

Diablo Valley College SLO Newsletter



Don't Be "Strangers on the (SLO) Train"

The DVC Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) train left the station in fall 2003 when the Faculty Senate SLO task force recommended a plan for developing SLOs for DVC instructional departments. We committed ourselves to identifying SLOs, assessing them, collecting data, and analyzing the results in order to help our students become successful learners. In spring 2006 energy was directed toward developing SLOs; and faculty identified over 35 course and program SLOs, while the Student Services staff developed SLOs for all of their program areas and completed their first assessment cycles. Work continued in fall 2006 as cycles were accomplished and results analyzed. Feedback indicates that changes are being made and that some unexpected outcomes resulted from the analyses.

Although we have accomplished much since spring 2006, we still have our work cut out for us. This semester several instructional departments and student support areas should conduct assessment Cycle 2. In addition, the goal is for each instructional discipline to identify SLOs, measurement tools, and success criteria for two additional courses and one **program** SLOs. A top SLO priority for our campus is the selection, administration, and analysis of a norm-referenced GE assessment instrument. Please consider serving as resource people to help in instrument selection and administration.

The faculty SLO committee, including the two faculty SLO facilitators—Suzanne Christian (X2830) and Melinda Moreno (X2553)—is ready to assist you with your completion of SLOs. When you finish your course and program SLOs, please send them to me electronically, and I will place your files on the agenda for faculty SLO committee review. Analyses and evidence of use of the results should also be sent to me so I can log in the information for your department or service area.

If a meeting with your department or with individuals would be helpful, let me know ((FO 224, X2667). Let's get on board and help our students become successful learners in our classes and in our programs! With accreditation just around the corner, we **all** need to complete our portion of the tracks to keep the train moving toward SLO Central.

—Judy Foster, DVC Business Instructor / Institutional Effectiveness Coordinator



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GE Assessment Strategy Approved

For many departments at DVC, GE courses are a staple of our offerings, with thousands of students working through a balanced diet of knowledge. We require degree-seeking students to go through this set of classes because we believe it will produce a well-rounded, educated individual, for life in general and for future college goals. Do you ever wonder, though, how well our students meet these outcomes as they move on to the next phase of their lives?

The growing SLO movement challenges colleges and universities to reflect on, to assess whether our graduates are achieving these outcomes (according to our own standards), and to make changes to our educational offerings based on these assessments and analyses.

In September 2006, the DVC Faculty Senate took a first step toward assessing the GE outcomes. It passed a motion to research, choose, and administer a nationally normed test for the core academic outcomes. Using a nationally normed test would enable us to compare DVC to national benchmarks for institutions of similar size and makeup at two- and four-year institutions. The selected instrument will be used for a two-year trial basis and then reevaluated.

It is important to note that this assessment will be of DVC and our GE program, **not** of individual students or faculty members. A statistical sampling of students who completed GE classes will take the exam, and an external agency will provide the results, which will not be connected to student records, graduation, or passing/failing—we are only interested in *aggregate scores*. We own the results of the GE assessment, and with that ownership comes the responsibility to continue working to keep DVC a prime provider of a valued general education.

—Karen Edwards, DVC Mathematics Instructor
Member of Faculty Senate SLO Committee

Do you ever wonder how well our students meet (GE) outcomes as they move on to the next phase of their lives?

—Karen Edwards
DVC Mathematics Dept.



EOPS Staff. Back row: Kerry Surman, Paula Stanfield, Emily Stone, Diane Ferguson, and Jeffrey Benford
Front row: Raine Dougan, Yoana Taseva, and Naima Blackman.

Missing from photo: Connie Williams, Kenneth Tam, Miwa Yoneyama, Carrie Sadighian, Esteban Alfaro, Tracy Williams, Jessica Scott, Usha Iswaran, and Sylvia Ronquillo.

Focus on Student Services SLOs – EOPS Program

EOPS/CARE Director Emily Stone is very excited about the changes that have been made to the EOPS student orientation process that was the result of working through Cycle 1 of the Student Services SLOs for her area. Cycle 1, which was completed in 2005-06, led to analysis of the data in spring 2006; and this semester EOPS is focusing on newly implemented changes to the Student Orientation process.

The questions that she asked were “Are we getting what we’re trying to do?” and “(Is EOPS) getting as much leverage as possible?” She went on to say that the SLO process “showed me where the holes were.” Now the student orientation sessions are held in a computer lab and counselors—both EOPS and counseling staff—participate and present various aspects of the orientation. These changes were direct results of going through the SLO assessment cycle. In addition, students now complete a survey form, which was modified by adding and revising questions based on feedback from the students, *during* the orientation session.

Emily’s closing words were “(SLOs) constantly forces us to think creatively and innovatively.” Nice going, EOPS team!

Focus on Faculty-developed SLOs – Electronics Department

In spring 2006 Tom Chatagnier, of the DVC Electronics Department, completed his first SLO cycle for two beginning-level courses, Introduction to Computer Hardware and Software and DC Circuits. In a recent conversation, Tom shared what he gained from the development and assessment of SLOs for these two courses:

I’ve been doing this (teaching classes) for so long (that) everything carried the same weight. After completing Assessment Cycle 1, I realized what needed to be emphasized. It prioritized what was important to teach in the course and what students needed for job skills. There are things they have to know, nice to know, and irrelevant. The process helped me separate the three.

After analyzing the results, Tom decided that troubleshooting skills should be and needed to be emphasized. “Developing SLOs forced me to put it in writing. It formed a bridge between my advisory committee members and what I was teaching.” His results have led to changes already implemented in his classes. After completing Cycle 2 this term, he will be able to better assess whether the changes had an impact on his students’ learning outcomes.

It (SLO process) made
me rethink what was
important and not
important.

—Tom Chatagnier
DVC Electronics Department

What Will the Accreditation Team Be Looking For?

In fall 2008 will the visiting Accreditation team really want to know about our SLOs progress and what DVC has done? Absolutely! I recently attended an Academic Senate Accreditation Institute and learned that accreditation teams will be looking for information on *student achievement* and on *student learning outcomes* in order to comment on our progress in incorporating all of the Standards’ requirements about student learning outcomes into their reports. Student Learning Outcomes and Dialogue are two of six themes that run through the majority of the four Standards. In the “Shaping the Dialogue” section of the *Introduction to Accreditation Standards*, it is noted that the team will be commenting on whether DVC participates in dialogue that integrates the elements of the Standards and uses its “resources and processes (to) support student learning, continuously assesses that learning, and pursues institutional excellence and improvement. An effective institution maintains an ongoing, self-reflective dialogue about its quality and improvement.”

Included in what the team will be seeking is **evidence** of

- SLOs defined by course, by program, and by degree (including GE requirements)
- Dialogue about the SLOs prior to their development, as part of developing integrated educational services and courses/programs, and as part of institutional self-evaluation, planning, and improvement
- SLOs measured and the measurements analyzed in order to evaluate institutional effectiveness and plan institutional improvements
- Specific pedagogical practices changed in response to analyses of SLOs
- Samples of student work and copies of summary data on measured SLOs

We all have a stake in how effectively our students are learning by participating in the SLO process . . . Let’s take responsibility for laying our section of the tracks!

—Bruce Koller, Faculty Senate President
2008 Accreditation Co-chair