

Adding Purpose to Commuter Programming with Learning Outcomes

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What is student learning?

“a complex, holistic, multicentric activity that occurs throughout and across the college experience.”

Learning Reconsidered, ACPA/NASPA, 2004

What is a learning outcome?

“a statement of what is expected that a learner will be able to do as a result of a learning task or activity.”

Jenkins and Unwin, 2004

www.ncgia.ucsb.edu/education/curricula/giscc/units/format/outcomes.html

“Outcomes usually identify growth in some dimension of knowing, being or doing. This knowledge (cognitive), attitude (affective), and skill (psychomotor) schema identifies three key categories of possible outcomes”

Komives and Schoper, *Learning Reconsidered 2*, ACPA/NASPA, 2006

Simply put, outcome indicator statements usually express, “As a result of participating in X, students will learn Y & Z.

Categories of Learning Outcomes

Learning Reconsidered:

- cognitive complexity
- knowledge acquisition, integration and application
- humanitarianism
- civic engagement
- interpersonal and intrapersonal competence
- practical competence
- persistence and academic achievement

CAS Standards for Commuter Programs:

- intellectual growth
- ability to communicate effectively
- realistic self-appraisal
- enhanced self-esteem
- clarification of values
- appropriate career choices
- leadership development
- physical fitness
- meaningful interpersonal relations
- ability to work independently and collaboratively, social responsibility
- satisfying and productive lifestyles
- appreciation of aesthetic and cultural diversity
- achievement of personal goals

Example of Division-Defined Indicator Statements for Learning Outcomes UNC Wilmington, 2005

Informed Reasoning

- To develop the capacity to critically examine knowledge sources, truth claims, and the assumptions and biases of each.
- To think critically.
- To analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information in order to make decisions and solve problems.
- To develop a strong desire to learn, to ask questions, and to consider new ideas.
- To understand one's role in applying knowledge across professional and personal contexts.
- To think creatively and use imagination to the betterment of the campus community and society.
- To exhibit an appreciation for artistic expression.
- To discern and understand others' emotions.
- To differentiate internal subjective emotional experience from external emotional expression.

Effective Communication

- To demonstrate the ability to compose written expression that effectively conveys thought in a logical, organized, and purposeful manner in a variety of formats.
- To develop the capacity to articulate needs, identify and evaluate campus resources available to help meet those needs.
- To exhibit the ability to speak confidently, and competently express thought and information in multiple settings with a range of audiences.
- Engage in active listening.
- To utilize technology as an efficient and effective form of communication.
- To use the vocabulary of emotional expression to effectively articulate feelings.

Personal Responsibility

- To develop one's core values, how these values are related to those of the campus community, and how these values are expressed to the greater community.
- To integrate concepts of honesty and integrity into understandings of self.
- To understand the power and privilege that comes with being educated.
- To develop an appreciation for the natural environment.
- To use moral principles to guide decision-making when faced with a moral dilemma.
- To formulate an appropriate life strategy based on an integrated understanding of self and the environment.
- To develop the ability to identify, evaluate, and assume responsibility for one's strengths and weaknesses.
- To act responsibly, in accordance with one's articulated set of values.
To take responsibility for one's actions.
- To develop an ethic of care that extends to oneself and one's community.
- To understand the effects of one's behavior on the self, on others, on the community.
- To appreciate the value of and develop the capacity for patience.
- To develop leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- To appreciate, and effectively engage in the world of work, including a basic understanding of macro and micro-economic structures and forces, skills in time and financial management, and a balanced approach to career and personal life.
- To be aware of one's own relationship values and boundaries.
- To make healthy choices within relationships.
- To increase the capacity to understand and prioritize care for self and care for others.

Pluralistic Maturity

- To understand that actions and values are shaped by understandings and interpretations of the past, of culture, and of one's position in society.
- To understand and appreciate the educational value of diversity on campus.
- To broaden understandings of diversity to include age, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, spiritual affiliation, and disability.
- To develop a respect for cultural and intellectual differences of all campus constituencies.
- To develop complex cognitive skills for decision-making in intercultural contexts.
- To develop the interpersonal skills necessary to function effectively in diverse groups.
- To participate in opportunities to learn about different cultures.
- To understand your personal responsibility toward achieving a diverse society.

Example of Division-Defined Indicator Statements for Learning Outcomes, continued UNC Wilmington, 2005

Well Being

- To recognize the importance of and develop the capacity to monitor and exercise control over one's emotional, psychological, spiritual, and physical well-being.
- To develop the capacity to negotiate life-related issues within a given context or system.
- To regularly participate in physical activity and maintain a diet based on sound nutrition.
- To manage a life based on sound principles of spiritual commitment.
- To be aware of one's emotions and demonstrate emotional competence, including increasing the capacity for adaptive coping with aversive emotions and distressing circumstances.

Civic and Community Engagement

- To develop an understanding, respect, and appreciation for the local, regional, and global community.
- To work effectively and efficiently with others toward common purposes or goals.
- To develop empathy skills that help to facilitate active engagement in another's life.
- To develop and demonstrate conflict resolution skills.
- To develop an understanding of contemporary social issues.
- To identify and articulate systematic oppression.
- To demonstrate active citizenship through behaviors and practices in the college environment, in accordance with the principles and values associated with the democratic process, social justice and ecological sustainability.
- To hold others accountable to their own and community standards.
- To develop and participate in relationships among volunteers and diverse community residents through engaged community service.

The UNCW Cornerstone

I am an **engaged learner** in constant search of knowledge.

I foster human dignity through acts of **civility** and **respect**.

I maintain a **distinguished character** based on truth, honesty, and integrity.

I pursue **inner-peace** by recognizing the significance of spirituality.

I demonstrate **honorable citizenship** through acts of **civic engagement**.

I embrace community by **active involvement and service**.

I lead a lifestyle that advances **physical health** and **emotional well-being**.

Working with Assessment Professionals:

- Ask for guidance, and if there are tasks your office can do to ease the burden of work. (data entry, using other departments' instruments as models, combining instruments with other departments)
- Be prepared! Pick three to five important programs/services you need to initially assess.
- Add other programs/services incrementally
- Narrow the list of desired outcome indicators for each program/service to a manageable number.
- Review assessment tools thoroughly before implementing.

“Purposing” your Programs:

- Use outcome “categories” to determine if you offer a balanced portfolio of services & programs for your populations. (Use LR, CAS or your own)
- This is a nice complement to the SPAR (Services, Programs, Advocacy, Research) Model (Barbara Jacoby, University of Maryland) for reviewing program/service offerings.
- Use LO indicator statements as a guideline to brainstorm *specific* ideas for new programs.

“Re-Purposing” Programs:

- Don't force existing programs into LO categories based on what “sounds good” - should be based on quality feedback. (Komives/Schoper, LR2)
- Use LO indicator statements to brainstorm how you can modify and improve current programming.
- Sometimes quality of learning is more important than number of attendees.

Working with Students:

- Narrow desired indicators to a manageable number that relates to your specific population or service.
- May have different outcomes/methods for students you work with (pre- and post-tests) and the students *they work with* (surveys/focus groups).
- Make it simple! Try a grid instrument. (UNCW “Learning Outcome Matrix”)
- Make it fun! Challenge students to brainstorm new ideas in staff meetings. Use flip charts and vote on the best new ideas!
- Talk about the difference between general program goals & learning outcomes
- Challenge students to summarize how they feel outcomes were met/not met in their programs.