Primer for Academic Student Learning Outcome Assessments
Draft 7/18/2018

Instructions (or work flow) for each department or program:

1. **Department/Program/School**
   Develop Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) (called Objectives by some programs) for each degree. Examples are attached.

   a. These should link to Program Objectives/Goals (if a program has them) which are broad skills for graduates.
   b. All SLOs and PO/Gs should be listed in the catalog.
   c. As appropriate to the degree level (Associate/Bachelors/Masters), SLOs should include/map to the nine Educated Person Outcomes identified during this NEASC Academic Planning Process.
   d. Think of Goldilocks – make the number of SLOs 'just right', not too few or too many.

2. **Department/Program/School**
   Ensure that each SLO is:
   a. Measurable
   b. At a specific level of proficiency via **Bloom's Taxonomy** (for Certificate/Associate/Bachelors/Masters); and
   c. Student-oriented.

3. **Department/Program/School**
   Agree on a course or a licensure exam for each SLO.
   a. Every course can have multiple SLOs listed in the course outline and syllabus, but *each SLO needs to be _assessed in only one course_*.

   b. Some SLOs will be assessed in degree core courses, some may be assessed in General Education or Business courses. General Education and Business programs must be made aware and agree to assess these SLOs.

   c. If a SLO is to be addressed through a course that has multiple sections, the SLO should be assessed consistently in all sections.

   d. Spread the assessed SLOs over the year, some in Fall, some in Spring.

   e. Spread the assessed SLOs among faculty and courses.

f. Include SLOs on Course Outlines. Remember that each course can list multiple SLOs and may not have any assessed SLO. NEASC Group or Scheduler to determine one manner to identify the assessed outcome across all degrees (bold or italicized, asterisk,…) in the Course Outlines.

g. At a minimum, include assessed SLO on the course syllabus. (Faculty Assembly to be working on what should be in a syllabus in the 2018/19 year.)

4. **Department/Program/School**
Determine:
   a. Which type of matrix to use for assessment. Examples are attached.

   b. The benchmark that will satisfy SLOs within the department (ex.: 70% of students will have met the "Accomplished" or "Competent" level). For some programs with outside accreditation, this is determined by the accreditation body.

   c. How to handle work that wasn't turned in or student absences, this should be noted on the assessment matrix. Ex. "Only assignments turned in were included in this assessment" or "student work that wasn't turned in was included in the 'Novice' or 'Beginning' level". Some departments agree that this can differ between faculty.

   d. How often to meet to review and discuss Assessments. Some programs meet each semester, some every other year.

   e. Whether documentation of student work be electronic, hard copy, or a mix of the two.

   f. Whether student names and grades will be visible on work retained for documentation. *Names cannot be present if materials are stored electronically and if they are on a drive accessible from off-campus.*

   g. Whether all student work will be retained or only three examples: poor work, acceptable work, and excellent work.

5. **Faculty Member**
Choose the measurement method for their assessed SLO. Examples are listed below. Some faculty inform students before or after the work is completed that it is the assignment being used for assessment. If a SLO is to be assessed in a course with multiple sections, the measurement method should be the same in all sections.

- o Quiz
- o Exam question
- o Lab
- o Oral presentation
- o Survey (before & after)
- o HW Assignment
- o Project
- o Skills Checklist

6. **Faculty Member**

Collect or copy the chosen work for assessment. There are several ways to do this –the student hands in two copies, the faculty member makes copies before handing back corrected work, the student is required to send an electronic version for assessment, even if not required for grading purposes.

7. **Faculty Member**

Complete the Assessment Matrix for the assigned SLO.
   a. Keep it as simple as possible.
      - o Could the student complete the calculation correctly?
      - o How much of the skills checklist did the student successfully complete?
      - o Did the student know more of the survey questions in week 15 then they did in week 1?
      - o Did the student have an introduction, body, and concluding paragraphs in their paper or letter? Or topic statement, argument, evidence, conclusion?
      - o Did the student complete all or portions of the lab experiment?

   b. If your assessment is the student grade, a rubric should be used to show consistency across assessing the work. Examples are attached. ex: the Benchmark is all students get a C or better, with a C defined as 75%.

   c. Determine what identifies each level of achievement if you are using a matrix that lists "Novice/Intermediate/Competent/Outstanding" or similar, Examples listed below.
      - o Novice means the student did not list knowns in a math problem or did not set the problem up correctly. Intermediate means they set up the problem correctly but made calculation or unit conversion errors. Competent means the student correctly completed the calculation with appropriate units.

      - o Novice means the student did not finish or did not set the lab up correctly. Intermediate means the student correctly set up the lab project but made errors during the lab that they didn't catch until after the lab was completed.

Competent means they completed the lab and got the correct result. Outstanding means they got the correct result and noted reasons where they could have gone or wrong or related the lab to a real world scenario.

- o Novice means a student correctly completed less than 50% of the skills checklist, Intermediate means that the student correctly completed 75% of the checklist, Competent means the student correctly completed over 90% of the checklist.

d. Determine if the Benchmark has been met and record this under 'Notes' on the matrix. Also under 'Notes' (or similar) state anything else relevant. Examples are listed below.
- o Three students did not take quiz/turn in homework, this work was not included or was included under 'Novice'.
- o Class size was unusually small/large in comparison to previous years.
- o Class contains students from multiple departments.
- o The assessed quiz question was completed in week 6 after two homework assignments on the same topic.
- o Identify is this was an improvement or decline from the previous year's assessment.
- o If the benchmark was met, indicate no changes are necessary in teaching the topic.

e. If the Benchmark was not met, identify what you can do differently next time to improve the number of students meeting the benchmark. Add a relevant quiz question before the assessed homework assignment? Have the students practice a calculation/writing introduction in class and on a homework before the assessed exam question? Add a class discussion on the assessed topic? State what you intend to do under 'Notes' on the matrix.

Note: If all benchmarks for all SLOs are met all the time, the chosen methods are not discerning enough. The point is to show continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

8. **Department/Program/School & Faculty Member**
Review the SLO assessment at the Department Assessment meeting. Document the date on the Assessment matrix or cover sheet if being used, or a Department Assessment List. Examples are attached.

9. **Department/Program/School**
Store the SLO Assessment, Department Assessment List (or Cover Sheet) and Student Work as determined (central electronic or hard copy location).

You're done! Until next year….

Definitions:

Student learning outcomes or SLOs are statements that specify what **students** will know, be able to do or be able to demonstrate when they have completed or participated in a program/activity/course/project. **Outcomes** are usually expressed as knowledge, skills, attitudes or values.

Student learning outcome statements clearly state the expected knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies, and habits of mind that students are expected to acquire at an institution of higher education. Transparent student learning outcomes statements are:
- Specific to institutional level and/or program level
- Clearly expressed and understandable by multiple audiences
- Prominently posted at or linked to multiple places across the website
- Updated regularly to reflect current outcomes
- Receptive to feedback or comments on the quality and utility of the information provided