

BRIDGEWATER STATE COLLEGE
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

INTRODUCTION

The *Division of Student Affairs* has developed a set of student learning outcomes to guide the programs and services that are implemented by the Division of Student Affairs. In order to provide a high quality co-curricular experience that complements classroom programs, we must clarify what learning outcomes are intended. Those learning outcomes must be consistent with the mission of the college, the mission of the Division, and, as our strategic plan is implemented, provide a way of measuring the quality of the out-of-class programs and activities.

The mission of the *Division of Student Affairs* is to provide “programs and services to support student learning in the classroom and extend student learning beyond the classroom...(and)...to create an environment that encourages critical thinking, promotes the development of life skills, fosters an atmosphere of cultural pluralism and human diversity and empowers students to take responsibility for their lives.” (from the Mission Statement of the Division of Student Affairs, attachment 1) While this mission statement is consistent with the mission of the college, it is not specific enough to clarify intended outcomes or provide a basis for measuring the achievement of such outcomes. Without a set of learning outcomes, we are also unable to assess processes, programs and other efforts that are designed to achieve the broad goals of the mission.

In order to bridge the gap between the general direction described in the Division’s mission statement and specific departmental efforts, the following student learning outcomes were developed. These outcomes are believed to be valuable and achievable for our students; are the reason for the existence of a co-curricular program; and provide a framework and means of assessing the productivity of the work that is done outside the classroom to educate our students.

1. Development of Practical Competence Skills

a. Communication Skills

Provide opportunities and experiences to develop communication skills in writing, speaking, and through use of the computer.

Writing skills: Examples: preparing reports, writing articles, business and job search correspondence, etc.

Verbal Skills: Examples: presenting to groups, leading a tour, using the phone, interviewing, etc.

Computer Skills: Examples: Word processing; using a database, e-mail and the internet to communicate with others, etc.

b. Problem Solving Skills

Develop mediation and conflict resolution skills by learning to analyze the problem and to implement an appropriate course of action to resolve the conflict.

Examples: develop useful strategies for roommate and personal conflicts, talking with a professor about dissatisfaction with a grade, etc.

c. Team Work Skills

Develop the ability to work effectively with others.

Examples: Complete group or organization tasks and projects, community service projects, etc.

d. Decision Making Skills

Develop a workable decision making model for making important life decisions: setting goals, finding alternatives, learning about the alternatives, prioritizing, making a choice, implementing the choice and evaluating the decision.

Examples: choosing a major, running for an elected office, buying a car etc.

2. Development of Complex Cognitive Skills

- a.** *Organize, analyze and evaluate information. Determine the accuracy, relevancy and usefulness of facts and opinions; separate myths from facts; collect information in ways that allow for access and use.*

Examples: identify the origin of personal stereotypes that affect opinion' and judgments: compare and contrast conflicting viewpoints on a subject; persuade others based on factual arguments

- b.** *Conduct independent inquiry into new content areas and demonstrate openness to new ideas and different points of view.*

Examples: seeking the viewpoints of experts; inviting criticism; engaging in serious conversations with people who have different views; set goals for developing new skills

- c.** *Synthesize new information, develop themes and patterns and apply new understandings to personal life. Use acquired knowledge to make informed judgments, develop personal perspectives and take responsibility for one's own thinking.*

Examples: summarize information accurately; perceive logical coherence across different sources of information; connect past experiences to present actions

3. Development of a coherent, integrated, personal Identity.

a. Identity

Define, understand, and develop the many dimensions of one's self (i.e. emotional, psychological, spiritual, physical, sexual, social, racial, and ethnic self).

b. Self-Esteem

Develop confidence in one's ability to think, to cope with basic challenges of life, and to assert one's needs and wants. Believe in one's right to be successful and happy.

c. Civic Responsibility and Integrity

Develop and adhere to behaviors consistent with institutional values including civility and mutual respect, social consciousness, volunteerism and positive leadership.

4. Development of Understanding and Appreciation of Human Differences

a. Demonstrate responsible behavior (i.e., non-exploitive, nondiscriminatory behavior compliant with college policies and state, local, and federal laws).

b. Identify and understand the cultural differences (i.e., beliefs, assumptions, communication styles, values) within our community.

c. Celebrate significant events of the major cultures represented within our community (e.g. banquets, concerts, lectures, trips, etc.).

SUMMARY

These student-learning outcomes describe what we hope our students will learn as a consequence of the rich and varied co-curricular experiences at BSC. By describing the desired outcomes, we can better design the learning environments that will produce those outcomes. By focusing our efforts on core experiences that foster desired learning outcomes, we make our work with students more productive, more powerful and more connected to the goals of life-long learning.

These four *student-learning outcomes* will provide a touchstone for the work of the Student Affairs Division. We can evaluate the programs and service that we provide from the vantage point of their expected contribution to achieving one or more of these outcomes. We can measure the success of the co-curricular program by developing measures of the accomplishment of the learning outcomes by the students who participate in planned experiences outside the classroom. Ideally, these measures will be part of a comprehensive student assessment program that measures the effect of educational experiences in the classroom, as well.