Institutional Learning Objectives (ILO) Working Group

Report to
Committee on Academic Policy and Planning (CAPP)
General Education Committee (GEC) and
Mānoa Assessment Committee (MAC)

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee tasked the Institutional Learning Objectives (ILOs) working group with preparing institutional learning objectives for the Mānoa campus in response to the WASC requirement that we develop learning objectives at the institutional level. Since 2001 WASC has required learning objectives at the institutional level. The committee included members of the Committee on Academic Policy and Planning (CAPP), General Education Committee (GEC) and Mānoa Assessment Committee (MAC). Additionally, members of the Assessment Office were invited to participate given their role in the future implementation and measurement of any ILOs that are created.

Beyond the WASC requirement, arguments for creating Institutional Learning Objectives (ILOs) for the undergraduate degree are that they have the potential to do the following: help UH Mānoa be clear about the educational values shared by the community and thus help students attain a higher level of learning achievement. Similar to a Strategic Plan, ILOs can provide a shared vision for faculty, students, staff, and administrators. They can also provide direction, focus, and goals that UH Mānoa expects students to achieve upon graduation. In addition, the ILOs can help students take responsibility for their own learning since they become cognizant of the learning objectives associated with their college degree. Please keep in mind that students meet ILOs through the sum of their UH Mānoa experience—no one set of major requirements nor the General Education (GenEd) requirements nor co-curricular experiences are expected to address all ILOs. For more information, please read the FAQs about ILOs.

The committee convened during the Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 semesters. We discovered that a prior committee had already created a draft of UH Mānoa learning objectives. Specifically, in late Spring-Summer 2009 an OVCAA working group consisting of instructional faculty, specialist faculty, and administrators used Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) objectives, the 2002-2010 UHM strategic plan, the mission of the University, and the UHM general education learning objectives to come up with what they called the Mānoa Undergraduate Learning Objectives (MUGLOs).

The draft MUGLOs, which are essentially ILOs, were sent to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee who then sent them to the MAC and possibly to CAPP. MAC recommended that further discussion of the MUGLOs be integrated into the strategic planning process. However, the strategic plan was revised and the process was limited in scope so no additional faculty discussion of ILOs was done at that time.

In order to create the attached draft ILOs, we engaged in the following investigation and discussion.

1. Whereas there was some debate about the process used to derive the draft MUGLOs, the ILO working group determined it was far better to begin with the
work that had already been accomplished than to start over. Our working group agreed that the MUGLOs were a good starting point because they address meaningful and important aspects of undergraduate education. We re-named them the draft ILOs.

2. We compared the draft ILOs against the Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) of 22 degree programs at UH Mānoa, including the 10 that graduate the most students. We did this to find out whether or not program SLOs come anywhere close to addressing the draft ILOs. As a result of this comparison, we determined that there were several areas of the draft ILOs, including personal growth and stewardship of the natural environment, that are not explicitly stated in most of these 22 degree programs’ SLOs. Recall, however, that ILOs are not meant to be fully addressed by any one degree program’s SLOs.

3. We also compared the draft ILOs to the UH Mānoa GenEd objectives. A significant portion of the ILOs not addressed by most departmental SLOs are indeed addressed by the GenEd objectives, although personal growth and stewardship of the natural environment remain mostly unaddressed.

Based upon the comparisons, we determined that the draft ILOs can largely be met by a combination of a typical degree program’s SLOs + the GenEd.

4. We compared the draft ILOs to the UH Mānoa strategic plan, both to identify other possible learning objectives that may be goals of UH Mānoa that are not in the draft ILOs (we didn’t find any), and to determine if there are experiences within the university that can address the few aspects of the draft ILOs not addressed by degree program SLOs + GenEd. Because the strategic plan emphasizes Native Hawaiian values, we added knowledge of Hawaiian culture to the draft ILOs.

5. The working group also discussed the undergraduate learning abilities and competencies emphasized by the WASC Commission at its November 2011 meeting. These are:

- Written communication
- Oral communication
- Quantitative skills
- Information literacy
- Critical thinking

Please note that the draft ILOs we are presenting embrace all five of these learning abilities and competencies.
6. We discussed the probability that UH Mānoa will pilot the Lumina Foundation’s Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) as part of a larger WASC project and how that might influence the creation of our ILOs. Whereas our draft ILOs align closely with Lumina’s DQP, there are differences. Should the UH pilot Lumina’s DQP as part of a WASC-sponsored project, we recommend that the ILOs be tabled until the DQP is piloted and evaluated. The WASC pilot project is still in an early stage and UH Mānoa will learn more about the project in February/March 2012. We did determine that while our draft ILOs are not designed to directly match the DQP, overlaps exist.

Based on our investigation and discussion, we are presenting a set of draft ILOs for the undergraduate degree (see attached) and we want wide circulation, recommendations and feedback. We recommend that the SEC develop a process for gathering feedback from all senators and their constituents. Please send any comments to: Debora Halbert (Chair of the ILO Working Group) halbert@hawaii.edu. When giving feedback, please keep in mind that what we are presenting is a draft. Please also keep in mind that the final ILOs need to address the entirety of an undergraduate student’s experience at UH Mānoa, regardless of his/her major. Specific goals of a particular department or college may or may not be pertinent for all students.

ILO Working Group includes:

- Debora J. Halbert, Associate Professor, Political Science (CAPP)
- Dore Minatodani, Librarian, Hawai‘i Specialist, Library Services (GEC)
- Scott Rowland, Specialist, Geology & Geophysics (GEC)
- Todd H. Sammons, Associate Professor, English, Faculty Administrator, General Education Office, (CAPP)
- Amy Lynn Schiffner, Assistant Professor of Theatre and Dance (MAC)
- Monica Stitt-Bergh, Assistant Specialist, Assessment Office
- Jane Uyehara-Lock Assistant Professor, John A. Burns school of Medicine (CAPP)
- Kate Zhou, Professor of Political Science (CAPP)

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