

The following was featured in “Accreditation Notes” (Spring 2008, ACCJC)

Commission Sets Timeline on Student Learning Outcomes Implementation

When it adopted the 2002 Standards of Accreditation, the Commission made public its expectation that institutions would take eight to ten years to fully implement the new requirements to define intended student learning outcomes, assess learning, evaluate the results of assessment, and demonstrate planning and improvement efforts to improve student success. At its annual retreat in February, the Commissioners and the staff of the ACCJC considered the question of whether the timeline for full implementation of the standards on student learning outcomes set in 2002 should be extended beyond the ten years originally announced. The Commission examined data collected through an external review in 2007 as well as through the Annual Report forms on student learning outcomes submitted by member institutions in Spring 2007. The data show most institutions have begun the required work, and many are at the developmental level; some institutions are at the more advanced proficiency or continuous quality improvement levels, and approximately ten appear to have not started the work at all.

After careful consideration, the Commission decided to retain its expectation that member institutions work to implement the standards that require definition of intended student learning outcomes, assessment of learning, and use of assessment results to improve institutional quality be completed within a ten-year timeframe, or by 2012. Institutions evaluated beginning in fall 2012 will be required to have reached the “proficiency” level, which is the third level described on the Rubric on Institutional Effectiveness released by the Commission in September 2007. Failure to reach this level will be considered by the Commission as a deficiency in meeting the standards.

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness – Part III: Student Learning Outcomes

Levels of Implementation	Characteristics of Institutional Effectiveness in Student Learning Outcomes <i>(Sample institutional behaviors)</i>
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is preliminary, investigative dialogue about student learning outcomes. • There is recognition of existing practices such as course objectives and how they relate to student learning outcomes. • There is exploration of models, definitions, and issues taking place by a few people. • Pilot projects and efforts may be in progress. • The college has discussed whether to define student learning outcomes at the level of some courses or programs or degrees; where to begin.
Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College has established an institutional framework for definition of student learning outcomes (where to start), how to extend, and timeline. • College has established authentic assessment strategies for assessing student learning outcomes as appropriate to intended course, program, and degree learning outcomes. • Existing organizational structures (e.g. Senate, Curriculum Committee) are supporting strategies for student learning outcomes definition and assessment. • Leadership groups (e.g. Academic Senate and administration), have accepted responsibility for student learning outcomes implementation. • Appropriate resources are being allocated to support student learning outcomes and assessment. • Faculty and staff are fully engaged in student learning outcomes development.
Proficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student learning outcomes and authentic assessment are in place for courses, programs and degrees. • Results of assessment are being used for improvement and further alignment of institution-wide practices. • There is widespread institutional dialogue about the results. • Decision-making includes dialogue on the results of assessment and is purposefully directed toward improving student learning. • Appropriate resources continue to be allocated and fine-tuned. • Comprehensive assessment reports exist and are completed on a regular basis. • Course student learning outcomes are aligned with degree student learning outcomes. • Students demonstrate awareness of goals and purposes of courses and programs in which they are enrolled.
Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student learning outcomes and assessment are ongoing, systematic and used for continuous quality improvement. • Dialogue about student learning is ongoing, pervasive and robust. • Evaluation and fine-tuning of organizational structures to support student learning is ongoing. • Student learning improvement is a visible priority in all practices and structures across the college. • Learning outcomes are specifically linked to program reviews.

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