faculty, Chemistry	Joe Terreri—Faculty, Mathematics / GEO Coordinator

DEPARTMENTS/AREAS WITH 75% OR HIGHER IN ALL FOUR (4) CATEGORIES MEASURED PER JULY 10, 2009 ePIE REPORT		
Department/Area Units	100%	75% or Higher
Accounting and Management	√	
Advertising Design		√
Adult Basic Education	√	
Aeronautics, Transportation	√	
Agricultural Sciences		√
Air Conditioning/Refrigeration		√
Aircraft Maintenance & Manufacturing Technology		√
American Language		√
Biological Sciences		√
Child Development		√
Communication		√
Computer Science	√	
Consumer Sciences	√	
Continuing Education Division Office	√	
Dance		√
DSP&S		√
Electronics & Computer Technology	√	
Fine Arts	√	
Fire Technology	√	
History, Art History	√	
Hospitality & Restaurant Mgmt.	√	
Math	√	
Medical Services	√	
Mental Health/Psychiatric Technician	√	
Nursing		√
Nutrition & Food		√
Older Adult Programs	√	
Parent Education	√	
Public Services	√	
Radiologic Technology	√	
Respiratory Therapy	√	
Sociology, Philosophy		√
Special Needs Population—ABE	√	
Water Technology	√	
Welding	√	
Total Area Units	22	13
Percent of 65 Academic Area Units	33.8%	20.0%

Final Thoughts

According to John Donne, “No man is an island, entire of itself, every man is a piece of the continent....” This analogy is certainly true of the SLO assessment efforts that took place during 2008-09 and/or the development of this SLO Annual Report. Therefore, we wish to acknowledge and sincerely thank the following groups or people for their valued contributions:

- Faculty and Academic Senate
- Division Deans, Associate Deans, Department Chairpersons, Vice Presidents, and the President
- Kate Scott, IT Specialist, Information Technology Department
- Barbara McNeice-Stallard and the Research and Institutional Effectiveness Team
- Student Learning Outcomes Committee
- General Education Outcomes Committee
- Institutional Effectiveness Committee
- Classified Professionals

And, last but not least, the students for their participation in the SLO process.

Questions about this report? Please contact Odette Richardson, x5408.

