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## **CHARGE OF THE COMMITTEE**

On September 9, 2023, the Provost's Office called for the formation of a Task Force charged with reviewing Stockton's Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) and other undergraduate degree requirements, specifically asking whether or not the faculty would consider collapsing, simplifying or refining the ELOs.

The Senate Executive asked for a clarification of the scope of ELO assessment alongside all unutm



student learning vis-a-vis the ELOs, including metacognitive growth, self-awareness and ownership of their learning over time?

The initial idea to assess ELOs through student portfolio development was hopeful, but ran into questions about expectations for the form and content of portfolios, questions of how to instruct students in portfolio development, questions about what portfolio management options might be used, and a host of other questions about how a large number of individualized portfolios would be evaluated, how students would receive feedback on their work, and how individual achievement in portfolio development could be recognized. In 2015, a pilot assessment project was

Overall, faculty members increased and improved their teaching in areas reflected by ELOs, and ultimately this improved the educational experience for students. In aligning program and course objectives to ELOs, many programs were able to reflect consciously on the ways their curricula and courses addressed broad skills and abilities that are part of an interdisciplinary, liberal arts education. Furthermore, a range of scholarship published by faculty members pertaining to ELOs advanced field-specific inquiries as well as institutional understandings of ELO frameworks, implementation processes and assessment measures.

However, while the ELOs contributed to faculty development and impacted student learning in a variety of ways, the question of whether the ELOs continue to serve their purpose and meet institutional needs is more problematic. While the positive effects of ELO development at Stockton are noted, below we offer our assessment of the state of ELOs at the present time, cover some ambiguities and complications in understanding their institutional purpose and Stockton's institutional needs, and offer some reasons why we conclude with a recommendation to realign, remodel or recreate the ELOs.

#### **ELO OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES:**

1. *ELOs are numerous:* At present, the ten ELOs represent a layer of learning outcomes superimposed over program-based outcomes, General Studies outcomes and learning outcomes associated with various attributes and subscripts. With the addition of ten ELOs, faculty and

students develop over the duration of their education. Courses, programs and the institution generally would be compelled to directly assess the ten ELOs if they were to be continued in their current form. This would necessitate ensuring courses are tagged as ELO-bearing via Banner at a level far above the current <5% rate. It would also mean norming and characterizing ELO development at various levels of competency from exposure, to basic to advanced levels, and also assessing ELOs at these different levels consistently and deliberately in individual courses over time.

4. *ELOs are unevenly selected/used/applied at the course level and program level:* While ELOs may be selected by faculty in the course scheduling process, with selections visible to students in Banner during course registration, the ELOs are *not university requirements* and, therefore, are not reflected in Degree Works. This creates confusion among students about how to understand Banner notations of ELOs. Many faculty use ELOs to guide their teaching but nevertheless do not specify ELOs during course scheduling, and therefore their courses may “carry” ELOs even when not noted in Banner. Because ELOs are not directly assessed at the course level, and not noted reliably in Banner, we lack a full understanding of how the ELOs are constructed, construed, applied, and measured in distinctive courses, disciplines, programs, and General Studies.
5. *We do not have consistent ELO standards:* As noted earlier, absent a norming process, we lack understanding of the basis and rationale for ELOs selections and alignments – which may be defined differently according to different faculty members. This problem feeds back into the assessment problem. With broad and potentially uneven definitions and applications of ELOs, we face significant challenges to any effort to disaggregate and assess essential learning outcomes consistently across the curriculum.
6. *ELOs are not used in teaching evaluations:* While faculty may be evaluated by program and IDEA-based outcomes, there is not currently a mechanism to use ELOs as a basis for assessing teaching effectiveness. Faculty targeting ELOs specifically not aligned to program-based outcomes risk investing energy into pedagogies not necessarily valued as highly by chairs and deans in programs. Thus, arguments for tenure or promotion rooted in ELO teaching effectiveness are not necessarily tethered to teaching standards in programs.
7. *ELOs in their current form are not fully integrated for co-curricular and other activities.* Because ELOs have been defined and mapped largely to academic endeavors, they have offered frameworks to guide co-curricular programs and activities only fairly loosely. The original ELO mission states that “students encounter opportunities to develop ELOs in all Stockton majors, career preparation, professional experiences both on and off-campus, and academic as well as social activities.” While co-curricular units did map to ELOs in some cases, and assessment efforts concerning ELOs in Residential Life and other Student Affairs programming did occur, these have not extended to other co-curricular units that we know of.



program-based learning objectives and outcomes which, aligned to the three themes, permit institutional assessment while helping to distinguish between General Studies, subscript and attribute, and program-



Develop a strategy and support mechanism for integrating ILTs into learning and experiences across the university, and provide recommendations for assessing ILTs in consultation with the Office of Academic Assessment.

Pending further development of ILTs, use programs' existing ELO curriculum maps to reorganize alignments within the framework of the ILTs. This could be done at the Academic Affairs level by translating existing curriculum maps into the three ILTs.

Create strategy and support mechanism for integrating ILTs into extracurricular and other campus activities.

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## APPENDIX A

**APPENDIX B**  
**Count of ELOs Assigned to Courses\***

	<u>Fall 2022</u>		<u>Spring 2023</u>	
	<u>Count</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>%</u>
Adapting to Change	5	3.9%	8	

**APPENDIX C**  
**ELOs Assigned by Academic School**

	Fall22	Spring23
<u>Adapting to Change</u>	5	8
ARHU	4	7
GENS	1	1
<u>Communication Skills</u>	22	22
ARHU	19	20
GENS	3	2
<u>Creativity and Innovation</u>	26	25
ARHU	18	21
EDUC	3	2
GENS	5	2
<u>Critical Thinking</u>	18	13
ARHU	6	9
EDUC	3	2
GENS	9	2
<u>Ethical Reasoning</u>	4	5





\*Courses with multiple ELOs attached are listed multiple times above.