

Student Learning Outcomes: An Introduction and Guide for Staff and Advisor Use

In order to support leadership development we have created Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and a Co-Curricular Template for Leadership Development. The SLOs and other supporting documents ensure high-quality co-curricular experiences for our students. This document is intended to outline our SLOs and how they should guide program development, advising, and reflection.

Why SLOs?

The Willamette University Strategic Plan's (2013) first objective is to "deliver the highest quality" experiences to our students. For College of Liberal Arts (CLA) students, this includes strengthening high-impact "co-curricular experiences that are essential or particularly valuable for our students' intellectual and personal growth and preparation for post-graduate success" (Willamette University Strategic Plan, 2013). This objective also states that the University is committed to "delivering a coherent curriculum that reflects our high standards for learning outcomes".

In alignment with Willamette's Strategic Plan (and with national best practices in student affairs), the office of Student Involvement (part of the Division of Campus Life) has developed Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and a Co-Curricular Template for Leadership Development.

The Student Learning Outcomes (and accompanying Rubric) that follow are based on national standards for best practice, internal assessment of student learning and needs, and the synthesis of student development theories. These outcomes are intended to guide programming, strengthen co-curricular learning, and foster skills and competencies that can be applied inside and outside of the co-curricular model. An additional benefit: through participation in the Leadership Development Model (and its emphasis on advising), students will see how these competencies can even be applied to their resume or CV. For More information Leadership Development Model, see the *2015 Co-Curricular Template for Leadership Development*.

Our SLOs and Rubric

Through participation in Willamette University co-curricular leadership development opportunities, students will develop a range of competencies and leadership skills that encompass the following Student Learning Outcomes:

- **Understand and use effective communication skills**
- **Engage in critical and reflective thinking to enhance personal discernment**
- **Demonstrate initiative and creativity**
- **Apply an understanding of group dynamics to create inclusive environments**

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These outcomes are supported by the Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Rubric that follows this introduction. The rubric is intended to support the overall student learning outcomes (listed above). The competencies outlined in the rubric are **examples** and are intended to be used to prompt conversation and reflection regarding one's own skills and learning. **These learning outcomes are to be viewed as a learning and development continuum and not as a progression/final level of mastery.**

How Advisors Should Use the SLOs and Accompanying Rubric

As part of our Leadership Development Model, students will meet with their advisor(s) on a regular basis. During one of their first meetings (preferably at the beginning of a student's term of service), the student and advisor will review the SLOs and accompanying rubric together. They will also discuss how these outcomes best fit into the student's leadership role (including what makes sense according to the student's expected duties and tasks). During subsequent meetings, the advisor will check in with the student regarding their learning and progress within our SLO goals.

The success of a student's leadership development relies on their level of involvement in our program and their commitment to working closely with their advisor. Responsibility for meeting these outcomes is shared between advisors and students. By following the programs outlines in the Co-Curricular Template for Leadership Development, Advisors will guide and engage students in reflective learning opportunities.

A reminder: The competencies listed in the following rubric are examples. They are intended to be prompts to initiate deeper conversation; they are not an exhaustive list. When reading the rubric, consider the examples as a continuum and not as a progression.