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# The Process of Aligning Student Learning Outcomes across the Campus: The Stockton University Example

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As campuses move forward in their assessment practices, they may confront a situation like the one faced by faculty at Stockton University. Assessment became cumbersome, at Stockton, with evaluation of student learning taking place at the course, program, and institutional level, with sets of outcomes developed overtime and not informed by the assessment taking place across the institution, with duplication of efforts, and with articulation of goals at the course and program level disconnected from the language of institutional outcomes. In 2010, when Stockton identified its ten essential learning outcomes (ELOs), the faculty had difficulty buying in because they perceived the ELOs an additional layer of outcomes that did not match their course and program goals. Some dismissed the ELOs as a fad. Others considered them too general to be meaningful. Still others did not understand how to incorporate ELOs into their teaching and the assessment work they had already initiated.



## ESSENTIAL LEARNING OUTCOMES



Essential Learning Outcomes	Description of Abilities
<b>Adapting to Change</b>	The ability to successfully engage and navigate new or unfamiliar circumstances or create opportunities.
<b>Communication Skills</b>	The ability to create and share ideas and knowledge effectively with diverse audiences and in various formats.
<b>Creativity and Innovation</b>	The ability to generate ideas, take risks, and recognize opportunities in problem-solving, relationships, or self-expression
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	The ability to formulate an effective, balanced perspective on an issue or topic.
<b>Ethical Reasoning</b>	The ability to consider alternative viewpoints and their potential consequences.
<b>Global Awareness</b>	The ability to appreciate diversity and cultural interconnectedness.
<b>Information Literacy and Research Skills</b>	The ability to locate, evaluate, analyze, and use information to solve problems or to produce an argument.
<b>Program Competence</b>	The ability to use and to integrate concepts, theories, and principles in one's major field of study in a masterful way.
<b>Quantitative Reasoning</b>	The ability to understand and to work confidently with numbers and mathematical concepts
<b>Teamwork and Collaboration</b>	The ability to join with others to achieve a common goal.

Stockton University's 10 Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) combine Stockton's flexible and distinctive liberal arts education with real-world, practical skills. They guide all Stockton University students from first-year through graduation to the intellectual and marketable talents needed to prepare for personal and professional success in the 21st century. As a set of values shared by everyone in the campus community, students encounter opportunities to develop ELOs in all Stockton majors, career preparation, professional experiences both on and off-campus, and academic as well as social activities.

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Figure 1. Stockton University's 10 Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) and descriptions.

## Implementing Essential Learning Outcomes

After four years of relative stagnation, attempting to lead ELOs from the administration, the Provost appointed a faculty director of ELOs to assist with buy-in and understanding. The director, first, convened a steering committee composed of a cross-section of University stakeholders to inform this work and, with input from committee members, quickly realized that the institution needed to take two actions:

- create a process to connect ELOs to existing goals and
- facilitate education of faculty members on pedagogy with ELOs. The latter effort, accomplished by summer workshops, increased faculty understanding of ways to integrate ELOs into their courses.

By the time Stockton began its ELO implementation process in January 2014, approximately half of the academic programs had designed assessment plans and, in most cases, conducted at least one cycle of program assessment. Among these programs were Stockton's accredited programs. I mention these programs because they stand out as Stockton programs that had completed, or were in the process of, creating curriculum maps. Accreditors ask programs to align program-level student learning outcomes to accreditation outcomes as well as to institutional outcomes. At that time, Stockton's accredited programs included Business, Chemistry, Communication Disorders, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Social Work. Currently, Visual Arts, Computer Science, and Counseling are in the process of applying for initial accreditation. These programs offer non-accredited programs models for how to map and align. Because of this, the accredited programs became a resource for the generation of an institutional map of student learning outcomes and assessment across the institution.

### *The Process*

Stockton values shared governance and those who lead major campus-wide initiatives make a point of consulting and collaborating with all campus constituencies, including faculty and students and, in this case, Student Affairs units, in planning and implementation processes. For an institution with approximately 10,000 students, 325 full-time tenure/tenure track faculty, 350 adjuncts and professional staff who teach, an active Faculty Senate, three collective bargaining units, and close to 1,000 employees across all academic Schools and administrative Divisions, the effort to reach and gain feedback from all populations requires diligence, a multi-year time commitment, and organizational efficiency to make sure that communication is sustained, meaningful, and reciprocal. I led the ELO Steering Committee through the implementation phase and after, but I would not have been successful without the help of committed faculty and staff and without administrative support.

My ultimate goal was to develop an ELO assessment plan for the institution; however, that could not be accomplished without universal integration of ELOs in teaching and learning, program assessment, and annual/5-year program review processes. The steering committee served as a site for open, at times contentious, but always productive, discussions about all aspects of ELO implementation and questions of concern to faculty, such as:

- Should ELO proficiency be a graduation requirement, Should Stockton require all students to produce an ePortfolio,
- Should ELOs replace existing general education outcomes. We decided not to create a new graduation requirement, not to require an ePortfolio, and not to replace general education outcomes with ELOs.

In consultation with coordinators of academic programs, we opted, instead, to engage in the process of aligning course and program outcomes to ELOs. This decision led to two very positive results: visualization of the relationship between outcomes and simplification of assessment. For instance, if a faculty member designs a final course writing assignment in a capstone course to assess students' content knowledge, critical thinking, research skills, and writing, the teacher can "see" how that assignment connects to and contributes to program outcomes and ELOs, specifically, program competence, critical thinking, information literacy & research skills, and communication skills. In other words, assessments did not increase with ELOs, as some on the campus feared, but became more manageable. ELOs provided a glue that hinged one type of outcome to another. This clarity certainly contributed to increased buy in and adoption of ELOs into, even resistant, faculty members' course planning and thinking about student learning.

### *Students*

Students were involved in the ELO initiative from the beginning of the implementation process. In the fall of 2014 and the spring of 2015, we piloted ELO integration into courses in general education and in major programs. Students in those courses were informed about the pilot, familiarized with ELOs, and completed pre and post-surveys that gauged students' self-perception about their ELO skills at the beginning and at the end of the semester. Prior to the start of the pilot, I conducted a survey of the entire student population to determine the outcomes students expected from their college education. The survey asked one primary, open-ended question of the students who completed the survey: What do you want to learn while you are in college? I did not identify ELOs in the survey questions; however, when I analyzed the results, I found that students valued the skills and knowledge referenced by Stockton's ELOs. Students also stated their interest in acquiring tools for career preparation, opportunities for community engagement, leadership training, and social skill building strategies. Student Affairs creates programming that focuses on developing these skills. In the survey, students expressed specific interest in opportunities to develop these four skills in their academic courses.

### *Building Awareness of ELOs*

In addition to learning from the pre and post-surveys that students completed in courses that piloted ELOs and through their responses to the survey, students in ELO pilot courses were invited to join one of numerous focus groups scheduled during finals week each semester of the pilot. All of the students who attended the focus groups said that they understood the ELOs and found them easy to grasp as outcomes. The ELOs are general enough to provide a common language that faculty and students can share. "Analyzing a text" or "synthesizing information from multiple sources," for instance, may not be as transparent to a student as "critical thinking." Furthermore, faculty and students found that using the shared language of "critical thinking" to frame instruction on textual analysis helped students comprehend the levels and intellectual processes involved in critical thinking: analysis, for example, as well as comparison, synthesis, transformation, reflection, etc.

During the ELO pilot and afterwards, all students had exposure to ELOs in the programming offered by Student Affairs. This exposure occurred, and continues to occur, at new student orientation, in Career Center activities, campus lectures, leadership training, and activities sponsored by student clubs and organizations. Consequently, students became familiar with ELOs even if they did not take a course in the ELO pilot. Student Affairs incorporated ELOs into its assessment plans, evaluations of activities, and advertising. During the ELO pilot, Student Affairs achieved 100% integration of ELOs throughout its programming and assessment. Academic Affairs only accomplished 80% integration of ELOs into academic courses by the end of the pilot.

The pilot implementation of ELOs included 3-day summer workshops for faculty. These workshops offered faculty opportunities to learn about ELOs, pedagogical strategies with ELOs, types of reflection, course/program assessment using ELOs, curriculum mapping, and outcomes alignment. 45 faculty members attended the first workshop and subsequent workshops have been capped at 15 faculty members. The first two workshops, summer 2014 and summer 2015, were considered part of the ELO pilot. However, Stockton has continued to offer summer workshops on ELOs since the pilot ended. In fact, this past summer, Stockton held workshops on quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, writing/communication skills and information literacy & research skills, and global awareness in addition to a workshop on ELO pedagogy. The workshops during the ELO pilot provided opportunities for faculty members to share their concerns as well as their enthusiasm and for those involved in designing the implementation to learn how best to proceed with next steps. Faculty members in programs with established assessment plans communicated their perceptions of the place of ELOs in those plans, and faculty members in accredited programs shared their strategies for adding ELOs to the curriculum maps supplied by their accreditors.

Working on course-level curriculum mapping during the ELO summer workshops spawned the idea for a University-wide curriculum map that would provide a visualization of assessment plans and outcomes alignment for all academic programs offered at Stockton. Courses and programs at Stockton have stated student learning outcomes. Generally, course outcomes align to one or more program outcomes. In accredited programs, the accreditor stipulates program outcomes; however, at Stockton, accredited programs tend to have additional outcomes that connect to Stockton's liberal arts mission. Non-accredited programs also have learning outcomes; however, these programs tended not to align course and program-level outcomes to ELOs or institutional strategic priorities.

### Beginning Curriculum Mapping

As the person leading the ELO initiative and the curriculum mapping effort, I had to figure out how to teach my colleagues both the value of and the process for mapping. I took on this complex task by breaking it down into smaller, and more manageable, pieces. Piece by piece, and in collaboration with faculty constituencies, I was able to create a curriculum map for the institution and to encourage faculty to use it to align outcomes and to communicate a summary of their program assessment plans and results. As we moved through this process, I was able to use a previous accomplishment to teach those involved at the next stage. Undergraduate and graduate academic program coordinators revised existing annual and 5-year review templates to include the curriculum map. The revised templates functioned as a form of pedagogy, too. Additionally, the blank and the completed University-wide curriculum maps are posted to Stockton's ELO website (<https://www.stockton.edu/elo>). Faculty members can consult the completed map to see how others have produced alignments and what kinds of program assessments faculty at Stockton have created to gauge student learning. Reviewing the map can give faculty across academic programs models for curriculum mapping and ideas for enhancing their assessment practices.

### Selected Curriculum Mapping on the Campus

From 2010 to 2013, faculty and other campus constituencies were not convinced that ELOs would become an integral part of Stockton's culture. The very idea of ELOs led to a feeling of goals' overload; there were just too many outcomes for faculty members to conceptualize and to manage in the context of their pedagogical work: course, program, and accreditation outcomes, and now, ELOs. In addition to these outcomes, faculty at Stockton had yet another set of course objectives to communicate with

students: the objectives identified on the IDEA survey of teaching, the student evaluation instrument used on the campus since 2005. Creating faculty engagement required creating a plan for connecting all of these outcomes. The first step was to align general education objectives to ELOs. I began with general education for three primary reasons: I was Chair of the Committee on General Education at that time; general education courses are the only courses on the campus that are reviewed, approved, and periodically evaluated; and general education courses are guided by a set of 13 objectives.

### *General Education*

The first draft ELO alignment was produced in 2012. I was the Chair of the Committee on General Studies at that time, and as one of my projects, I worked with the other Committee members to evaluate the 13 existing general education objectives for their connection to ELOs. General education at Stockton is relatively unique, the centerpiece of Stockton's liberal arts education, and at the core of Stockton's mission since its founding in 1970; for these reasons, the general education curriculum is also complex. It includes interdisciplinary courses from first year to senior year, a capstone course, writing intensive courses for first-year students (W1), writing across the curriculum courses (W2), arts courses (A), history courses (H), values and ethics courses (V), international and multicultural courses (I), quantitative reasoning intensive courses (Q1), and quantitative reasoning across the curriculum courses (Q2). Each student takes eight courses across five interdisciplinary course categories (one course in the General Interdisciplinary and Experiential category – GEN, two courses in the General Arts and Humanities category – GAH, 2 courses in the General Natural Sciences and Mathematics category – GNM, two courses in the General Social Science category – GSS, and one capstone course during the junior or senior year in the General Integration and Synthesis category – GIS). Across their general education and major program courses, students are also required to take one W1 and three W1 or W2 courses; one Q1, one Q2 course, and 2 Q1 or Q2 courses; and four courses carrying one of each A, H, V, and I designation. The general education component of students' education comprises approximately one third (BS degrees) to one half (BA degrees) of the total number of courses students take at Stockton.

New courses are added to the general education curriculum each semester; faculty members develop them in response to trends in the field, personal interest, curiosity, and experimentation. The Committee on General Studies reviews and approves new courses. Faculty members prepare course proposals and, to have a new course proposal approved, must identify 2-3 general education objectives and, since 2012, 2-3 ELOs and 3 IDEA objectives appropriate for each course. The Committee on General Studies revised the course approval process in 2012, as part of the alignment effort, from a previous process that was much less rigorous and did not lend itself to assessment. Revision took a year but certainly helped to facilitate connecting 10 ELOs to 13 general education objectives. On the next page is the alignment of ELOs to general education objectives (Figure 2).

Not surprisingly, ELOs and general education objectives do not perfectly align. For instance, three ELOs are not included in the general studies objectives: Information Literacy & Research Skills, Program Competence, Teamwork & Collaboration. In addition, ELOs do not connect to five general education objectives: Lifelong Learning, Experiential & Experimental Learning, History, Science, and Interdisciplinarity. Since the general education objectives were crafted during the 1970s, some imperfect alignment with ELOs is reasonable. Although Stockton has changed over the almost 50 years of its existence, the institution has not undertaken general education reform. The alignment offers one perspective on how to begin that reform, and provides a tool for identifying course goals and outcomes for faculty members who propose new general education courses. For instance, if a course aims to expose students to ethical reasoning, it would also most likely provide learning opportunities associated with either general education objective 2 or 13.

General Studies Objectives	Essential Learning Outcomes	IDEA Objective
Objective 7: Development of a conceptual framework with which to assimilate new experiences – and the ability to adapt it as necessary.	Adapting to Change	
Objective 8: Appreciation and understanding of artistic experiences as reflections of the depths and quirks of the human spirit.	Creativity & Innovation	Objective 6 – developing creative capacities Objective 7 – gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity
Objective 3: Ability to reason logically and abstractly and to comprehend and criticize arguments.	Critical Thinking	Objective 3 – learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions) Objective 11 – learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, argument, and points of view
Objective 5: Ability to write and speak effectively and persuasively.	Communication Skills	Objective 8 – developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing
Objective 2: Commitment to citizenship, through the ability to make informed decisions about public issues – while conscious of one’s responsibility for doing so and of one’s responsibility as an individual for the social whole. Objective 13: Critical understanding of one’s own values and those of others, and of their role in making ethical choices.	Ethical Reasoning	Objective 10 – developing ethical reasoning or ethical decision making
Objective 11: Awareness of the achievements and perspectives of people of different nations and cultures, and of different races, genders and ethnicities.	Global Awareness	Objective 2 – developing knowledge and understanding of diverse perspectives, global awareness, or other cultures
Objective 4: Ability to understand numerical data so as to be able to comprehend arguments and positions that depend on numbers and statistics,	Quantitative Reasoning	Objective 13 – learning appropriate methods for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting numerical information
These ELOs do not directly match a single General Studies objective; however, both may appear in a wide variety of courses across the General Studies curriculum.	Teamwork & Collaboration	Objective 5 – acquiring skills in working with others as a member of a team
	Information Literacy & Research Skills	Objective 9 – learning how to find, evaluate, and use resources to explore a topic in depth
	Program Competence	Objective 1 – gaining a basic understanding of the subject Objective 4 – developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to the course

Figure 2. Alignment of Stockton’s General Education Objective & IDEA Objective to the ELOs

All Stockton faculty members use the IDEA survey of teaching as the student evaluation instrument for their courses. Prior to the administration of IDEA, which takes place during the last two weeks of the semester, faculty members select usually three objectives, one essential and two important, that correspond to specific outcomes for each course. Since a course might also identify ELOs, general education objectives, program outcomes, and possibly accreditation outcomes, aligning ELOs to IDEA objectives can help the faculty member visualize a coherent set of learning outcomes in a course and present them to students. As an illustration, a faculty member teaching a general education course that provides opportunities for students to develop ethical reasoning (ELO and general education objective 2) will probably select the IDEA objective #10 as an essential objective. The alignment of ELOs to IDEA objectives is found in Figure 2 on the previous page.

As was the case with the alignment of general education objectives to ELOs, this alignment does not produce a one-to-one correspondence between ELOs and particular IDEA objectives. For instance, one ELO does not correspond to any IDEA objective: Adapting to Change, and one IDEA objective does not connect to any ELO: Learning to apply knowledge and skills to benefit others or serve the public good. On future evaluation, some faculty members who include ethical reasoning content in their courses may find that this latter IDEA objective represents the approach to ethical reasoning taken in their courses. This possibility highlights the importance of revisiting alignments, changing alignments to reflect course content and student learning over time, and approaching alignment as a flexible – and evolving – tool for faculty, and students, to hinge teaching to learning.

The fact that ELOs, general education objectives, and IDEA objectives do not perfectly match should not cause alarm. Rather, inexact alignments can be viewed historically and with the understanding that each schema emerged in distinct contexts, moments in time, and under particular conditions. From this perspective, they represent authentic attempts to portray the scope of student learning and opportunities for assessment as well as strategies for continuous improvement. Truthfully, not all courses and all programs provide opportunities for all outcomes. The entire curriculum does, and the institutional perspective about student learning outcomes at Stockton is that students receive exposure to all ten ELOs across the courses they take to earn their degree. Alignments help Stockton identify the location within the curriculum where particular learning opportunities occur and, then, create an assessment plan to evaluate the extent to which that learning is, in fact, occurring.

### *Program*

Faculty members at Stockton have made efforts to connect their learning outcomes to Stockton's ELOs. Faculty initiated these alignments in the context of the first ELO summer workshop. First-year writing courses, for instance, align program outcomes with three ELOs: Adapting to Change – Attitude about Writing; Communication Skills – Variety of Writing and Quality of Writing; and Information Literacy & Research Skills – Use of Sources. The remainder of the writing outcomes described below represent detailed, granular goals for students taking first-year writing courses that can be considered additional first-year writing outcomes for Communication Skills or outcomes that fall under Program Competence (Figure 3).



## Learning Outcomes for Stockton University's First-Year Writing Courses

### Variety of writing

1. Incorporate class readings into writing
2. Use at least two multiple rhetorical strategies
3. Address academic audiences
4. Write for multiple purposes

### Quality of writing

5. Use a standard academic format
6. Write a debatable, non-obvious thesis
7. Sustain support for a thesis
8. Begin an essay with an introduction that engages readers and logically anticipates the essay
9. End an essay with a conclusion other than a summary
10. Join most body paragraphs of an essay cohesively with logical transitions
11. Organize papers so that ideas are logically related without diversions or repetitions
12. Unify most paragraphs
13. Follow the convention so standard English grammar and punctuation

### Use of sources

14. Find electronic sources beyond dictionary.com and Wikipedia
15. Find traditional source material
16. Use electronic tools to locate some sources
17. Understand the credibility of electronic sources
18. Understand the credibility of traditional sources
19. Incorporate source materials with appropriate documentation in a conventional format
20. Properly use direct quotations, paraphrases, and summary

### Attitude about writing

21. Complete the course feeling more confident about ability to write to a range of audiences using appropriate rhetorical strategies

### Knowledge about writing

22. Demonstrate an understanding of the course goals

Figure 3. Learning Outcomes for Stockton University's First-Year Writing Courses

At Stockton, we have a popular undergraduate BS program in Health Science; it currently enrolls approximately 1,200 students. Faculty members teaching the introductory course attended the first ELO summer workshop. They collaborated to produce the course map below that aligns course goals to program outcomes and corresponding ELOs (Figure 4). The course map indicates that the introductory course provides exposure to six ELOs and eight program outcomes. Courses taken after the introductory course offer students opportunities to develop skills in Teamwork & Collaboration (ELO) and the program outcomes for identifying health disparities and demonstrating professionalism. Neither this program nor the first-year writing program includes all ELOs among their program outcomes. Outstanding for both programs are: Creativity & Innovation, Global Awareness, and Quantitative Reasoning. Writing courses do not claim to provide students with opportunities for Critical Thinking,

Ethical Reasoning, or Teamwork & Collaboration, either. The Health Science program does not offer students opportunities to develop their abilities for Adapting to Change. The program does offer students exposure to Teamwork & Collaboration, however, not in the introductory course.

<b>BSHS Program Outcomes</b>	<b>1101 Course Outcomes</b>	<b>ELOs</b>
Explain the relationship between the core competencies for interprofessional collaborative practice (IPCP) and improved health outcomes	Speculate about the relationship between the IPCP and healthcare outcomes	Program Competence
Apply the concept of wellness in discussion of health outcomes	Discuss the concept of wellness in the context of health outcomes	Program Competence
Consider the impact of multiple systems on health outcomes	Identify the impact of systems theory on health and healthcare	Program Competence
	Demonstrate a beginning understanding of the US healthcare system	Critical Thinking
Critically discuss the influence of value/ethics on health outcomes	Differentiate between legal and ethical issues in healthcare	Ethical Reasoning
Utilize valid and reliable sources of knowledge related to healthcare	Identify valid and reliable sources of healthcare information	Information Literacy & Research Skills
	Define evidence-based practice (EBP) in healthcare	Critical Thinking
Demonstrate communication skills that contribute to quality, safety, and improved health outcomes	Compare and contrast effective and ineffective communication in healthcare	Communication Skills
Demonstrate skills in teamwork and collaboration		
Identify the relationship between technology and health outcomes	Identify the relationship of technology to healthcare	Information Literacy & Research Skills
Recognize the interrelatedness of professional roles and responsibilities in healthcare settings	Explore professions in healthcare using appropriate resources	Program Competence
		Information Literacy & Research Skills
Identify the impact of health disparities on health outcomes		
Demonstrate the professional behaviors required to assume roles within the healthcare system or advanced educational programs		

Figure 4. Outcomes for Stockton University's Introduction to Health Science Course (BSHS = Bachelor of Science in Health Science).

As Stockton frames expectations for its ELOs, no one program needs to provide learning outcomes for all 10 of the institution's ELOs. That said, faculty members in programs like these two might revise their outcomes in the future and, noticing an absence of opportunities for students to develop proficiency in one or more ELOs, might decide to develop learning experiences that, for example, aim to increase students' skills with Creativity & Innovation or Global Awareness. It is also important to point out that Stockton faculty members, even those teaching sections of a single course, can select their own course texts and design their own assignments. That means, that some faculty members in programs like these two may create learning modules geared toward Creativity & Innovation or Global Awareness while others do not, despite the fact that program outcomes do not include these particular ELOs.

Stockton’s School of Business has received accreditation by the Association for the Advancement of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). For that reason, Stockton’s Business programs adopt AACSB outcomes, known as assurances of learning, as program and course outcomes. Accrediting organizations, including AACSB, require alignment of course, program, and AACSB learning outcomes to each accredited institution’s learning outcomes, in this case Stockton’s ELOs. The alignment below, for a junior-level Management course, offers one example of how a faculty member connects selected AACSB assurances of learning to ELOs (Figure 5).

AACSB Assurances	ELOs
<b>Communication Skills Learning Goal</b>	
<b>Oral Communication:</b> graduates will be able to deliver information in a persuasive, logical, and organized manner with a professional demeanor using appropriate supportive visual aids	Communication Skills
<b>Written Communication:</b> graduates will know how to create informational, analytical, and technical documents which are organized, precise, and relevant	Critical Thinking
<b>Information Literacy:</b> graduates will be able to assess the nature, quality, extent, and appropriateness of various sources of information used in preparing oral and written projects	Information Literacy & Research Skills
<b>Technological Skills Learning Goal</b>	
<b>Computer Literacy:</b> graduates will be able to demonstrate a multi-faceted skill set in computer literacy through oral and written communication	
<b>Management-Specific Learning Goals</b>	
Graduates will successfully apply basic business principles and theories in a variety of organizational settings	Program Competence
Graduates will acquire knowledge of current management and administrative practices and theory and be conversant in the language of business	
<b>Diversity Learning Goal</b>	
Graduates will understand, be able to apply, and will work toward integrating and evaluating the unique contributions made by diversity in organizations	Global Awareness

Figure 5. Alignment of AACSB Assurances of Learning to ELOs in a Junior-Level Management Course Management Theory, Practice, and Vision

### Turning to University-Wide Curriculum Mapping

At Stockton University, we attached alignment of learning outcomes to the annual and 5-year review reporting process. In collaboration with coordinators of academic programs, we first revised the templates for annual and 5-year review reports to include a section for articulation of program-level learning outcomes, another section for connections of those outcomes to ELOs, and a third section for assessment plans, results, and actions. By 2015, programs had provided enough examples, like the above alignments, for me to consider posing the idea of a University-wide curriculum map to program coordinators. It took us a year to review all of the campus examples and to create a curriculum mapping template that included all categories of information presented in the program alignments, in an understandable order. Our map, moving left to right, has columns for alignments to institutional strategic priorities, ELOs, accreditation outcomes, course and program outcomes, and a number of columns related to assessment planning and results. Since we conceptualized the University-wide curriculum map as a way to facilitate aligning and assessment, and intended to share the map across the campus, we wanted to make sure that it included everything necessary for faculty to understand what

information to include, to easily complete the map, and to learn from the completed maps where to begin, if the program had not yet embarked on identifying course and program outcomes, aligning outcomes, or creating an assessment plan. Below is the blank template for Stockton’s University-wide curriculum map (Figure 6). I provided a hypothetical example in the map as a prompt for faculty members, in response to advice from the program Coordinators.

Academic Program Curriculum Map and Assessment Matrix										
LEGS Alignment (if relevant)	ELO Alignment/Level of Proficiency (if relevant)	Accreditation Outcomes (if relevant)	Program Outcomes	Course	Course Goal	What Measurement/ Instrument	Which Assignments	Results of Measurement	Interpretation of Results	Actions
<i>The following is a fabricated example.</i>										
Learning	Information Literacy & Research Skills	N/R	Demonstrate the ability to synthesize research	XXXX 1101 First-Year Communication	Write an essay that incorporates more than one source of information.	Rubric	Research paper	80% of the students who took XXXX 1101, in the fall semester 2014 received a C or better on their research paper assignment, 60% received a B or better, 20% received an A- or an A.	The 80%, 60%, 20% statistics have remained consistent over the past 5 years, although the program has re-envisioned the research paper assignment, revised the rubric, and offered professional development for the teaching of research during that time period. The program would like for 75% of the students who take XXXX 1101 to achieve a B- or better on this assignment.	The program will have a summer retreat specifically for the purposes of redesigning the research paper assessment. The new assessment will be piloted in the fall semester.
<i>The spaces below are for additional program goals and alignments, etc.</i>										

Figure 6. University-Wide Curriculum Map

At present, approximately 90% of the program coordinators have submitted curriculum maps along with their annual and 5-year review reports. I copy individual maps into the University-wide map as I receive them. When programs update their maps, I replace the older map with the new information. In some cases, I have been asked by a coordinator to draft an initial map from information in the annual or 5-year review report, which I have done. The draft helps the coordinator see an example and, because of that, the coordinator has the confidence to revise the map, to share it with program faculty, and to continue adding to the map. In addition to submitting maps as part of the academic reporting process, faculty members use this template to present outcomes, alignments, and assessment planning in proposals for new academic programs.

The University-wide curriculum map has also been useful to me in planning for the University-wide ELO assessment. This assessment will take place over three semesters: fall 2019, spring 2020, and fall 2020. I was able to select courses to include in this assessment by reviewing the information in the completed curriculum map. If a program map indicates that a particular course delivers learning opportunities for one of the ELOs, I added the course to the plan for assessment of that ELO. Without the University-wide curriculum map, I would have had a difficult time identifying courses to include in the ELO assessment plan.

## Sharing Alignments with Students

Stockton University faculty members tend to communicate course goals and outcomes with students in their courses. At the time of the ELO pilot, not all faculty members included this information on their syllabi, however. Some attached outcomes to their course activities and assessments and, as a result, distributed them to students when they introduced a learning module or when they described particular assignments. During the ELO pilot, we encouraged faculty members to begin communicating outcomes and ELO alignments right on the syllabi for their courses and, additionally, on the materials for learning modules and assignments. We also emphasized the importance of providing students with the IDEA objectives selected for each of the faculty members' courses. Students benefit from knowing what outcomes they will be expected to demonstrate. They also benefit from the alignments; since the alignments connect course outcomes to the broader categories of program and institutional outcomes, this information can aide students' abilities to make connections between courses in their major and across the curriculum, in general education courses and in their electives.

For example, a first-year seminar might provide opportunities for students to develop their critical thinking skills, and by the time they begin their second year, they might take a course in their major that also includes critical thinking among its course outcomes. Although the critical thinking work will likely differ from course to course, students will begin each course with confidence that they know what is expected of them, be well-enough versed in critical thinking to navigate the course or assignment, and have the background to be successful. Additionally, since each course may approach critical thinking from a distinct perspective and may present different levels of critical thinking challenges, the student will enter the course ready to further develop what they learned in previous courses.

Finally, I do not want to diminish the value of a shared vocabulary about outcomes. For instance, critical thinking encompasses a variety of intellectual activities, as an illustration, applying theory to one or more situations, integrating knowledge from multiple sources, and transforming a practice or policy to meet current needs. One faculty member might call this type of intellectual work deep thinking; another might refer to it as metacognitive thinking; and a third might consider it rational thought. Some students might understand this various language to mean critical thinking; however, others might not. Listing ELOs on syllabi helps students to make the connection. Below are some examples of ways that faculty members on the Stockton campus have shared ELOs and outcomes alignment with their students on syllabi. The first example is a collection of syllabus statements created by the ELO steering committee that I send out to faculty prior to the beginning of each semester as a prompt. The second and third examples are from two faculty members' course syllabi, the first for a Perspectives on Women course and the second for a first-year seminar on the topic of disability and special education (see Figures 7, 8, and 9).

## Possible ELO Statements for Syllabi

### First Sample ELO statement:

Stockton College's 10 Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) combine Stockton's flexible and distinctive liberal arts education with real-world, practical skills. They guide all Stockton College students from first-year through graduation to the intellectual and marketable talents needed for personal and professional success in the 21st century. As a set of values shared by everyone in the campus community, students encounter opportunities to develop ELOs in all Stockton majors, career preparation, professional experiences both on and off-campus, and academic as well as social activities.

The 10 ELOs are: Adapting to Change, Communication Skills, Creativity and Innovation, Critical Thinking, Ethical Reasoning, Global Awareness, information Literacy and Research Skills, Program Competence, Teamwork and Collaboration. You can learn more about Stockton's ELOs by visiting <http://www.stockton.edu/elo>.

In this course, students will have the opportunity to work on the following ELOs: \_\_\_\_\_

### Second Sample syllabus statement:

Through assignments such as \_\_\_\_\_, you will have the opportunity to develop the following Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) in this course:

- Critical Thinking: The ability to formulate an effective, balanced argument or perspective on an issue or topic.
- Global Awareness: The ability to formulate an effective, balanced argument or perspective on an issue or topic.
- Teamwork and Collaboration: The ability to join with others to achieve a common goal.

### We might also offer this third, more visual type of syllabus statement:

Essential Learning Outcome	Description of Ability	Assignment
Critical Thinking	The ability to formulate an effective, balanced argument or perspective on an issue or topic.	Create a visual argument for your position on a situation presented in a prompt.
Global Awareness	The ability to formulate an effective, balanced argument or perspective on an issue or topic.	Write a 1000-1200 word essay explaining the cultural misunderstandings between the British and East Indians central to Aziz's trial in E. M. Forster's novel <i>Passage to India</i> . In your essay, offer an alternative to the trial outcome that demonstrates an unbiased understanding of East Indian culture.
Teamwork and Collaboration	The ability to join with others to achieve a common goal.	You will work with a group on a service-learning project this semester. At the end of the term, your group will present a collective assessment of the project to the class. In addition, each member of the group will keep a reflective journal that contains at least one entry per week. You will hand in your journals at midterm and, again, at the end of the semester.

#### Fourth sample syllabus statement:

Stockton's 10 Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) identify a diversity of learning experiences that students will encounter during their time at Stockton. Students can develop ELOs in General Studies, major, cognate, and elective courses as well as in extracurricular activities such as student clubs and organizations, athletics, Stockton-sponsored events, work experiences, service learning, internships, and social activities.

The 10 ELOs are: Adapting to Change, Communication Skills, Creativity and Innovation, Critical Thinking, Ethical Reasoning, Global Awareness, information Literacy and Research Skills, Program Competence, Teamwork and Collaboration. You can learn more about Stockton's ELOs by visiting <http://www.stockton.edu/elo>.

In this course, students will have the opportunity to work on the following ELOs: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Fifth, more pared-down version of a syllabus statement:

Your instructional and co-curricular experiences will support the Stockton's 10 Essential Learning Outcomes (ELO) – see <http://www.stockton.edu/elo>. Your Program, General Studies, At Some Distance, as well as your internship, service learning, work, and social experiences will all contribute to these ELOs.

The work in this course will further your learning in the ELOs for \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_.

Figure 7. Sample Statements for Faculty Syllabi to Communicate ELOs to Students

### Sample Learning Goals & Objectives from the "Perspectives on Women" Course

**LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:** This course has three essential goals. All course requirements ask you to demonstrate these skills. Students will:

- 1. LEARN TO ANALYZE AND CRITICALLY EVALUATE IDEAS, ARGUMENTS, POINTS OF VIEW (ELO: CRITICAL THINKING):** key ideas include commonalities and differences among women, continuities and changes in women's experiences, gender as a tool of analysis, and feminist definitions, analysis, methods, and theories. Specifically, students will:
  - a. Explain various definitions of feminisms, including feminisms as ideologies for social change and a means of analysis in academic disciplines;
  - b. Explain the social construction of gender and sex;
  - c. Explain how gender/sex operates as a means of maintaining and defining power;
  - d. Explain historical perspectives of social change movements in the U.S. and/or abroad.
- 2. LEARN TO APPLY COURSE MATERIAL (ELO: CRITICAL THINKING):** to identify and apply feminist research, sources, and analysis as an ideology for social change and an academic methodology. Specifically, students will:
  - a. Use gender/sex as analytical categories to critique cultural and social institutions and practices.
  - b. Use the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, marital and parenting status, age, religion, and nationality across time and place to understand and analyze commonalities and differences, continuities and changes in women's experiences.

3. **DEVELOP A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF, AND COMMITMENT TO, PERSONAL VALUES (ELO: ETHICAL REASONING):** consider how the topics covered in this course relate to your ethical worldview.

Two important goals of this course are for students to:

1. **LEARN HOW TO FIND AND USE RESOURCES FOR ANSWERING QUESTIONS OR SOLVING PROBLEMS (ELO: INFORMATION LITERACY AND RESEARCH SKILLS):** students will research feminism's definitions and the status of women in Atlantic county.
2. **LEARN TO WORK IN TEAMS (ELO: TEAMWORK AND COLLABORATION):** apply feminist practices by working together to complete class and small group projects.

Figure 8. Sample Syllabus ELOs Section from the Perspectives on Women Course

### Section of the Syllabus for a First-Year Seminar on Disability and Special Education

**Attendance/Class Participation:** Attendance and class participation are critical to gaining knowledge and skills presented in this course. You are expected to be on time and prepared for each class meeting by having completed the assigned readings and assigned activities from the previous class. These will include readings from The New York Times and supplemental readings of related course content material. While in class, it is important that you stay engaged so that you benefit from instruction, discussion and collaborative learning among those in the class.

*Please refrain from texting, using iPads and laptops for unrelated course activities, as your participation grade will suffer. Should you miss a class, 3 points will be deducted from your grade.*

The syllabus provides a calendar and individual power points, supplemental articles; helpful websites and specific assignments are on Blackboard.

*If you miss class, your grade will suffer. **Course Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5***

**Service Learning Project:** Students will participate in a service learning project. There are a few options for the service learning experiences which will be reviewed. A reflection is due 24 hours after each visit which is to be submitted on the blackboard reflection link. (15%) **Course objectives: 4,5**

**ELO's: Global Awareness, Ethical Reasoning, Adapting to Change, Communication and Team work/Collaboration.**

**Readings and Reflections:** Readings and reflections are based on New York Times articles and films on the topic of disabilities. Specific guidelines are provided on rubrics which are located on blackboard. Readings and reflection assignments-(20%). All reading assignments are due at the next class session. **Course Objectives: Reading objectives 1-6**

**ELO's: Ethical Reasoning, Adapting to Change, Communication, Creativity, Critical Thinking and Global Awareness.**



**Research Paper:** You will complete one research paper. I will guide you through the process of developing your research topic and conducting online and print research. The paper will focus on components of the Americans with Disabilities Act or other civil rights laws for the disabled and legal issues that surround this antidiscrimination legislation. There is a rubric for your reference. No late papers are accepted. (20%) **Course Objectives: 2, 3, 5**  
**ELO's: Information Literacy, Ethical Reasoning, Global Awareness, Critical Thinking**

**Group Presentation:** In small groups, we will research specific court cases that relate to individuals with disabilities and present both sides of the argument as well as an overview of the judicial ruling of the case. You will post a power point of your presentation on blackboard. (15%)  
Group presentation outline and evaluation forms are located on Blackboard. **Course Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5**  
**ELO's: Communication, Ethical Reasoning, Global Awareness, Team work/Collaboration, Critical Thinking and Information Literacy**

**Quizzes:** There are four essay quizzes; one for each required text. (30%) **Course Objectives: 2, 3, 4, 5**  
**ELO's: Ethical Reasoning, Global Awareness and Critical Thinking.**

Figure 9. Section of the Syllabus for a First-Year Seminar on Disability and Special Education

Each of these examples approaches the task of communicating ELOs and alignments to students in a different way. The syllabus statements provide models for describing Stockton's ELOs on a syllabus, defining course-level ELOs, and connecting course-level ELOs to assignments. The Perspectives on Women syllabus attaches course outcomes to ELOs. The syllabus for the course on disability and special education describes classroom activities and assignments and identifies both the course outcomes and ELOs associated with each learning experience.

## Conclusion

Creating a campus culture that supports University-wide curriculum mapping is a complex task that attaches to pedagogy, assessment, and academic reporting. In Stockton's experience, it requires input from a variety of campus constituencies, including students. Throughout the process of developing the curriculum map, I learned the importance of maintaining ongoing communication with program coordinators. Completing the mapping template, as exuberating as that might be, should not mark the end of communication or the conclusion of the mapping process. Curriculum mapping, always a work in process, should emerge as an annual conversation, in informal settings as well as on agenda for meetings with program coordinators.

At Stockton, for instance, we are in the process of completing a new strategic plan. That means that the institution's strategic priorities will change. Once that occurs, the far-left column of the University-wide curriculum map will also need to change. Program coordinators should have a voice in revisions of the curriculum map that reflect the new priorities. Any revisions to the University-wide curriculum map will spark changes to program and course-level alignments; outcomes' mapping for accreditors; and syllabus statements, specifically those that align to ELOs and strategic priorities. A flexible approach to mapping that views mapping as a recursive process, opens up the possibility for regular revisiting and modification in response to changes in campus culture, academic vision, pedagogy, and the landscape of higher education.