Florida Gulf Coast University
Faculty Senate Outcomes and Assessment Task Force (OATF)

Judy R. Wilkerson, Chair

March 20, 2012

The Senate Outcomes and Assessment Task Force (OATF) met 11 times in academic year 2011-12. This report to the FGCU Faculty Senate is comprised of the membership list, the charge from Senate, a brief summary of the process, and the final recommendations reached. It is supplemented with the following appendices:

      Appendix A: Current and Initial Student Learning Outcomes and Goals (SLOGs)
      Appendix B: OATF Process and Procedures
      Appendix C: OATF Agendas
      Appendix D: OATF Minutes
      Appendix E: Process Used in College Discussions
      Appendix F: College Meeting Schedule and Reports

OATF Members

Members included both elected College representatives and appointed ex-officio representatives from Academic Affairs. The Chair was appointed by the Senate President, and two consultants worked with us. Members were as follows:

- Darlene Andert, Lutgert College of Business, voting
- Tom Bevins, College of Health Professions, voting
- Anna Carlin, Library, voting
- Sim Komisar, Whitaker College of Engineering, voting
- Collin Ramdeen, College of Professional Studies, voting
- Maria Roca, College of Arts and Sciences, voting
- Charles Xiaoxue Wang, College of Education, voting

- Cathy Duff, ex-officio, Academic Affairs, non-voting
- Elspeth McCulloch, ex-officio, Academic Affairs, non-voting
- Jim Wohlpart, ex-officio, Academic Affairs, non-voting

- Judy R. Wilkerson, Chair (College of Education), non-voting except in case of tie
- Eric Otto, Consultant, General Education Council, non-voting
- Katherine Hale, Consultant, Communication, non-voting

Charge to OATF from Senate

Like other Senate task forces, the Outcomes and Assessment Task Force will begin its work by defining its operational procedures and decision-making processes, including the framework for deliberations and the work flow for iterative documents that are to become part of the task force's official work product. Once that groundwork is completed, it will proceed with the following three charges, with an over-arching goal of simplifying and aligning existing processes while ensuring an effective and efficient University-wide outcomes assessment process
.

1. Develop University SLOs for all University levels (lower division, upper division, and graduate programs).
2. Establish a partial list of SLO attributes, as appropriate, and a process for continued attribute identification in academic units.
3. Develop a University-level SLO assessment plan, with specific attention to course-embedded- assessments.

Summary of the Process

The Task Force worked as a committee of the whole, reaching consensus on all decisions. The Task Force used a consolidated list of 14 student learning outcomes (SLOs) derived from the four sets of outcomes and competencies: current undergraduate and graduate Student Learning Outcomes and Goals (SLOGs), the General Education Competencies, and the competencies required by the Board of Governors in the Academic Learning Compacts (ALCs). These were abbreviated as follows:

1. Aesthetic Sensibility
2. Communication (included in four sets)
3. Community Involvement
4. Content/Discipline (included in two sets)
5. Continuous Improvement
6. Critical Thinking (included in three sets)
7. Culturally Diverse Perspective
8. Ecological Perspective
9. Ethical Responsibility
10. Information Literacy
11. Leadership
12. Problem-Solving Abilities
13. Quantitative Reasoning
14. Technological Literacy

After extensive discussion related to the definition of an SLO, the existing SLOs, and the process needed to meet the charge, the Task Force conducted a brief survey of the faculty to obtain a preliminary assessment of commitment to each of the 14 abbreviated SLOs. Based on the results of the survey, the Task Force presented the results to the faculty and sought input in each College and the Library on each SLO. See Appendix E for the process and Appendix F for unit level results.

Recommendations

The Task Force reached consensus on the following recommendations:

1. Definition of Student Learning Outcomes (Charge 1):

   University-wide learning outcomes are those that are **integrated** into the instructional curriculum of **every** program such that students will be able to demonstrate their learning regarding that outcome and faculty will be able to assess that learning for the purposes of program improvement.

2. FGCU Graduate and Undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes for All Programs (Charge 1):

   The following three areas of student learning are taught and assessed in every degree program at FGCU: communication skills, critical thinking skills, and content/discipline knowledge and skills. Each undergraduate and graduate degree program is required to develop measurable student learning outcomes in each of the three areas, as relevant to the student learning needs of that program. Graduate level student learning occurs at a higher level than undergraduate student learning and thus the outcomes that are established for graduate programs should reflect a greater level of rigor and complexity.

   For the purposes of accountability and program improvement, each program is further required to provide evidence of students' attainment of each outcome, the use of this evidence in determining program improvement strategies, and data demonstrating the results of each identified improvement. The assessment process will be accomplished in accordance with relevant University policies and procedures that are developed and implemented collaboratively by faculty and administration.

   Faculty and administration are encouraged to support efforts to incorporate the student learning goals and outcomes that have been in existence since the founding of the University in curricular and extracurricular programs.   The initial university student learning goals and outcomes appeared in the 1996-1997 University Catalog and have evolved over the years. Ecological sustainability, community involvement, and diversity were the most discussed SLOs and should receive special attention as programs develop their individual SLOs.

   > Note: The initial and current undergraduate and graduate SLOGs are provided in Appendix A.

3. Attributes (Charge 2)

   Regarding the establishment of a set of attributes to define each outcome, the Task Force determined that this would be appropriate at the program level, since the three "outcomes" (areas) are technically general "competency" areas that will require the

development of program-level outcomes first.

4. Assessment Plans (Charge 3)

The Task Force recommends that the University use Policy 2.005, Academic Learning Compacts, as the guiding policy and procedure for the student learning outcomes assessment component of program assessment plans at both undergraduate and graduate levels at FGCU. This requires the assessment of the three areas of student learning confirmed by the faculty. The Task Force reviewed the components and descriptions in Policy 2.005 and supports the requirements as stated in policy below:

Core Student Learning Outcomes: Concise statements that describe what each active and successful graduate, who has participated in the joint teaching-learning-assessment process as part of a given baccalaureate degree program, will know and be able to do (competencies). Each ALC contains jargon-free statements that describe outcomes in the following areas:

(a) Content/discipline-specific knowledge and skills,
(b) Communication skills, and
(c) Critical thinking skills.

Assessment Strategies: Mechanisms or tools that may be used to assess individual student attainment of expected core student learning outcomes. The ALC lists possible assessment strategies that may be used, including the courses/locations that students might expect to encounter these strategies. The actual assessment strategies to be used by faculty are described in the Assessment Plan.

Assessment Plan: A description of how every student in a given undergraduate degree program is assessed to determine the extent to which the student has met the expected core student learning outcomes. The plan must (a) be feasible, (b) identify the specific assessment strategies to be used to assess individual student attainment of every core student learning outcome, (c) be of adequate quality to withstand external review, and (d) compare favorably to best practices in the discipline. Data collected for the assessment plan is stored, analyzed, and summarized in accordance with the Evaluation Plan.

Evaluation Plan: A description of the system used to substantiate the assertion that graduates have truly achieved the expected core student learning outcomes. The plan and its components (a) can involve sampling, (b) must be robust with appropriate measures of validity and reliability, and (c) may include comparisons of student performance to the student performance at other institutions or to national norms.

Use of Results: A description of how results of student assessment and program evaluation are used to continuously improve program effectiveness and student learning.

The Task Force further recommends a simplification of the assessment process at FGCU, including the elimination of the Integrated Program Matrix. Finally, the Task Force recommends collaborative administrative and faculty review of the requirements outlined in Policies 2.005 and 2.009 to ensure a simplified assessment process that meets all internal and external requirements.

Both policies can be found at these URLs:
http://www.fgcu.edu/generalcounsel/files/policies/2_005_Academic_Learning_Compacts_6_19_07.pdf
http://www.fgcu.edu/generalcounsel/files/policies/Policy_2_009_Institutional_Effectiveness_Directives_121510.pdf

Chair's Acknowledgement

The Chair of the Task Force gratefully acknowledges the hard work and dedication of each elected and ex-officio Task Force member and consultant as well as the excellent support of the Senate Leadership Team. Without this level of commitment to collaboration and shared governance, it would not have been possible to meet our overarching charge of simplifying the assessment process at FGCU.