



OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

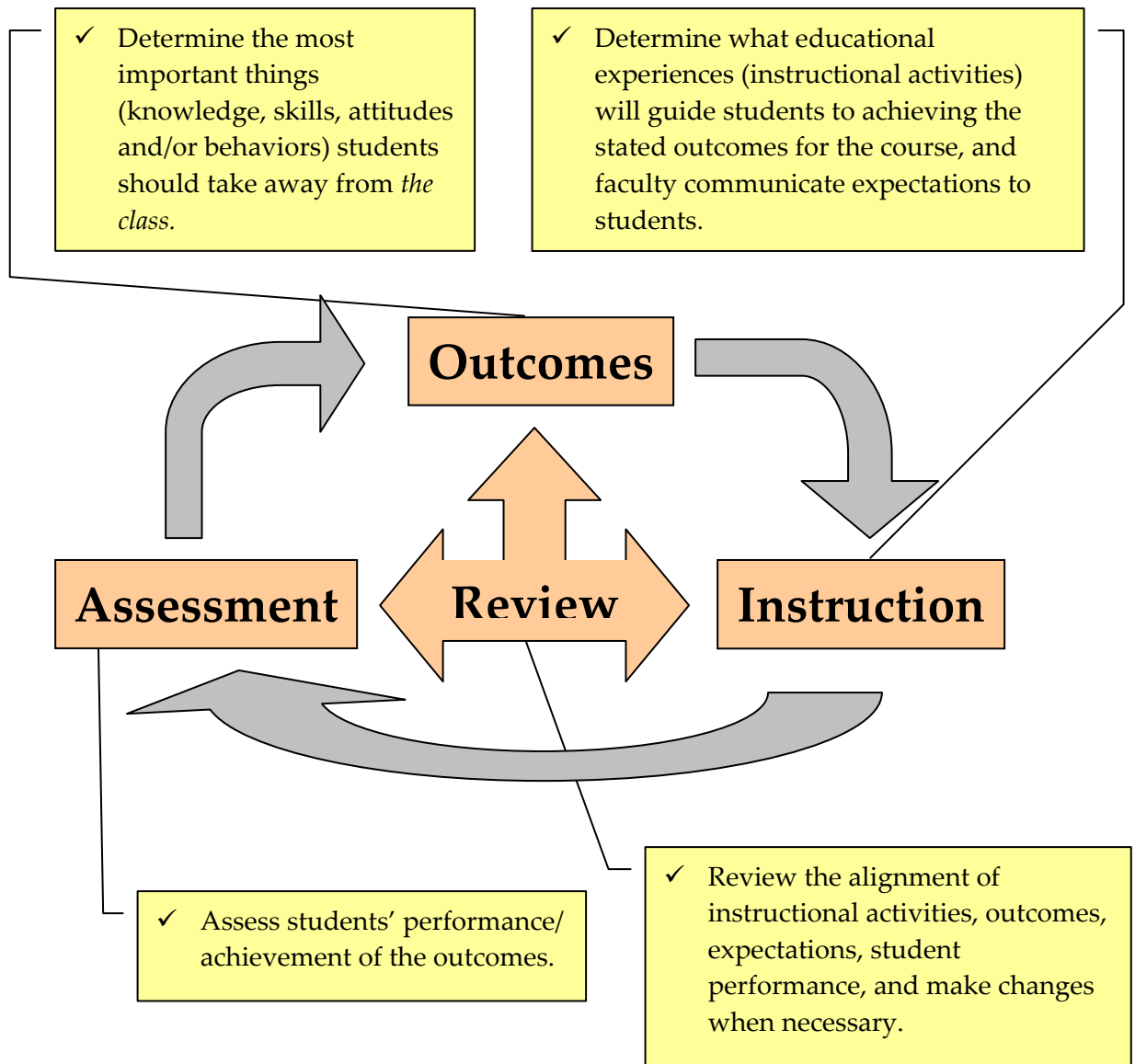
Cliff Notes to the Outcomes Assessment Handbook

2009-2010

I. What is course-based Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Assessment?

It is the process of collecting information that will tell us whether our courses are having the desired impact on the students who successfully complete them; that is, Outcomes Assessment will tell us whether our students are taking away from our academic offerings the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes that we hope they will.

II. How does Outcomes Assessment Improve Student Learning?



III. What is the purpose of an Outcomes Assessment Process?

Specific, action oriented, learning centered recommendations which will directly improve or maintain student performance in the classroom are the ultimate goal of Outcomes Assessment. Recommendations which directly focus on ways the discipline faculty can improve or maintain successful student performance are the reason for doing Outcomes Assessment. For this reason, assessing meaningful outcomes and developing authentic, challenging assessments is essential to the process.

IV. Why don't final grades provide sufficient evidence of learning?

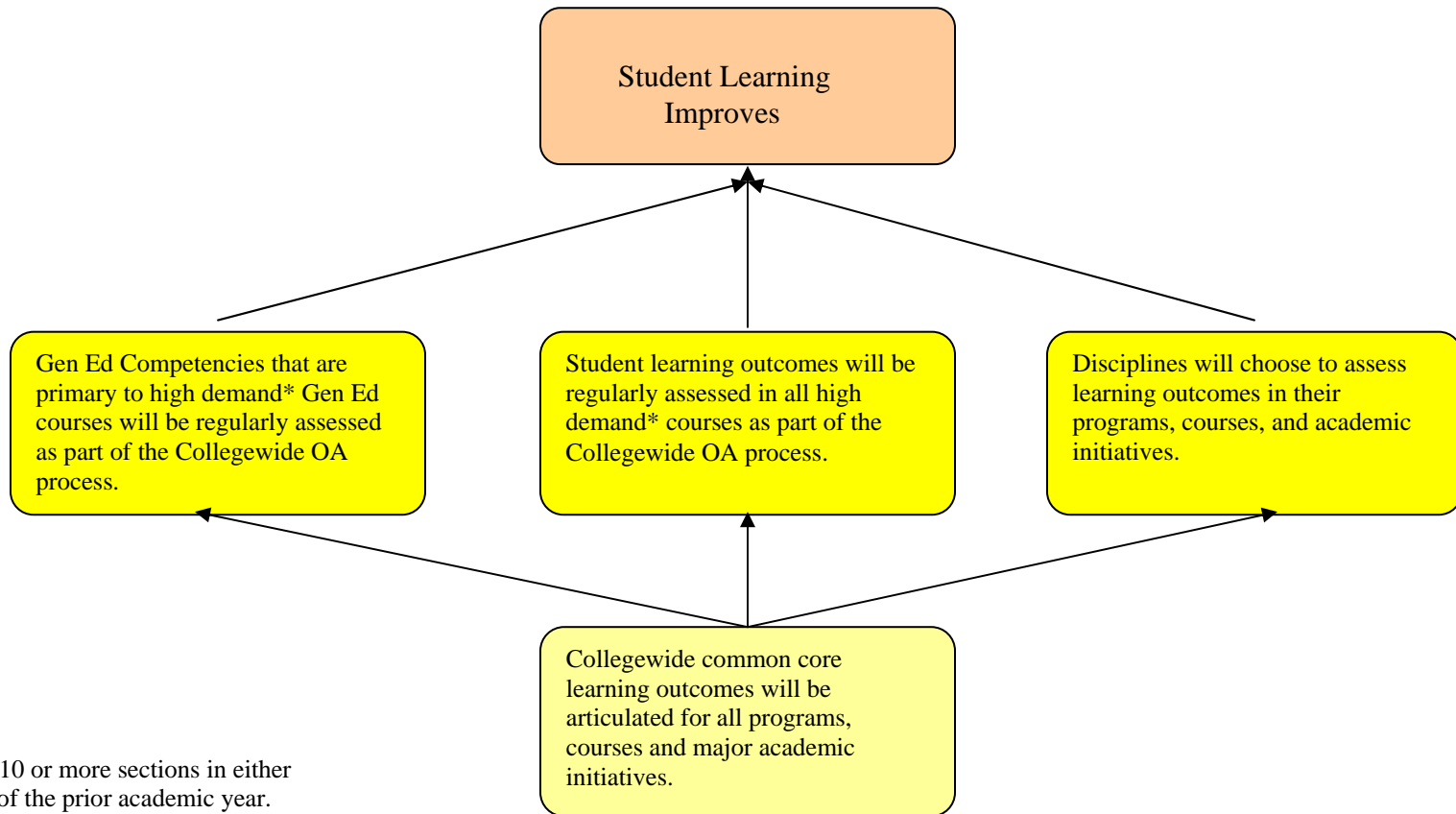
Final grades don't provide

- specific information about students' performance core learning outcomes
- meaningful data across sections
- objective student data which can be used by a discipline for improvement of student learning
- data on how well students are achieving the general education competencies

V. What are the key values that guide Montgomery College's approach to Outcomes Assessment?

1. Faculty are best suited to determine the intended educational outcomes of their academic programs and activities, how to assess these outcomes, and how to use the results for program development and improvement.
2. The results of Outcomes Assessment should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of academic programs and activities, and student services, and not the performance of individual faculty or staff.
3. Faculty must use the information collected to develop and improve academic programs, that is, they must "close the loop." If Outcomes Assessment is used primarily as a reporting tool, then this effort will have been deemed a failure.
4. Central and campus administrators must provide leadership and accountability to the process.
5. Outcomes Assessment must be ongoing and performed on a regular basis. In essence, it must become an academic habit.

VI. What are the expected outcomes for the Outcomes Assessment process?



* Courses with 10 or more sections in either fall or spring of the prior academic year.

VII. What are the underlying principles of the Collegewide Student Learning Outcomes Assessment process ?

1. Courses should have a set of common collegewide core learning outcomes

Course outcomes are based on and mirror the student learning expectations agreed on by the discipline when the course was last approved by the Collegewide Curriculum Committee. Faculty from the discipline are asked to agree on the most important learning outcomes, three of which will be assessed for that course during each assessment cycle. This does not mean that faculty will be required to teach identical content across the entire course, nor does it dictate how faculty choose to deliver any of the course content to their students. What is expected is that during an assessment cycle, the same course outcomes will be assessed using the same methods regardless of where or how it is taught.

2. The entire discipline participates

Assessing learning outcomes for courses should be important to all faculty in the discipline. Therefore, the process is structured to engage all discipline faculty directly in the assessment activity, as well as in discussions related to the process. Although this approach may require more effort than sampling specific sections or simply soliciting volunteers, it is more equitable and the participation of all faculty results in a full appreciation of the importance of the core learning outcomes, the worth of assessing them, and the value of coming together for meaningful discussions about both.

3. Assessment instruments are embedded into the course

When assessing student learning outcomes in a course, the easiest and least obtrusive way for faculty and students is to weave the assessment instrument (assignment, exam questions, etc.) into the course rather than have an obvious, add-on test or assignment that doesn't blend naturally into the course.

4. Consistency is promoted by using common instruments and common scoring

Faculty members are not expected to teach every section of a multi-section course in exactly the same way. However, the best way to get meaningful and reliable results for Outcomes Assessment is to have consistency on both the outcomes being assessed and the method by which they are assessed. For this process, that means establishing a set of collegewide common core outcomes for a course, assessing three of these in a given assessment cycle in all sections using a common instrument, and scoring the assessments using a common rubric or scoring approach.

5. Incentive for individual faculty to bias the results in their favor is removed

It is natural for faculty to be concerned about how assessment data about their students will be reported and used. The College, in a written statement endorsed by the two Executive Vice Presidents, has stated unequivocally that data collected as part of this process will never be reported in a way that would allow it to be linked to an individual student or faculty member, and that assessment results will not be used in the faculty evaluation process. These guarantees, combined with the use of a common assessment

instrument and scoring rubric should remove any incentive for individual faculty members to bias the assessment process in order to “make themselves look good.”

VIII. What are the minimum expectations and requirements of disciplines when they participate in the assessment process?

- **They must assess at least three outcomes** – If your course is participating in General Education Outcomes Assessment, one or two of your outcomes will be based on General Education competencies.
- **There must be faculty consensus** – For the project to be a success, it is essential that there be faculty consensus about the outcomes and the plan to assess them. The faculty workgroup members and their department chairs will be the leaders in helping foster this consensus. Discipline Lead Deans will be asked to work with their respective faculty to accomplish consensus.
- **They must use common definitions for their outcomes** – All faculty teaching the course must share the same definition for these three outcomes, regardless of who teaches it or where.
- **They must use common assessment instruments and scoring schemes** – All faculty members must use a common assessment instrument and score it the same way for the purposes of the Outcomes Assessment project. As discussed in Part I, faculty members may grade the assessment instrument however they wish for purposes of calculating their own course grades.
- **Faculty must share learning outcomes with students** – For students to take the process seriously and for the process to be as meaningful as possible, students must be aware of the expected learning outcomes for the course and how their performance on each will be assessed. All this should be communicated early in the course, either as part of a syllabus or through some other printed material. If a rubric will be used to score the assessment, students should receive this as well prior to their participation in the assessment.
- **Faculty must submit assessment data** - Faculty participating in the assessment are expected to record and submit student scores electronically on class spreadsheets provided to them by the Collegewide Outcomes Assessment Team (COAT).
- **They must use the information** – The power of Outcomes Assessment is the importance it gives to “closing the loop.” This means using the results of an Outcomes Assessment project to improve future student performance on the student learning outcomes that were being assessed. Thus, it is vital that the discipline discuss the results and use them to celebrate and build on its strengths as well as to discuss and remediate its weaknesses.

IX. What is the schedule of course participation?

Schedule of Course Participation in Collegewide Outcomes Assessment

Five-Year Assessment Cycle

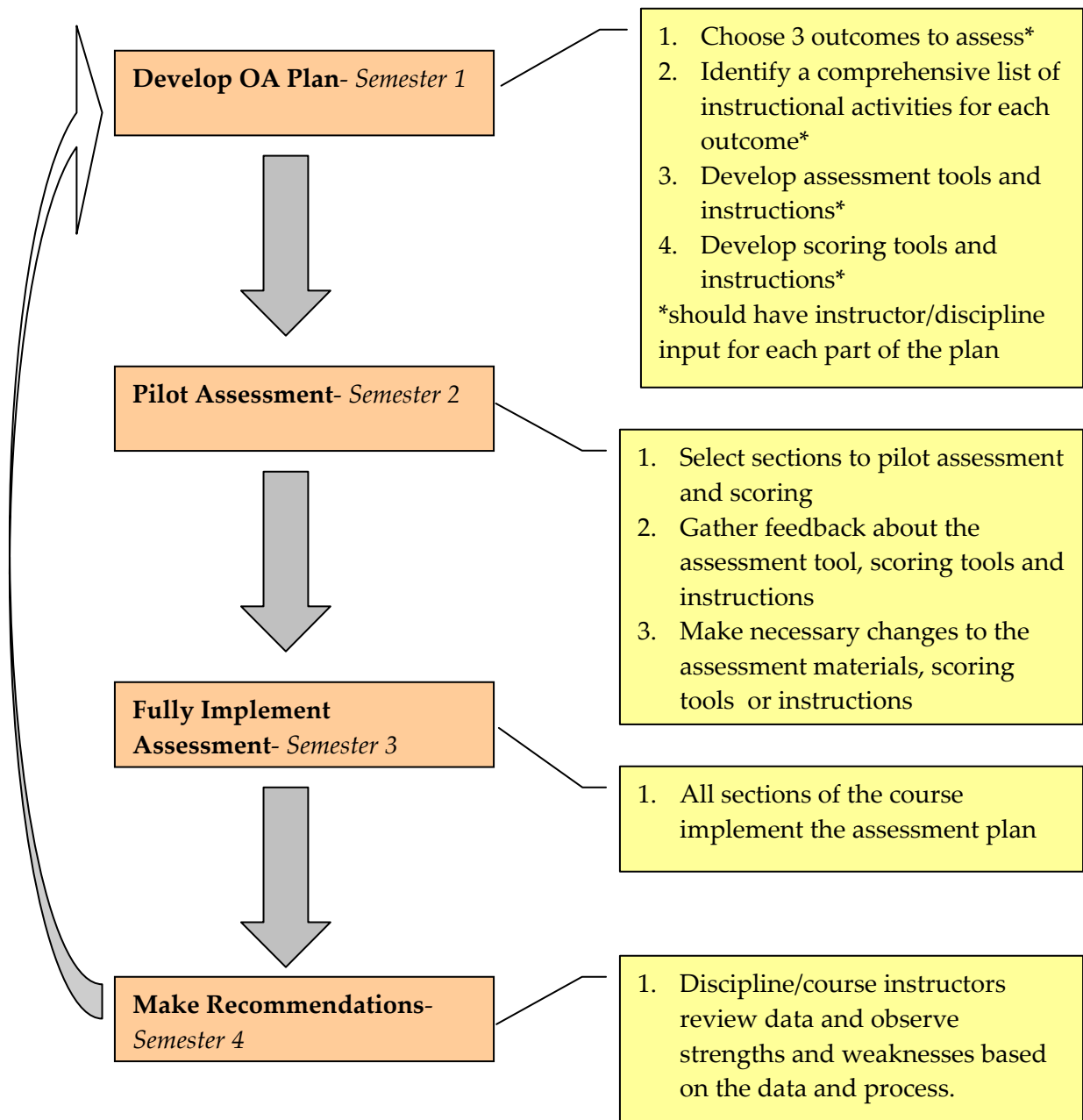
Alpha* OA Planning FA 07 OA Pilot/FI SP/FA 08 Rec SP/FA 09 (Next AAR FA 2010)		Beta OA Planning FA 08 OA Pilot/FI SP/FA 09 Rec SP/FA 10 (Next AAR FA 2011)		Gamma OA Planning FA 09 OA Pilot/FI SP/FA 10 Rec SP/FA 11 (Next AAR FA 2012)		Delta OA Planning FA 10 OA Pilot/FI SP/FA 11 Rec SP/FA 12 (Next AAR FA 2013)		Epsilon OA Planning FA 11 OA Pilot/FI SP/FA 12 Rec SP/FA 13 (Next AAR FA 2014)	
Discipline	Courses	Discipline	Courses	Discipline	Courses	Discipline	Courses	Discipline	Courses
BI	101	AR	103	AR	101	RD	99	DS	103
	107		105		107		95		106
									107
CJ	110	HS	202	BA	101	SP	108	CH	100/100A
ED	101				210		102		102
FL(SN/FR)	SN 101	PE	186	CA	106	HE	100	EC	201
	FR 101	PS	101		120		107		202
PY	102	BI	203		EL		103	AN	101
	203		204	EN		001	AC	201	
			205			002	202		
DS	102	MA	110	ES	100	EL	101	MA	103
MA	181		160		RD		101		102
	182				102	MA	110	EN	101
					103		090	102	
							091	CG	120
						101			
						DS	104		
						AR	115		
	11		10		12		18		15
Gen Ed Focus		Gen Ed Focus		Gen Ed Focus		Gen Ed Focus		Gen Ed Focus	
Information Literacy		Quantitative Reasoning(tentative)		Technological Competency (tentative)		Critical Thinking(tentative)		Effective Communication/Writing	

*Explanation:

Alpha = Name identifies group of courses participating in Outcomes Assessment (OA)
OA Planning FA 07 = OA Planning occurs Fall 2007 semester
OA Pilot/FI SP/FA 08 = OA Pilot occurs Spring 2008/Full Implementation occurs Fall 2008
Rec SP/FA 09 = Recommendations phase of OA process occurs Spring and Fall 2009
(Next AAR FA 2010) = Next Academic Area Review occurs Fall 2010

X. What are the steps that a discipline must follow when participating in Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Assessment?

Montgomery College's Outcomes Assessment Process is a process that takes advantage of the strengths of outcomes driven instruction to systematically collect and use student performance data on a course wide level to improve student learning.



XI. What is the detailed timeline for the Collegewide Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Assessment process?

Preplanning Semester- Spring		
Tasks	Person Responsible	Timeline & Form Required
Deans and disciplines are notified of participating courses and workgroups members are requested; Deans and disciplines are given the opportunity to request additional courses	COAT Coordinators	March
Faculty Workgroups identified	Deans	March- May 1
Planning Semester- Fall		
OA Orientation for Faculty Workgroups, Deans, VPPs	COAT Team	Fall Professional Week
Complete draft OA Plan	Workgroup w/input from discipline & Lead Dean	Nov 20; Forms: Draft OA Plan
Review draft OA Plans; return with comments to Faculty Workgroup & Lead Dean	COAT Team	Dec 1- 10
Pilot Semester- Spring		
Review Complete OA Plan with Discipline	Faculty Workgroups	Jan Professional Week
Identify Pilot Participants- CRN, Instructor names	Faculty Workgroups	Feb 1
Submit Final Pilot OA Plan with Discipline and Lead Dean approval to COAT	Faculty Workgroups	Feb 1; Forms: Draft OA Plan
Create Spreadsheets mockup	COAT Cadre	March 1 (or earlier if needed)
Confirm Spreadsheet layout	Faculty Workgroup	March 1- as received
Complete Pilot and submit data	Participating Faculty	End of semester
Review OA pilot results and materials, make revisions as needed	Faculty Workgroups	Summer/by Fall Professional Week Forms: Final Drafts of OA Plan and assessment instrument materials;
Full Implementation Semester- Fall		
Communicate OA materials and expectations to all participating faculty	Faculty Workgroups	By Fall Professional week
Submit final draft OA Plan for Full Implementation	Faculty Workgroup	Fall Professional Week
Identify CRN and Instructor Names for all sections of participating courses	COAT Coordinator	3 rd week of classes

Confirm Instructors, Contact information and CRN's	Faculty Workgroups	4 th weeks of classes
Confirm/Revise Spreadsheet	COAT Cadre	6 th week of classes or as needed
Complete Assessments and submit data	Faculty	End of Semester or as indicate by OA Plan
Recommendations Semester- Spring		
Review OA process, materials and preliminary results	Faculty Workgroup with Discipline Faculty	Jan Professional Week
Request additional data analysis	Faculty Workgroup	Feb 1
Full data results reports to disciplines	OIRAw/ COAT	March 1
SLO Observations Form (each campus <u>or</u> collegewide) submitted	Faculty Workgroups with Discipline Faculty and Lead Dean Sign Off	May 1; Form: SLO Observations Form
Discipline agrees on specific learning recommendations and submits Discipline Summary Recommendations Form	Faculty Workgroups with Discipline Faculty and Lead Dean Sign Off	June 1; Form: Discipline Summary Recommendations Form
Review Discipline Recommendations Summary	COAT	By June 15
Final Recommendations sent to Disciplines for discussion at Fall Discipline Meetings	COAT Coordinator	August 15

COAT = Collegewide Outcomes Assessment Team

XII. Who's responsible and for what?

A successful Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Assessment project requires the participation of many people throughout the College. While discipline faculty are the heart and soul of the process, others, including the Outcomes Assessment Coordinator(s), Faculty Cadre, the Data Resource Team, administrators, and students, all have important roles to play.

The **Discipline Workgroup** consists of at least one full-time faculty member from each campus at which the course being assessed is offered.

Specific Responsibilities:

- Development of an assessment plan, including which collegewide common core learning outcomes will be assessed, instruments to assess these, and rubrics or detailed instructions for scoring the assessments
- Submission of Outcomes Assessment Forms in a timely manner
- Coordinating the pilot and full-scale assessments for the discipline
- Reviewing and disseminating assessment results to discipline faculty
- Leading discipline discussions on recommendations stemming from the assessment results

Because this project will involve and impact all faculty in the discipline, a critical expectation of the workgroup is that they will communicate with and solicit feedback from their colleagues during all phases of the project.

Discipline Faculty participate regularly throughout the process by providing feedback and guidance to the Discipline Workgroup as they plan and implement the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment project.

Specific Responsibilities:

- Make their students aware of collegewide common core learning outcomes for their courses
- Provide input to the Faculty Workgroup during the development of the assessment plan
- Participate in the pilot assessment (if selected to do so), score it, and submit assessment data on time
- Participate in the full-scale assessment, score it, and submit assessment data on time
- Engage in discussion of the assessment results, and how they may be used to improve student learning.

Students are expected to be aware of the common core student learning outcomes for their courses, including the relevant General Education competencies. Students should

also understand and be familiar with how they will be evaluated on these outcomes and competencies, including any rubrics used to score the assessments.

Administrators from the campus deans to the Vice Presidents and Provosts (VPP) help convey the importance of Outcomes Assessment to the College community. Administrators are expected to hold faculty accountable for implementing Outcomes Assessment as required. In addition, they provide leadership, guidance, and support for the process, including any recommendations to improve student learning that may result from the assessments.

Specific Responsibilities:

Lead Deans:

- Attend OA orientation during fall professional week
- Meet with Faculty Workgroup at least during the assessment planning semester
- Review draft OA Plan before and after comments from the COAT
- Sign off on final draft of OA Plan (Feb 1 of Pilot Semester) after sharing with campus discipline deans and VPP
- Sign off on SLO Discipline Summary Recommendations (June 1 of Recommendation Semester) after sharing with campus discipline deans and VPP
- Monitor implementation of Recommendations

Campus Discipline Deans:

- Identify members of Faculty Workgroup, in consultation with Chair/Coordinator
- Review final draft of OA Plan and provide input to Lead Dean
- Sign off on SLO Observations and Recommendations
- Assist with implementation of recommendations

Vice President and Provosts (VPP):

- Review final draft of OA Plan and provide input to Lead Dean
- Review SLO Discipline Summary Recommendations
- Assure that Recommendations are implemented

Executive Leadership:

- Ensure that Outcomes Assessment is a college priority.
- Promote the importance and value of Outcomes Assessment to the entire campus community
- Hold campus administrators accountable for effective Outcomes Assessment at the campus level

The **Collegewide Outcomes Assessment Team (COAT)** is made up of faculty and resource people who are responsible for overseeing and supporting Outcomes Assessment efforts at Montgomery College. The team is made up of a Coordinator(s),

Faculty Cadre, the Data Resource Team and a lead administrator. This team works with College administration and faculty to facilitate and promote outcomes assessment.

Specific Responsibilities:

Coordinator(s):

- Provide general oversight, planning, and coordination of all aspects of the collegewide outcomes assessment process, including assessment of the General Education Program
- Communicate and promote the importance of Outcomes Assessment to entire college community
- Advise faculty workgroups tasked with developing Outcomes Assessment plans for their disciplines
- Consult with and advise other units of the College that are assessing outcomes for their area

Faculty Cadre:

- Provide expertise and guidance to a small number of academic disciplines as they develop their Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plans
- Participate in meetings devoted to oversight and planning of the collegewide Outcomes Assessment process

Data Resource Team:

- Analyze pilot and full-scale assessment data
- Provide written reports which summarize results for pilot and full-scale assessments

XIII. Fall 2009 - Outcomes Assessment Update

Courses beginning the planning phase of the OA process in Fall 2009

Gamma Group: AR 101, AR 107, BA 101, BA 210, CA106, CA120, EL 103, EL 104, ES 100, RD 101, RD102, RD 103

Faculty workgroups for these courses will be developing an assessment plan beginning this fall. The assessment will be **piloted in Spring 2010**, and **all sections** will complete the assessment in **Fall 2010**. For more information about the Outcomes Assessment planning process or to participate, please contact your course coordinator or chair, who can put you in contact with the faculty workgroup leading the project.

These courses will develop a plan to assess 3 course specific outcomes; General Education courses will assess course specific outcomes that reflect the primary General Education competency(ies) identified for the course.

Courses implementing OA projects in Fall 2009

Beta Group: AR 103, AR 105, BI 203, BI 204, BI 205, HS 202, MA 110, MA 160, PE 186, PS 101

All sections of these courses should be completing the Outcomes Assessment project identified by the discipline. If you are teaching one of these courses, please make sure you have the material for the project and have it indicated on your syllabus. If you have questions about the assessment project, please contact your course coordinator or chair who can put you in contact with the faculty workgroup leading the project.

These courses are assessing 3 course specific outcomes; General Education courses are assessing at least one outcome that reflects a primary General Education competency identified for the course.

Courses beginning implementation of recommendations in Fall 2009-

Alpha Group: BI 101, BI 107, CJ 110, ED 101, SN 101, FR 101, PY 102, PY 203, DS 102, MA 182, MA 182

These courses completed their assessment in Fall 2007, reviewed data in Spring 2008 and will be completing observations and recommendations for their campuses and disciplines in early September or for HS 201 and WS 101, later in the semester. For more information about the data, observations and recommendations, or the Outcomes Assessment project for these courses, please contact the chair or course coordinator, who can put you in touch with the faculty workgroup leading the project.