

Memorandum

TO: Vice President Sean Blackburn, Student Affairs

FROM: Laurie Smith, Student Affairs Assessment Coordinator

DATE: January 15, 2019

SUBJECT: Proposed Plan to Develop Student Affairs Learning Outcomes:
Primary Step in Implementing Division-Wide Assessment Plan

Introduction

In 2010 the Education Advisory Board (EAB) under the guidance of the Student Affairs Leadership Council conducted a study of co-curricular student learning outcomes which resulted in a publication entitled “Aligning Co-Curricular Initiatives with Learning Outcomes: Key Challenges Facing Student Affairs Leaders.” Accreditation, budget constraints/resource allocation decisions, and the need for continuous improvement were identified as factors making this a matter of importance for Student Affairs practitioners.

Renewed focus has been placed on program effectiveness and demand in light of recent budget cuts and the University is currently preparing for accreditation renewal. Appropriately, the development of learning outcomes is a component of Goal 1: Driving Excellence in the Student Affairs Strategic Plan: 100% of departments and programs will have student learning outcomes and/or assessment plan.

Learning outcomes will be one driver of assessment plans, and their development will be the first step in the implementation of a comprehensive assessment strategy throughout the division. The “Aligning Co-Curricular Initiatives with Learning Outcomes” study by EAB identified 3 models, or approaches, to develop learning outcomes with Student Affairs:

- Model 1: Centralized campus wide collaboration between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs to develop broad learning outcomes. This was identified as the best practice because of the “common framework enabling results sharing and increased collaboration...”
- Model 2: The study found that the most commonly used model was that of creating learning outcomes at the division level that are used division departments, programs and services.
- Model 3: A decentralized model that empowers units within the division to develop their own outcomes. It has the positive of giving individual units and programs a voice; however, the Study did not recommend this model “because of the potential for misalignment” with Student Affairs and institutional goals, which frequently leads to problems using the data and maintaining commitment to an assessment plan.

Recommendation

My recommendation is that we use Model 2 and generate unit/program engagement and “enfranchise practitioners” by:

- Establish a committee that recruits participants representing all division departments and from staff who actively run programs and services:
 - Dean of Students
 - CSIL
 - Campus Recreation
 - Residence Life (including WCC)
 - Dining Services
 - University Counseling and/or Student Health
 - ASUW representation
 - Alumni Association
 - University Store/Copy Center

- Conduct comprehensive inventory across departments of programs and services and associated goals/purposes to inform development of appropriate division-wide learning outcomes.

Steps for Development of Learning Outcomes

1. Recruit participants for Learning Outcomes Development Committee (January 2019)

2. Conduct training for committee (February 2019):
 - a. Review UW touchstones that learning outcomes should align with:
 - i. UW mission statement
 - ii. SA mission statement
 - iii. Student Affairs values (Student Development, Personal and Social Responsibility, Holistic Wellness, Diversity, Engagement)
 - iv. Student Affairs Strategic Plan
 - v. Our goals for developing and implementing division wide learning outcomes (how fits into general assessment priority)
 - vi. Best practices/terminology/definitions
 - vii. Instructions for conducting unit- and program- level inventory of goals

3. Members go back to units to conduct program-level inventory of goals by programs and service. (February 2019)

4. Committee meets to aggregate goals identified and begins to sort into common outcomes that align with division mission, values and strategic goals. (March 2019)



5. Further work on writing learning outcomes that are applicable and allow for specification as appropriate within programs. Develop guidelines for each learning outcome. (March – May 2019)
6. Present drafted learning outcomes to VP and Leadership and/or Executive for approval. (May 2019)
7. Transition Learning Outcomes Committee to ongoing Assessment Committee and announce Learning Outcomes division-wide. (June 2019)
8. Develop schedule and process to conduct hands on review of current assessment activities and needs for each department leading to the implementation plan for each department through 2019-2020. (June 2019)