



Outcomes Plan

Mt. San Antonio College

2012-2020

Executive Summary

Mt. San Antonio College has long distinguished itself as an institution committed to excellence and student success through its programs and services. The aim of the Outcomes Committee (OC) is to create a plan that will strengthen curricula and instructional pedagogies by encouraging faculty to use the outcomes assessment process to improve teaching and learning through regular evaluation and collegial review by faculty practitioners. Implementing formal assessment strategies will help foster a collaborative, dynamic, and iterative process that engages faculty, students, and personnel by improving curricula, pedagogy, and assessment of student progress.

Although the College has utilized outcomes assessment in various capacities for nearly a decade, this plan seeks to amplify, develop, and extend current practices with additional initiatives. This plan seeks to continue those practices that have proven beneficial, as well as to introduce new items to further improve the process. New additions to the plan include:

1. When new courses, degrees, certificates or programs are created, faculty will develop and submit appropriate Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) to the Outcomes Committee (OC) for consideration and recommendation.
2. Assessment data and “use of results” information should be shared at a department meeting or SLO-focused meetings to foster dialog. Since this information does not disclose faculty or student information and is not used for faculty evaluations, departments are encouraged to ask challenging questions that seek to promote academic excellence and student success.
3. For General Education Outcomes (GEOs), the Outcomes Committee will support faculty with the existing GEOs that have been created, as well as provide options that encourage cross-departmental activities, such as critical thinking and information competency.
4. Departments should assess every course, including general education courses, at least once over a three-year cycle. Departments with a program should assess their program-level outcomes at least once over a three-year cycle. If the outcomes have not been assessed within that time, they will be assessed during the current or next semester offered.
5. The Outcomes Committee will conduct qualitative evaluations in alignment with the Educational Design Committee’s (EDC) four-year qualitative review process. When EDC samples courses for four-year review, they will forward that list of courses to the Outcomes Committee to review the outcomes work and to make recommendations relating to the outcomes quality. As such, it is recommended that Departments create their three-year cycle in alignment with the EDC’s four-year curricular review cycle.
6. The Outcomes Coordinator will work with the Academic Senate to encourage faculty to publish Measurable Objectives (MOs) and SLOs on course syllabi or provide a link that directs students to this information (slos.mtsac.edu).

Create a campus culture where SLOs are understood and valued and where assessment functions as a resource leading to improved instruction, curricula, programs, and/or services. (Outcomes Committee, 2011)

Outcomes Plan

1. College Goal

The Outcomes Plan is designed to forward the [College's Mission](#) and, more specifically, to achieve progress toward the College's Goal (#14) on assessment, which reads: *The College will utilize assessment data to guide planning, curriculum design, pedagogy, and/or decision-making at the department/unit and institutional levels.*

2. History of Outcomes Planning

The Academic Senate has adopted several plans for outcomes assessment at the college, including:

- Course-Level Student Learning Outcomes Plan (May 8, 2008)
- General Education Outcomes at Mt. SAC: Plan (2009-2012; May 28, 2009)
- Student Learning Outcomes Plan: Addendum (October 1, 2009; included course, degree, certificate outcomes)

Over the years, these plans provided orientation, were time limited, and were directed toward getting a large number of courses assessed. While recognizing the need to meet accreditation requirements, the College is working towards sustainability and continuous quality improvement of learning outcomes. That includes ensuring that all SLOs, GEOs, and program-level SLO work have completed at least one full assessment cycle in a regular and on-going manner with a focus on authenticity.

Authentic pedagogy is based on the premise that students' work should prepare them for the intellectual work that their various roles in society will demand of them and involves "intellectual accomplishments that are worthwhile, significant and meaningful."¹

Outcomes, pedagogy, and measurement methods must all correspond, both for summative assessment (demonstrating that our students have achieved certain levels) and formative assessment (improving student learning, teaching, and programs)... (A)sessment evidence must reflect the level of complexity and detail of real-life tasks, including locating information; evaluating the credibility of sources; understanding multiple viewpoints; synthesizing information from various sources; creating complex explanations, solutions, or theses that capture multifaceted realities; and integrating source material into an original work.²

The Outcomes Committee recommends that the College continues the positive work that has been done. This Outcomes Plan emphasizes the Outcomes Committee desire to affirm authentic assessment, provides for a periodic evaluation of the process and quality, and includes recommendations for further consideration by the College.

3. The Outcomes Assessment Process

Outcomes assessment occurs at the course, program, and institutional (GEO) levels, as well as support services. Assessment goals at each level should align and support one another, working to further the development of our students. This includes asking compelling questions of our students, developing measurable expected learning outcomes, establishing benchmarks for performance, creating instruments to measure the outcomes, and using the results to make improvements.

DESCRIPTION

Student Learning Outcomes

Results from the assessment of student learning are best achieved when post-assessment evaluations inform the next round of outcomes development. Departments should evaluate course-level SLOs and services in a three-year cycle. Those courses impacting the most students may warrant more frequent assessment, including:

- Gateway Courses
- Key courses in a sequence of courses
- General Education Courses
- Courses central to a program

Program Outcomes

Those units/departments with degrees or certificates need to create program-level SLOs.

Departments should focus on those key competencies that they expect students to know and master within their discipline as their program-level SLOs. Examples of program-level SLOs could include:

- Utilize the SLO data from a capstone course as the program-level outcome (short-term)
- Compile and analyze longitudinal data on the success of transfer students within the discipline (long-term)

General Education Outcomes

Mt. SAC has five areas of general education: (A) Communication in the English Language, (B) The Physical Universe and Life, (C) Arts and Humanities, (D) Social, Political, and Economic Institutions, and (E) Lifelong Understanding and Self-Development. GEOs are statements about the skills, knowledge, and perspectives acquired by students who enroll in courses within each of these five areas. Conducting a GEO assessment counts as the SLO course-level assessment. However, departments may choose to do additional work in this area.

PROCESS

How do we assess the outcomes of courses, programs, and general education courses?

There are numerous guides on the web that outline how to develop and implement outcomes assessment. The broadest picture of the entire process is found here:

http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/outcomes/doc/AssessmentPlan_v2.pdf

When do we assess outcomes?

Departments should assess every course, including general education courses, at least once over a three-year cycle. Departments with a program should assess their program-level outcomes at least once over a three-year cycle. If the outcomes have not been assessed within that time, they will be assessed during the current or next semester offered.

Per the Administrative Procedure on Program and Curriculum Development (AP 4020), if a course that is required for a degree or certificate has not completed an outcomes cycle within a period of five years, the Educational Design Committee or Curriculum and Instruction Council may propose inactivation.

How do we record the outcomes information?

There are two options available to departments to record their outcomes assessment data:

- Departments may record information into TracDat at <http://tracdat.mtsac.edu/tracdat/>
- Departments may also fill out the form below, located at <http://outcomes.mtsac.edu>

SLOs and GEOS

Course prefix & number (ex. MUS 1)	Course Outcome (SLO/GEO)	Means of Assessment and Criteria for Success	Summary of Data Collected	Use of Results

Program-level SLOs (for all areas with a degree or certificate)

Program name (ex. A.S. – Nursing)	Program Outcome (SLO)	Means of Assessment and Criteria for Success	Summary of Data Collected	Use of Results
	<i>What are the exit skills, competencies, or content areas students should have mastered as a result of obtaining this degree or certificate?</i>	<i>Record the assessment instrument (rubric, portfolio, etc.), as well as the standards for success (70% of students will score at least 70% on a course-embedded exam).</i>	<i>The results collected from the assessment may be recorded numerically or in narrative form.</i>	<i>Discuss - what were the most important findings? What changes (curricular, pedagogical, etc.) can be made as a result? Are additional resources required? How can we increase student success next time? When faculty reflected upon the data, what thoughts or concerns emerged?</i>

What type of feedback and recommendations will departments receive?

While TracDat/ePIE reports provide the numbers of completed assessments, quality checks should be done by the Outcomes Committee to examine how the “Use of Results” are aligning with the intended uses of that information to improve curricula and pedagogy. The process for the quality checks are as follows.

When the Educational Design Committee (EDC) samples the courses in their four-year qualitative review process, they will forward that list of courses to the Outcomes Committee to review the outcomes work for those courses to make recommendations relating to the outcomes quality. In addition to making suggestions on how to use the process for continued improvement, the Outcomes Committee will provide outstanding assessment examples to departments for their review. It is worth noting that discipline faculty are the final arbiters of the quality of their assessment work.

Even though the Committee is working to align its plans with the procedures of EDC, the processes are independent and will not affect one another.

4. Evaluation of the Process

The Outcomes Committee should conduct an evaluation of the process and progress of the outcomes work achieved via this Outcomes Plan. The Committee should encourage the College to provide input on both an ad hoc and a systematic basis to determine if the process is working well and if there is need for improvement. The Outcomes Committee will include a continued authentic assessment perspective and provide many examples for faculty to use as resources to achieve this goal. The Outcomes Committee feedback process should be separate from the Curriculum Review process.

5. Recommendations

The Outcomes Committee recommends the following be done for continued improvement of the outcomes assessment such that the College's outcomes work becomes sustainable, quality work:

- a) Continue Administration and Academic Senate support for outcomes efforts (e.g., Outcomes Coordinator, Educational Research Assessment Analyst, Presidential Awards, Professional Expert, and conference support).
- b) Continue to create and execute strategic actions to provide professional development opportunities for faculty and external reporting for accreditation through the Outcomes Committee, the Outcomes Coordinator, and the Research and Institutional Effectiveness Office.
- c) Continue to review and work to achieve the goals of the Outcomes Committee:
 - ✓ Create a culture that values SLO assessment as an integral part of student learning and College planning.
 - ✓ Create a culture that supports campus-wide dialog that furthers student success.
 - ✓ Create mechanisms that support faculty in designing, implementing, and evaluating assessment processes.
 - ✓ Create and integrate a long-term outcomes assessment cycle that is ongoing and integrated into the current planning mechanisms of the College.

6. Timeline – 2012-2020

The Outcomes Committee recommends that this new plan remain in effect until 2020, or until an alternative plan is designed and established. The current plan should be reviewed every three years by the Outcomes Committee to test its viability and alignment with strategic planning. Should the Outcomes Committee have recommended changes, they will be submitted to the Academic Senate. .

7. Contact

If you have questions, please contact the Outcomes Committee, Outcomes Coordinator, as well as the Research and Institutional Effectiveness Department at outcomes@mtsac.edu.

References:

1. Newmann, F.M. (1996) *Authentic achievement: Restructuring schools for intellectual quality*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
2. Banta, T.W., Griffin, M., Flateby, T.L., & Kahn, S. (2009, December). *Three promising alternatives for assessing college students' knowledge and skills*. (NILOA Occasional Paper No.2). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.