

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: **Getting Started**

Learning is an integrated, holistic, transformative activity that incorporates and intertwines academic growth and student development. **We can no longer continue to separate the academic and developmental foundations for learning.** When learning happens, development is happening, and student development is a process of learning.

### **What Are Learning Outcomes >>**

Learning outcomes (sometimes called student learning outcomes) reflect the results of these intertwined processes. Learning outcomes can define a multitude of experiences including individual activities (such as an assignment for a course), groups of linked activities (an entire course), or for college (the net outcomes of all undergraduate learning experiences, taken together).

*The components of academic learning and student development in various learning activities will vary, but at all levels, there are components of both. Similarly, learning objectives should reflect elements of both.*

Learning outcomes should be linked and consistent across the institution. The learning outcomes for a major or for Student Affairs as a division should reflect and respond to overall intended college learning outcomes, and learning outcomes for individual activities or groups thereof should reflect and respond to the learning outcomes for the curriculum of which those activities are a part.

- College learning outcomes then drive all other sets, or groups, of learning outcomes
- Curricular or divisional learning outcomes respond to college learning outcomes and drive sub-curricular and grouped learning outcomes
- Individual activity learning outcomes reflect and respond to curricular or divisional

### **What Are College Learning Outcomes >>**

College learning outcomes are specific and contextual; each institution must establish outcomes that reflect its mission, goals, social and cultural context, history, and student population.

*Since college learning outcomes drive all others, this means that every set of learning outcomes in some way is also specific and contextual.*

### **Establishing Learning Outcomes >>**

Establishing Learning outcomes at any level then requires:

- **Looking up** to determine how a learning activity fits in with higher level learning outcomes.
- **Looking around** to figure out how the learning associated with a given activity fits in with other activities like it, or related to it.
- **Looking down** to “ground” the activity and its outcomes in the specific context of the institution and its students.

### **Example Learning Outcomes >>**

A variety of schemas and systems of categorizing or classifying college learning outcomes exist; while there are differences among them, they share many core features. Below are some examples of how you can classify learning outcomes.

#### Cognitive Maturity

- Intellectual power
- Reflective judgment
- Mature decision-making
- Problem solving in context

#### Integrated Identity/Personal Maturity

- Confidence
- Capacity for autonomy and connections

#### Effective, Engaged Citizenship

- Coherent, ethical action for the good of all

#### Mature relationships

- Respect for others’ identities and cultures
- Productive collaboration to integrate multiple perspectives

### **For More Information >>**

To learn more about K&A and our services for Student Learning Outcomes, please visit [www.keelingassociates.com](http://www.keelingassociates.com) or call us at 212.229.4750.

#### Related Resources:

- **Information Sheets from Keeling & Associates:**
  - Collecting & Using Research Data For **Assessment & Strategic Planning**
  - Workshops, Tools, & Templates: **Professional Development Experiences**