2012-2013

Division of Planning, Enrollment Management and Student Affairs (PEMSA)

Assessment Guide

Dr. Lori Varlotta
Senior Vice President for Planning, Enrollment Management and Student Affairs

Alan Haslam
Coordinator of Communication

Vickii Castillion
Assessment Coordinator Emeritus

Sacramento State

Updated April 2013
## Contents

1. Author’s Note: Introduction to the Second Edition ................................................................. 1  
2. How to Use This Guide ............................................................................................................. 2  
3. A Culture of Evidence in Sacramento State PEMSA Division .................................................. 2  
4. The Assessment Process .......................................................................................................... 3  
   Overview of Eight-Point Model .............................................................................................. 4  
5. Assessment Report Template & Formatting Guide .................................................................. 8  
6. The Assessment Report: Detailed Descriptions ....................................................................... 10  
   Mission ..................................................................................................................................... 10  
   Goals ....................................................................................................................................... 12  
   Dashboard Data .......................................................................................................................... 13  
   Points of Pride ........................................................................................................................... 15  
   Student Learning Outcomes & Program Objectives ................................................................. 15  
   Methods & Measures ............................................................................................................... 18  
   Findings ................................................................................................................................... 20  
   Conclusions .............................................................................................................................. 21  
   Plans for the Coming Year ........................................................................................................ 23  
   Attachments .............................................................................................................................. 23  
7. Assessment Report Sample (Completed) .................................................................................... 24  
8. Assessment Timeline ............................................................................................................... 28  
9. Designing Learning Outcomes and Program Objectives ......................................................... 30  
10. Direct vs. Indirect Measurement in Student Learning Objectives ........................................... 32  
11. Constructing Assessment Instruments: Subjective Instruments ........................................... 34  
12. Constructing Assessment Instruments: Objective Instruments ............................................. 38  
13. Writing Assessment Reports: Style Guide .............................................................................. 42  
   Appendix 1: University and Division Planning Goals ............................................................... 46  
   Appendix 2: Works Cited/Consulted ......................................................................................... 50  
   Appendix 3: Multiple Choice Pre-/Post-test Example ............................................................. 51  
   Appendix 4: Sample Essay Scoring Rubrics ............................................................................. 53
1. Authors’ Note: Introduction to the Second Edition

The several of us who have worked to produce this document over the last few years are proud to present this new iteration of the *Division of Planning, Enrollment Management and Student Affairs (PEMSA) Assessment Guide*. We feel that it is greatly expanded and improved: packed with examples, better reflective of our philosophy and hopes for the assessment process, and more user-friendly for you and the staff who work with you on your assessment activities and reporting.

The Division launched its comprehensive assessment program six years ago in AY 2006-2007, and each department in the Division has completed an annual assessment report since then. That is a major achievement, of which everyone in the Division should feel proud. We first instituted our assessment process largely as a response to the WASC reaccreditation taking place at the time, and WASC reviewers’ and Sacramento State leaders’ interest in seeing us develop a culture of evidence in Student Affairs (recently reorganized as PEMSMA). Since then, the assessment process has been shaped by and helped to shape many other facets of the Division, especially strategic planning and budgeting. This connection has helped PEMSMA thrive even in these challenging fiscal times. Just as importantly, many of us have taken our evidence-based decision-making approach and applied it to our collaborations with leaders across campus. Each year, more of you and the collective “we” are using data to make decisions that should ultimately benefit students and the University.

Since the inception of the assessment program, we have not stopped reflecting on and working to refine and improve our assessment processes. Each year brings new challenges and opportunities for that improvement and refinement.

This new guide is a reflection of our attempts to advance our assessment processes. In it, you will find an overview of assessment and the approach we hope you take toward it. You will also find concrete resources: definition of terms; many new examples of those terms in action; an explanation of how to use the revised (Spring 2013) assessment reporting template; sample materials; and much more.

A few other stylistic features will hopefully make this guide even easier to navigate and read: examples are in clearly labeled colored boxes, as are new “tips” and “updates” which call your attention to important new points and advice.

**Example:** Examples are in gold.  

**Tip/Update:** Tips and updates are in green.

Thank you for your ongoing input on this process, and for your invaluable work in assessment.

Sincerely,

Lori Varlotta, Sr. Vice President for Planning, Enrollment Management and Student Affairs  
Alan Haslam, Coordinator of Communication, PEMSMA
2. How to Use This Guide

This guide is not meant to be consumed all at once from cover to cover (though please, feel free). It contains a great deal of information, explanation and examples to facilitate your assessment work and report-writing; it is a reference guide meant to be applied. Familiarize yourself with its contents and appendices, and hopefully it will be a useful tool as questions and areas for clarification arise.

3. A Culture of Evidence in Sacramento State PEMSA Division

What is Assessment in the Division of Planning, Enrollment Management and Student Affairs (PEMSA)?

Assessment in the PEMSA Division at Sacramento State is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving the Division’s contribution to student learning, retention, and success at the University and beyond. Assessment involves:

1. Continually evaluating our programs to ensure that we provide excellent and efficient services and maximize our contribution to student learning and success
2. Using data to demonstrate what kind and how much value we add to the experience of those who participate in a program or utilize a service
3. Identifying areas where departments and the division can change, improve, and/or partner with other entities
4. Showcasing departmental and divisional strengths and substantiating the Division’s budget and human resource requests

Note that the list above has been refined since the last version of the Assessment Booklet to reflect the myriad ways we use assessment in the Division.

What drives priorities in the PEMSA Division?

Assessment in the PEMSA Division demonstrates the division’s alignment with and commitment to:

- Division Vision, Mission, and Core Values
- Chancellors’ Office initiatives (e.g., the CSU Graduation and Closing the Achievement Gap Initiatives)
- University planning priorities (e.g. Sacramento State Graduation and Closing the Achievement Gap Initiatives, Sacramento State Strategic Plan, Athletics Strategic Plan)
- Sacramento State Baccalaureate Learning Goals
- WASC requirements to demonstrate the impact of Student Affairs on student learning

For more information on these areas, see Appendix 1.
4. The Assessment Process

An Ideal Approach to Institutional Assessment

This section reflects an approach to Divisional assessment to which we hope you will aspire.

An important thing to note about assessment is that no matter what form it takes, it should be meaningful to those conducting and taking part in assessment activities. We want you to feel ownership and investment toward your assessment and assessment reporting activities.

After becoming familiar and hopefully comfortable with this assessment process (seven years into it), we hope you are now beginning to assess what really matters. This means that your assessment should “tell a story” that illuminates the core mission and functions of your department. This also means assessment should answer questions that are important to you as departmental leaders, important to the Sr. VP and AVPs, and that are likely to matter to CSU administrators, legislators, students, parents, and the public.

Departmental assessment should be directly in line with institutional, Divisional, and departmental priorities (see Appendix 1). The findings and conclusions produced via assessment should be used to improve the student experience based on such tangible factors as performance, retention, and graduation, and such less-tangible factors as student health, happiness, engagement in campus activities, feelings of connection to the University community, and overall wellbeing.

The assessment reports themselves serve many purposes: they may be used in reaccreditation exercises; data related to the activities, initiatives and interventions examined in the reports may be used to inform Divisional strategic planning (including budget, human resources, and organizational structures); such data and related interventions can be shared with colleagues at department, campus, system, or nation-wide levels to inform policy and practice decisions at those levels; and such data can help position the University as a leader and model for assessment as a whole, for ongoing programmatic improvement, and for demonstrating co-curricular learning.
Overview of the Eight-Point Model

1. The former seven-step model is now an eight-point model, due to the newly articulated expectation that directors annually gather and report on key “dashboard data” points.

2. The change from “step” to “point” may seem small, but reflects the observation that pursuing the steps in order doesn’t make sense in terms of the progression of real-world research and inquiry. Thus, the change to “points” (and the corresponding revision to the timeline) indicates that all of these activities will occur, but not necessarily in a particular order or on a rigid timeline. The “points” here correspond to the organization of the final assessment report.

In the last six years, much of the Divisional assessment process has been largely driven by the impetus to produce an annual assessment report. The way the report is structured has had an important effect on the way assessment activities are conceived, considered, and conducted. Several directors have mentioned that the rather rigid, consistent format is constrictive and stifles the “organic” research process. Therefore, if a department would like to use an alternate format, please work in advance with your AVP and the Sr. VP to get approval.

No matter what exact format the final report takes, directors and their staffs should shift their view from a “product-based” approach to assessment, to a more “process-based” approach to assessment. We will work to support that philosophical shift. Though every unit will continue to be asked to produce an annual assessment report, we hope that this academic year (2012-2013), will mark yet another productive shift and improvement in assessment efforts, in part through this important distinction between process and product.

A Process-Based Approach to Assessment

In a more process-oriented approach to assessment, the research occurs organically (meaning it’s not necessarily driven by an annual schedule). It begins when the researcher or investigator becomes curious about how well his or her department is working in a particular area or identifies an issue, problem or need. This curiosity, issue, problem, or need drives the creation of a research question.

Note that this approach is in contrast with the way assessment activities have been organized up to this point. In the past, directors typically began their assessment program by coming up with outcomes and objectives and the associated methods and measures. Aligned with this process-oriented or “story-telling” perspective, we ask directors to come up with a more general research topic, even a research “story” if you will, and to work with their supervisors to determine which parts of the story should be tracked, measured, and articulated in writing.
**Research Questions**

One of the best ways for directors to decide what to assess is to start with an important question to be answered, a skill to be developed, or a problem to be solved. Once the question, skill or problem is clearly identified, it should be much easier to formulate an assessment research question. Often, assessment that grows naturally out of such questions or identified needs is assessment that units value and that yields relevant and illuminating results. To put it even more simply, assessment efforts should center around real, important issues for a department—the more real the problem, the more naturally worthwhile the intervention and data-gathering efforts related to it will likely be.

The notion of adding a section about the importance of research questions came up during the first iteration of this booklet in 2011. According to an AVP and several directors, one of the first challenges they faced in organizing their annual assessment plan was to decide where to start. Research questions help address this difficulty. The research question then became part of the “seven-step” model, and it continues to be part of this revised eight-point model.

As an important first step in assessment, research questions must be accurately and clearly defined. They should be the central element of both quantitative and qualitative research.

Research questions often stem from problems that investigators notice, e.g.:

**Examples: Research Questions**

- “Even though filing applications on time is critical to receiving financial aid, why do so many students file late?” (Financial Aid)
- “To what extent does participation in counseling services positively affect a student’s self-reported likelihood to stay in college and complete the degree?” (Academic Advising)
- “To what extent do our first year students make appropriate decisions regarding important academic deadlines?” (Admissions & Outreach, Registrar’s Office)

In whatever form it takes, assessment should reveal the effectiveness of some activity, program, or intervention. In common terms, an assessment answers these questions: “Did ___ work? How well did it work? How do we know how well it worked? What can we do to make it better?”

**The Relationship between Research Questions and Assessment**

Pursuing answers to a research question can lead to many “assessable moments,” which may include gathering data, interpreting and analyzing the data, designing related interventions, and assessing how well those interventions work. At the top of the next page is an example of how a research question can lead to those assessable moments.
Question: “Even though filing applications on time is critical to receiving financial aid, why do so many students file late?”

1. The Financial Aid Director noted that one of the main reasons students do not receive their financial aid disbursements by the start of the semester is that they file their financial aid application after the published deadline. The director and her staff discussed the importance of students learning the relationship between missing priority deadlines and problems with their financial aid.

2. To increase the number of students who file financial aid applications on-time, the financial aid staff created an intervention strategy: Financial Aid Awareness Month.

3. Although Financial Aid’s intent is to increase student understanding of the relationship between financial aid deadlines and timely award disbursement, they realized that measuring the effect of the Financial Aid Awareness month on the number of students who filed on time would only be an indirect measure of learning. Accordingly, they decided to create a Program Objective.

Depending on what the director feels would be best to include in her annual assessment report, or which assessment moment best helps tell the “story” of her department, she could formulate program objectives stemming from the same fundamental question in many different ways.

For example, if she decides to formulate a program objective before she does an initial investigation:

**Program Objective**
Investigate why a larger-than-predicted number of students file their FA applications late, and design improved measures to intervene and/or mitigate these factors.

Or, if she chooses to formulate an objective after the initial investigation takes place:

**Program Objective**
Design measures to decrease the number of students filing their FA applications after the deadline.

Beginning with this question can also lead to an intervention for which the director would like to assess a student learning outcome (see next page):
Learning Outcome
Students who receive FA information through Financial Aid Awareness Month will demonstrate increased knowledge of the FA process and important FA deadlines. Furthermore, more of those students receiving such information will file on time compared to previous semesters.

As illustrated through these examples, research questions prompt the gathering of data, which in turn drives researchers to ask more research-related questions. The cycle continues as researchers devise interventions to affect the data they are gathering and then measure the effects of those interventions. These interventions are often the subject of program objectives or learning outcomes—essentially, those moments when leaders make an attempt to change student behavior or the way their department does business.

The next section describes the eight-points of the assessment model in detail, and begins with a template/formatting guide for the assessment report.
5. Assessment Report Template & Formatting Guide

Director Name
Email
Office Location
Phone

DEPARTMENT NAME 20XX-20XX (YEAR) ASSESSMENT REPORT

MISSION
3–4 sentences describing departmental mission.

GOALS
2–3 bullet points delineating departmental goals.

DEPARTMENTAL DASHBOARD
An overview of key department-specific data points.

POINTS OF PRIDE
2–3 bullet points describing departmental points of pride—exciting achievements the department has attained in the previous academic year. Points of pride should comment on departmental dashboard data, highlight improvements, or present important achievements that don’t fit elsewhere in the report.

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES 2010-11

Learning Outcome/Program Objective 1
Describe Learning Outcome/Program Objective.

Methods and Measures
Summary of assessment methods and measures.

Findings
Summary of findings.

Conclusions/Status
Summary of conclusions and/or ongoing status as appropriate.

Learning Outcome/Program Objective 2
Describe Learning Outcome/Program Objective.

Green paragraph fill on main section headers in RGB is:
R: 0
G: 68
B: 46
(Dark Sac State Green)

Gold paragraph fill on main section headers in RGB is:
R: 200
G: 178
B: 109
(Sac State Gold)
Methods and Measures

Summary of assessment methods and measures.

Findings

Summary of findings.

Conclusions/Status

Summary of conclusions and/or ongoing status as appropriate.

PLANS FOR THE COMING YEAR

A bulleted list of highlights to look forward to for the upcoming year.

ATTACHMENTS

[Department Name] Attachment A: Attachment Name (brief but descriptive title)
[Department Name] Attachment B: Attachment Name (brief but descriptive title)
[Department Name] Attachment C: Attachment Name (brief but descriptive title)
[Department Name] Attachment D: Attachment Name (brief but descriptive title)
6. The Assessment Report: Detailed Descriptions

The eight points outlined and defined below form the basis for the PEMSA Division assessment process and the associated reporting template. Each department is expected to annually complete an assessment report that includes all of the points below (a completed Sample Assessment Report follows this section).

As the previous discussion of research questions attempted to show, the different phases of assessment do not necessarily take place in a linear fashion, but rather tend to grow, evolve, and change somewhat “organically” depending on the research question, data gathered, and interventions attempted. Thus, it is important that researchers note that while the assessment reporting template is structured in a linear fashion, they do not need to approach their departmental assessment processes in a rigorously linear form.

Assessment Report Template Main Sections:

1. Mission
2. Goals
3. Dashboard Data
4. Points of Pride
5. Program Objectives and Learning Outcomes
6. Methods and Measures
7. Findings
8. Conclusions / Status

Additional Information:
- Plans for the Coming Year
- Attachments

1. Mission

The departmental mission should give a clear idea of the purpose and function of the department and should focus on or support one or more University priorities. The departmental mission guides the departmental goals described below, and is no more than 3-4 sentences long. The mission statement should contain:

- Name of the department
- Description of the department (if not readily discernible to an unfamiliar layperson)
- Primary functions
• Primary activities/modes of delivery
• Target audience

The majority of PEMSA units formulated new mission statements just prior to initiating the assessment process in AY 2005-2006. Some have been revised since then.

Examples: Mission Statement

To show how a mission statement should be aligned with University priorities, take this single point from the University Strategic Plan: “[The University will implement] a strategically focused, campus-wide effort to improve recruitment, retention, and graduation rates,” and note how the Academic Advising Center Mission below aligns with it.

Example Mission: Academic Advising Center Mission (color-coded)

The Academic Advising Center offers new student orientation, mandatory freshman advising, and advising on General Education and graduation requirements for all students. The Center engages students in a developmental process that helps clarify and implement individual educational plans consistent with their skills, interests, and values. Through individual appointments, group advising sessions, and presentations the professional staff, faculty advisors, and student interns help students understand the university’s academic requirements as well as its policies and procedures. As a result, students are better prepared to take responsibility for their education and persist towards a timely graduation.

Example Mission: Student Health and Counseling Center Mission (SHCS)

Student Health & Counseling Services (SHCS) embraces a holistic and collaborative approach to healthcare by offering urgent care, primary care, preventive services, wellness education, violence support services, mental health, and counseling services to the Sacramento State campus community. The mission of SHCS is to enhance students’ educational experience by addressing health-related barriers to learning, enabling students to make informed health decisions, and promoting the seven dimensions of wellness—Intellectual, Emotional, Environmental, Physical, Career/Financial, Spiritual, and Socio-Cultural. SHCS offers quality healthcare provided by a multidisciplinary team of medical and mental health professionals dedicated to making healthcare accessible and affordable for students through ethically sound practice, confidentiality and integrity. SHCS is committed to quality care and service delivery and is accredited through the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC).
**Example Mission: Associated Students, Inc. (ASI)**

Associated Students, Inc. (ASI) serves as the official governing body of Sacramento State students and meets the varied needs of students through operation and sponsorship of programs and services. ASI provides experiential education, leadership opportunities, student representation, various business and recreational services, and campus life programs and activities which support the campus and greater Sacramento community.

2. Goals

Departmental Goals are broad statements that:

- Are primarily used for general planning, as a starting point for the development and refinement of program objectives or student learning outcomes
- Describe the overarching, long-range intentions of the department
- Are usually not measurable
- Explicitly support overall university goals

Goals should **not** just describe the department’s main functions—they should be aspirational, guiding statements.

**Writing Goals**

In assessment reports, goals should be presented in a bulleted list; be relatively short; begin with a verb; and be balanced, flow well, and read easily.

**Examples: Goals**

**Example Goals: The WELL (fitness, recreation, and wellness facility)**

- Provide opportunities for the students, staff, and faculty to engage in WELL programs and activities toward becoming active members of the Sacramento State community
- Increase the health and healthy lifestyle behaviors of WELL members
- Increase awareness of the WELL’s programs and services in the campus community
- Train, mentor, and develop WELL student employees to best serve WELL clientele, and to foster skills that transfer toward academic and career success
- Enhance the WELL Student Supervisors’ leadership and critical thinking skills; help prepare them for active citizenship and leadership as alumni
3. Dashboard Data

Dashboard data is a new section of the assessment report added discussed at several directors’ meetings and added to the report in in Fall 2012. This section describes and gives examples of the kinds of dashboard data departments might routinely gather and report.

PEMSA departmental “dashboards” present, at-a-glance, key indicators that help show what the department is doing and how well it is doing it. These data help directors tell some of the most important “stories” about their department—stories that explain who and how many students the department serves; the types of programs and services the department offers; and how these programs and services help students make progress to degree, or prepare for the future. Another way to think of dashboard data is that it should reflect what directors already know departments are doing, but which they may not know how to express or quantify.

As of Fall 2012, each department is beginning the early stages of data dashboard development by identifying what statistics tell their program’s “story,” what data are necessary to calculate those statistics, and whether and how the necessary data can be collected (some programs already collect some or all of the requisite data). Directors have been encouraged to start by gathering and reporting on the “low-hanging fruit” of data (that which is both useful and already accessible).

To help guide their selection of dashboard data points, PEMSA leaders have asked directors to think about what kinds of data they need to review and analyze in terms of day-to-day management and quality improvement, and about the kinds of data stakeholders are interested in. Such data will likely fall into broad categories like these:

- **“snapshot-in-time” data** for the present term or academic year
- **programmatic data** that shows what services the department offers and how many “clients” it serves (depending on the department, e.g., how many and what percentage of students receive financial aid, how many students play intramural sports, how many clubs and organizations are registered on campus, etc.)
- **operational data** that shows how efficient the department is in performing key functions
- **longitudinal data** that involves repeated observations of the same variables over long periods of time

To help narrow down those broad categories of data into specific data points, PEMSA leaders have asked directors to think about the following questions:

- What data points help tell your department’s most important stories?
- What statistics do the Sr. VP and AVPs routinely ask for about your department(s), program(s) and/or unit(s)?
What statistics are other stakeholders (e.g., University President, CSU administrators, members of accrediting organizations, journalists, and the public) interested in?

When the Sr. VP needs to defend your budget to the University Budget Advisory Committee (UBAC), what statistics can you give her to show how your departments and programs are performing, both in an absolute sense, relative to other colleges, and relative to CAS standards (Council for the Advancement of Standards)? What functions might be reduced, eliminated, or slowed down if fewer financial resources were available? What functions could be added or speeded up if more resources were available?

Finally, as the data dashboard component of assessment reporting evolves and grows, departments are expected to work with their supervisors to devise ways to collect data they would like to have but that are not currently available.

**Example: Financial Aid Data Dashboard**

Note: this info is incomplete, and for example purposes only.

**Program Data**

- 72% of Sacramento State undergraduates (N=25,000) receive some kind of financial aid
- 29.5% receive both grants and loans; 27% receive only grants; 14.3% receive only loans
- 51% of Sacramento State undergraduates are Pell-eligible
- Sacramento State students accepted $264,614,598 in total aid through the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships in 2011-2012, an $____M increase over 2010-2011
- xx% of aid comes from federal government sources; xx% comes from state sources; xx% comes from University/system sources; xx% comes from other sources (donations, etc.)
- Average student loan debt is $____
- $111.7M (xx%) of aid accepted was in the form of loans
- $____M (xx%) of aid accepted was in the form of grants
- Average grant is $____
- $54M in federal Pell grant dollars disbursed in 2011-2012
- Average loan is $8400
- Sacramento State Cohort Default Rate (CDR) is 6.5% in 2010, up from 4.4% in 2009, and 3.6% in 2008
- 2010 Average CDR for all public 4 year institutions nationwide is 6%; 2010 Average CDR for all institutions nationwide is 9%

**Operational Data**

- Average processing time for document review is x weeks (may need clarification peak vs. non-peak times)
- Average processing time for financial aid award is x weeks (may need clarification peak vs. non-peak times)
- Processing time for Satisfactory Academic Progress appeals (may need clarification peak vs. non-peak times)
4. Points of Pride

The Points of Pride section presents selected achievements of the administrative unit. This section may be used to highlight the department’s contributions to student success or its progress in bolstering quality and achieving efficiencies. Since Points of Pride follow Dashboard Data in the assessment report format, it often makes sense for Points of Pride to comment on or highlight statistics that demonstrate a program’s successes and accomplishments.

Ideally, Points of Pride should be achievements that pique the reader’s interest in the report and draw them in. While the rest of the assessment report is likely to be of interest only to a small, specific group of people, the Points of Pride should be accessible and compelling to any reader interested how the University serves students, promotes student success, and spends limited student and taxpayer resources efficiently and effectively.

5. Student Learning Outcomes & Program Objectives

Learning outcomes and program objectives are measureable statements that provide evidence to show how well a department is reaching its goals. Both learning outcomes and program objectives should relate directly to the University mission, Division mission, departmental goals, and research questions.

**Example: Aligning an Objective to University and Departmental Priorities**

**University Priority:** The University commits itself to increasing students’ retention and graduation rates and decreasing their time to degree.

**Departmental Goal:** Help students clarify and implement individual educational plans which are consistent with their skills, interests, and values.

**Departmental Program Objective:** By Summer 2008, at least 90% of all first-time freshmen (FTF) will have participated in the three-phase advising program that offers sessions at critical junctures during the academic year.

*Student Learning Outcomes*

At Sacramento State, the Division of Student Affairs defines student learning as a comprehensive, holistic, transformative activity that integrates *academic learning* and *student development*, processes that have often been considered separate and even independent of each other. As used here, the term *learning*, then, does not mean exclusively or primarily
academic instruction, the acquisition of disciplinary content, or classroom learning (source: *Learning Reconsidered*).

This means that our definition of “student learning” may be broader than a traditional “classroom” definition of learning. Classroom learning means generally that students retain and are able to report on or demonstrate discrete facts, concepts, or skills they gained during a lecture, workshop, event, or instructional-related activity. In PEMSA, “student learning” attempts to capture a broad range of student development behaviors that could be conceptualized by the phrase “student success.”

When we speak of student learning or success behaviors, we mean behaviors that help students be academically successful as indicated by GPA, retention rates, and graduation rates. But we also attempt to measure the effects of other behaviors that are likely to help students be successful while at Sac State. To name a few, these include being healthy—physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually—making responsible decisions, developing “soft” skills that will help students be successful in any career and in life in general (e.g., being organized and accountable, managing time, learning to lead, etc.), feeling connected to the campus community, getting involved in co-curricular activities, and preparing to begin a career or continue their education beyond a bachelor’s degree.

Keep in mind this inclusive definition of student learning when designing your assessment activities and deciding what to measure. Such a broad definition will likely help you have many more options when trying to “measure what matters.”

**Learning Outcomes—Where We Started**

Early in the process of developing a culture of evidence, learning outcomes in the Division were rather rote—they often measured short-term or memorized “learning.” Additionally, they only measured “small picture” student learning, such as whether students could retain a few key ideas from a workshop, or whether they learned processes such as how to apply for financial aid or apply to graduate. These types of learning are aligned with the more narrow definition of learning described above.

**Example: “Small Picture” Student Learning Outcome**

Student-athletes who complete the Intercollegiate Eligibility Workshop in Spring 2011 will demonstrate increased understanding of NCAA compliance issues.

(This outcome was measured by a short pre-test and post-test.)

Furthermore, many early assessment efforts were “satisfaction” based, or otherwise relied heavily on self-reported or “indirect” data. (These kinds of data can be very important to some programs, but directors should be aware of the associated limitations.) An example follows.
Examples: Learning Outcomes Based on Satisfaction and Self-Reported Data

University Union Example: 80% of student employees at the University Union will report that their leadership skills were improved through their employment.

Global Education Example: After completing a short online survey (usually administered late spring), 90% of the Office of Global Education’s clients will agree or strongly agree their experience with OGE is positive.

Learning Outcomes—Where We Are Now

As the assessment program has continued, directors increasingly have been asked to tailor their learning outcomes to more “big picture” learning—that which ties into Division and University priorities such as academic success as measured by GPA and retention and graduation rates.

Examples: Housing & Residential Life

- Sac State students living on-campus will have a higher average GPA at the end of their freshman year than students who live off-campus at the end of their freshman year.
- First time freshmen who live on-campus will be more likely to persist to their second year of college than first time freshmen who live off-campus.

*Note: These statements do not assume a direct cause and effect relationship between the variables; however, there may be a significant correlation between them. Such correlations warrant further research.*

In addition to looking at student success as reflected by GPA, retention, and graduation rates, some directors have even begun attempting to measure behavior change.

Examples: Student Health & Counseling Services

By Fall 2009, residents participating in the Choices Level One Alcohol Education Class will demonstrate the following:

- 50% of referred residents will be able to cite at least one thing they learned.
- 50% of referred residents will report they have incorporated at least one thing they learned into their drinking behavior that has reduced the risk associated with their drinking (reduction in how much or how often the student drinks, increase in use of protective behaviors).
- 50% of referred residents will report a reduction in the number of occasions in which they consume alcohol.
- By Fall 2012, 65% of all first-year students will successfully view and complete the student success online alcohol tutorial program, “Zombies, Alcohol, and You” with a passing grade of 75% or better on the post test.
Example: The WELL (fitness, recreation, and wellness facility)

Participants that complete the 8 week Weight Warriors program at the WELL will learn how to engage in more healthy behaviors which will lead to decreasing fat mass and increasing muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, and cardiovascular fitness.

See also Section 9, “Designing Learning Outcomes and Program Objectives,” page 23.

6. Methods & Measures

Methods and measures describe how the program objective or learning outcome is being assessed, and how and what indicators were used to create a context and chart progress.

Methods are the pre-planned procedures and techniques that help the investigator carry out the inquiry, examination or research (e.g., the timelines and overall types of assessment—qualitative, quantitative). Measures can include identifying the target population, the timeline of the assessment activity, the assessment instrument(s) being used (e.g. pre-/post-test, rubric-scored role-play, rubric-scored portfolio, etc.), the benchmark data used for comparison.

As a whole, Methods & Measures sections should:

- Explicitly state how the methods/measures guide the inquiry
- Provide a short description of assessment instrument being used
- Identify the population being served and the conditions under which they are being served (i.e. “first-year Students who complete X and Y Online Training”)
- Outline a timeframe
- Include the benchmarks against which the behavior modification or learning is compared

Direct and Indirect Measurement

Direct Measurements chart the actual outcomes that students achieve—such as an increase in abilities, information, knowledge, attitudinal or behavioral change—after participating in a program or utilizing a service.

Indirect Measurements include self-reported statements, comments, or reported satisfaction levels that reveal a perceived increase in understanding or appreciation. The perception is not verified through any demonstration of knowledge acquisition or observed behavioral/attitudinal changes.

Evolution of Methods and Measures in PEMSA Assessment

Early in PEMSA assessment, many directors used indirect methods to assess student learning. Many assessment instruments asked students to report on their perceived increase in
understanding or their appreciation of or satisfaction with a workshop, training, cultural event, or similar event they attended.

Now, many directors are trying to use more direct methods to assess student learning. Thus far, the most common direct measurement has been a pre-/post-test combination, which creates a baseline for student knowledge before some kind of activity, and then measures their knowledge after taking part in the activity.

Example: Direct Measurement—Student Learning

**Pre-/Post-test**
- To what extent can students demonstrate knowledge on a particular subject before and after an intervention (e.g., a workshop, a lecture, a presentation, a co-curricular activity, etc.)?

**Direct Observation**
- To what degree do student employees (who are being observed by their supervisors in a mock-situation) adequately perform the tasks they have been trained in?

**Portfolios**
- To what extent do print, electronic, or multi-media collections of students’ work over a period of time demonstrate what they have learned in a particular co-curricular experience? Portfolios may be scored by a rubric and used to measure longitudinal change.

**Essays**
- How do students score (usually via a predesigned rubric) on an essay, whose response is meant to reveal what they have learned in a certain activity?

Example: Admissions & Outreach Methods and Measures

Following each group campus tour delivered in Spring 2012, Admissions & Outreach staff administered a post-presentation test to prospective students after they participated in a pre-admissions presentation consisting to measure how well they understood Sacramento State admissions requirements. The test was composed of 15 questions based on the content of a PowerPoint presentation used by counselors, staff, and student ambassadors. Additional questions were added in this version of the test to identify respondents’ academic level, potential term of entry to Sacramento State, and service region.

Note: In this example, there is no baseline comparison.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

See PRIDE Center example, next page.
Example: PRIDE Center Methods and Measures (color-coded)

Note: This is an indirect measure of learning.

At the end of Spring 2011, all PRIDE Center student assistants will complete a survey (containing both Likert-style and open-ended questions) which asks them to reflect on the ways in which their employment has affected their leadership skills compared to what they felt their leadership skills were prior to their employment.

| Timeline | Population | Instrument | Baseline |

7. Findings

In general, the findings section includes two major pieces: the actual data the assessment tool generates (i.e. pre- and post-test scores, rubric scores, workload estimates, and participant logistics), and a clear and concise summary as to what extent the outcome was met. In the interest of brevity and readability, charts, examples of participant responses, student work, etc. should be relegated to the “Attachments” section.

Note: The findings section does not include analysis or projections about why the outcome was not met. Such information should be included in the “Conclusions” section.

Examples: Clear, Concise Findings

SARC Example: Student-athletes who completed all three segments of the Division I Eligibility and Recruiting Workshop scored an average of 20% higher (the instructor’s desired minimum) on the post-test than they did on the pre-test.

Financial Aid Example: After streamlining key processes and protocols, Financial Aid was able to decrease its application review time from 5 days to 3 days, which is an acceptable period.

Example: Unclear Findings (What Not to Do)

SARC Example: Scores recorded on the post-test were better than the pre-test in general, and can be broken down as follows. 85% of student-athletes who completed all three segments of the workshop answered question 1 correctly. 78% of students correctly answered question 2 regarding academic probation GPA, but the staff feel this lower percentage reflects the imprecise wording or the question. Conversely, 95% of student athletes answered question 3 correctly. Etc., etc.

Note: No offense to SARC staff—this example was created by the authors.
8. Conclusions

The conclusion sections (sometimes thought of as the section that “closes the loop”) is the part of the report that tells the story. In telling the story—even if it’s not yet over—this section explains:

- “Here is where we started (the research question that shaped early work)”
- “Here is what really happened”
- “Here is what we learned”
- “Here is what we will do next”

More specifically, the conclusion section reiterates whether outcomes or objectives were or were not achieved.

- Do not be defensive or “beat around the bush” if outcomes were not met
- Rather, try to explain why that might be the case if there is a plausible reason; if not, do not “push it”—sometimes, it is acceptable to just present the data

Explain how the findings will shape what you will do next. If there is anything in the findings that suggests you should modify the program or its delivery, explain how you might enact those changes.

Next steps

An important part of any conclusion section is identifying appropriate “next steps.” There are many different ways to approach “next steps” depending on your assessment findings.

Possible “next steps” when objectives or outcomes were achieved include:
- Develop new objectives or outcomes
- Expand the research or examination to include a longitudinal study that builds upon current objectives or outcomes
- Raise the criteria for achievement
- Develop more stringent measures

Possible “next steps” when objectives or outcomes were not achieved include:
- Modify program in appropriate ways that increase the likelihood of achieving the outcome
- Modify policies or procedures in appropriate ways to support the desired change
- Clarify or tweak program objective or learning outcome
- Design measurement tools more aptly suited for the task
- Rethink the methodology
- Improve collaboration
- Improve communication
Example: Strong Conclusion (Well-Written, Appropriate Content)

In this example, Student Athlete Resource Center (SARC) staff administered a survey to student athletes to determine their satisfaction with SARC academic advising services. The related program objective was that 80% of athletes would rate advising services “excellent” or “good.”

Conclusion

Based on an aggregate score, over 80% of student-athletes rated athletic advising services as good or excellent; thus, the outcome was achieved. Some specific areas scored lower than 80%, most of which corresponded to areas less-emphasized in orientation. Athletic Advisors will review how they currently provide information in those low-scoring areas, which include information about summer school, handbooks, and other orientations (eligibility, etc.). Advisors may consider further assessment and feedback measures with student-athletes regarding these topics to improve student-athlete satisfaction, and to create an even more comprehensive program.

Example: Weak Conclusion

In this example created by the authors, the Women’s Resource Center presented a set of movies, and after viewing each movie, students wrote brief response papers which WRC staff scored based on rubrics. The assessment activities and methods are not bad, but the write-up and analysis need improvement.

Conclusion

There are several issues that could have impacted results. We used different raters for the different movie presentations, who also were different from the person who developed the rubrics. It is a very subjective evaluation as to whether or not the students actually “hit” the points in their post papers. Some attention to “rater training” might be helpful in the future.

Analysis of WRC Example Conclusion

- Doesn’t “tell the story”
- Not enough context for the reader; section doesn’t stand alone
- Doesn’t reiterate whether the objective was or was not met (was it met, or was it not?)
- “Beats around the bush;” sounds a bit defensive

There are several issues that could have impacted results; these should be explained and presented clearly:

- Women’s Resource Center staff used different “raters” for the different movie presentations.
- These “raters” were different from the staff who developed the rubrics.
- The evaluation itself was very subjective as to whether or not the students actually “hit” the points in their post papers.
- Providing some type of “inter-rater reliability training” might be helpful in the future.
Example: Improvement of the WRC Conclusion

When first introduced in Fall 2006 only 63% of student participants reported learning key points from the movie presentations they attended; in Fall 2007 that number increased to 73%. Thus, the “increase an average of ten percentage points” objective was met, though just barely. Though the scores seem to indicate student learning, WRC staff acknowledges some potential problems with the assessment instrument itself: the rubric proved highly subjective, different raters were used at different points in the assessment, and there was no “norming” of raters to establish a common method of interpreting the rubric. These initial results indicate the WRC movie series shows promise for demonstrable student learning; however, the WRC will continue to refine both this assessment and the program itself in upcoming semesters.

Additional Information: Plans for the Coming Year

The “Plans for the Coming Year” section of the assessment report is not one of the eight main points, but is where directors should point out a few highlights of upcoming programmatic initiatives planned for the following academic year. Since these plans come at the end of the assessment document, they provide a sort of broad, overall conclusion for the report, and thus might speak to the dashboard data and/or future measures related to individual learning or program objectives.

Additional Information: Attachments

Since data presented in the body of the assessment report should be as brief and concise as possible, directors may wish to include more comprehensive data in attachments. Such attachments may not be of interest to a general audience, but may be very useful or interesting to another reader or colleague in a similar field (e.g., Academic Advising, Housing, Registrar’s Office, etc.).

For example, the Multi-Cultural Center (MCC) director is assessing student learning of specific concepts following a panel presentation—specifically, students’ ability to apply those specific concepts to their own lives (self-reflection). She is assessing these outcomes by asking the students who attended to answer open-ended essay questions following the presentation.

The MCC director will likely only paint her findings in broad strokes in the body of her assessment report, e.g.: “The majority of students attending the panel indicated that they understood the three key takeaway points, and most were able to connect those ideas to their own lives.” The MCC director concludes that the learning objectives associated with the panel presentation appear to have been met; that may be sufficient for the purposes of the assessment report. However, in the director’s opinion, the student comments show even more nuanced and interesting things than simply “the learning objective was met.” So she decides to attach the transcribed student essay responses in their entirety in case her colleagues are interested.
7. Assessment Report Sample (Completed)*
*Content is for example purposes and does not necessarily reflect real, complete, or up-to-date activities or results.

SACRAMENTO STATE
Financial Aid Office

Anita Kermes, Director
anita.kermes@csus.edu
(P) 916.278.6980

FINANCIAL AID 2011-2012 ASSESSMENT REPORT

MISSION

The Financial Aid & Scholarship Office helps students, and in many cases their families, search for, apply for, receive, and maintain eligibility for various types of financial aid. The office also offers financial aid education through individual counseling, campus marketing activities, and group presentations. Staff also research and resolve individual student issues. The office strives to provide timely and accurate financial aid processing that is in full compliance with all federal, state and university regulations.

GOALS

- Maximize the number of students who receive their first Fall semester disbursement by the beginning of the term
- Streamline document and awarding processes to decrease the average amount of time between student applications and award disbursement
- Facilitate student employment on-campus and encourage development of leadership skills for students employed in the Financial Aid Office

DEPARTMENTAL DASHBOARD (data incomplete/unverified in this example)

Program Data

- Sacramento State students accepted $264,614,598 in total aid through the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships in 2011-2012, an $____M increase over 2010-2011
  - $111.7M (xx%) of aid accepted was in the form of loans
  - $____M (xx%) of aid accepted was in the form of grants
- 72% of Sacramento State undergraduates (N=25,000) receive some kind of financial aid
  - 29.5% receive both grants and loans; 27% receive only grants; 14.3% receive only loans
  - Average grant is $_____; average loan is $8400
- Xx% of aid comes from federal government sources; xx% comes from state sources; xx% comes from University/system sources; xx% comes from other sources (donations, etc.)
- 51% of Sacramento State undergraduates are Pell-eligible
  - $54M in federal Pell grant dollars disbursed in 2011-2012
- Average student loan debt is $_____
- Sacramento State Cohort Default Rate (CDR) is 6.5% in 2010, up from 4.4% in 2009, and 3.6% in 2008
  - 2010 Average CDR for all public 4 year institutions nationwide is 6%; 2010 Average CDR for all institutions nationwide is 9%
Operational Data

- Average processing time for document review is x weeks (may need clarification peak vs. non-peak times)
- Average processing time for financial aid award is x weeks (may need clarification peak vs. non-peak times)
- Processing time for Satisfactory Academic Progress appeals (may need clarification peak vs. non-peak times)

POINTS OF PRIDE

- Increased Fall Disbursement – Financial aid office staff continue to focus efforts throughout the summer months on improving our processing and awarding efforts, which lead to an increased Fall Disbursement to students.
- Improved Student Awareness of Financial Aid Deadlines – More than 39,000 students and prospective students completed their FAFSA by March 2.
- Improved Processing Efficiency – Completed first phase of office reorganization by combining the operations and awarding staff into a newly formed team called the Processing & Awarding unit. This new team is trained in a wider variety of tasks and has made significant improvements in financial aid processing. The review time for documents submitted by June 1 was reduced to 6 - 7 weeks (prior year processing time was 10 - 12 weeks during the same time period). This efficiency will help ensure more students are paid during the first disbursement. Documents submitted after June 1 are being processed within a 4-6 week timeframe (obviously this information dovetails with the dashboard data).

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES 2010-11

Learning Outcome 1

Student Assistants will demonstrate exemplary skill in responding appropriately and accurately to financial aid inquiries from students and/or completing work assignments after participating in an in-depth training program. Work assignments are designed to mimic activities students will be required to perform after graduation in professional work settings. Increased skill will be demonstrated through a pre-test/post-test assessment of the training program, and by scoring at least 90% on an observed competency test.

Methods and Measures

Three student assistants participated in an in-depth training session covering financial aid work requirements associated with their student assistant positions. Students completed a pre-test to measure understanding prior to the training program and a post-test at the completion of the program. Then, at least one month after the training was completed, students participated in an observed competency test administered by financial aid staff. Staff scored the student assistants’ competency using a standardized rubric. Assessed competencies included oral, written and task completion activities.

Findings

This learning outcome was met. FA staff assessed students about their skills levels in the following areas: Communication Skills, Decision Making and Problem Solving, Time Management, Teamwork,
Organization, and Leadership. Following the training program, and based on pre-/post-test and observed competency data, each student assistant reported improving in each area, and each indicated that he or she felt increased confidence in his or her abilities as a result of the opportunity provided as a student worker (see Attachment A). Based on observed competency results, over the course of their training and employment, student assistants have become better listeners. Each has learned to ask questions to clarify students’ needs and be able to better assist. Furthermore, student assistants have learned the importance and value of communication skills, organization and planning, and problem solving skills.

Conclusions

Financial Aid leadership is encouraged by the results of this assessment, and plans to continue the student assistant training program. In the future, FA staff will analyze data from the student assistant training program assessment to identify areas for improvement.

Program Objective 1

Increase the number of students who attend the FAFSA and Document workshops by 5% over 2010-2011 participation. The goals of the FAFSA workshops are to increase student’s awareness of deadlines, increase accuracy of form completion, and facilitate early financial aid disbursements, thereby reducing the potential of students withdrawing from their studies for financial reasons.

Methods and Measures

FA staff enhanced the early awareness campaign used in previous years to focus more specifically on FAFSA and Document workshops.

The Financial Aid office designates each February as “Financial Aid Awareness” on campus. FAFSA workshops are held on campus to encourage students to file early for next fall. Staff make themselves available to assist with completing the FAFSA and answering any questions. Financial Aid staff also volunteer to support various community outreach activities for the local “I’m Going to College” effort organized by regional high schools. These events provide hands-on assistance for students and parents to encourage filing the FAFSA before the priority March 2 deadline.

Workshops occur between October and February each year and are hosted by high schools, churches, and other community organizations. Financial Aid staff’s presence at these events helps maximize the number of completed FAFSA’s submitted on time.

Findings

In AY 10/11, Attendance at workshops held during Financial Aid Awareness month on campus was 374 students and parents. Attendance at the document workshops held later in the spring was 98 students. Based on staff observations, FAFSA Workshops during Financial Aid Awareness continue to be well attended by students, and students who attended the workshops reported that they found them very helpful. The joint effort between the Financial Aid Office, ASI and other student organizations to “get the word” out on campus seems to have helped with attendance. Due to significant office reorganization and job assignment and leadership changes, however, FA staff were unable to track workshop attendance for AY 11/12.

Document workshop attendance was low in AY 11/12, therefore they have been dropped from the workshop schedule in AY 12/13. FA efforts were refocused in the 12/13 award year to promote the
“Docs Done by June 1” deadline and campaign. Students are strongly encouraged to meet the June 1 deadline to help ensure that their Fall Financial Aid award will be completed in time for the first disbursement.

**Conclusions/Status**

Financial Aid staff will continue to refine their FAFSA workshop efforts, and gather more detailed data to inform programming decisions.

**PLANS FOR THE COMING YEAR**

- During the 12/13 AY Systems staff will work with IRT to bring up a Disbursement Proration module that will allow aid to disburse based on actual enrolled units for each student. This module should greatly reduce the amount of manual file review and manual award adjustments done by staff each year. The DP module will also permit FA to initially disburse more aid to students by allowing us to disburse based on part-time enrollment and then disburse an additional amount up to the Aid Offered amount, as the student enrolls in additional units through Census date.
- Implement additional online document filing; making more documents available for online submission will allow FA to require certain fields to be complete before form is submitted and thereby reduce the number of incomplete forms being received by the FA office.
- Initiate cross-departmental training on Frequently Asked Questions between Financial Aid, Student Services Counter and Student Financial Services Center. This activity will be designed to improve student services and broaden the understanding of the front line customer service staff within each office.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Financial Aid Attachment A: Student Affairs Student Employee Survey Data  
Financial Aid Attachment B: 2011-2012 FAFSA Workshop Evaluation Results
8. Assessment Timeline

This schedule is a working draft as of April 2013.

This schedule has been revised to reflect the expectation that directors work more closely with their direct supervisor to assess outcomes and objectives closely aligned with departmental, Divisional, and University priorities. It has also been revised to encourage a more process-based approach to assessment.

Directors are expected to complete the following tasks and meet the related deadlines. If any director feels he or she is unable to meet any of the deadlines, he or she should discuss this possibility with his or her direct supervisor and make alternate arrangements in advance.

Aug 16-Oct 31: Develop Assessment Plan
- During this time period, directors should use information gained from the previous year’s assessment efforts, departmental dashboard data, and issues, problems, or challenges of which they are aware, to begin to get an idea of several areas in which to focus the upcoming year’s assessment report.
- Directors and staff involved in assessment should meet with their supervisors and other divisional assessment support staff as appropriate to refine their initial ideas into an assessment plan for the academic year.
- Each director should ask their supervisor what form they would like their assessment plan to take.

Reminder: In AY 2012-2013, each department is expected to gather and report on the dashboard data they have available by summer 2013, and two outcomes and objectives. At least one outcome must be a student learning outcome (i.e., a student success outcome) and one may be a programmatic improvement objective.

Nov 1-Nov 30: Submit Assessment Plan to Direct Supervisors
- During this time period, directors should engage in a back-and-forth with their supervisors about their proposed assessment plan.
- Directors may wish to or their supervisors may ask them to consult with divisional support staff at this point in the process for input and feedback, including:
  - Senior Research Analyst (Joel Schwartz)
  - Communications Coordinator (Alan Haslam)
  - Other managers and staff with assessment expertise
- **Final assessment plans must be approved by directors’ supervisors by November 30.**

(Continued next page.)
Dec 1-May 31: Conduct Assessments and Prepare Final Report
• During this time period, directors and their staff should be conducting assessment activities and cataloguing their assessment efforts in the report template format.
  • They should consult with divisional support staff and their supervisors as necessary and as questions or concerns arise.

June 1-July 31: Submit and Edit Assessment Report
• During this period, directors and assessment staff must submit their assessment report to their supervisor, and work with him or her and divisional support staff to revise, edit, and finalize the report.
• Sr. VP/AVPs will ask directors to make revisions to assessment reports, and/or forward the report to the Communications Coordinator for editing.
  • Sr. VP/AVPs may also ask that directors work with the Senior Research Analyst regarding data or data presentation matters.
• The Communications Coordinator will work with writers to revise final report to prepare it for publication to the Student Affairs website. Once finished, the Writing Coordinator will forward the edited report to directors and their supervisors for final approval.

Aug 1-Aug 15: Submit Final Assessment Reports to Communication Coordinator
• During this period, final approved assessment reports are submitted to the Communications Coordinator to collate and assemble a final report which will be posted on the SA Assessment website.
• The Communications Coordinator will work with Student Affairs Information Technology staff to post the report.

September 1: Final Division Assessment Report Posted
9. Designing Learning Outcomes and Program Objectives

Program objectives are related to program improvement around issues like timeliness, efficiency and participant satisfaction.

Learning outcomes address what a student learns or how they change through program participation or utilization of the service.

Both are measurable statements that provide evidence as to how well the unit is reaching its goals.

### Designing S.M.A.R.T. Program Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>Objectives/outcomes should state exactly what they want to achieve. Say exactly what you want to achieve in clear, concise words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurable</td>
<td>Objectives/outcomes should be stated in measurable terms. This means that it is feasible to collect accurate and reliable data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive but Attainable</td>
<td>Objectives/outcomes should include reasonable stretch targets. (Where would you like the unit to be?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results-Oriented</td>
<td>Objectives/outcomes should focus on the end results you desire rather than the activities necessary to get there. Student learning outcomes should focus on the student behaviors/skills/knowledge that is desired. Program objectives should focus on desired program improvements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-bound</td>
<td>The objectives/outcomes should indicate the time frame for achievement (e.g., by graduation, at the end of the first year of the program).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Necessary Components of Program Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

- **Who:** The population or program being studied
- **Where:** The program or unit where the improvement or learning occurs
- **What:** The specific learning or program improvement that is expected
- **“How much” target:** The desired result that will determine if success is achieved
- **When:** The timeframe for achievement

It is worth noting that these components often overlap in the descriptions, as illustrated on the next page.
Examples: Program Objectives

Second Year students (who) who participate in a new, intrusive, probationary program second year retention program (where / when) will achieve a 20% higher retention rate (“how much” / what) than previous cohorts who did not receive similar advising interventions.

Increase (what) the number of students (who) receive financial aid (what) in the first Fall 2011 disbursement (where / when) by 10% (“how much”).

Survey (what) student-athletes (who) in Spring 2011 (when) on the usage of MySacState, email, and campus websites (where / what) to determine if student-athletes are accessing their records on a regular basis (“how much” target) and thus have timely access to important campus information.

Increase by 15% (what / “how much”) in AY 2011-12 (when), student veteran (who) usage of the VSC and SVO (where) for leadership activities including, workshops, seminars, conferences, and bi-monthly leadership meetings.

Examples: Learning Outcomes

85% (“how much”) of First-time freshmen (who) participating in Summer Orientation (where) will demonstrate accurate understanding of the add/drop and satisfactory academic progress policies (what) after completion of the program (when).

Student employees at the University Union (who/where) will demonstrate a 50% reduction (“how much”) in A, B and C errors (what) between initial training and the end of the semester (when).

Students participating (who) in the LSAT preparatory course (where) in fall 2013 (when) will score 10% higher (“how much”) than the national norm on the LSAT Exam (what).

The portfolios of transfer students (who) who complete program Z (where) in 2012 (when) will demonstrate their knowledge of X, Y, and Z (what) increased at least 6 points (“how much”).
10. Direct vs. Indirect Measurement in Student Learning Objectives

**Direct Measurement** - Demonstrate the abilities, information, knowledge, attitudinal or behavioral changes students can demonstrate after participating in a program or utilizing a service.

**Indirect Measurement** - Self-reported statements/comments that reveal a perceived increase in understanding or appreciation. The perception is not verified through any demonstration of knowledge acquisition or observed behavioral/attitudinal changes.

Additionally, as previously discussed, Student Learning Outcomes should specifically align with Sacramento State’s Baccalaureate Learning Goals whenever possible.

**Types of Direct Measurements**

- **Embedded Questions** are a group of questions designed to measure student learning related to program objectives. These can be included in tests administered in one or more courses comprising the program. These questions measure growth throughout the program or they can be administered one time to determine if objectives are met.

  They are useful if the learning outcome occurs within a course you or a faculty partner provide. They can also be useful if you can embed questions in a colleague’s assessment.

- **Locally developed tests** are designed to measure student achievement of specific learning outcomes. Within the program assessment framework, one can use the outcomes for the purpose of identifying where improvement is needed within the program. These tests are useful if the learning outcome occurs within a program rather than a course.

- **Pre-/post-tests** are locally developed tests that measure students’ incoming level of knowledge, skills, or behaviors and post program knowledge, skills or behaviors. These tests can be used to measure students’ gains.

  They are useful to determine increases in knowledge or skill.

- **Direct Observations** are a process where individuals can observe the students’ performance (e.g., speed, errors, understanding of process). These can be useful if the learning outcome involves attainment of an observable skill. Direct observations can also be used as a pre/post test methodology.

- **Portfolios** are a collection of students’ work (e.g., writing, homework, etc.) over a period of time that provides longitudinal information and an opportunity for student reflection. The work is scored by a portfolio committee for the purpose of identifying where improvements in the program are needed. Portfolios are useful if the students create a body of work over a
period of time as a part of program participation. However, portfolios are more difficult to score.

**Essays** are designed to measure specific learning outcomes, (e.g. writing skills, understanding of key points, etc.) These essays are scored using rubrics established by a panel for the purpose of identifying where to improve the program. Essays are useful to elicit understanding from students; they also provide an opportunity to determine other ancillary types of learning that were not part of the main objective. However, these are more difficult to score.

**National/State Standardized Exams** are available within the State or nation with standardized scores and sub-scores that can be used to determine where to improve the program. These exams are useful for comparative purposes within the State and nation. Few may be available for Student Affairs units. Note that these are exams, not surveys.
11. Constructing Assessment Instruments: Subjective Instruments

**SUBJECTIVE ITEM INSTRUMENTS**
Subjective item instruments permit the student to organize and present an original answer. They include observed competency, problem solving and essay test items.

**Direct Observation (Simulation)**
Most direct observation instruments have been developed for the assessment of vocational, managerial, administrative, leadership, communication, interpersonal and physical education skills in various situations. Direct observation tests require that the student being tested role play or perform required tasks. Various aspects of the performance are then observed and rated by several judges with the necessary background. The ratings could then be used both to provide the student with a diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses, as well as to provide the program with information about necessary training program improvements.

**Advantages in using direct observation items**
- measure learning outcomes which focus on the ability of the students to apply skills or knowledge in real life situations
- usually provide a degree of test validity not possible with standard paper and pencil test items
- useful for measuring learning outcomes in the psychomotor domain

**Limitations in using direct observation items**
- difficult and time consuming to construct
- primarily used for testing students individually and not for testing groups
- subject to bias on the part of the observer/scorer

**Suggestions for writing direct observation items**
- prepare items that elicit the type of behavior you want to measure; be specific about what they should demonstrate
- clearly identify and explain the simulated situation to the student
- make the simulated situation as "life-like" as possible
- provide directions which clearly inform the students of the type of response called for.
- when appropriate, clearly state time and activity limitations in the directions
- adequately train the observer(s)/scorer(s) to ensure that they are fair in scoring the appropriate behaviors

**Essays**
An essay test consists of a small number of questions by which the student is expected to demonstrate his/her ability to (a) recall factual knowledge, (b) organize this knowledge and (c) present the knowledge in a logical, integrated answer to the question.
By their very nature, essay tests require the student to bring his/her writing skills to bear: he/she is being asked to write about specific content, for a specific purpose and audience, and to make appropriate rhetorical choices in all of those areas (structure, tone, formality, etc). The decision must be made whether to emphasize or de-emphasize the student’s actual writing ability in addition to whatever other outcomes the assessment intends to measure.

Advantages in using essay items
- easier and less time consuming to construct than are most other item types
- provide a means for testing student's ability to compose an answer and present it in a logical manner
- efficiently measures higher order cognitive objectives (e.g., analysis, synthesis, evaluation)

Limitations in using essay items
- cannot measure a large amount of content or objectives.
- require an extensive amount of time to read and score.
- subject to bias on the part of the scorer

Suggestions for writing essay items
- phrase each item so that the student's task is clearly indicated
- indicate for each item a point value or weight and an estimated time limit for answering
- ask questions that will elicit responses on which experts could agree that one answer is better than another
- avoid giving the student a choice among optional items as this greatly reduces the reliability of the test
- several short-answer items are generally recommended over only one or two extended-response items

Problem Solving Tests
Problem solving tests present the student with a problem situation or task and require a demonstration of work procedures and a correct solution, or just a correct solution.

Example
You are walking to your car after class at 10pm. You see someone lying in shrubbery moaning and bleeding. What three things would you do to get help?

Advantages in Using Problem Solving Items
- minimize guessing by requiring the students to provide an original response rather than to select from several alternatives
- easier to construct than multiple-choice or matching items
- measure learning objectives which focus on the ability to apply skills or knowledge in the solution of problems
- can measure an extensive amount of content or objectives
Limitations in Using Problem Solving Items
- require an extensive amount of time to read and score
- subject to bias on the part of the scorer

Suggestions for Writing Problem Solving Items
- clearly identify and explain the problem
- provide directions which clearly inform the student of the type of response called for
- state in the directions whether or not the student must show his/her work procedures
- clearly separate item parts and indicate their point values
- use conditions and situations which create a realistic problem
- ask questions that elicit responses on which experts could agree that one solution and one or more work procedures are better than others
- work through each problem before test administration to double-check accuracy

Suggestions for Scoring Subjective Tests

Rubrics
A rubric is an explicit set of criteria used for assessing a particular type of work or performance. A rubric usually also includes levels of potential achievement for each criterion, and sometimes also includes work or performance samples that typify each of those levels. Levels of achievement are often given numerical scores. A summary score for the work being assessed may be produced by adding the scores for each criterion. The rubric may also include space for the judges to describe the reasons for each judgment or to make suggestions to the student.

See Appendix 3 for several examples of scoring rubrics already in use in Student Affairs at Sacramento State.

Additionally, visit the AAC & U for many rubrics that may be adapted to suit departmental needs to assess many individual areas of the Baccalaureate Learning Goals at http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/index.cfm.

Analytical Scoring
Each response is compared to an ideal response and points are assigned for the inclusion of necessary elements.

Example
"Americans are a mixed-up people with no sense of ethical values. Everyone knows that baseball is far less necessary than food and steel, yet they pay ball players a lot more than farmers and steelworkers." Why?
Use 3-4 sentences to indicate how an economist would explain the above situation.
(Continued on next page.)
**Necessary Elements to be Included in Response**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Necessary Elements to be Included in Response</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries are based on demand relative to supply of such services.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent ball players are rare.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball clubs have a high demand for excellent players.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of Response</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

__9 pts.__

**Other Suggestions for Scoring Written Responses**

1. Try **not** to allow factors which are irrelevant to the learning outcomes being measured affect your scoring (i.e., handwriting, spelling, neatness).
2. Read and score all answers to one item before going on to the next item.
3. Read and score the answers without looking at the students' names to avoid possible preferential treatment.
4. Occasionally shuffle papers during the reading of answers to help avoid any systematic order effects.
5. When possible, use multiple scorers.
12. Constructing Assessment Instruments: Objective Instruments

Objective item instruments require students to select the correct response from several alternatives or to supply a word or short phrase to answer a question or complete a statement. Objective items include multiple-choice, true-false, and completion.

Multiple Choice Tests
See an example of a multiple choice pre- / post-test in Appendix 2.

Advantages of multiple-choice items
- highly reliable test scores
- scoring efficiency and accuracy
- objective measurement of student achievement
- wide sampling of content or objectives
- reduced guessing factor compared to true-false items
- different response alternatives which can provide diagnostic feedback

Limitations in using multiple-choice items
- are difficult and time consuming to construct
- favors simple recall of facts
- place a high degree of dependence on the student's reading ability and preparer’s writing ability

Suggestions for writing multiple-choice items

The stem (the question)
- when possible, state the stem as a direct question rather than as an incomplete statement
- present a definite, explicit and singular question or problem
- eliminate excessive verbiage or irrelevant information
- word(s) that might otherwise be repeated in each alternative should be placed in the stem
- use negatively stated stems sparingly; when used, underline and/or capitalize the negative word

Item alternatives
- make all alternatives plausible and attractive
- make the alternatives grammatically parallel with each other, and consistent with the stem
- make the alternatives mutually exclusive (no overlapping)
- when possible, present alternatives in some logical order (e.g., chronological, most to least, alphabetical)
- be sure there is only one correct or best response to the item
- make alternatives approximately equal in length
• avoid irrelevant clues such as grammatical structure, well known verbal associations or connections between stem and answer
• use at least four alternatives for each item to lower the probability of getting the item correct by guessing
• randomly distribute the correct response among the alternative positions throughout the test having approximately the same proportion of alternatives a, b, c, d and e as the correct response

**True / False Tests**

**Advantages in using true / false items**
• the widest sampling of content or objectives per unit of testing time
• scoring efficiency and accuracy
• versatility in measuring all levels of cognitive ability
• highly reliable test scores
• an objective measurement of student achievement or ability

**Limitations in using true / false items**
• incorporate an extremely high guessing factor. For simple true-false items, each student has a 50/50 chance of correctly answering the item without any knowledge of the item's content
• can often lead to writing ambiguous statements due to the difficulty of writing statements which are unequivocally true or false
• do not discriminate between students of varying ability as well as other item types
• can often include more irrelevant clues than do other item types
• can often lead to favoring testing of trivial knowledge

**Suggestions for writing true / false tests**
• base true / false items upon statements that are absolutely true or false, without qualifications or
• express the item statement as simply and as clearly as possible
• express a single idea in each test item
• avoid lifting statements from the text, lecture or other materials so that memory alone will not permit a correct answer
• avoid the use of specific determiners which would permit a test-wise but unprepared examinee to respond correctly
  o specific determiners refer to sweeping terms like "all," "always," "none," "never," "impossible," "inevitable," etc; statements including such terms are likely to be false.
  o statements using qualifying determiners such as "usually," "sometimes," "often," etc., are likely to be true
  o when statements do require the use of specific determiners, make sure they appear in both true and false items
false items tend to discriminate more highly than true items; therefore, use more false items than true items (but no more than 15% additional false items)

Completion Tests (Fill in the blank)
The completion item requires the student to answer a question or to finish an incomplete statement by filling in a blank.

Advantages in using completion items
- can provide a wide sampling of content
- can efficiently measure lower levels of cognitive ability
- can minimize guessing as compared to multiple-choice or true-false items
- can usually provide an objective measure of student achievement or ability

Limitations in using completion items
- are difficult to construct so that the desired response is clearly indicated
- have difficulty measuring learning objectives requiring more than simple recall of information
- can often include more irrelevant clues than do other item types
- are more time consuming to score when compared to multiple-choice or true-false items
- are more difficult to score since more than one answer may have to be considered correct if the item was not properly prepared

Suggestions for writing completion items
- omit only significant words from the statement
- do not omit so many words from the statement that the intended meaning is lost
- avoid grammatical or other clues to the correct response
- be sure there is only one correct response
- make the blanks of equal length
- when possible, delete words at the end of the statement after presenting a clearly defined problem
- avoid lifting statements directly from the text, lecture or other sources
- limit the required response to a single word or phrase

Matching Items
In general, matching items consist of a column of stimuli presented on the left side of the exam page and a column of responses placed on the right side of the page. Students are required to match the response associated with a given stimulus.

Advantages in using matching items
- require short periods of reading and response time, allowing you to cover more content
- provide objective measurement of student achievement or ability
• provide highly reliable test scores
• provide scoring efficiency and accuracy

Limitations in using matching items
• may not measure learning objectives requiring more than simple recall of information.
• are difficult to construct due to the problem of selecting a common set of stimuli and responses.

Suggestions for writing matching test items
• include directions which clearly state the basis for matching the stimuli with the responses; explain whether or not a response can be used more than once and indicate where to write the answer
• arrange the list of responses in some systematic order if possible (e.g., chronological, alphabetical); avoid grammatical or other clues to the correct response
• keep matching items brief, limiting the list of stimuli to 10 or less
• include more responses than stimuli to help prevent answering through the process of elimination
• when possible, reduce the amount of reading time by including only short phrases or single words in the response list

Sources:

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Center for Teaching Excellence
Learning Technologies at Virginia Tech
13. Writing Assessment Reports: Style Guide

Organization

- The flow of documents/presentations should move from general “big picture” issues to more specific “small picture” issues.
  - Make sure the reader is oriented to how ideas fit together in context.

- The main idea/organizing theme or argument of the documents should be presented in a clean, straightforward manner in the first paragraph or introduction.
  - The Assessment Report template is structured toward helping writers organize the report in an easy-to-understand way.

- Use clear topic sentences throughout the document to organize each paragraph in a logical manner.

- Use transitions between paragraphs and within paragraphs to keep the reader oriented and make the connections between ideas clear.

Writing

- Write in complete, grammatically correct sentences.

**Example: Incomplete Sentences** (Incomplete sentences are underlined)

The study attempted to measure several things. The number of students utilizing the program, the students who attended each workshop, and areas to improve on.

The areas to improve on were not clearly identified by the survey instrument. Although the study was successful in the two other areas.

- Ensure prose is clear, concise, and not over-wordy.
  - Break up complex sentences into separate sentences.

**Example: Breaking Up Complex Sentences**

The following examples (created by the authors) are based on a SARC assessment measure in which SARC staff visit local high schools and deliver workshops to potential student-athletes and their families. Prior to the workshop, SARC staff administered a pre-test on workshop materials to participants. After the presentation, they administered a post-test and later compared the two tests to help them get an idea of how well the audience retains the information. The examples here come from the Methods & Measures section of the assessment.

See example text next page.
Example: Too Complex

As part of the SARC’s annual service to the local-area high school districts during “College Night” and career information sessions, SARC staff asked prospective student-athletes and their parents who participated in presentation sessions to take a post-test to assess their understanding of basic NCAA Division I initial eligibility and recruiting rules (per NCAA rules, these sessions are provided when the SARC receives invitations from the high schools and/or their respective districts).

Example: Less Complex

SARC staff asked prospective student-athletes and their parents who participated in the presentation to take a post-test to assess their understanding of basic NCAA Division I initial eligibility and recruiting rules. The test and presentations are part of the SARC’s annual service to the local-area high school districts during “College Night” and career information sessions. Per NCAA rules, these sessions are provided when the SARC receives invitations from the high schools and/or their respective districts.

- Make sure subjects and verbs agree.
  - Most common mistakes occur with “a student” and “their,” instead of “their” used as a singular pronoun (which is becoming increasingly common but still technically incorrect), use “he or she.”
  - Example: “A student must log in using his or her SacLink ID.”
  - Example: “Students must log in using their SacLink ID.”

- Use active voice whenever possible, and in the majority of cases
  - Active voice is when the subject of the sentence is performing the action; passive voice is when the subject of the sentence is being acted upon.
  - One key to avoiding passive voice is making the “real subject” of sentences (that is, what the sentence is really about) the grammatical subject of your sentence.

Making the “Real Subject” the Grammatical Subject Examples

Sample Student Learning Outcome

Leadership skill development will be measured by a pre- and post-test survey taken at the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester.

The grammatical subject of the sentence is “development of students’ leadership skills” in a passive construction: those skills are being acted upon—“measured by”—a survey. The “real subject” of that sentence is students. The next step in the revision is for the author to ask him
or herself, “what do I want **students** to do?” The answer: demonstrate increased knowledge of leadership skills.

**Sample Student Learning Outcome Revision**

**Students** will demonstrate increased knowledge of leadership skills over the course of a semester as shown by earning a post-test score that is higher than their pre-test score.

**Additional Active and Passive Voice Examples**

- Passive voice example: “Results of the survey **will be analyzed** upon completion.”
- Active voice example: “University Union staff **will analyze** the data once collection is completed.”

- Passive Voice example: “Students’ applications that are not completed by the deadline **will be withdrawn** from consideration.”
- Active Voice Example: “If students do not complete all sections of their application by the due date, Admissions & Outreach staff **will withdraw** their application from consideration.”

- Use third-person in most situations
  - First and second person (I, we, you) are less formal than the third person; think carefully about using those points of view, and be consistent.
  - In assessment reports, use third-person in nearly all cases.

**Second and Third Person Examples**

Second Person example: **You** can check your financial aid award status by logging into SacLink.

Third-person example: **Students** can check their financial aid awards by logging into SacLink.

**Style**

- Using symbols to replace words (&, =, +, etc.) signals a less-formal writing style; consider your audience and purpose when deciding if this is appropriate, and be consistent with your choices.
- Be consistent with boldface, underlining, and italics; do not overuse those features, and be consistent with their use.
  - Be consistent using these features in headings.
    - All primary headings should be the same font, size, etc., and be **larger** than secondary headings.
- All secondary headings should be the same font, size, etc., and be **smaller** than primary headings.
  - Be consistent using these features for emphasis; choose **one** feature for emphasis, and stick with it.

**Bulleted Lists**

- Consider using short sentences or descriptions before bulleted lists to help orient readers; make sure that the intro sentence and the subsequent bullets make complete sentences or thoughts when combined.
- Make sure that bullets are consistent and balanced in content, grammatical structure, and punctuation.
- Consider whether to use periods with sentence fragments in bullet points or lists (recommend that writers do not use periods with sentence fragments in lists; note that these list items all have periods, and are all complete sentences).
- Avoid passive voice.
Appendix 1: University and Divisional Planning Goals

The Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) that departments in Student Affairs are trying to meet should be aligned with goals and priorities beyond the department itself. In other words, University and divisional priorities should shape departmental ones, which will then, in turn, inform the outcomes Student Affairs directors choose to address.

University Mission

California State University, Sacramento is an integral part of the community, committed to access, excellence and diversity.

California State University, Sacramento is dedicated to the life-altering potential of learning that balances a liberal arts education with depth of knowledge in a discipline. We are committed to providing an excellent education to all eligible applicants who aspire to expand their knowledge and prepare themselves for meaningful lives, careers, and service to their community.

Reflecting the metropolitan character of the area, California State University, Sacramento is a richly diverse community. As such, the University is committed to fostering in all its members a sense of inclusiveness, respect for human differences, and concern for others. In doing so, we strive to create a pluralistic community in which members participate collaboratively in all aspects of university life.

California State University, Sacramento is committed to teaching and learning as its primary responsibility. In both the academic and student support programs, success is measured in terms of student learning. In addition, the University recognizes the vital connections between pedagogy and learning, research activities and classroom instruction, and co-curricular involvement and civic responsibility. All students, regardless of their entering levels of preparation, are expected to complete their degree programs with the analytical skills necessary to understand the social, economic, political, cultural, and ecological complexities of an increasingly interconnected world.

Located in the capital of the nation's most populous and diverse state, California State University, Sacramento is dedicated to advancing the many social, economic, political, and scientific issues affecting the region and the state. The University's curricular and co-curricular programs continue to focus on these issues through undergraduate and post-baccalaureate programs that prepare graduates for successful careers dedicated to public service and the enhancement of the quality of life within the region and the state. Our research centers and much of our individual scholarly efforts also remain directed at the enhancement of the quality of life within the region and the state.

At California State University, Sacramento, we are constantly striving to create a sense of unity among faculty, staff, administrators, students, alumni, and community members. In
pursuing the combined elements of our mission, we seek to foster a sense of pride in all who view this campus as their own – pride in Sacramento State as the institution of choice among our current students; pride among our alumni in the ongoing impact of the Sacramento State education upon their lives; pride among faculty, staff, and administration in their university's achievement of excellence in teaching, learning, and scholarship; and pride in Sacramento State as an asset to the community among residents of the Greater Sacramento region.

Sacramento State Baccalaureate Learning Goals

Early in the Student Affairs assessment process, the Vice President suggested that directors map one or more of their SLOs back to a broader set of goals called the Sacramento State Baccalaureate Learning Goals (BLGs). While this “mapping back” occurred for one or two cycles, it was not fully conceptualized in a proactive or meaningful way; therefore, it never firmly took hold.

Since that time (2008-09), the undergraduate BLGs have been reexamined at a campus level, and are available in full below. These Learning Goals are adapted from the American Association of Colleges and University’s (AAC & U) LEAP (Liberal Education and America’s Potential) Goals. See www.aacu.org/leap for more information.

Though there is currently no mandate that departments reference these Learning Goals explicitly in their assessment reports, they can serve as good background information for learning outcomes, particularly in departments with student employees or volunteers.

Sacramento State Baccalaureate Learning Goals for the 21st Century

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence in the Disciplines:</th>
<th>The ability to demonstrate the competencies and values listed below in at least one major field of study and to demonstrate informed understandings of other fields, drawing on the knowledge and skills of disciplines outside the major.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts. Focused by engagement with big questions, contemporary and enduring.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual and Practical Skills, Including: inquiry and analysis, critical, philosophical, and creative thinking, written and oral communication, quantitative literacy, information literacy, teamwork and problem solving, practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal and Social Responsibility, Including: civic knowledge and engagement—local and global, intercultural knowledge and competence*, ethical reasoning and action, foundations and skills for lifelong learning anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Integrative Learning**, including: synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies.

All of the above are demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems.

*Understanding of and respect for those who are different from oneself and the ability to work collaboratively with those who come from diverse cultural backgrounds.

** Interdisciplinary learning, learning communities, capstone or senior studies in the General Education program and/or in the major connecting learning goals with the content and practices of the educational programs including GE, departmental majors, the co-curriculum and assessments.

Student Affairs Vision, Mission, and Core Values

Vision
As a vital component of a destination campus, Student Affairs will be a recognized leader in fostering student learning, growth, retention and success at the University and beyond.

Mission
The Division of Student Affairs at Sacramento State meets the diverse needs of our students by offering programs, services and opportunities that empower students to reach their unique potential as learners, as contributing members of their communities and as responsible leaders.

Core Values

Integrity
We pride ourselves on being honorable, trustworthy and credible.

Collaboration
The interactive partnerships we forge with members of the Division, The University and the community enable us to create meaningful learning experiences for our students.

Empowerment
We help students develop the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to shape their futures.

Respect for Diversity
We cultivate a culture of civility where the open exchange of ideas and respect for all people are paramount.
**Service to Students**
We strive to deliver programs, policies and services in a timely, responsible and respectful manner.

**Student Affairs Overarching Themes**

Another major set of guidelines that can help inform program objectives and student learning outcomes in Student Affairs, related to the Division’s mission, vision and values, are the general themes below. These themes are intended to be concrete extensions of University and Student Affairs planning priorities. Though these themes are still in the draft and revision stages, they are still useful as priorities to guide planning.

- Retention and Graduation
- Diversity and Inclusivity
- Engagement and Leadership
- Wellness and Health
- Navigating Complex Organizations (helping students understand, work as a part of, or accomplish their own goals in conjunction with the types of bureaucracies they will face as adults)
- Providing Seamless Student Services

**Athletics Strategic Plan**

In 2013, the Sacramento State Athletics Department adopted a new five-year strategic plan, as well as joined the Division of Student Affairs. The priorities outlined in the Athletics Strategic Plan will guide the Athletic Departments strategic planning and assessment efforts. The Athletics Department Vision, Values and Goals are summarized below.

**Vision**
Sacramento State Athletics is committed to success. We work hard to achieve excellence—on the field and in the classroom. We inspire campus pride and engage our community. We win.

**Values**
The Hornets’ commitment to athletic excellence is based upon four core values. These values define who we are and how we act. More importantly, they also reflect the values of the University we represent.

**Integrity**
We work hard, we play fair and we expect the conduct of our student-athletes, coaches and staff to be beyond reproach.

(Continued next page.)
Commitment to Student-Athletes
We provide our student-athletes with the support to develop and succeed—as competitors, scholars, citizens and leaders—at Sacramento State and beyond.

Accountability
We are stewards of University and community resources. We take this responsibility seriously and conduct our activities in a professional and transparent manner.

Engagement
We enrich lives on campus, in the community and among our alumni. We connect the University to our region.

Goals
The following goals are designed to establish a strong, definitive direction for Sacramento State Athletics:

- Build and communicate a clear, consistent identity for Sacramento State Athletics
- Support student-athlete well-being, achieve academic success and promote exemplary conduct
- Build a dedicated fan base that supports Sacramento State Athletics
- Improve Sacramento State's athletic facilities
- Foster a championship culture

Appendix 2: Works Cited or Consulted


Appendix 3: Multiple Choice Pre-/Post-test Example

FIRST-YEAR STUDENT PRE-/POST-TEST
Summer 2008

Instructions: Please select the most appropriate answer for each question below.

1. The two primary components of an undergraduate degree are:
   A. General Education and Electives
   B. General Education and Major
   C. Major and Minor
   D. Major and Electives
   E. None of the above

2. What is the minimum number of units required to graduate?
   A. 135
   B. 120
   C. 60
   D. 51

3. What is the minimum GPA a student must maintain to remain in good academic standing?
   A. 2.3 (C+)
   B. 2.0 (C)
   C. 1.7 (C-)
   D. 1.3 (D+)

4. The most up-to-date list of GE classes may be found where?
   A. Catalog
   B. New Student Guide
   C. Online through My Sac State
   D. Registration and Advising Handbook

5. If you notice a class on your schedule that you don't remember registering for and don't want to take, you should:
   A. Drop it online before the end of the second week
   B. Not attend class because the instructor will drop you
   C. Not worry about it because it wasn't your fault
6. My Sac State CANNOT be used for which of the following?

   A. Buying textbooks
   B. Fee Payment
   C. Financial Aid notifications
   D. Important messages from the university
   E. Registering for classes

7. Which of the following factors should you consider when making your class schedule?

   A. Commute Time
   B. Family commitments
   C. Number of classes
   D. Number of hours working
   E. All of the above

8. Where should a student go to get academic advising and explore majors?

   A. Academic Advising Center & Career Center
   B. Admissions & Associated Students (ASI)
   C. Global Education & Learning Skills
   D. Library & Major department

9. Where can students get information about clubs and organizations?

   A. ASI
   B. Career Center
   C. On-campus Housing
   D. Student Activities
   E. UNIQUE

10. Sac State is a big campus, who is here to help?

    A. Advisors & Counselors
    B. Faculty & Staff
    C. Peer Mentors
    D. Resident Advisors
    E. All of the Above
## Career Services’ Resume Rubric

This rubric was created by the University of West Florida. [http://uwf.edu/studentaffairs/documents/CareerServices2005-2006RubricSet.doc](http://uwf.edu/studentaffairs/documents/CareerServices2005-2006RubricSet.doc)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Resume needs significant improvement and would not be considered.</th>
<th>2. Resume is average and needs improvement to be considered.</th>
<th>3. Resume could land you an interview but may need a few improvements.</th>
<th>4. Resume should effectively land you an interview.</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Format</strong></td>
<td>This resume is either a half page or three pages long. The font is too big or may be hard to read. There is more white space than words on the page. You have picked the wrong format to use. There are multiple spelling errors.</td>
<td>The font and spacing of the resume is not appealing and easily scanned. Information such as dates are inconsistent on the page. There are more than one spelling or grammar errors.</td>
<td>This resume has some uneven white space. Some information is inconsistent (dates, bolding, underlining). There may be a single spelling or grammar error.</td>
<td>The resume makes good use of space. It can be easily scanned and is pleasing to the reader. There are no grammar or spelling errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Header</strong></td>
<td>The header is hard to read and missing information. Some information may be inappropriate (e-mail, telephone information).</td>
<td>Your name and header information are hard to read or may be confusing. Phone numbers are not clearly labeled and some information may be missing.</td>
<td>Header information is easy to find but your name is not the biggest and boldest thing on the page. Current and permanent contact information may not be labeled correctly.</td>
<td>Header information is easy to read and contains necessary information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Section</strong></td>
<td>This section is missing some crucial information, i.e. Institution listed without a location, graduation date is not listed, major is listed but not the name of the degree.</td>
<td>This section is not well organized. Some information is missing. There is no order to how information is formatted in this section.</td>
<td>This section is organized and easy to read. This section includes: institution and location, graduation date, name of degree, and major. Some “extra” information that might help you is missing. (ex. Relevant coursework or honors and achievements.)</td>
<td>This section is organized, clear, and well defined. It highlights the most pertinent information. This section also helps add value for the position applied for including relevant coursework or honors and achievements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Housing & Residential Life Incident Report Writing Rubric

This rubric was created by Vickii Castillon and Alan Haslam at Sacramento State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCORE</th>
<th>1. IR is lacking in every category and needs significant improvement.</th>
<th>2. IR is lacking in several places and needs improvement.</th>
<th>3. IR conforms well to all standards; there is room for minor improvement in one or two areas.</th>
<th>4. IR conforms very well to standards with little or no room for improvement.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>The writer does not describe the scene with nearly adequate detail. Much improvement is needed in almost every content area.</td>
<td>The writer describes the scene with some detail, but more is needed for the report to be considered adequate. Two or more of the basic content elements are missing.</td>
<td>The writer describes the incident with basically adequate detail, but more specifics and/or details could be included. One element of the basic content elements may be missing.</td>
<td>The writer describes thoroughly all specific details of the incident: how they arrived on the scene, what happened when they got there/while they were there, what measures were taken as follow up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>The report contains many severe grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors and an unsuitably informal or unprofessional tone, and lacks suitable narrative structure.</td>
<td>The report contains several and/or severe grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors, and/or adopts an unsuitably informal or unprofessional tone, and/or the report lacks coherent narrative structure.</td>
<td>The report contains one or two minor grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors, and maintains a suitably professional tone and appearance while following a logical narrative structure.</td>
<td>The report is free of grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors, and maintains a suitably professional tone and appearance in addition to being a logical narrative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectivity</td>
<td>The report includes a great deal of speculation. It makes generalizations and assumptions throughout.</td>
<td>The report includes facts as well as speculation. It may make some generalizations and/or assumptions.</td>
<td>The report includes only facts and no speculation. It focuses on observation and avoids generalities and assumptions with only one or two minor deviations.</td>
<td>The report includes only facts and no speculation. It focuses only on observation and avoids generalities and assumptions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Student Conduct’s Essay Writing Rubric
This rubric was created by Vickii Castillon and Leonard Valdez at Sacramento State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCORE</th>
<th>Demonstrates knowledge of policy violation</th>
<th>Accepts responsibility for actions</th>
<th>Demonstrates increased awareness and maturity</th>
<th>Demonstrates commitment not to violate University policy in the future</th>
<th>Demonstrates understanding of the value of academic integrity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Student completely lacks understanding/knowledge Significant improvement needed.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates no understanding of the policy and how their behavior violates policy.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates no acceptance of responsibility for their actions.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates no increase in awareness and maturity.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates no commitment to refrain from future policy violations.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates no understanding of the value of academic integrity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Student understanding/knowledge is limited. Improvement needed.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates limited understanding of the policy and how their behavior violates policy.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates limited acceptance of responsibility for their actions.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates limited increase in awareness and maturity.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates limited commitment to refrain from future policy violations.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates limited understanding of the value of academic integrity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Student understanding/knowledge is adequate. There is room for improvement.</td>
<td>The student adequately demonstrates understanding of the policy and how their behavior violates policy.</td>
<td>The student adequately demonstrates acceptance of responsibility for their actions.</td>
<td>The student adequately demonstrates increase in awareness and maturity.</td>
<td>The student very clearly demonstrates commitment to refrain from future policy violations.</td>
<td>The student adequately demonstrates understanding of the value of academic integrity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Student understanding/knowledge is very good. Little need for improvement.</td>
<td>The student very clearly demonstrates understanding of the policy and how their behavior violates policy.</td>
<td>The student very clearly demonstrates acceptance of responsibility for their actions.</td>
<td>The student very clearly demonstrates increase in awareness and maturity.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates thorough and complete commitment to refrain from future policy violations.</td>
<td>The student very clearly demonstrates understanding of the value of academic integrity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Student understanding/knowledge is exceptional. No improvement needed.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates thorough and complete understanding of the policy and how their behavior violates policy.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates thorough and complete acceptance of responsibility for their actions.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates thorough and complete increase in awareness and maturity.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates thorough and complete commitment to refrain from future policy violations.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates thorough and complete understanding of the value of academic integrity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>