

College of San Mateo SLO/SAO Assessment Plan Information Packet

Presented to the Academic Senate of College of San Mateo for approval 5/13/25

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Introduction

College of San Mateo's (CSM) assessment program has seen significant changes in the past decade, particularly in the realm of student-learning outcomes (SLO) assessment.

Before 2018, CSM used a more “traditional” SLO model with faculty collecting data from student assignments tied to SLOs in an individual course, documenting the data with the use of tracking software (TracDat), and analyzing the data for themes and student opportunity gaps. In Fall 2018, this changed to a flipped model allowing departments to identify an area of interest with a research question tied to student learning, create an assessment plan to gather data, and analyze the results through Program Review. This revision hoped to encourage a more meaningful assessment process that included cross-division dialogue, innovation, and reflection. Some departments on campus have responded well to this new model, creating dynamic assessment projects that meaningfully impact student learning, but SLO results documented in the latest cycle of Program Review (Fall 2023) demonstrate that programs are approaching assessment very differently. Some programs have fully embraced the new model while others are still reporting individual SLO data following CSM's pre-2018 model and still others are not reporting data on student learning at all. Factors like the COVID-19 pandemic and faculty and administrative turnover at CSM have also contributed to an overall lack of awareness and consistency in reporting. Additionally, preparation for our Fall 2025 accreditation report has unveiled gaps in the areas of data storage and analysis. What follows is a more detailed summary of College of San Mateo's student-learning outcome assessment program followed by proposed revisions to the SLO assessment program from Academic Senate's SLO Workgroup.

A Recent History of Assessment at College of San Mateo

Below is a description of CSM's pre-2018 process as detailed in [CSM's 2019 Institutional Self-Evaluation Report](#) (ISER) to the ACCJC:

Institutional procedures for SLO assessment focused on providing guidelines around data gathering and data entry, leaving the analysis and discussions over student learning to individual disciplines. SLO leads in each department and service were tasked with gathering data on SLOs (a never-defined but widely accepted practice was to gather data on each SLO at least once every three years), analyzing that data, and recording the results in TracDat [[II.A.3-12](#)] [[II.A.3-13](#)]. Each discipline or service was to record the upshot of the assessment – namely, the analysis, any action steps or “closing the loop” – in program review [[II.A.3-14](#)]. (99)

CSM’s 2019 [ISER](#) goes on to detail that a need for revisions was identified in 2015 due to updated ACCJC standards as well as calls from faculty to “make learning outcomes assessment process less onerous, better supported, more collaborative, and more integrated with flex activities directly tied to making improvements in student learning” (100).

Our new student-learning outcome assessment program was approved by Academic Senate on [May 8, 2018](#) and implemented in Fall 2018. This is the assessment program we use today and is detailed on [the Student-Learning Outcomes website](#):

Each academic year, disciplines and services identify a question about student learning to follow up and share out.

- October, [Program Review off] years: Complete and submit an Assessment Plan which Identifies a question about student learning at the course, discipline or institutional level;
- Fall/Spring semesters: Gather the data that will help answer that question;
- By Spring semester prior to Program Review: Analyze the data and draw conclusions that determine future curricular or pedagogical planning;

- October, [Program Review] years: Summarize assessment activities in Program Review and repeat assessment cycle.

On [October 25, 2021](#) CSM's Committee on Teaching and Learning (CTL) decided to remove the biennial Assessment Plan as it was seen to be redundant; thus, CSM SLO assessment currently exists entirely within Program Review. Every Program Review year, programs report their SLO assessment project results from the previous two years and at the same time establish an assessment plan for the next two years and so on and so on.

Proposal Development

In Fall 2024, an SLO workgroup was formed under Academic Senate, containing a mix of faculty and PRIE staff to address the gaps in our current assessment program with the aim of making it flexible, trackable, participatory, and meaningful.

After defining the general framework for revisions, the SLO workgroup [presented the idea](#) to the campus community during Spring 2025 to solicit feedback:

- Instructional Administrator's Council: February 11, 2025
- Academic Senate: February 25, 2025
- Institutional Planning Committee: March 5, 2025
- Student Services Managers/Coordinators: March 26, 2025

Response was largely positive, and this information packet acts as a follow up to those discussions, containing a more detailed version of the same general framework for approval and implementation.

Proposed SLO/SAO Assessment Program

College of San Mateo's SLO/SAO assessment program will include a **default assessment model**, similar to Skyline and Cañada's current assessment model and CSM's pre-2018 SLO assessment model (with updated tracking software and more institutional support).

Additionally, there will be an **opt-in faculty inquiry project option** with a peer application, review, and approval process through the Committee on Teaching and Learning (CTL) that will give faculty the option to explore student-learning projects of a larger scale or those affecting student-learning not directly related to grades.

Default SLO/SAO Assessment Program

The default SLO/SAO assessment program will ask programs to assess student-learning outcomes for each course in their program over a three-year period, mirroring their Program Review cycle (except for CTE programs on two-year Program Review cycles). Program's will document their intended schedule of assessment with an Assessment Schedule Form (Appendix A) submitted in the same semester as Program Review. The order and sequence of courses to be assessed is completely within program faculty purview.

Example Assessment Calendar for ENGL:

	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
Fall	ENGL 100 ENGL 105	ENGL 165	ENGL 110
Spring	ENGL 161	ENGL 162	ENGL 163

As we know, faculty participate in assessment activities every day in their courses; however, we do not always get the opportunity for reflection and action. To this end, programs do not need to report SLO assessment results for every SLO in every course every cycle. Instead, programs and individual faculty can meet and decide amongst

themselves which outcomes to report on each semester based on program priorities and the changing education landscape. At least one course-level SLO should be assessed and reported on for the indicated course(s) each semester.

Opt-in Faculty Inquiry Project

Inspired by our current inquiry-based SLO/SAO assessment program, faculty will also have the opportunity to opt in to a faculty inquiry project to explore student-learning projects of a larger scale or those affecting student-learning but not directly related to grades.

CTL will develop an application form and process for programs to request the replacement of their course-level SLO assessment with a faculty inquiry project. Details of the form are to be determined, but information requested may include: a research question, details about the connection to student learning, courses covered by the project, data needs, and an assessment timeline. CTL will assess and approve applications and connect programs with PRIE to help fulfill data needs.

Timeline & Fall 2025 Nuventive SLO Pilot

Most programs at CSM will spend Fall 2025 developing an assessment calendar for their program, familiarize themselves with the process, and attend professional development opportunities ahead of a Spring 2025 launch.

However, in Fall 2025, the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Coordinator (SLOAC) and Research Inquiry and Institutional Effectiveness Manager with support from the Committee on Teaching and Learning (CTL) will identify approximately seven programs (ideally, one from each division) to participate in a Fall 2025 Nuventive SLO Pilot.

Ideally, these will be programs already participating in regular SLO assessment with existing plans to assess courses in Fall 2025 in order to avoid additional workload.

Participants will be identified within the first three weeks of the semester and be expected to attend a group kick-off meeting in September. The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Coordinator (SLOAC) and Research Inquiry and Institutional Effectiveness Manager will be available to support faculty with questions throughout the semester and may hold a second group meeting during October Flex to support faculty through the process.

In Spring 2025, participants of the Fall 2025 Nuventive Pilot will be asked to present their experiences during a Flex Day panel and help support their divisions with Nuventive adoptions as all programs will begin using Nuventive to report SLO assessments in Spring 2025.

		Primary Responsibility	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
SLO Assessment												
	Opening/Flex Day: SLO assessment program overview	Academic Senate President, SLOAC	Aug 11, 12									
	Message to faculty requesting assessment calendars for each instructional program	Academic Senate President, SLOAC	Aug 18									
	Identify programs for Fall 2025 Nuventive Pilot (one program per division)	Research Inquiry and Institutional Effectiveness Manager, SLOAC	Aug 18 - Aug 29									
	Visit division meetings to raise awareness of SLO assessment program & assessment calendars (due Nov 15)	SLOAC, CTL	Aug 18 - Sep 30									
	Creation and approval of Opt-in Inquiry Project Application	SLOAC, CTL	Aug 18 - Sep 30									
	Fall 2025 Nuventive Pilot Group Kick-Off meeting w/ Nuventive demo	Research Inquiry and Institutional Effectiveness Manager, SLOAC		September								
	Message to programs in 25-26 Program Review cycle about opt-in inquiry project opportunity w/ application and invitation to Flex Day info session (due Nov 3)	Academic Senate President, SLOAC			Oct 1							
	Flex Day: 25-26 Program Review Participants Opt-in Inquiry Project Info Session	SLOAC			Oct 8							
	Flex Day: Fall 2025 Nuventive Pilot Support Session	SLOAC			Oct 8							
	Due date for opt-in inquiry project opportunity	Academic Senate President, SLOAC				Nov 3						
	Review & approval of opt-in inquiry project applications	CTL				November						
	Due date #1 for assessment calendars	Academic Senate President, SLOAC				Nov 15						
	Nuventive training for programs identified on assessment calendar as assessing SLOs in Fall 2025	Research Inquiry and Institutional Effectiveness Manager				Nov 15 - 30						
	Review of assessment calendars for completeness and request for programs that did not submit to submit by Dec 1	SLOAC, CTL				Nov 15 - 30						
	Message faculty about steps for spring and training calendar/opportunities	Academic Senate President, SLOAC				Dec 1						
	Notification to opt-in inquiry project applicants of approval/rejection and warm hand-off to PRIE	SLOAC				Dec 1						
	Final review of assessment calendars for completeness	SLOAC, CTL				Dec 1 - 15						
	Faculty PD for SLO assessment and Nuventive @ spring Opening/Flex	Research Inquiry and Institutional Effectiveness Manager					Jan 8, 9					
	Message faculty about due dates for SLO/SAO assessment data (May 1)	Academic Senate President, SLOAC					Jan 13					
	Monthly Nuventive trainings for SLO/SAO process	Research Inquiry and Institutional Effectiveness Manager							Jan - May			
	Monthly assessment workshops	SLOAC, CTL							Jan - May			
	Reminder message for faculty about due dates for SLO/SAO assessment data (May 1)	Academic Senate President, SLOAC								Mar 1		
	Due date for assessment data	Academic Senate President, SLOAC										May 1
	Review of assessment data for completeness, e-mails to programs for submission before end of spring, identify programs to reach out to in fall that may need additional support	SLOAC										May 1 - 14

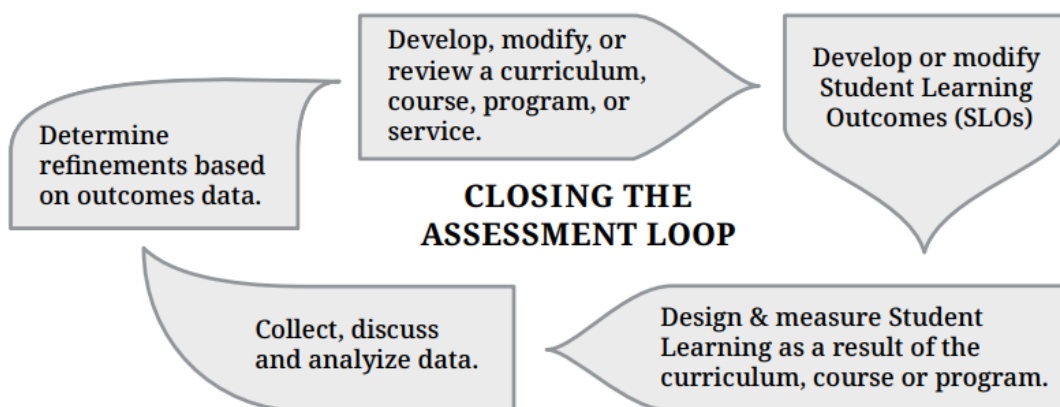
Definitions

Assessment¹

In education, the term “assessment” refers to the wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students. Assessment efforts provide faculty with the opportunity to look honestly at courses and programs, relevance of course content, self-evaluation of teaching and evaluation methodology, and whether the vision of a course or program is resulting in success of the program. Assessment is the way in which faculty ensure curriculum effectiveness and relevance, and it allows for self-reflection that encourages enhancement or revision of curriculum when appropriate.

Assessment Cycle¹

“Assessment cycle” refers to the process of collecting data from assessment, using that data to develop or modify curriculum, and then assessing the new or modified curriculum to collect data for ongoing modification or development. Such a cycle is graphically represented below. As with any cycle, it has no beginning, and no end. The dynamic nature of curriculum includes matters such as curricular development, measurement of success, and modifications based on assessment leading to modifications of curriculum.



¹[The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges \(ASCCC\) Glossary: Student Learning Outcomes](#)

Continuous Improvement¹

Continuous improvement involves an on-going, cyclical process of identifying evidence and implementing incremental changes to improve student learning

Program¹

An educational program is defined in Title 5 §55000(m) and in the Chancellor's Office Program and Course Approval Handbook as "an organized sequence of courses leading to a defined objective, a degree, a certificate, a diploma, a license, or transfer to another institution of higher education." However, in program review, colleges often define programs as relating to specific disciplines. A program may refer to student service programs and administrative units as well.

Student-Learning Outcome (SLO)¹

Student learning outcomes (SLOs) are the specific observable or measurable results that are expected subsequent to a learning experience. These outcomes may involve knowledge (cognitive), skills (behavioral), or attitudes (affective) that provide evidence that learning has occurred as a result of a specified course, program activity, or process.

SLOs for each course at CSM are located in the Course Outline of Record (COR).

Service Area Outcome (SAO)²

Service Area Outcomes (SAOs) are statements about what a client will experience, receive, or know as a result of a given service. A client can be anyone receiving a service, including students, faculty, staff, and community members.

SAOs for service areas at CSM are not formally documented or publicly viewable, but Student Services has been approached about permanently documenting SAOs to better include Student Services programs within the SLO/SAO assessment program.

¹[The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges \(ASCCC\) Glossary: Student Learning Outcomes](#)

²[Hartnell College, Service Area Outcomes](#)

Appendix

Draft SLO/SAO Assessment Schedule Form

Program Name:	
Assessment Contact:	

- Meet with your department to schedule courses for SLO assessment during this current Program Review cycle
 - If you are not sure when your program is due for Program Review, check the [Program Review website](#)
- Pull a list of active courses for your program (available in the [Course Catalog](#))
- List each course in the semester you plan to assess it, keeping in mind when the courses are usually scheduled; you should schedule all active courses over the three year calendar
- There is no need to list specific SLOs to assess; this can be decided at the department/faculty level depending on program needs; not every SLO for every course needs to be assessed every cycle

	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
Fall			
Spring			

Note for Fall 2025: Due to our new staggered Program Review cycle, programs completing Program Review in Fall 26 and Fall 27 will be asked to submit a new assessment calendar with Program Review to align the three-year assessment cycle to the three-year Program Review cycle. You may, at that time, elect to change the schedule you've indicated here or keep some aspects the same.