

**CAL POLY'S LEARNING ASSESSMENT DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Learning assessment is a continuous process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting high standards for learning; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance meets those standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve student learning. When it is embedded effectively within larger institutional systems, assessment can help us focus our collective attention, examine our assumptions, and create a shared academic culture dedicated to assuring and improving the quality of higher education.

Effective assessment efforts should focus on programs and activities that speak to, and are driven by, institutional identity, mission and values. During the next three years, each academic program at Cal Poly will engage in an assessment plan development process that is discipline-based, encourages self-reflection and generates useful outcomes. (A summary of the assessment development plans for each College is included later in this document.) Flexibility in the use of existing and new data based on multiple (quantitative and qualitative) measures and in the use of assessment methodologies is encouraged when deemed appropriate for specific disciplines and for such needs as improving student learning, enhancing effective teaching, and improving campus climate. Although the timeline for accomplishing assessment development activities may vary by program, discipline or College, the principles and processes for establishing and assessing student learning outcomes at Cal Poly have a common core:

1. Identification and definition of student learning outcomes - Each academic program will identify, define, and develop student learning outcomes (educational objectives and criteria) as are relevant and appropriate with their disciplinary practice. Consultation with the programs' constituency groups (students, advisory boards, alumni, employers, professional or accrediting agencies, and disciplinary associations) during this process is encouraged.
2. Identification of criteria, indicators and assessment measures - Each academic program will be responsible for choosing and/or designing the measures used to assess their program.
3. Pilot testing and feasibility studies - Small-scale pilot testing with samples of volunteers will occur and modifications to assessment tools and assessment methodologies used will be made as necessary.
4. Baseline assessment - Baseline assessments will be conducted with additional modifications to assessment tools and assessment methodologies used made as necessary.
5. Continuous improvement - The resulting information gained from assessment efforts will be used to document, explain, and improve student learning.

Although learning assessment is a function of the faculty, it requires institutional commitment (financial and operational support and collaboration). To accomplish this, each program, including [General Education](#) (GE), will designate a member of the faculty as the Program Assessment Coordinator with responsibility for leading the assessment development discussions in their program. Each college has established a College

Assessment Committee to serve as a resource for the exchange and coordination of ideas and concepts appropriate to the programs within the College. A university-wide Academic Assessment Council (AAC) will provide coordination of all academic program assessment activities, act as a clearinghouse for resources, and promote the use of “best practices and principles” in assessment methodologies. The AAC will also provide periodic progress reports on assessment activities throughout the campus for inclusion in the annual Accountability Reports. It is important to emphasize that individual faculty and programs have a right to formative assessment, the confidentiality of which shall be guaranteed by the Academic Assessment Office. While it is clear that all programs have the obligation to contribute to assessment that will be used for a variety of internal and external constituencies, this should in no way inhibit the exploration of meaningful evaluations for continued improvement. Thus, assessment is essential for program review, academic planning and budgeting.