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DATE: April 24, 2020  
TO: Andrea Wheeler, Academic Affairs Council  
SUBJECT: Annual Report  
CC: Sherri Angstrom

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**Committee Charge:** Coordinate learning outcomes assessment implementation across the university.

The Outcomes assessment committee met 4 times in the fall of 2019 and 2 times in the spring of 2020.

**Activity:**

During the 2019/2020 year, the Outcomes Assessment Committee Reviewed and discussed the following:

- Revised and updated the language in the Faculty Handbook, section 10.7.2, on Outcomes Assessment to reflect current practices and expectations.
  - Planned avenue to submit revisions in Fall 2019
- Upcoming Higher Learning Commission review
  - Iowa State engaged in a Higher Learning Commission Year Four Assurance Review, which began on February 3, 2020. As a portion of this review, and in the spirit of continuous improvement, there are areas where Iowa State could improve related to learning outcomes assessment. Some of these areas Iowa State self-identified in preparation for the visit and others were identified by the visiting team.
  - The HLC Review concluded with a finding that Iowa State had met all criteria and had many strengths. However, the report noted that although Iowa State clearly outlines the skills and attitudes that every ISU undergraduate should possess, "[i]t is less clear how these outcomes will be assessed and aggregated at the institutional level."
- University Outcomes
  - Revised language to propose four outcomes as university-wide learning outcomes based on existing outcomes already held in each individual college.
    - Diversity and Global Citizenship
    - Communication
    - Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
    - Information Literacy
  - Proposed the 4 University-Wide Outcomes to Academic Affairs Council and Faculty Senate [FS 19-13].

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- At the last external accreditation review of Iowa State University by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the lack of clearly-defined university-wide Student Outcomes was identified as an area of concern. In addition to having outcomes identified, HLC criterion 4 requires that institutions assess student learning outcomes and use the results of those assessments to improve student achievement of those learning outcomes. Historically, university-wide outcomes have been proposed without success in at least two prior instances.
- The committee reviewed current student learning outcomes described in the University Catalog and in published college documents to assess the breadth and scope of outcomes for each college. These outcomes were compared within and among colleges, and this comparison assisted in the identification of common learning outcomes among all undergraduate degree programs. The OA Committee's objective was to propose overarching learning outcomes for all ISU undergraduate students that would be acceptable to satisfy HLC university-wide outcomes requirements, and are consistent with learning outcomes and objectives that have been adopted by ISU colleges. The four university student learning outcomes identified were developed based on the existing outcomes stated for each college and are designed to synthesize those objectives into a set of general learning outcomes that would be beneficial to all students. These learning outcomes were reviewed and approved by the Academic Affairs Council in the fall of 2019, and were presented to the Faculty Senate for a first reading on January 21, 2020
- Amendments were made by Senators following the first reading. The committee has concerns about the verbiage of the amendment. Readers are led to believe that the Registrar (or some university entity) will do the reporting, while it is really necessary that departments/programs consciously consider student achievement of outcomes and write reports. No entity

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has been created to do outcomes assessment FOR departments/programs and there is neither a carrot nor a stick for departments/programs to do it.

- The amended University-Wide Outcomes were passed on February 11, 2020

**Goals for the next year:**

- Propose the updated language in the Faculty Handbook, section 10.7.2, on Outcomes Assessment to reflect current practices and expectations to the Academic Affairs Council and Faculty Senate.
- Create a best practices guide and website for outcomes assessment in conjunction with CELT.
- Ensure adequate preparation for the upcoming HLC Review.
- Consider as part of HLC Quality Initiative – Conduct Needs assessment Determine where colleges stand with outcomes assessment and to recommend training, processes, and potential resources.