DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

LEARNING OUTCOMES

JANUARY 2016
Greetings Student Affairs Colleagues,

This past semester, the *Educating for the Future Strategic Planning Task Force* introduced nine learning outcomes that the University will use in the curricular and co-curricular environments. These learning outcomes outline the “Essence of a St. Thomas Education.” They were developed in consultation with faculty, alumni, students, families of students, staff, advisory boards and employers.

In the Division of Student Affairs, we will use these learning outcomes to frame co-curricular learning in our programs, events, services, processes and activities. This workbook was developed to introduce staff to the learning outcomes and to provide space for developing objectives for outcomes which you can implement this spring semester.

You will notice that the nine learning outcomes each fall under one of three domains. The domains are Integrated Knowledge, Ethical Values and Broad & Deep Skills. Each Domain coincides with a part of our mission statement (Think Critically, Act Wisely and Work Skillfully).

This workbook also contains information about writing your objectives and how to assess your work.

If you have any questions about learning objectives, please do not hesitate to contact us in the Office of Student Affairs.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## OVERVIEW OF THE LEARNING OUTCOMES

### STUDENT AFFAIRS LEARNING OUTCOMES PROCESS

- Purpose 4
- Definitions 4
- The Process 5
- How to Write Learning Objectives 6
- Assessing Your Work 7

### Think Critically - Integrated Knowledge

- Reasoning and Critical Thinking 8
- Integration and Interdisciplinary 10
- Curiosity and Creativity 12

### Act Wisely – Ethical Values

- Personal Identity and Ethical Compass 14
- Meaningful Engagement 16
- Global and Diverse Perspectives 18

### Work Skillfully – Broad & Deep Skills

- Content Knowledge 20
- Communication 22
- Preparation, Collaboration, Adaptability and Leadership 24

### Mission Fit With Learning Objectives 26

### Bloom’s Taxonomy 27 - 28
STUDENT AFFAIRS LEARNING OUTCOMES PROCESS

PURPOSE

The focus of our work with learning outcomes in Student Affairs is to:

1) Be intentional about how we advance student learning

2) Continuously improve learning in student’s co-curricular experience.

DEFINITIONS

**Domain:** A higher level grouping under which learning outcomes fall. The three domains for our institutional learning outcomes are 1) Think Critically [Integrated Knowledge], 2) Act Wisely [Ethical Values], and 3) Work Skillfully [Broad & Deep Skills].

**Learning Outcomes:** Institutionally defined statements of essential learning related to knowledge, skills, or values that students achieve and demonstrate during their St. Thomas education both in and outside of the classroom.

**Learning Objectives:** Departmentally defined targets aimed at achieving a particular learning outcome within the scope and context of that department’s work. The learning objective is written in measurable terms that describe what the learners will know or be able to do as a result of participating in a learning event, activity, program, service or process.

**Measure:** An assessment used to determine the degree to which a department has achieved its learning objective (with the goal of continuously improving student learning).
THE PROCESS

Because we are beginning with the *Educating for the Future Strategic Planning Task Force* Learning Outcome model this spring semester, we are asking each department to select one or two learning outcomes and develop a learning objective(s) for the chosen outcome.

Think Critically – Integrated Knowledge (Domain)
- Reasoning and Critical Thinking (Learning Outcome)
- Integration and Interdisciplinary (Learning Outcome)
- Curiosity and Creativity (Learning Outcome)

Act Wisely – Ethic Values (Domain)
- Personal Identity and Ethical Compass (Learning Outcome)
- Meaningful Engagement (Learning Outcome)
- Global and Diverse Perspectives (Learning Outcome)

Work Skillfully – Broad and Deep Skills (Domain)
- Content Knowledge (Learning Outcome)
- Communication (Learning Outcome)
- Preparation, Collaboration, Adaptability, Leadership (Learning Outcome)

Each department will be responsible for:

1. Writing a learning objective(s) for a learning outcome(s).
2. Determining measures that will help assess how to improve at achieving the learning objective.
3. Using data from measures to determine what improvements can be made.
HOW TO WRITE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Here are some tips for writing departmental objectives for learning outcomes that are derived from the concept of SMART goals:

S  Specific – They should name a particular program, service, or opportunity.

M  Measurable – When developing your learning objectives it is important to pair them with a measure that will help you understand how well you are doing at achieving the objective.

A  Attainable – Your objectives should be viewed as opportunities to stretch your department to improve student’s co-curricular learning and remain feasible for your department to achieve.

R  Relevant – Each objective should tie directly to one of the nine learning outcomes.

T  Time-bound – Your objective should identify the point at which an assessment measure can be implemented (i.e. end of a program, time when an assessment for a service is sent, etc.)

A well written learning objective provides a clear picture of the performance you expect. The following table illustrates Roger Mager’s (1962) A-B-C-D Model for writing learning objectives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVE PART</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>What level or ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>Observable verb or performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition</td>
<td>Under what circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>How well they must perform</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ASSESSING YOUR WORK

The goal of our learning outcomes assessment process is formative as opposed to summative. A formative process means that the purpose of the assessment is to gather feedback that we can use to improve our learning work with students (as opposed to a summative process which would focus more on a student’s individual level of success or proficiency related to a particular outcome).

Departments will identify a measure or measures for the learning objective they create. Departments should choose measures that will provide the best information possible for helping the department improve student learning related to each objective. Therefore, measures will vary based on the department’s particular learning objectives. Departments will be asked to use this information from these measures to identify opportunities to improve student learning for each objective. The best litmus test for determining if you have identified a good measure is to ask the question – “will the information I get from this measure help me to get better at what I do?”

NOTES:
Reasoning and Critical Thinking
(THINK CRITICALLY – INTEGRATED KNOWLEDGE)

Ability to
- problem solve
- think independently/originally
- think abstractly
- think carefully
- think systematically
- think broadly
- make sense of world where information is everywhere
- apply reason and logic
- apply quantitative and qualitative methods of sense-making
- inquire deeply
- rationally discern what is important
- distinguish good from bad arguments
- gather/synthesize and evaluate evidence
- Evaluative and Reflective
- Discerning/Discriminating
- Applied to creation and consumption of knowledge
- Patient with ambiguity/uncertainty/intellectual conflict
- Analytical skills
- Truth-seeking
- Critical engagement with life
- Appreciation for pluralism
- Broad conceptual understanding of surroundings and the world
- Information fluent

Example:

- Stop@Buzzed
Objectives and Measures

Objective 1:

Measure 1:

Objective 2:

Measure 2:

Objective 3:

Measure 3:
Integration and Interdisciplinary
(THINK CRITICALLY – INTEGRATED KNOWLEDGE)

Ability to
- Think and collaborate across disciplines
- Apply skills and competencies across areas
- Apply knowledge to real-world problems
- Problem solve from the perspective of multiple lenses
- Integrate habits of mind and heart across disciplinary studies
- Deep knowledge of chosen field and knowledge of how other disciplines play a role in search for meaning
- Recognition that all disciplines are part of a circle of knowledge (each contributes to the whole)
- Basic familiarity with central fields of human inquiry and how they are integrated and interrelated
- Unity of human knowledge
- Integration of faith and reason, of liberal and professional education, of skill and virtue
- Appreciation for pluralism
- Broad conceptual understanding of surroundings and world
- Holistic thinker

Example:

- Club and Organization Service Requirement
Objectives and Measures

Objective 1:

Measure 1:

Objective 2:

Measure 2:

Objective 3:

Measure 3:
Curiosity and Creativity
(THINK CRITICALLY – INTEGRATED KNOWLEDGE)

- Voracious answer-seeker
- Lifelong learner
- Knows how to pursue further inquiry
- Recognizing truth and knowledge as ends in themselves, and not only as means to other ends.
- Open-minded
- Creative thinking and problem solving
- Ability to direct creativity in impactful ways

Example:

- Meditation/Mindfulness
Objectives and Measures

Objective 1:

Measure 1:

Objective 2:

Measure 2:

Objective 3:

Measure 3:
Ethical/Moral Compass Personal Identity & Ethical Compass
(Act Wisely – Ethical Values)

- Self – awareness
- Able to answer the question: What do I stand for?
- Sense of agency
- Independence and authenticity
- Ability to apply a coherent set of moral principles within professional and specialized contexts
- Common-good orientation/concern beyond self
- Stewardship, Mission-driven
- Moral virtues: Justice, Courage, Temperance, Prudence, Faith, Hope, Charity,
- Accepting, open-minded, ecumenical
- Empathetic, compassionate, highly principled, humble, upbeat, confident, ---- optimistic, hard-working, passionate
- Willing to make unpopular but right decision
- Love of others, belief in dignity of all
- Awareness of common humanity and the human condition
- Social conscience, Critical consciousness
- Grounded in values of shared community - Family and community orientation
Someone who:
- Understands her/himself as an individual and as someone connected to others, the world and the transcendent
- Understands how his/her background influences his/her worldview
- Considers the moral, ethical and human results of his/her life
- Questions his/her own ideologies
- Is aware of his/her limits and knows how to expand those limits
- Has a sense of vocation
- Has a sense of honor/integrity and emotional intelligence
- Strives to live out foundations of Catholic faith such as kindness, acceptance, forgiveness, generosity
- Is in touch with the rights and obligations of being human

Example:
- Green Dot
Objectives and Measures

Objective 1:

Measure 1:

Objective 2:

Measure 2:

Objective 3:

Measure 3:
Meaningful Engagement  
(Act Wisely – Ethical Values)

- Engagement with  
  o all communities, local to global  
  o intent to expand inclusiveness  
- Committed to working for justice and peace locally and globally  
- Good citizen of local and global world  
- Empowered to effect change  
- Networked  
- Apply knowledge to real-world problems  
- Ability to recognize a moral challenge and respond morally  
- Stewardship  
- Change agent  
- Skills for activism

Example:  
  • Sustainability LLC
Objectives and Measures

Objective 1:

Measure 1:

Objective 2:

Measure 2:

Objective 3:

Measure 3:
Global and Diverse Perspectives  
(Act Wisely – Ethical Values)

- (Inter)cultural competence and an understanding of why it matters
- Socially competent
- Open to diversity
- Not just tolerant but embracing of diversity consistent with the good
- Appreciation for local and global diversity
- Appreciation and respect for the basic dignity of all people
- Appreciation and respect for diverse cultures
- Broad/cosmopolitan worldview
- Expanded sense of humanity and place in world
- Citizen of the world
- Informed global perspective
- Sensitive to issues of power and privilege
- Understand how one’s background influences his/her worldviews

Ability to:
- overcome ethnocentric (or even regional) worldview
- contextualize one’s own experience
- understand economic/environmental/cultural resources and their effects
- understand the complex inter-workings of the world

Examples:

- CultureLink Tea
- Purple Bench
Objectives and Measures

Objective 1:

Measure 1:

Objective 2:

Measure 2:

Objective 3:

Measure 3:
Content Knowledge
(WORK SKILLFULLY - BROAD & DEEP SKILLS)

- Catholic Intellectual Tradition/Catholic Social Teaching/Catholicism
- Fine Arts and Literature
- Sciences
- Social Sciences
- Math
- Philosophy and Theology
- Professional Disciplines (Majors or Areas of Study)

Examples:

- Student Leadership Trainings (Orientation Leader, RA, Tommie Central, International Orientation Leader, STAR Intern, Linkages Program Mentor Intern, etc.)
Objectives and Measures

Objective 1:

Measure 1:

Objective 2:

Measure 2:

Objective 3:

Measure 3:
Communication
(WORK SKILLFULLY - BROAD & DEEP SKILLS)

- Writing
- Speaking
- Listening
- Reading
- Skills related to human interaction
- (Inter)cultural competence and communication skills
- Ability to collaborate
- Teamwork and relationship skills
- Civil discourse (discourse without enmity and discontent)
- Collegiality
- Articulate (with diverse audiences)
- Effectiveness and elegance of communication
- Able to participate in discussions of all kinds
- Technology literate

Examples:

- SDIS J Term Book Club
- Gender Matters
Objectives and Measures

Objective 1:

Measure 1:

Objective 2:

Measure 2:

Objective 3:

Measure 3:
Preparation/Collaboration/Adaptability/Leadership
(WORK SKILLFULLY - BROAD & DEEP SKILLS)

- Challenge-seeker
- Broadly and deeply prepared to contribute in professional work and to community
- Committed to working with others/ effective team member
- Demonstrated excellence
- Solidly competent/capable; expertise in field
- Technical skills
- Ready to succeed in a variety of situations, to meet (changing) needs of workforce
- Dedicated, hardworking, passionate
- Networked
- Agile and resilient
- Intellectually nimble
- Lifetime of constructive participation
- Someone who
  - Knows how to redefine himself/herself professionally
  - Persevering--can fail and try again
  - Knows that the world and our understanding of it changes over time
  - Can navigate complexities of life/ is forward thinking
  - Meets challenges of changing world
  - Is prepared to live his/her passion
- Innovator/ Ability to mentor
- Agents of change/difference makers
- Servant leaders/Benevolent leader/Leaders by example

Examples:

- Fall Leadership Institute
- Career Development Model
Objectives and Measures

Objective 1:

Measure 1:

Objective 2:

Measure 2:

Objective 3:

Measure 3:
Inspired by Catholic Intellectual Tradition to develop morally responsible leaders who:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Think critically</th>
<th>Act wisely</th>
<th>Work skillfully</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Integrated Knowledge)</td>
<td>(Ethical Values)</td>
<td>(Broad &amp; Deep Skills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reasoning and critical thinking</td>
<td>• Personal identity and ethical compass</td>
<td>• Content knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Integration and interdisciplinarity</td>
<td>• Meaningful engagement</td>
<td>• Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Curiosity and creativity</td>
<td>• Global and diverse perspectives</td>
<td>• Preparation, collaboration, adaptability, and leadership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To advance the **Common Good**

*Leads ultimately to achievement of vision*
Bloom’s Taxonomy

Bloom’s Taxonomy is a classification of the different objectives and skills that educators set for their students (learning objectives). The taxonomy was proposed in 1956 by Benjamin Bloom, an educational psychologist at the University of Chicago. The terminology has been recently updated to include six levels of learning (see page 28). These six levels can be used to structure the learning objectives, and assessments. The major concept of the taxonomy is that educational objectives can be arranged in a hierarchy that moves from less to more complex levels of knowledge. The levels are successive; one level must be mastered before the next level can be reached.

Applying Bloom’s Taxonomy to Learning Objectives

Effective learning objectives need to be observable and/or measureable, and using action verbs is a way to achieve this. Verbs such as “identify”, “argue,” or “construct” are more measureable than vague or passive verbs such as “comprehend” or “be aware of”.

Sample Learning Objectives

After participating in the program, students living on second floor Dowling will be able to:

Differentiate the meanings of equity and equality.
   (Measure: Pre Test/Post Test)

Give examples of micro aggressions they have witnessed on campus.
   (Measure: Examples noted during group discussion)

Develop goals to further educate themselves about diversity.
   (Measure: Developed during floor meeting following the program)

(Taken From: http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching-resources/course-planning/syllabi/writing-learning-objectives/)
Below are examples of ACTION VERBS associated with levels of REVISED BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REMEMBER</th>
<th>UNDERSTAND</th>
<th>APPLY</th>
<th>ANALYZE</th>
<th>EVALUATE</th>
<th>CREATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chose</td>
<td>Classify</td>
<td>Choose</td>
<td>Categorize</td>
<td>Appraise</td>
<td>Combine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe</td>
<td>Defend</td>
<td>Generalize</td>
<td>Compare</td>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>Compose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define</td>
<td>Demonstrate</td>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>Differentiate</td>
<td>Criticize</td>
<td>Construct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Label</td>
<td>Explain</td>
<td>Organize</td>
<td>Distinguish</td>
<td>Defend</td>
<td>Develop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List</td>
<td>Give Examples</td>
<td>Prepare</td>
<td>Detect</td>
<td>Compare</td>
<td>Hypothesize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorize</td>
<td>Illustrate</td>
<td>Select</td>
<td>Identify</td>
<td>Assess</td>
<td>Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Paraphrase</td>
<td>Show</td>
<td>Infer</td>
<td>Conclude</td>
<td>Produce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Restate</td>
<td>Solve</td>
<td>Arrange</td>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>Generate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline</td>
<td>Rewrite</td>
<td>Classify</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Determine</td>
<td>Integrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quote</td>
<td>Summarize</td>
<td>Compute</td>
<td>Separate</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Transform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recall</td>
<td>Tell</td>
<td>Examine</td>
<td>Point out</td>
<td>Measure</td>
<td>Revise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize</td>
<td>Discuss</td>
<td>Graph</td>
<td>Diagram</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Reconstruct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeat</td>
<td>Predict</td>
<td>Use</td>
<td>Breakdown</td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Drive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>