LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PLAN
Office of Institutional Research, Skagit Valley College.

I.   OVERVIEW

Instructional Program Review at Skagit Valley College involves an annual review of data and the implementation of strategies to improve student outcomes, focusing on four key areas: student access, achievement, learning, and satisfaction. However, the scope of this report is limited to describing the process for assessing learning outcomes.

Purpose: The purpose of learning outcomes assessment is to ensure that students are equitably achieving learning goals. This assessment helps faculty identify specific areas for improvement in curriculum and pedagogy. It is also a tool for faculty and administration to make informed decisions that meet the needs of students, disciplines, and the community.

Definition: Learning outcomes are measurable (assessable) statements about what students should know or be able to do by the end of a course or program. These student-centered outcomes focus on the essential evidence of knowledge, performance, products, or skills that students will develop as a result of learning, rather than on instructional techniques or course content.

Learning Outcomes Review: Learning outcomes assessment data are included in the instructional program review, which follows a 4-year cycle and culminates in a report summarizing 3 years of student data.

II.   TYPES OF LEARING OUTCOMES

1) **General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs):** GELOs represent the essential skills, knowledge, and abilities required in all associate degree programs at Skagit Valley College (SVC). These outcomes are designed to guide students toward becoming engaged, knowledgeable, and skilled community members while preparing them for educational and professional success. SVC uses GELOs to inform teaching, curriculum design, and program review, with an emphasis on equity in student access, achievement, learning, and satisfaction. Learning occurs both inside and outside the classroom—through resources like libraries, student services, campus events, and local communities. SVC is committed to supporting

students and the wider community in achieving these outcomes. Five GELO are: Communicate, Engage, Integrate, Quantify, Think.

2) **Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)**: They are the measurable knowledge, skills, and abilities that students can expect to develop by the end of a program. They inform the content, design, and delivery of all courses within a program. Competency in program learning outcomes is essential to students' success in their future academic and/or career endeavors.

3) **Course-Specific Learning Outcomes (CSLOs)**: They are the measurable knowledge, skills, and abilities that students can expect to develop by the end of a course. They inform the content, design, and delivery of a course. If a general education outcome or program outcome is mapped to a course, that outcome is considered one of the course outcomes.

4) **Degree or Certificate Learning Outcomes (DLOs)**: Together, program learning outcomes, general education learning outcomes, and course-specific outcomes make up each degree or certificate's learning outcomes (DLOs = GELOs + PLOs + CSLOs).

III.   ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1) **Instructional Committees:**

1a. Program Review and Assessment Committees: Oversees and helps coordinate the College's assessment of course, program, and general education learning outcomes, including the use of assessment results in planning and improvement. The Assessment Committee reviews and makes recommendations on academic standards, policies, and practices as they relate to learning outcomes assessment.

1b. General Education Committee: Provides the College community with expertise, leadership, research and analysis regarding the General Education program to ensure that the curriculum is current, relevant and data-informed; and results in expected student learning outcomes. The General Education program consists of all course requirements common across most SVC degrees, including First Quarter Experience, diversity, communication, quantitative, and other college-wide requirements. The General Education Committee (GEC) is responsible for evaluating and maintain the rigor of degree requirements as they relate to the general education learning outcomes, including collaboration with the Assessment Committee in the mapping of courses to the general education outcomes, assessment, and planning for improvement.

1c. Curriculum Committee: provides the College community with expertise, leadership, research and analysis of College instructional programs. The Curriculum Committee is charged with ensuring that the curriculum is current, relevant and data-informed; and results in expected student learning outcomes at the course and program levels. The CC collaborates with

the Assessment Committee in the mapping of courses to program level outcomes, assessment, and planning for improvement.

2) **Faculty**: Faculty are responsible for monitoring, reporting, and implementing actions that strengthen student achievement of learning outcomes and success. They create learning and assessment activities aligned with the outcomes they are required to assess. Faculty must also assess these outcomes in Canvas and use data to identify areas for course improvement.

3) **Instructional Programs**: This includes Deans, chairs, and faculty. Each instructional program is responsible for outcome mapping to program courses, monitoring outcomes assessment data, analyzing and reporting results, and recommending and implementing strategies and actions that reduce areas of inequity and strengthen the College's core themes, while also ensuring alignment with the College's mission.

4) **Office of Institutional Research**: Responsible for maintaining learning outcomes database, exporting outcomes assessment data from Canvas into a local database and create dashboards for data visualization and reporting.

5) **Office of eLearning**: Provides training, technical assistance, and reminds faculty of when and which outcomes they are required to assess. Collaborates with the Office of Institutional Research to ensure data integrity between Canvas and the managed outcome database.

IV.   ASSESSEMENT CYCLE OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning outcomes assessment data are included in the instructional program review, which follows a 4-year cycle and culminates in a report summarizing 3 years of student data.

During years 1, 2, and 3, programs engage in an annual review, analyzing program learning outcomes assessment data, setting program goals, and identifying strategies to reach those goals (annual formative assessment). The report is known as the "Program Effectiveness Annual Report" (PEAR).

In year 4, a comprehensive review and analysis of cumulative learning outcomes assessment data from the three years of formative assessment takes place. The summative assessment results in a comprehensive report that outlines achievements, recommends changes for improvement, and sets new targets based on the three years of data collection.

Note that instructional programs access outcomes data through a Tableau dashboard, where Deans, Chairs, and Faculty can sort data by their academic area, academic year, and student demographics (race, gender, age group, and attendance).

Current Program Review Cycle

- Year 1: Summer 2023 through Spring 2024

- Year 2: Summer 2024 through Spring 2025
- Year 3: Summer 2025 through Spring 2026
- Year 4: Review and Analyze Cumulative Data

Previous Program Review Cycle

- Year 1: Summer 2019 through Spring 2020
- Year 2: Summer 2020 through Spring 2021
- Year 3: Summer 2021 through Spring 2022
- Year 4: Review and Analyze Cumulative Data

V.   IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The implementation of learning outcomes assessment is a systematic process structured around three key areas: 1) training, collaboration, and engagement; 2) the creation of outcomes that are clear, concise, meaningful, and assessable; and 3) instructional program review. The College established the Outcome and Assessment Workgroup, which includes faculty, staff, and administrators. Workgroup members were selected based on their expertise, training, and/or experience in learning outcomes development, assessment, and backward planning. All faculty involved in the group have strong educational backgrounds and, in many cases, experience with outcome redesign at other institutions. Instructional Deans and the Vice President for Instruction also participated to ensure support, maintain coherence, and drive sustained progress.

Key deliverables of the Outcome and Assessment Workgroup included the redesign and mapping of outcomes to courses, the development of training resources in Canvas, and the creation of an assessment plan. The annual plan was to assess one-third of General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs) and one-third of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). In addition to mapping outcomes to courses, programs also identified one-third of outcomes to be assessed each year. Instructors are encouraged to assess learning outcomes for their courses even before or beyond the year the outcome is scheduled for formal assessment. The more frequently faculty can assess an outcome within a course and across quarters, the better. For example, the five General Education outcomes were required to be assessed as follows:

Outcome	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Communicate	Required		
Quantify	Required		
Integrate		Required	
Engage			Required
Think			Required

VI.   TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF ASSESSING LEARNING OUTCOMES

The assessment of learning outcomes in Canvas involves several technical steps that allow instructors to monitor and report student progress toward achieving course objectives. In addition to supporting individual assessments, the process includes tools for instructional programs and faculty to analyze and

improve learning outcomes. Programs and faculty can utilize the Tableau dashboard to view and interpret longitudinal outcome data, grouped by student academic plan (degree) and demographic factors such as race, gender, age group, and attendance, helping to inform data-driven decisions for program and course improvement. Below is a breakdown of the key steps involved in this process:

1) **Finding and Adding an Outcome to a Course:**
   There are two different levels of outcomes pre-loaded in Canvas that are available to instructors: 1) General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs), and 2) Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). These outcomes are mapped to a specific course or cluster of courses within a program, are embedded in course syllabi, and assessed at the course level each time a course is taught. Therefore, Instructors will import into their Canvas courses only the GELOs and PLOs that are applicable to the courses they are teaching during the current quarter.

2) **Linking an Outcome to an Assignment:**
   In Canvas, instructors can use multiple course activities to assess student learning. These activities may include quizzes, essay questions, and online discussions. Each of these assessment activities includes a grading rubric aligned with learning objectives and outcomes at the unit level.

   All instructional programs at the College use a standardized Outcome Assessment Rubric (OAR). This uniform OAR allows for data to be collapsed, aggregated, or disaggregated as needed, and enables comparisons across programs, faculty, classes, and modalities (see Appendix 6: Outcome Assessment Rubric).

   Consistent with the SVC instructional program review, instructors must create one or more assignments aligned with each of the General Education and Program Learning Outcomes they are required to assess during the current quarter. Therefore, instructors link the appropriate General Education and/or Program Learning Outcomes to the assignment rubric.

3) **Grading the Assignment and Scoring the Outcome:**
   Students complete assignments (assessment activities), and instructors grade the student work using a grading rubric. They also use the learning outcomes linked to the grading rubric to indicate well each student met the learning outcome standards (Exceeds Standard, Meets Standard, Approaches Standard, Standard Not Met, Not Assessed). Note that instructors grade assignments using a grading rubric aligned with outcomes, but scoring the outcome itself does not affect the student's grade for the assignment.

4) **Reviewing Learning Outcome Data for Improvement:**
   Canvas includes a "Learning Mastery Gradebook" that instructors can use to monitor how individual students, and the class as a whole are achieving desired outcomes. Instructors can then use outcome data to improve instruction for the entire class or identify students who may need individualized intervention.

5) **Quarterly Communication Cycle for Outcomes Assessment:**
   The Quarterly Communication Cycle ensures that faculty stay on track with their required

assessments. It establishes a system of reminders and follow-ups at key points throughout the quarter to support timely completion of outcome assessments and maintain alignment with program and institutional goals.

First Week of the Quarter:

a) The eLearning Office generates a report of faculty who did not assess scheduled outcomes during the previous quarter and sends the report to the deans.
b) Deans email department chairs about faculty who did not assess scheduled outcomes during the previous quarter and prompt them to contact the faculty.
c) Department Chairs contact faculty who did not assess scheduled outcomes during the previous quarter and remind them to submit assessments.
d) The eLearning Office sends an email prompt to faculty scheduled to assess outcomes during the current quarter.

Week Eight of the Quarter:
e) The eLearning Office sends an email reminder to faculty scheduled to assess outcomes during the current quarter.

Last Day of Finals Week:

f) The eLearning Office sends an email reminder to all faculty who were scheduled to assess outcomes during the current quarter but did not.

VII.   REPORTING LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSEMENT DATA

At the end of each quarter, the Office of Instructional Research exports learning outcomes assessment data from Canvas and imports it into a locally managed database. Tableau is then used to visualize the outcome data linked to courses and student demographics (academic plan, race, gender, age group, and attendance). In addition, each student's academic plan is linked to student demographic information, which is used to sort them into instructional program areas. For example, you can sort and analyze outcome data by students in Academic Transfer Programs, Automotive Technology, Culinary, Engineering, Nursing, etc.

Other information available includes the count of course sections that assessed the outcomes, student headcounts, and how well they met each individual or cumulative outcome. A percentage of records labeled "Exceeds or Meets Standard" shows the success rate. Note that each time an outcome is scored in Canvas, the entry is counted as a record in Tableau. Instructional programs can use the Tableau dashboard to view longitudinal outcome data grouped by academic year, student academic plan (degree) and by student demographics.

VIII.   FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1) Why do faculty assess learning outcomes?
Faculty assess learning outcomes as one of the indicators of student academic success. It is recommended that faculty list all outcomes (GELO, PLO, CSLO) mapped to their courses in the course syllabus. Faculty will assess these outcomes each time the course is offered. Outcome data will be used for program effectiveness and improvement.

2) How often are learning outcomes updated?
Program learning outcomes can be updated annually as part of the Program Review process. If necessary, faculty, departments, or the Office of Instruction can initiate a request to update learning outcomes at any time.

3) What is an outcome assessment rubric?
Each program has written outcome assessment rubrics (OARs) for all outcomes in their programs. Each OAR describes the indicators for 1) Exceeds Standard, 2) Meets Standard, 3) Approaches Standard, and 4) Not Assessed. Faculty use these rubric indicators to assess how well a student is achieving the outcome. The OARs are preloaded into Canvas. Note that OARs are part of the outcome descriptions in Canvas.

4) How are program outcomes mapped?
Each program learning outcome is mapped to one or more specific courses within or across programs. "Mapping" means that faculty, within their departments, collaborate to identify the courses that are appropriate for assessing specific program outcomes. The faculty also determine the schedule for when outcomes should be assessed (Year 1, Year 2, Year 3).

5) Who does the program review?
Program chairs, instructional deans, and faculty work together to review program data. They evaluate the structure, pedagogical effectiveness, curriculum, and needs of their program. The process focuses on continuous program improvement but is not related to program viability or faculty evaluation.

IX.   RESOURCES

1) [General Education Outcomes](#)
2) [Transfer Programs Outcomes](#)
3) [Professional Technical Programs Outcomes](#)
4) [List of outcomes & Course Mapping](#)
5) [Learning Outcomes Data](#) (all programs combined)
6) [Learning Outcomes Data by Degree Program](#)