

University-Wide Student Learning Outcomes Survey

Summary of Results

This document contains the results of the recently conducted survey on the University-Wide Student Learning Outcomes for Ferris State University. The survey was open and available to the full university community between February 8 and March 15, 2012.

Introduction

The University-Wide Student Learning Outcomes for Ferris State University were approved by the Academic Senate in April 2011 as part of the campus-wide review of the General Education Program. During subsequent efforts to establish criteria that define what it means to achieve each outcome, concerns arose about whether we as a university were trying to accomplish too much with the 18 U-Wide SLOs.

In response to this concern the General Education Task Force, charged with conducting and facilitating the review of the GE program, created a survey to find out which of the 18 outcomes the campus feels are most important. In addition, the survey asked whether each outcome could be addressed through: 1) course requirements in the major, 2) courses from outside the major, or 3) co-curricular experiences that occur outside the classroom. Together, these three areas provide the educational experience for university graduates.

Survey Results

Survey Participation:

The number who participated in the survey according to their college or division is shown in Table 1 (p. 4). There were 192 participants and the percent by college or division who participated roughly reflects the relative size of each area in relation to the university as a whole. In this respect, the participants appear to be a representative sample of the institution.

Tabulated Results of Survey:

The first item on the survey asked participants to indicate, for each of the 18 SLOs, if it was of Great, Moderate, Little, or No importance. Tables 2 and 3 (p. 5) list, respectively, the SLOs ranked according to “Great Importance” and according to the sum of “Great” and “Moderate” importance. Perhaps the most important result from these tables is the strong agreement from across campus about the six most important outcomes for all Ferris graduates: communication, critical reasoning, information literacy, quantitative information, creative thinking, and knowledge integration.

Tables 4, 5, and 6 (p. 6) rank the outcomes according to whether they could be achieved through course requirements within the major (Table 4), through non-major's courses (Table 5), or through co-curricular experiences (Table 6). Table 4 shows broad agreement that the same outcomes identified as most important in Tables 2 and 3 can perhaps best be addressed as part of the requirements within a student's major. These data clearly establish the crucial role of the major's programs for addressing the most important University-Wide Student Learning Outcomes.

Table 5 shows that the outcomes related to the traditional Gen Ed distribution requirements of Culture, Society, and Natural Science can perhaps best be addressed through coursework from outside the major's programs. Table 6 shows a strong role for co-curricular experiences in helping students achieve outcomes that may not be as well addressed through coursework, including Civic Engagement, Health/Wellness, and Diversity.

Conclusions and Next Steps

There appears to be broad agreement from all colleges/divisions about the most important of the U-Wide Student Learning Outcomes for our students, and that the major's programs play a key role in addressing these outcomes. Furthermore, coursework from outside the major is widely seen as having the key role in addressing the traditional general education outcome areas. Finally, co-curricular experiences may play a primary role in addressing some U-Wide SLOs and can support classroom efforts for many others.

The General Education Task Force is currently drafting final language for criteria that will define what it means to achieve each of the University-Wide Student Learning Outcomes. These criteria, together with some changes that have been recommended to wording of the SLOs themselves, will be brought for comment to the Academic Senate and the campus community during Faculty Development Week in August 2012. A finalized set of SLOs and "defining criteria" will be brought to the Senate for approval at either the September or October 2012 Senate meeting. During this time and through the remainder of the 2012-2013 academic year the task force will focus on how to provide curricular and co-curricular experiences that will help students best achieve the University-Wide Student Learning Outcomes. This survey together with ongoing feedback from the campus community will provide the direction needed to help the task force accomplish this goal.

The task force encourages you to send any comments you may have about the survey results to heckf@ferris.edu.

The University-Wide Student Learning Outcomes

Knowledge Outcomes - Graduates of Ferris State University should know:

- ... how all cultures, past or present, are fundamentally similar to each other, and why it is important to understand cultural differences.
- ... how their lives are shaped by the society and place in which they live.
- ... how scientists come to an understanding of the natural world and why a scientific understanding of the natural world is important.
- ...how technology shapes their world.
- ...how they are affected by the interconnectedness and diversity of global society.

Skills Outcomes - Graduates of Ferris State University should be able to:

- ...identify, access, and use information effectively.
- ...critically evaluate information using appropriate reasoning skills.
- ...interpret and use quantitative information together with the qualitative to understand and effectively solve real-life problems.
- ...think and act creatively in problem solving.
- ...communicate effectively with others in both the personal and professional spheres of life.
- ...function effectively as a member of a team.
- ...make informed decisions in the use and management of financial resources.

Responsibility Outcomes - Graduates of Ferris State University should understand the value of:

- ...participating in the civic life of their communities.
- ...inclusion, empathy and positive engagement in their interactions with diverse others.
- ...considering issues through well established ethical and moral traditions.
- ...continuing to learn for personal and professional growth.
- ...making informed lifestyle choices.

Integration Outcome - Graduates of Ferris State University should be able to:

- ...integrate and apply what they have learned inside and outside of the classroom.

Note that each outcome is also accompanied by a one or two sentence narrative that describes more about the intent of the outcome. Copy and paste the following address into your web browser to see the full set of outcomes with narratives (except for the more recently developed Global outcome):

<http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/academicaffairs/vpoffice/senate/GenEdTaskForce/UnivWide%20SLOs%20SenateApproved%204-5-11.pdf>

Also note that based on the survey comments and other campus feedback there will be changes in the language for several of these outcomes and their narratives.

TABLE 1
PARTICIPATION BY COLLEGE/DIVISION IN ORDER OF VALID PERCENT

College / Division	Frequency	Valid Percent
Arts and Sciences	60	31.6
Engineering Technology	35	18.4
Business	28	14.7
Education	20	10.5
Allied Health	13	6.8
Pharmacy	12	6.3
FLITE	8	4.2
Optometry	3	1.6
University College	3	1.6
Other	3	1.6
Academic Affairs	2	1.1
Student Affairs	2	1.1
FSU-GR	1	.5
Missing	2	
TOTAL	192	100.0

TABLE 2

U-Wide SLO in order of “Great Importance”	Ferris Graduates Should:	% Yes
COMMUNICATION	be able to communicate effectively with others in both the personal and professional spheres of life.	85.3
CRITICAL REASONING	be able to critically evaluate information using appropriate reasoning skills.	84.7
INFORMATION LITERACY	be able to identify, access, and use information effectively.	82.9
QUANTITATIVE INFORMATION	be able to interpret and use quantitative information together with the qualitative to understand and effectively solve real-life problems.	73.5
CREATIVE THINKING	be able to think and act creatively in problem solving.	70.9
KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION	be able to integrate and apply what they have learned inside and outside of the classroom	69.3
LIFELONG LEARNING	understand the value of continuing to learn for personal and professional growth.	59.7
TEAMWORK	be able to function effectively as a member of a team.	56.8
NATURAL SCIENCE	know how scientists come to an understanding of the natural world and why a scientific understanding of the natural world is important.	50.3
TECHNOLOGY	know how technology shapes their world.	50.3
ETHICS	understand the value of considering issues through well established ethical and moral traditions.	49.5
SOCIETY	know how their lives are shaped by the society and place in which they live.	44.7
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	be able to make informed decisions in the use and management of financial resources.	44.7
CULTURE	know how all cultures, past or present, are fundamentally similar to each other, and why it is important to understand cultural differences.	38.9
GLOBAL	know the interconnectedness and diversity of global society.	38.8
DIVERSITY	understand the value of inclusion, empathy and positive engagement in their interactions with diverse others.	37.9
HEALTH / WELLNESS	understand the value of making informed lifestyle choices.	32.3
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	understand the value of participating in the civic life of their communities.	25.8

TABLE 3

U-Wide SLO in order of “Great + Moderate Importance”	% Yes
INFORMATION LITERACY	99.5
CRITICAL REASONING	98.4
COMMUNICATION	97.9
QUANTITATIVE INFORMATION	96.3
KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION	96.3
CREATIVE THINKING	93.7
LIFELONG LEARNING	91.4
TECHNOLOGY	90.5
SOCIETY	90.4
TEAMWORK	89.5
NATURAL SCIENCE	89.4
ETHICS	87.9
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	86.8
GLOBAL	84
CULTURE	82.6
DIVERSITY	82.6
HEALTH / WELLNESS	78.8
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	78.4

TABLE 4

U-Wide SLO in order of “Addressed Through Major’s Coursework”	% Yes
INFORMATION LITERACY	91.2
CRITICAL REASONING	87.9
TEAMWORK	83.0
CREATIVE THINKING	81.3
KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION	76.9
COMMUNICATION	74.2
QUANTITATIVE INFORMATION	72.5
LIFELONG LEARNING	65.4
TECHNOLOGY	63.2
ETHICS	45.1
NATURAL SCIENCE	42.3
DIVERSITY	41.8
GLOBAL	36.8
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	36.8
SOCIETY	32.4
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	32.4
HEALTH / WELLNESS	24.7
CULTURE	23.6

TABLE 5

U-Wide SLO in order of “Addressed Through Non-Major’s Coursework”	% Yes
CULTURE	75.6
SOCIETY	71.6
NATURAL SCIENCE	71.0
GLOBAL	64.8
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	59.1
ETHICS	58.5
COMMUNICATION	56.8
HEALTH / WELLNESS	56.8
DIVERSITY	55.7
TECHNOLOGY	53.4
QUANTITATIVE INFORMATION	52.8
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	52.8
INFORMATION LITERACY	52.3
CRITICAL REASONING	51.7
KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION	49.4
CREATIVE THINKING	47.7
LIFELONG LEARNING	47.2
TEAMWORK	46.6

TABLE 6

U-Wide SLO in order of “Addressed Through Co-curricular Experience”	%Yes
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	80.9
HEALTH / WELLNESS	72.8
TEAMWORK	64.7
DIVERSITY	63.6
KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION	59.5
LIFELONG LEARNING	53.2
SOCIETY	52.6
GLOBAL	51.4
COMMUNICATION	49.7
ETHICS	49.7
CULTURE	45.7
CREATIVE THINKING	45.1
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	45.1
TECHNOLOGY	36.4
INFORMATION LITERACY	31.8
QUANTITATIVE INFORMATION	28.3
CRITICAL REASONING	26.6
NATURAL SCIENCE	17.3