

Area of Emphasis Degree in Social and Behavioral Sciences

2015 Reflection on the AOE PLO Assessment, 2012 - 2013

NORCO COLLEGE

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Background

In the spring of 2012 Norco College engaged in an initial project to assess the seven Areas of Emphasis (AOE) Degrees, including the AOE for Social and Behavioral Sciences. The project involved asking graduates, in each of the AOE degrees, to determine the extent to which they thought they achieved each of the program learning outcomes for their identified degree. This method of assessment was then replaced by a more robust and authentic approach in the 2012-2013 academic year. This project involved multiple steps, the identification of faculty leaders to help facilitate the assessment plan, and the generation of a more authentic method of assessment. The project resulted in the following:

- Student Learning Outcomes for each of the courses were aligned to corresponding Program Level Outcomes (PLO) for each of the AOE.
- Specific PLOs in each AOE were assessed, with the inclusion of multiple disciplines.
- Data were generated and analyzed for each AOE and a report was produced in December 2013 (Areas of Emphasis Program Assessment Report, December 2013).

Faculty in the Social and Behavioral Sciences identified the following PLO for assessment:

Students will demonstrate an ability to apply the theories and principles of human development, human interaction, cultural diversity, and global awareness to their everyday lives.

Data were gathered from the following courses:

Economics 8, Psychology 9, Sociology 1 and 10

The assessment results were as follows:

Group 1 (N = 233), 3.25 on a 4 points scale

Group 2 (N = 207), 3.41 on a 4 points scale

Group 3 (N= 90), 3.52 on a 4 point

The overall mean across the three courses was 3.33 on a 4 point scale. The student cohort from the previous spring (2012) survey averaged 3.72 on this PLO. Of the 569 students assessed, 485 (85.2%) demonstrated competency in this area.

Conclusions from this assessment indicated that students in the program generally achieve the PLO by virtue of their coursework in the program.

2015 Follow-up

In 2015, Norco College created a revised rotation schedule for assessment in all courses and programs. The SBS AOE was identified as needing to be assessed in spring 2015. The decision was made to spend time reflecting on the assessment that was conducted in 2012-13, as this had not already occurred.

All members of the SBS department were invited to attend a meeting on 3/24/15, to discuss the previously completed assessment and determine if any additional activity should occur. Six members of the SBS department attended the meeting. The disciplines represented included Early Childhood Education, Political Science, Disability Resource Center, Psychology, Guidance, and History). No participants from the original assessment were present.

During the meeting, the Assessment Coordinator and the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness provided some background and historical context for the meeting, which included:

- An overview of the AOE Degree in SBS
- An overview of the original report and general data generated from the assessment
- Additional demographic data
- Reflection on the specific recommendations for SBS identified in the original report and general recommendations for the college.

Discussion

The group engaged in a lively discussion, partially regarding the original assessment results, but more generally about overarching concerns related to the AOE degrees in general. With regard to the original assessment results, the faculty members were encouraged to see that 83.5% of the student's assessed were successful in obtaining the identified skill in the SBS classes. The group determined that no further assessment was needed with regard to the identified PLO. However, the majority of the discussion time revolved around the aforementioned overarching concerns.

The discussion included the following topics:

1. What is an AOE? How is it useful to students? Where did they come from? Who created them? In general the faculty wanted to have more clarification on the purpose and role of an AOE, and to be better informed as to how a student might use the AOE track. They also wanted further clarification on their role in explaining the AOE to students.
2. What courses should be in the AOE degree patterns? Most of the faculty members in the meeting were not aware how the courses in their own disciplines had been

identified for inclusion in the AOE. The selection, for some, seemed too random. The group wanted to gain clarification on the process for adding and removing courses from the AOE degrees.

3. Do all of the courses still align to the AOE PLOs? Many courses have undergone revision as part of the ADT process and have new SLO. Do the current SLO align with the AOE PLO?
4. How do we know if students are truly obtaining all 4 PLOs as part of the SBS AOE? Is there a way to track if all students that complete the AOE actually had significant exposure to each of the PLOs during the degree?

Next Steps

The discussion inside of this meeting mirrored a discussion that also took place regarding GE PLO assessment in spring 2015. There seems to be a great deal of confusion among the faculty regarding the overarching concept of Program Level Outcomes. Faculty are unsure of their role in PLO assessment, they are unclear what an AOE is, its purpose and their role as a discipline member within a specific AOE.

At this point, this information needs to be shared and discussed with the Norco Assessment Committee, the Academic Senate, and the newly reformed GE PLO workgroup. Even though the AOE's are not considered GE, they are a district wide entity and are experiencing the same type of confusion as the GE PLOs. It would seem that further discussions about the AOE Program level Outcomes are warranted, especially with regard to appropriate SLO-PLO alignment, level of faculty understanding regarding their role in helping students attain the four PLOs, and how this can be accomplished across the district.