

# Report from the Task Force on Student Learning Outcomes

March 1, 2009

## Introduction

The members of the Task Force met weekly to address its charge from the Faculty Senate:

1. To define the collaborative process between the FGCU faculty and administration for reconsidering undergraduate and graduate students' learning outcomes and goals.
2. Proceed with the review of the existing university graduate and undergraduate students' outcomes/goals within an acceptable time frame.

Membership agreed that the statements labeled "Undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes" and "Graduate Student Learning Outcomes" in the 2008-2009 FGCU catalog may need to be renamed and, in some cases, changed. Since the University opened in 1997, the undergraduate statements have been presented in various ways. In the 1996-1997 FGCU catalog, the statements were labeled "University Learning Outcomes" and the wording of the statements was different from wording that appeared in the 2008-2009 catalog. In the 1998-1999 FGCU catalog, the statements were labeled "Student Learning Goals and Outcomes."

The meaning and understanding of the terms *goals* and *outcomes* have changed over time. In the science of educational assessment, particularly relevant for the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the current understanding of the term *outcomes* implies frequent, systematized assessment on periodic basis (e.g., 1-3 years). Adopting a structure, to be determined by faculty and administrative stakeholders, with both general statements (e.g., values, goals) and more specific statements (e.g., outcomes) relating to student learning will enable the University to have statements common for all students as well as statements specific to a program.

In determining a review process, the membership examined existing student learning outcomes for undergraduate and graduate students and determined the time allotted to this task force was insufficient for a comprehensive and meaningful review to occur. This review process has great importance and implications for the University students, faculty, and community stakeholders. For a valuable and comprehensive review, resulting in significant and meaningful information, a new task force will require a greater the amount of time, such as that devoted to developing the University Mission or the Quality Enhancement Plan. The review must include students, faculty, and community stakeholders (e.g., businesses, employers) with ample input from all parties.

The Task Force agreed that the General Education competencies are a core unit of the University, yet do not completely reflect the University's uniqueness. There was no additional

review of the General Education competencies. Membership did not consider this a part of its charge.

As charged, the task force, with full consensus, approved the following collaborative review process.

### **Collaborative Review Process of Student Learning Outcomes**

- A. Compose and disseminate the historical, institutional contexts that necessitate revised Student Learning Outcomes and a revised Student Learning Outcome assessment process.
- B. Identify assessment expectations from internal and external bodies (state regulations, accreditation institutions and programs, etc.).
- C. Gather information about how FGCU Undergraduate and Graduate colleges/programs use and assess the institution's current Student Learning Outcomes.
- D. Gather information about how other institutions' Undergraduate and Graduate colleges/programs use and assess their respective Student Learning Outcomes.
- E. Gather information on trends and models in use at state, regional, and national levels. These would include the essential learning outcomes entitled LEAP (Liberal Education for America's Promise), promulgated by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and any others found as part of this research process.
- F. Align data from C, D, and E to identify best-case Student Learning Outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes assessment strategies for fulfilling the assessment expectations identified in B.
- G. Analyze best-case Student Learning Outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes assessment strategies against current FGCU Student Learning Outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes assessment strategies.
  - a. Generate comparative analysis.
  - b. Disseminate report to stakeholders (faculty, student government, administration, etc.).
  - c. Invite stakeholder feedback on this report to generate ideas for aligning FGCU's current Student Learning Outcomes (which reflect its institutional history and values) with best-case Student Learning Outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes assessment strategies (which determine the University's accreditation status and viability).
  - d. Determine resources needed, including technology, to support efforts.
- H. Collate feedback to develop revised Student Learning Outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes assessment strategies.

Lastly, with full consensus, the task force recommends the collaborative review process of student learning outcomes be directed and frequency of review be determined by a new committee. The new committee should be comprised of individuals who have an institutional history, as well as knowledge of and experience with student assessment requirements, and accreditation process.

Thank you for this opportunity to assist the University in this matter.

Respectfully,

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representative

#### Taskforce Members

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