NEW APPROACH TO LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT AT UCSC

Beginning Fall 2020, the campus is switching to a new approach to the assessment of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) in **undergraduate programs**. The new approach's key feature is a **3-year reporting cycle** for each department/program to conduct assessment by working with assessment specialists on a specific schedule. This replaces the 1-year reporting cycle for undergraduate programs.

The new approach (1) gives more time to faculty to work on the implications and next steps based on their assessment results, (2) simplifies their reporting requirements, (3) designates a faculty lead to oversee assessment in every program, and (4) puts every program on a specific schedule to allow IRAPS assessment specialists to provide support for every stage of the assessment process.

This info sheet provides general guidelines and tips about the new assessment cycle, organized along the following questions:

1) *What is a PLO study and how will it be useful to faculty?*

2) *When does this new assessment cycle begin for our academic program/department?*

3) *How many program learning outcomes (PLOs) are we expected to assess during each 3-year cycle?*

4) *What is the typical timeline for collecting assessment data?*

5) *What is the role of a faculty lead on assessment?*

6) *Why do we need to send our assessment data to IRAPS?*

7) *How do we collect assessment data to send to IRAPS, and when will we receive the results?*

8) *What do we need to include in a PLO report?*

9) *What steps do faculty need to take to stay on track in a 3-year cycle?*

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1) What is a PLO study and how will it be useful to faculty?

A PLO study is a project designed by faculty in consultation with assessment specialists in IRAPS. The study collects evidence to improve faculty's understanding of the extent to which one or more program learning outcomes (PLOs) are achieved by students overall, and across demographic and academic backgrounds (first generation, transfer students, and other equity analyses). It includes both direct evidence[1] (faculty assessment) and indirect evidence[2] (student self-assessment of their skills). This evidence becomes the basis for faculty's planning of course-based or curricular improvements in teaching and learning.

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[1] Direct evidence: Criteria-based assessment (rubrics) designed and used by faculty to evaluate students' skills in two or more areas related to a PLO. Course grades and overall exam scores <u>cannot</u> be used as sources of data.

[2] Indirect evidence: Students' self-evaluations of their proficiencies in specific skills related to a PLO. Possible sources of data: an existing campus survey (UC Undergraduate Experiences Survey or UCUES), a reflection paper, and an essay question on an exam. SETs <u>cannot</u> be used to collect this evidence.

2) When does this new assessment cycle begin for our academic program/department?

Each academic program/department will begin its 3-year cycle based on the table below (organized by division). The BSOE and Arts Division will begin in Fall '20, the PBSci and Social Sciences Divisions will begin in Fall '21, and the Humanities Division and Writing Program will begin in Fall '22.

DIVISION	ACADEMIC YEAR					
	'20-'21	'21-'22	'22-'23	'23-'24	'24-'25	'25-'26
School of Engineering & Arts	1st Cycle			2nd Cycle		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Social Sciences & Humanities		1st Cycle			2nd Cycle	
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2
PBSci			1st Cycle			2nd Cycle
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1

3) How many program learning outcomes (PLOs) are faculty expected to assess during each cycle?

To keep faculty workload manageable, we recommend selecting one or two PLOs that can be assessed based on the same student work/project or exam in undergraduate programs.

4) What is the typical timeline for collecting assessment data?

Undergraduate programs collect data over 2-3 quarters: for example, Winter, Spring, and (if needed) Fall of Year 2. We recommend to collect data in 2 or more courses taught by different instructors if possible.

5) What is the role of a faculty lead on assessment?

To ensure faculty governance and coordination of the assessment efforts needed to collect reliable data, each department will **designate a faculty member to oversee assessment** in their undergraduate program(s) and to work with the IRAPS assessment specialist through every stage of the process.

A faculty lead will work with the assessment specialist on the design of the study in Fall quarter. In Winter and/or Spring quarter their role will be to help instructors in undergraduate courses selected for PLO assessment; for example, to ensure that their assignments are consistent with the rubrics, and to ensure that the instructors send their assessment data to IRAPS. See next page for a quarterly schedule.

6) Why do we need to send our data to IRAPS?

IRAPS's assistance with data analyses is useful for two reasons: it significantly reduces faculty workload related to assessment data analysis and reporting, and it allows IRAPS specialists to conduct equity analyses of student outcomes that significantly improves usefulness of any assessment study for identifying areas that need improvement of teaching and learning experiences, especially of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

7) How do we collect assessment data to send to IRAPS and when will we receive a report?

Instructors will need to enter their assessment results in an Excel template, and send it to IRAPS assessment specialist who will analyze the data, conduct equity analyses, and summarize the results. The results will be sent back to the department in the "IRAPS report" by October 1st or by February 15th if submitted at the end of Fall of Year 2.

IRAPS will not share the results with anyone else outside the department. The IRAPS report will be uploaded in the PLO assessment "course" set up in Canvas for each department, and a notification will be sent to the department chair and a manager.

8) What do we need to include in a departmental PLO report?

The new, streamlined PLO report format is simple. Basically, faculty answer these two questions:

1. What did you find in your study?

2. What are you planning to do based on your findings?

The IRAPS report will be included as the attachment and will cover the description of the study and the results. Sample PLO reports are posted on IRAPS website: https://iraps.ucsc.edu/assessment/

9) What steps do faculty need to take to stay on track in a 3-year cycle?

Faculty leads are expected to work with assessment specialists in IRAPS to complete the design of the assessment study in Fall. In the following quarters, their role would be to ensure instructors' participation in data collection and sending data to IRAPS.

3-YEAR CYCLE IN UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

YEAR 1

Fall	Winter	Spring

❑ Faculty lead meets with IRAPS assessment specialist to design plan for PLO study:
  ❑ Select courses & instructors
  ❑ Review relevant syllabi and assignments
  ❑ Develop assessment rubrics that align with assignments in specific courses
  ❑ Engage instructors of these courses in this process
	❑ Data collection
	  ❑ Faculty lead ensures that designated instructors collect assessment data in courses according to plan
	  ❑ Assessment specialist consults instructors on how to assess student work using the rubric and collect data
		❑ Data collection (may also continue in Fall if needed)*
		  ❑ If assessment is complete, faculty lead ensures that instructors submit data to IRAPS by **June 30** to be analyzed.

YEAR 2

Fall	Winter	Spring

❑ Undergraduate director or committee receives IRAPS report with results
  ❑ Review results
  ❑ Develop implications & next steps
  ❑ If needed, consult with AVPTL, CITL
	❑ Department discusses implications and next steps	❑ Department submits PLO report to divisional coordinator **(due June 30)**

YEAR 3

❑ Department implements changes

*If faculty continue to collect PLO data in fall of Year 2, they should send their data to IRAPS by January 4th. The department will receive an IRAPS report by February 15th, and will need to develop implications/next steps and complete the report by June 30th.