

Division of Student Affairs Proposal for Funding  
The Student Leader Learning Outcomes (SLLO) Project  
Texas A&M University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)  
Academic Year: 2007-2008

Division of Student Affairs QEP/Assessment Team Membership

Sandi Osters, Chair, MS1254	Dave Salmon, MSC, MS 1237
Chareny Rydl, Residence Life, 1253	Rhonda Rahn, Student Health Services, MS 1264
Carol McBryde, Student Activities, MS 1236	Kerry Hope, Student Counseling Service, MS 1263
Drew McMillen, Recreational Sports, MS 4250	Vanessa Diaz de Rodriguez, Student Life, MS 1257
Kristie Orr, Disability Services, MS 1224	John Wickline, Student Life, MS 1257
Rod Matte, Corps of Cadets, MS 1227	Tammie Cunningham, Greek Life, MS 1173
Darby Roberts, Student Life Studies, MS 1254	Peggy Holzweiss, Student Life Studies, MS 1254
Jennifer Reyes, Student Life Studies, MS 1254	Roxanne Longoria, Multicultural Service, MS 1121

Abstract

The Student Leader Learning Outcomes (SLLO) project provides consistent methods and tools for staff to use with student organization leaders to assist in the assessment and documentation of enhanced learning in relation to students' leadership experiences.

Goals of SLLO:

- Learning outcomes for student leadership experiences in the co-curricular for use by advisors across the Division of Student Affairs and in academic departments
- Assessment tools and methods for learning outcomes
- Infrastructure to train staff in the use of outcomes, assessment methods, and use of the results
- Preparation of student leaders to be peer developers and intentional learners
- Evidence of the value added by students' participation in co-curricular leadership experiences for use in accreditation, recruitment, fund raising and development

In 2006-2007 a pilot study was conducted in the MSC with 20 student leaders. In addition to embedded assessment for each individual student through a rubric, two focus groups were held with the entire group to determine if transference had occurred between their leadership experience and the classroom. The SLLO outcomes and rubrics have been mapped to the Mays Business School learning outcomes, and the project encourages students to open an e-portfolio with the Career Center to record their learning over time.

In 2007-2008 advisors and staff will have access to training and resources on the outcomes and assessment methodologies, and a meta assessment plan for the project will be finalized. A future step will be to create a process whereby advisors can track student leader learning outcomes electronically and share information across departments so that student learning can be maximized.

Learning Outcomes

The SLLO project directly aligns with the articulated goals of inquiry/research-based education of undergraduates. Because the SLLO project is not an intact course or a curriculum, the components of inquiry/research-based education are found to varying degrees within the themes and learning outcomes and in varying degrees in the mission and goals of the various student organizations that utilize them.

The development of learning outcomes is an evolutionary process. To date, ten themes have been developed with attendant learning outcomes and assessment rubrics. The following are five themes that have training materials and resources. (The communication theme has three component parts.)

Theoretical frames of reference have been selected in order to ground each theme and outcome in literature and research. Some of the outcomes are based on a single theory/model while others are a combination of several congruent theories and models.

#### *Written Communication Learning Outcomes*

Students will be able to:

- Effectively communicate in writing for a wide variety of purposes and audiences.
- Write a document using correct grammar and spelling.
- Effectively adjust their writing styles to appropriately address the audience.
- Present their information in a variety of formats.
- Create documents that accurately reflect their purpose.
- Clearly and accurately convey the intent of their message.
- Enhance the visual appeal of their written documents.

#### *Verbal Communication Learning Outcomes*

Students will be able to:

- Effectively communicate verbally for a wide variety of purposes and audiences.
- Maintain self confidence when speaking to an audience.
- Accurately convey the intent of their message when speaking.
- Structure a speech that is clear and easy to follow.
- Select appropriate audio/visual support methods and materials.
- Use at least one popular software program to create a presentation.

#### *Interpersonal Communication Learning Outcomes*

Students will be able to:

- Exhibit effective interpersonal communication in a variety of settings.
- Effectively apply active listening skills.
- Perceive the listeners interpersonal needs.
- Gain information about other individuals through communication.
- Build a context of understanding through communication.
- Establish and identify when using interpersonal communication.
- Demonstrate respect for others' viewpoints.
- Maintain proper eye contact while communicating interpersonally.
- Exhibit de-escalatory behaviors in situations of conflict.
- Mediate between other conflicting parties.
- Give critical feedback effectively (non-threatening).
- Receive, and reflect on, critical feedback from others.
- Demonstrate acknowledgment and validation of the feelings, opinions, and contributions of others.

#### *Critical Thinking Outcomes:*

Students will be able to:

- Identify a problem
- Analyze the elements/facts of a specific situation/problem
- Communicate the important elements/issues
- Gather relevant situational information
- Interpret information effectively relative to the problem
- Establish relevant criteria and standards for acceptable solutions

- Develop alternatives to address criteria
- Clarify assumptions
- Predict implications and consequences
- Construct well-reasoned solutions/conclusions
- Support conclusions with fact
- Communicate decisions (and throughout the process)

*Diversity Outcomes:*

A student will be able to:

- Differentiate between individual differences, cultural differences, and universal similarities
- Empathize and connect with individuals different from themselves.
- Use knowledge of similarities and differences between people to make sensitive and appropriate decisions

*Project Management Outcomes:*

Students will be able to:

- Articulate the series of steps/processes & strategies to achieve end results
- Determine, procure, optimize all resources (human, material, & financial) needed
- Define and appraise task
- Calculate time on task
- Initiate the task
- Perform the task
- Manage the task and the performance of all involved
- Complete the task
- Evaluate the task (pre & post analysis)
- Forecast and set procedures for subsequent years

*Teams and Groups Outcomes:*

Students will be able to

- Recognize a model and identify stages of group development according to the Tuckman and Jensen model
- Demonstrate the ability to facilitate a group through each stage of the Tuckman and Jensen model

*Assessment Plans 2007-2008:*

Each student who participates in an organization that is using a theme and its learning outcomes has the assessment rubric as an initial self-assessment tool and as a map to guide their learning. Advisors and trained peers provide feedback on a student's growth in the rubric through various assessment measures such as observation, document review, peer evaluation, and reflection papers.

During 2007-2008 a meta assessment plan for SLLO will be finalized to include assessment of the learning taking place for advisors. In addition, six student organizations have been selected for study. Half the organizations will serve as a control group while the other half will receive a rubric-based learning outcome intervention. Up to four web based surveys of participants will occur during the study. Up to 12 students from the control group and 12 from the intervention group will be selected to participate in individual interviews to gather qualitative data on what they are learning in their student organization and if they have been able to transfer learning between the organization and their classroom experiences.

The responsibility for the assessment of SLLO is with Student Life Studies. Oversight is provided by the Division's QEP/Assessment Team and the Vice President for Student Affairs who has supported and

nurtured this project from its inception. In addition, the department directors in Student Affairs are included in the training opportunities and will be provided project reports on an annual basis.

*Training Tools:*

A training manual for advisors and staff has been prepared during the summer of 2007. The manual includes: each theme and its outcomes; assessment rubrics; the literature, research or model that contributed to each rubric; an annotated bibliography; suggested activities to facilitate learning; a guide to facilitation; and a guide to writing and assessing learning and program outcomes.

A minimum of six training sessions will be conducted during the summer of 2007 and throughout the 2007-2008 academic year.

It is apparent that the outcomes and assessment rubrics are very useful for student employees. To date, at least two departments within the Division of Student Affairs have developed learning outcomes for their student employees and are using the SLLO assessment matrices.

*SLLO "Reach":*

It is very difficult to estimate the number of students who will be impacted by SLLO. The number of student leaders in each of the organizations using the outcomes and rubrics varies. A conservative estimate of the number of students involved in the 2007-2008 academic year is 120.

*Budget:*

A great deal of the cost of the SLLO project is born by the voluntary participation of student affairs staff (over 30) on the committee. Any expenses not covered by QEP funding will be covered by Student Life Studies. Sustaining funds for the future will be from Student Life Studies.

Resource	Description	Cost
Graduate student or intern	A graduate student each summer (\$4200) or a full time intern when funds are available (\$5800)	\$4200- \$5800
Student worker	12 hour a week at \$7.00/hour for 48 weeks	\$4032
Training supplies	Training materials for 3 sessions of 30 participants (notebooks, copying, certificates of completion, name badges, pens)	\$2600
Refreshments	Snacks for three 4-hour training sessions; must use Food Service when booked in University Center Complex	\$600
2 Tape recorders	One time expense to have enough tape recorders for interviews and focus groups	\$540
Tapes	For 24 qualitative interviews and 6 focus groups; 2007-2008	\$60
Transcriptionist	For 24 qualitative interviews and 6 focus groups; dependent on number of pages generated; 2007-2008	\$1000 - \$2000
Web page development	All outcomes, rubrics, and training materials available electronically; an interactive website for advisors	\$750
Totals		\$13,782 - \$16,382