GEC – GE Learning Outcomes Placement on Syllabi

Rationale: The WASC 2013 Handbook of Accreditation Criterion for Review 2.3 states the following:

The institution’s student learning outcomes and standards of performance are clearly stated

at the **course, program, and, as appropriate, institutional** level. These outcomes and standards

are reflected in academic programs, policies, and curricula, and are aligned with advisement,

library, and information and technology resources, and the wider learning environment.

(Emphasis added.)

Criterion for Review 2.4 states the following:

The institution’s student learning outcomes and standards of performance are developed by

faculty and **widely shared among faculty, students**, staff, and (where appropriate) external

stakeholders. The institution’s faculty take collective responsibility for establishing appropriate standards of performance and demonstrating through assessment the achievement of these standards.

**GUIDELINE: Student learning outcomes are reflected in course syllabi.**

(Emphasis added.)

The WASC “Rubric for Assessing the Quality of Academic Program Learning Outcomes” says of a ”Developed” program that

Students are well-acquainted with program outcomes and may participate in creation and use of rubrics. They are skilled at self-assessing in relation to the outcomes and levels of performance. **Program policy calls for inclusion of outcomes in all course syllabi, and they are readily available in other program documents**.

The stratification of learning objectives at the course and program level is a matter with which our campus has been busy for several years. Most faculty have been closely involved with development of learning objectives/outcomes in the programs of their own departments. The GE program is also a ”program” with learning objectives and outcomes which the GEC has been composing. In GE, learning outcomes at the Area level (e.g., Area A2, B2, C3, D, E) were completed and approved by Academic Senate in 2012 and 2013. It has been agreed that all GE learning outcomes in a given area apply to all courses in that area – hence the policy specifies that area learning outcomes should all be listed in the syllabus. The course will be asked to assess these learning outcomes periodically, so the course should be presented in such a way that it will be possible to assess the area learning outcomes.

GE learning outcomes at the program level are partially developed. It is expected that a given GE course will only do some of the program level learning outcomes, so the policy specifies that **only program level outcomes relevant to the course** should appear in the syllabus. As a university, we will have to demonstrate via assessment to WASC that these learning outcomes are achieved somewhere in the GE program, so it is important for us to have documentation for what learning outcomes are occurring in which courses.

It is completely clear that WASC sees it as important that student learning outcomes be widely and easily accessible to the students and faculty, using course syllabi as a primary tool for dissemination. In order for these learning outcomes to meet the criteria for review of WASC, the GEC sees it as necessary to make it policy that these learning outcomes be posted in syllabi of all GE courses.

**Policy:**

The syllabus or first-day handout of a general education course at CSUSM must include the following:

1. A list of the GE Program learning outcomes relevant to the course (when available);
2. A list of the GE learning outcomes of the GE area for which the course is certified;

The campus syllabus guidelines shall be updated to include this directive.

The GE learning outcomes at area and program levels shall be posted in a public place on the campus web server in a format which is easily copied and pasted for use in individual syllabi.