

## INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING OUTCOMES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### ***What are Institutional Learning Outcomes?***

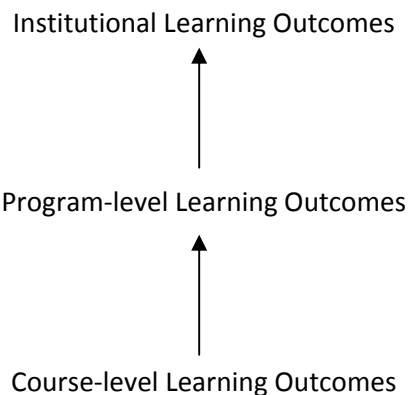
The knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes that students are expected to develop as a result of their overall experiences with any aspect of the college, including courses, programs, and student services.

### ***What is the purpose of ILOs?***

Institutional learning outcomes (ILOs) are designed to help guide individual departments and disciplines in the development of student learning outcomes for programs and courses and services, and to help shape the decision-making processes of the college.

### ***How are ILOs different from Student Learning Outcomes?***

They are inter-related. ILOs are the collective expression of the learning environment the College offers to any enrolled student. Student learning outcomes focus on the more particular skills, knowledge, and attitudes that students learn in your courses and programs.



### ***How can my courses meet all of the ILOs?***

The ILOs represent the educational values of Hancock College, and allow all students, regardless of their course of study, faculty and staff at the College the opportunity to share in a collective academic culture. Because these outcomes are the most universal educational goals of the College a single course cannot and is not expected to meet all of the ILOs.

Each program need not fulfill every Institutional Learning Outcome. However, each program must contribute toward at least one ILO. Likewise, each course within a program need not fulfill every program-level student learning outcome. However, each course must meet at least one of its program's established student learning outcomes. By contrast, a course should meet every one of its stated student learning outcomes.

### ***How are ILOs different from GE learning outcomes?***

There may seem to be considerable overlap between our General Education outcomes, developed by AP & P, and the ILOs. This overlap is deliberate. GE outcomes apply only to students who graduate from the college with an AA or AS degree and who thus must meet the GE requirements. In contrast, ILOs apply many of the same educational values to all students, whether enrolled in transfer or occupational programs, noncredit courses, or personal enrichment classes.

### ***How were these ILOs developed?***

The Student Learning Outcomes Task Force did not develop the draft ILOs in isolation. The Task Force looked at models from several other schools and then reviewed the program outcomes developed by every instructional and student services unit on campus to be certain that the categories selected represented the educational values of our faculty and staff. The GE outcomes, developed over several years by AP & P with input from the Academic Senate and every department, were also reviewed, and much of the language for the performance indicators under each category is taken directly from these already-adopted GE outcomes. Finally, the Task Force sent out an all-staff survey in Nov. 2006 and received over 90 responses from all employment categories; these responses were also used to help shape an early draft. That draft was then emailed to all staff, presented at All-Staff Day during January 2007, and shared at two meetings for all staff in February 2007. A revised draft has been presented to the President's Advisory Council (PAC).

### ***What employees at AHC should be active participants in engaging ILOs?***

Simply put, all of us. Our institution is a gateway to higher education. And while students enroll for many individual motives and goals, there will always be those who are not sure what they can gain from a college education. All of us can help in promoting the purpose and value of learning. ILOs start that process by clarifying our mission to ourselves and to students.

### ***But why do I care? I have little or no direct contact with students.***

Until now most of the emphasis in the area of student learning outcomes has focused on the role of classroom instruction in the learning environment. However, institutions are becoming increasingly aware that student services and other elements of the institution have an equally important impact on student learning. Research consistently identifies an environment that signals support for learning *at all levels* of the institution as one of the core components of student success. Facilities and operations, student services, research and planning, administration, information technology, as well as instruction—all aspects of college operations help shape the educational environment and thus contribute to the learning experiences of our students.

### ***Why do ILOs matter?***

There is no getting around the fact that learning outcomes are now the essence of accreditation standards and visiting accreditation teams will focus their study of the College's mission and programs on how well we are integrating learning outcomes into the operation of the College.

But more importantly, involving all college personnel in a discussion about ILOs will enable us to ask ourselves questions like these:

- What should an Allan Hancock College student—whether enrolled in a degree or occupational program, noncredit classes, or personal enrichment courses—know and be able to do upon leaving the college?
- What skills, values and knowledge will prepare our students—whatever their educational goals—for the complex, diverse, and interdependent world of the twenty-first century?
- Are these goals widely known and owned by the entire campus community?

Once we have defined the answers to these questions for ourselves, we can--and *should*-- share them with our students and the community. And we can begin to explore ways to measure to what degree our students have achieved these outcomes when they leave the college and, if they aren't learning at the levels we'd like, what we can do to improve their learning.

***Now that you mention it, how will ILOs be measured?***

As with SLOs, assessment, measurement of ILOs will be an ongoing process. We will start small, with one or two of the ILOs and one or two disciplines or units. We will be looking for faculty in several disciplines to volunteer to participate in pilot projects for both GE and ILO assessments in the coming semesters.

The good news is that many of the assessments that you are already using to measure the effectiveness of your courses and programs may also provide data for ILOs and/or GE outcomes. For example, if you are using an assignment embedded in a course, such as an oral presentation or an essay scored with rubrics, for course or program assessment, you may be able to use the same assignment to measure student achievement in the ILO area of *Communication*, simply by designing another rubric (if the assessment criteria are different). Or you may choose to invite faculty from other disciplines in scoring the assessment for the ILO, if appropriate.