

“SLOs and the WASC Self-Study: Measuring and Reporting What Matters”

For CCL Workshops
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Purposes of Assessment

- To clarify instructional objectives
- Evaluate the effectiveness of instructional practices to improve teaching
- Measure student achievement -- how much they know and what they can do
- For accountability and accreditation

From “Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning”

- “Assessment requires attention to outcomes, but also to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.”
- “Assessment is more effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multi-dimensional, integrated and revealed in performance over time.”

(Alexander W. Astin, et. al., “Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning,” *Assessment Forum*, 2003.)

What’s Different About the 2002 WASC Standards?

- Much more evidence-based
- Focus on SLOs and how each units’ activities and programs contributes/impacts student learning
- Themes
- Focus on dialogue – two pages in the **Guide** devoted to the importance of an institution’s engaging in dialogue and documenting that on-going dialogue.

What are Outcomes?

- Outcomes are benefits or changes for individuals or groups during or after participating in courses or program activities, such as new knowledge, increased skills, changed attitudes or values, modified behavior.
- Includes student learning outcomes and other desired institutional outcomes, often expressed as goals/priorities in institutional planning documents.

Ex: increase in retention or success rates;
improvement in number of courses with diversity issues in course outline

Student Learning Outcomes

- “...Developing SLOs requires that faculty engage in discussions of ways to deliver instruction to maximize student learning.
- It requires that those providing student support services develop SLOs and evaluate the quality of their policies, processes, and procedures for providing students access and movement through the institution.”

(From Guide to Evaluating Institutions, ACCJC/WASC, August 2004)

It's Not Just Standard II.C.

- Identify all the relevant sections in the WASC standards that LLR potentially impacts and contributes to:
 - Mission & Institutional Effectiveness
 - II.A. Instructional Programs
 - II.B. Student Support Services
 - II.C. Library and Learning Support Services**
 - III.C. Technology Resources

Examples of Some Other Relevant Standards

- I.B.1. Maintains an ongoing, self-reflective dialogue about continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes
- II.A.1.b. and c. Identifies SLOs for courses.....Uses delivery systems and modes of instruction appropriate to student needs..
- II.A.3.b. Gen. educ has comprehensive learning outcomes, including skills in oral and written communication, information competency....
- II.B.3. Identifies learning support needs of its student and provides appropriate programs and services
- II.B.3.d. Designs programs and services that enhance understanding and appreciation of diversity.
- III.C. b. Provides information technology training to students and personnel.

Measuring What Matters: Connecting LLR Services/Resources to Student Learning: Key Steps

1. Restate library key services/resources as performance objectives that show how they contribute to institutional priorities, which are aligned with WASC standards.

"Probably the most direct contribution the library makes to institutional goals is its role in developing clear student learning objectives for IL skills; assessing the progress and achievement of these objectives; and showing how the outcomes are used to improve student learning."

Example of Step 1

College Goal: "Infuse the curriculum and co-curricular programs with experiences that promote an understanding of diversity."	Standard II.B.d. "The institution designs and maintains appropriate programs, practices and services that support and enhance student understanding and appreciation of diversity."	Library Per Obj: "LLR offers a variety of information resources, services, programs, exhibits that promote student understanding and appreciation of diversity."
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Measuring What Matters: Key Steps

2. Identify performance indicators, which are types of evidence.
 - What is evidence? Characteristics- it is:
 - * purposeful and related to specific questions
 - * it has been interpreted and reflected upon, not offered in its raw or unanalyzed form
 - * integrated and presented in a context of other information about the institution that creates a holistic view of the program

Measuring What Matters: Key Steps

What is evidence? Characteristics- it is:

- *cumulative and is corroborated by multiple sources of data
- *coherent and sound enough to provide guidance for improvement
- *direct vs indirect, qualitative vs quantitative

Potential Sources of Evidence

- databases -- opac, subscription databases, library statistics database
- documents such as collection development policies, program review documents, planning documents, minutes of meetings, syllabi, course outlines, institutional fact books
- users -- survey results, assignments, tests

Sample from Self-Study →

Excerpt from Self-Study

"The number of book titles received in the 2003-2004 academic year compared to 2000-2001 represents a 75% decrease (Ref. 4). For some courses, **currency** of the book collection is very important and use of outdated material could detrimentally affect **student learning**. Analysis of book publication dates in the online catalog found that, of the 140,698 total titles, only 7,604 (5.4%) were published between 2000 and 2004 (Ref. 5). Using just one example for the **health/medical** subject area, only 157 books (2.4% of the 6,516 books classified for that subject) were published between 2002-2004. These numbers by themselves may not be convincing, but when **combined with qualitative data** that students provided in the Spring 2004 survey about **collection weaknesses**, a solid case exists for making improvements (Ref. 6)."

Types of Evidence: Library's Two Roles

1. Library as Instructional Provider - Use combination of data/documentation showing how inputs and outputs lead to learning outcomes

Ex: Librarians working with biology faculty (inputs) developed online research skills tutorial (output). Performance on tutorial quiz shows 81% of 250 students scored 75% or higher (outcome)

Outcomes: user self-report of change/benefit + assessment of learning gains/changes in behavior

2. Library as Academic Support Unit - Use combination of data/documentation showing how inputs and outputs lead to impact/effects

Impact/effects: quantity of service/resource available + use data + user opinion/rating of quality

Instructional Provider: Evidence Focused on SLOs

Standard II.C.1. b. "The institution **provides ongoing instruction** for users of library and other learning support services so that students are able to **develop skills in information competency**."

Perf. Obj: Library faculty, in conjunction with discipline-based faculty, provide a variety of learning opportunities so that students develop info. competencies through use of library/information resources.

Questions: 1. What are the information competencies that the institution purports to teach all students? (see others)

Evidence that shows **ongoing instruction: reach of instruction program**

- Description of courses, workshops, and other training held each academic year and attendance, preferably grouped by broad academic areas
- Extent of independent learning opportunities and usage data
- Specify information competencies addressed

Instructional Provider: Evidence Focused on SLOs

2. Evidence that shows **IL student learning outcomes and quality of instruction**

- Course or workshop outlines, samples of instructional materials
- Quality of instruction based on faculty/student surveys and anecdotal evidence
- Evidence about the effectiveness of student learning during courses, workshops, tutorials, such as:
 - scores on workshop or class assignments
 - pre- and post-assessments and course grades
 - analysis of research paper/projects – bibliographies and parenthetical citations; use of information to support writing
 - Analysis of research diary/journals
 - student self-confidence rating about specific skills

Excerpt from "Self-Evaluation Section of Self-Study: What's Missing?"

"The introduction to the Learning Resources Technology Plan explains the importance the college places on information literacy for students (IIC-57). This is reflected in the goal for the library: "Help students become information literate." The librarians are faculty members who teach every day. Each student's reference question provides the opportunity for a private lesson on some aspect of information competency. In addition, the College provides credit library orientation classes, taught by a reference librarian with the primary objective being to develop students' information competency skills. The library also provides customized class orientations to over 6,000 students each year. Instructors set the criteria for these orientations, and librarians meet with individual classes to provide information competency instruction. Librarians are continually revising the content and delivery of these class orientations using student feedback from a classroom assessment technique after the orientation session. (IIC-59).

• C.1.B Self-Identified Issue-Library

A self-identified issue related to information literacy is the need to establish benchmarks for the number of students who receive library orientation, and increase that number annually; to revise the library orientation course based on student and faculty evaluation; and to develop, implement and evaluate a Web-based library orientation for off-campus students."

Role as Academic Support Unit

What core services/resources do we measure and assess to show evidence for this role?

Examples of performance objectives?

"To support the curriculum and student learning the Library acquires and provides equitable access to information resources in print and electronic format."

"The Library's physical and virtual space promote study and life-long learning."

What are examples of performance indicators or evidence to document these objectives?

Group Multiple Measures to Strengthen Evidence

Excerpt from Self-Study for II.C.1.a

"Print, non-print and digital collections number 78,350 items. Usage statistics show book circulation is increasing from 45,961 in 1998-99 to 74,106 in 2001-2002. Library subscriptions to full text periodical databases increased from 13 to 18 with over 65,000 database logins counted in 2001-2002."

How might you improve this to strengthen evidence that collections and online access are adequate to support student learning?

Preparing for the Self-Study: The Year Ahead

- Populate the Self-Study Committees with LLR faculty and staff
- Volunteer to chair Self-Study committees, especially II.C.
- Educate the LLR staff about the process and especially the language of the standards and themes
- Revisit your Library Mission Statement – does it connect services to SLOs?
- Draft or review the Library's assessment plan or Instructional Services assessment plan? Is there mention of SLOs?

Example of Revised Mission Statement

Library & Learning Resources is committed to providing excellent resources and services that support the College's mission by:

- **Contributing to student learning outcomes** by actively engaging in both the development and implementation of an information competency initiative that supports the curriculum and lifelong learning;
- Providing users with assistance and instruction for success in the use of library resources for their present studies and lifelong learning;
- Striving to provide equal access to print and electronic materials and to develop services, including distance learning services, for students with a wide range of scholastic abilities, learning styles and comprehension levels;
- Being responsive to the changing needs of people with diverse ethnic, cultural, social and economic backgrounds, and advocating for faculty and staff participation in building and enhancing library resources and creating new services;
- Contributing to the College's curricular goals by providing programs and exhibitions and by publicizing available resources and activities

Planning for the Self-Study Year Ahead - continued

Establish an LLR assessment/data collection coordinator or team who will:

- Identify the relevant sections in the WASC standards and themes that LLR potentially impacts/contributes to and publicize to staff:
- Gather and review campus planning documents to identify important campus priorities and goals that relate to WASC standards/themes
- Set up a timeline in conjunction with the Library director or advisory committee

Planning for the Self-Study Year Ahead - continued

Establish an LLR assessment/data collection coordinator or team who will:

- Identify important data/documentation needed to provide evidence for each of the standards
- Coordinate the data gathering and analysis
- Write up the findings from the data analysis to share with the chairs of the Self-Study committees.

Practical Tips

- Membership – try to have members from all the programs included on the Standard I.C. Committee
- Contact chairs of other standards committees to offer needed information about library/info.competency/technology, if no library staff are on these committees.
- Give some release time to the librarian chairing or co-chairing a standard or theme committee.
- Keep an "action required" list of recommendations from the Self-Study, so that needed actions can begin before the visiting team arrives (e.g. improving the signage). This is evidence that the Library uses the results for improvement!
- Be honest
- Establish meeting times for dialogue among all LLR staff

Measuring What Matters

When a library adopts an external view to the campus-wide outcomes and goals, the range of services and resources to be assessed comes into clear focus. Not everything is equal in its need to be measured. Indeed, once a library promotes itself as fulfilling two major roles – as an instructional unit and as a critical academic support unit – it should become clearer to both the library staff and external constituents what services and resources contribute to desired campus-wide outcomes.