Introduction

At the heart of UNLV’s Mission is the creation of an educational environment that encourages the full personal and professional development of its student constituents. Fulfillment of this mission requires the creation of opportunities that engage our student learners in activities and experiences which help them to integrate and make meaning of the knowledge they acquire. The Division of Student Affairs provides these opportunities via our co-curricular programs, activities, and services.

Generally speaking, co-curricular education has traditionally referred to the implicit and indirect learning experiences encountered and acquired by university students throughout their education. Typically, this terminology referred only to those experiences which occurred outside of the classroom. However, in Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-wide Focus on the Student Experience (ACPA and NASPA, 2004), our national associations redefine learning as “a comprehensive, holistic, transformative activity that integrates academic learning and student development” and provide well-documented justifications for this definition. We support this definition, as it complements our University’s mission well and provides the theoretical foundation for including the programs, activities, and services we provide which link in- and out-of classroom learning in our definition of co-curricular education.

The nature of the work performed in the Division integrates a variety of concepts including learning theory, holistic wellness, ethical and moral development, self-exploration and identity formation, experiential education models, social change theory and development of values and goals that guide personal and professional choices. Analysis of the recent statements, research, and trends which guide our profession highlight the increasing need for universities to utilize a holistic, systemic, and integrative approach to student learning to help students become intentional learners with the core competencies necessary to thrive in our complex and rapidly changing world.

To successfully achieve this global outcome, Learning Reconsidered (ACPA and NASPA, 2004) strongly recommends every campus make the effort to define and measure desired student outcomes – including identifying the competencies and skills they expect students to achieve, describing the context within which they can be acquired and demonstrated, making explicit the process through which students will gain these competencies, and specifying the ways in which progress will be tracked and evaluated. Becoming more proactive and intentional in designing programs and services increases the likelihood that the desired learning will occur, giving student learners the tools they need to effectively engage in the world as citizens and professionals, and making Student Affairs staff better educators.
In support of this recommendation, the Division of Student Affairs has established a Co-Curricular Agenda that links in- and out-of the classroom learning, clarifies learning outcomes, and reduces barriers that contribute to fragmented learning experiences. The Co-Curricular Agenda is comprised of seven key learning outcomes that are central to a holistic education. Extrapolated from these outcomes are the core concepts and skills that define the UNLV collegiate experience and that describe the fundamental intellectual competence and cultural awareness UNLV students will need in today’s global society. Thus, the Agenda provides a platform from which staff can ground departmental programs and services in a core set of competencies to enhance the collegiate experience for UNLV students. This grounding in turn provides the consistency and fluidity necessary to maximize, and later assess, student learning.

Each unit within the Division of Student Affairs may choose to emphasize a particular learning outcome more so than others; however our Agenda encourages faculty and staff to avoid compartmentalization of learning and to continually challenge students to make meaning across experiences.
## Student Learning Outcomes Table

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| Practical Competence | Effective oral communication | Base Competencies Model |
| | Effective written communication | Baxter-Magolda Self-authorship |
| | Time management | Student Health Ecological Model |
| | Vocational competence | Psychotherapy |
| | Maintain personal health and wellness | Wellness Wheel |
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| | Effective decision-making | |
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| | Risk taking | |

| Knowledge Acquisition, Integration, and Application | Understand knowledge from a range of disciplines | Perry Intellectual and Ethical Development |
| | | Kolb Learning Styles |
| | | Structural Theories / Trait and Factor |
| | | Cognition Career Theory |
| | | Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences |
| | Connect knowledge, ideas, and experiences | |
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| Persistence and Academic Achievement | Persistence | Retention Models –Tinto |
| | Establishment of collegiate identity | Banning Campus Ecology |
| | Ability to work within structure | Prescriptive vs. Descriptive Advising |
| | Resource utilization | Astin Involvement Theory |
| | Establishment of academic goals | |
| | Achievement of academic goals* | |

NOTE: The learning outcomes identified are consistent with the UNLV Mission and mirror those identified in *Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-wide focus on the Student Experience* (2004).
Defining the Learning Outcomes and Competencies

1. Cognitive Complexity

Definition: The ability to organize, analyze, integrate, compare, and contrast ideas; to practice effective planning, generate options and creative alternatives; to question assumptions and evaluate the logic, validity, and relevance of data; to construct and respond to logical arguments, and use deductive and inductive reasoning, synthesis of information, and abstract reasoning to solve problems.

This learning outcome is demonstrated by the following competencies:

a. **Identity / cognition integration** involves the development of an awareness of one’s beliefs, values, and attitudes that guide self-definition, the establishment and pursuit of personal goals, behavioral choices, and decision-making that is reflective of and congruent with these beliefs.

b. **Problem solving** involves identifying, prioritizing and solving problems; the ability to ask questions, sort out many facets of a problem, and contribute ideas as well as answers regarding the problem.

c. **Reflective thinking** involves active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the likely conclusion.

d. **Effective reasoning** involves the capacity for logical, rational and analytic thought and the ability to understand and resolve problems.

e. **Emotion / cognition integration** involves the ability to experience and label one’s emotions and identify the beliefs and thought processes that generate such feelings, as well as seek awareness and understand the thoughts and subsequent responses that result from the experience of one’s emotional states.

f. **Conflict resolution** involves recognizing that differences in viewpoints are inevitable and that such differences should be aired openly and with civility; having the ability to identify sources of conflict and take steps to overcome disharmony.

g. **Critical thinking** involves the ability to analyze carefully and logically information and ideas from multiple perspectives.

h. **Creative thinking / innovation** involves the ability to adapt to situations of change, at times initiating change and providing novel solutions.

2. Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Competence

Definition: Recognizing and defining oneself as unique, evolving, and self-directed and interacting effectively with a variety of individuals and groups.

This learning outcome is demonstrated by the following competencies:
a. **Realistic self-appraisal** involves being aware of the beliefs, values, attitudes, and emotions that motivate one to take action as well as identifying personal strengths and areas for improvement.

b. **Identity understanding and awareness** involves viewing oneself as a cultural being within the larger context of social and political concerns. This includes incorporating a student identity as a Rebel into personal identity.

c. **Self-management** involves developing practices and internalizing routines for maximizing one’s ability to be productive and self-reliant.

d. **Understanding of self in relation to others** involves understanding the impact of the peer group, assimilating the feedback of others into one’s consciousness of self, understanding your impact on others, your role within group dynamics, and the nature of interdependence.

e. **Ability to work with others / collaboration** involves working with others towards a common purpose, multiplying group effectiveness by capitalizing on the multiple talents and perspectives of each member and on the power of diversity to generate creative solutions and actions.

f. **Spiritual awareness** involves perceiving and creating a wider sense of meaning and purpose and finding patterns in one’s understanding of the universe that help a person to connect to a broader context.

g. **Personal goal-setting** involves setting reasonable and measurable goals and objectives, and persistently working towards goal attainment.

h. **Ability to establish meaningful relationships** involves the development of personal connections with others based upon reciprocal support, honest and direct communication, sincerity, and mutual respect for the individual characteristics, beliefs, values, and viewpoints of others. Such relationships provide emotional and behavioral support and promote personal growth and provide a forum for understanding one’s impact on others.

i. **Ethics and integrity** involves making informed and principled choices regarding conflicting situations, to foresee the consequences of and take responsibility for these choices, and thinking, feeling, and behaving with consistency, genuineness, and authenticity.

j. **Emotional maturity** involves motivating oneself to function at optimal levels of performance, functioning in stressful situations, maintaining a positive attitude, and responding appropriately to constructive criticism.

k. **Personal wellness** involves making healthy choices while being aware of one’s own physical, nutritional, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, social, and occupational needs.

3. **Humanitarianism**

**Definition:** Developing a world view and perspective in order to effectively function in an increasingly diverse global society.

This learning outcome is demonstrated by the following competencies:

a. **Understanding and appreciation for human differences** involves understanding differences including but not limited to, gender, race, ethnicity, religion/spirituality, ability/disability, sexual orientation/identity, age, class, educational level, size/appearance, use of English/other languages, marital/parental status, US born/foreign born, and broader cultural differences; appreciate differences in that, though entitled to their own beliefs and views, one will
understand the impact and consequences of stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, oppression, and the emotional, cognitive, behavioral, structural, economic, and endemic effects that result from oppression and discrimination.

b. **Cultural competence** involves the ability to recognize one’s own cultural traditions / identity, to understand and appreciate the historical significance, cultural traditions, and uniqueness of diverse human experiences.

c. **Reflective judgment** involves the increasingly complex ways individuals evaluate knowledge claims, make meaning and explain and defend their points of view.

d. **Social responsibility** involves working for positive change on behalf of others and the community.

e. **Social justice advocacy** involves actively working towards creation of inclusive and just communities, acting as an ally to marginalized populations, and appropriately challenging statements, actions, or systems that are contrary to the values of a just community.

f. **Global consciousness** involves analyzing and understanding the interconnectedness of global and local concerns and operating with civility in a complex social world.

g. **Aesthetic sensitivity** involves appreciating the unique abilities of self and others, appreciating various forms of artistic expression and actively seeking exposure to cultures, expressions and viewpoints that are different from one's own.

4. **Civic Engagement**

**Definition:** Recognizing the value of and participating in activities promoting service, social justice, and civic responsibility.

This learning outcome is demonstrated by the following competencies:

a. **Sense of civic responsibility / community engagement** involves the individual becoming responsibly connected to the community and society through leadership and civic action; actively working for positive change on behalf of others and the community.

b. **Engage in principled dissent** involves the civil manner of sharing ideas and mobilizing others in a way that challenges existing systems.

c. **Effective leadership** involves the process of identifying a need and working collaboratively with others to affect positive change.

d. **Commitment** involves the psychic energy that motivates the individual to serve and implies passion, intensity, and duration.

e. **Change management** involves leading people through the process of change and overcoming resistance to change.

5. **Practical Competence**

**Definition:** The skills needed for effective leadership, employability, and lifelong learning.

This learning outcome is demonstrated by the following competencies:

a. **Effective oral communication** involves the ability to present information orally in one-on-one and group settings including public speaking.
b. **Effective written communication** involves expressing ideas and facts to others effectively in formal and informal formats.

c. **Time management** involves managing several tasks at once, being able to set priorities, and to allocate time efficiently.

*d. Vocational competence* involves a broad understanding of one’s career options and of the steps needed to follow-through with choices; adequate preparation for one’s chosen career; and an understanding the value and function of work.

e. **Maintain personal health and wellness** involves the ability to learn and apply skills that promote the emotional/psychological, physical, social, academic/occupational, intellectual, and spiritual/values dimensions of wellness. To find and access knowledge and services in the endeavor of improving wellness.

f. **Prioritization** involves the ability to organize one’s goals and values in order of importance with a focus on maximizing results.

g. **Listening skills** involves being attentive when others are speaking, hearing and processing information, and attending to non-verbal cues.

h. **Ability to plan and organize** involves determining the steps or tasks needed to meet objectives, delegating if necessary, monitoring the progress made toward the plan, and revising the plan to include new information or to overcome new obstacles.

i. **Effective decision-making** involves making timely decisions on the basis of thorough assessment of the short- and long-term effects of decisions, recognizing the political and ethical implications, and being able to identify those who will be affected by the decisions.

j. **Adaptability** involves the ability to modify one's approach to an issue or problem based on the contexts and requirements of particular situations.

k. **Risk taking** involves taking reasonable risks by recognizing alternative or different ways of meeting objectives, while at the same time recognizing the potential negative outcomes and monitoring the progress toward set objectives.

6. **Knowledge Acquisition, Integration, and Application**

**Definition:** Processes involved in integrating ideas, making connections, and identifying and applying knowledge gained from various disciplines to complete tasks and solve everyday problems.

This learning outcome is demonstrated by the following competencies:

a. **Understand knowledge from a range of disciplines** involves actively expanding the mind and heart by engaging in learning activities and reflectively thinking about one’s experiences in order to make meaning. Intellectual depth describes the demonstration of substantial knowledge and understanding of at least one field of study; intellectual breadth is demonstrated by the ability to compare and contrast approaches to knowledge in different disciplines.

b. **Connect knowledge, ideas, and experiences** involves the ability to examine and organize ways of knowing, and compare and contrast approaches to knowledge within different disciplines.
c. **Relate knowledge to daily life** involves the ability to use information and concepts from experiences and studies in multiple disciplines and to apply them to specific issues and problems.

d. **Career decidedness** describes an individual’s certainty with their career decisions and involves confidence in one’s vocational competence.

e. **Technological competence** involves attaining and using technological and research skills.

f. **Pursuit of life-long learning** involves a curiosity for and pursuit of knowledge that transcends the quest for intellectual knowledge acquired in a formal setting, and includes the desire to expand one’s skills, abilities, and experiences in cognitive, behavioral, and emotional realms across the lifespan. It involves the ability to continually question, explore, research, experiment, and challenge assumptions and seek the understanding and experience in areas of interest across a variety of settings.

7. **Persistence and Academic Achievement**

**Definition:** Developing the self motivation and drive to pursue academic goals and persevere.

This learning outcome is demonstrated by the following competencies:

a. **Persistence** involves the internal motivation and drive necessary to utilize resources to overcome barriers, and make consistent progress toward defined academic and personal goals.

b. **Establishment of a collegiate identity** involves connecting to UNLV by engaging psychological and physical energy into the collegiate experience and building resources and interpersonal networks that further investment in persistence at UNLV.

c. **Ability to work within structure** involves recognizing one’s rights and responsibilities within the UNLV and greater community and being able to appropriately advocate for the needs of self and others.

d. **Resource utilization** involves identifying and accessing campus and community resources in order to achieve goals.

e. **Establishment of academic goals** involves reflecting upon the outcomes expected to result from the pursuit and completion of a particular academic program; ensuring expected outcomes are accurate and achievable; and broadly understanding the relationship between short-term academic goals and lifelong learning goals.

f. **Achievement of academic goals** (to be defined).

Implementation

Introduction

The Co-curricular Agenda recognizes the lifelong and recursive nature of learning. Each time a student engages in a co-curricular experience, it may not lead to immediate achievement of learning outcomes or competencies, but may serve as a catalyst for future growth. Even after graduation, students will continue to apply and build on curricular and co-curricular learning. While it is true that students have control over their collegiate experience and may choose to participate in a broad range of activities, delve deeply into a select few roles, or may choose not to participate in any co-curricular activities; the implementation of a sequential and progressive Co-curricular Agenda will provide intentional learning experiences.

Implementation of the Agenda entails identifying how students will be exposed to learning opportunities and what the achievement of learning outcomes looks like. In order for the Division to align programs and services with the Co-curricular Agenda we must be able to articulate what students will know or do differently as a result of an experience.

The entire Division of Student Affairs will engage in a multiple step process:
1. Inventory and map current programs and services
2. Identify and fill gaps by modifying current practices and designing new learning experiences to ensure alignment with the Agenda
3. When designing new programs and services, begin by identifying the desired learning outcomes and competencies and intentionally design the new program or service to meet those competencies
4. Assess services and programs related to intended purpose and identified learning outcomes
5. Refine services and programs based on assessment
6. Work with faculty to explore curricular and co-curricular congruence
7. Communicate expectations to students and provide students with maps to navigate the menu of learning opportunities
8. Assess the overall impact of the Co-curricular Agenda on student learning
9. Use data to re-evaluate the Agenda as well as the strategies to implement the Agenda.

While the steps may seem to be linear, in practice the process will be more circular. It will be critical for the Division to continuously inventory services and programs and to conduct ongoing assessments regarding the level of progress students make toward the intended outcomes and to utilize assessment data to continually refine and improve learning experiences for students.

Scope of Student Affairs

The co-curricular experience is vast, encompassing an array of formal and informal interactions outside of the classroom. The Division of Student Affairs provides students with a multitude of learning opportunities including:
• Services which support student success (examples include course registration, parking services, RebelCard services, and information or reception desks). These services are often designed to support student persistence.

• One time programs or services introduce and/or reinforce identified competencies and refer students to additional resources (examples include orientation sessions, awareness programs, one-on-one appointments, and workshops).

• In-depth progressive programs and services have explicit learning outcomes and are tracked and measured over time (examples include freshman success courses, tutoring services, and student employment or involvement opportunities).

Each type of service or program contributes to student learning, bringing focused depth or providing breadth and impacting a large number of students. Support services are key functions related to student retention and are critical in the creation of an environment that facilitates learning.

While one time services or programs may seem episodic, they can be designed to intentionally introduce competencies and refer students to other learning experiences. For example, a student visiting the Student Health Center with a cold interacts with staff regarding personal wellness and is referred to other in-depth learning experiences focused on the personal wellness competency.

In depth learning experiences are more involved, requiring students to commit to an extended learning experience. A student employment experience may be intentionally designed for students to develop practical competencies such as time management, effective oral communication, and effective decision making.

While units within Student Affairs may specialize in addressing particular competencies, it is the sum of students’ curricular and co-curricular experiences that results in holistic learning.

Inventory of current services and programs

Implementation of the Co-curricular Agenda will require staff to align current services and programs with the identified learning outcomes. By inventorying current practices, the Division can reflect on the degree to which we offer multiple and diverse ways for students to learn what it is we say we value. The process should begin by answering the following questions regarding current programs and services:

1. What educational theories, models, or shared assumptions underlie the co-curricular design of the service, program, or learning experience?

2. Describe the service or program – what competencies is the experience designed to intentionally address? Does the service or program explicitly state these learning objectives?

3. What aspects of the service or program design intentionally support, introduce, reinforce, or emphasize the identified competencies? Identify the ways in which students learn what you intend (e.g. response to task, collaborative projects, self-reflection, use of technology, etc.).
4. How will a student demonstrate or represent learning in regard to identified competencies? Answering this question will aid the assessment process.
5. How does the service or program explicitly refer students to expanded learning opportunities?
6. How does the service or program build on the educational experiences students gain from other co-curricular or curricular experiences?

The key to inventorying services and programs is to focus on what the service or program intends to accomplish. Competencies that a student may learn that are not a part of the intentional design of the service or program are not relevant for this purpose. Serendipitous learning or teachable moments are a function of the student and can not easily be identified or measured.

**Co-curricular Learning Map**

In evaluating program and service offerings the Division will strive for the optimal levels of depth and breadth that impact students’ cognitive and psychosocial growth. By mapping program and service offerings, the Division may begin the process of determining how progressive learning experiences are sequenced in order to build on prior learning. Mapping will facilitate the Division’s ability to analyze program offerings and identify gaps on a broader scale. This will allow the Division to better ensure progressive experiences that allow students to make significant progress toward all seven learning outcomes.

To help define learning experiences, and better articulate the intention and impact of programs and services, the Agenda defines the following terms:

- **S – Support**: “S” indicates services designed to support student achievement or may even require students to practice identified competencies as they navigate the services. These are often critical services associated with enrollment and matriculation or services related to creating and sustaining a safe and inclusive environment. These services generally have great breadth, meaning they are designed to serve a large number of students or even the entire student population.

- **I – Introduce**: “I” indicates programs or services that introduce and refer students to additional resources or programs that may promote further enhancement of identified competencies. Again, these services and programs are generally intended for a large target population.

- **R – Reinforce**: “R” indicates programs and services designed with the intent that students make progress toward achieving the competency or a portion of the competency. As a result of the intentional learning experience student indicates or demonstrates some level of growth. This could be a one-time program or appointment that acknowledges the learning experience is only one part of sequential learning.

- **E – Emphasize**: “E” indicates programs designed with the intent for students to be able to demonstrate a level of mastery of the identified competency as a result of the learning experience. The student is aware of identified learning outcomes associated with the learning experience and receives feedback regarding progress. This implies
an in-depth learning experience, with a low staff to student ratio, over a period of time (i.e. programs focus on depth rather than breadth of impact).

Not every service or program will address all competencies, it will be important to accurately analyze what a service or program intends to accomplish. Through the process of inventorying current co-curricular initiatives, staff may determine that some programs and services need to be revised to better meet the intended competencies.

**Assessment**

Student outcomes assessment is the act of assembling and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative learning outcomes evidence in order to examine congruence with an institution's stated purpose and educational objectives. Assessment is an ongoing process and involves:

- Making our expectations explicit and public;
- Setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality;
- Systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards;
- Using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance.

Effective assessment of complex student learning relies on gathering multiple measures or indicators of learning from a variety of sources. Direct measures assess the knowledge and skills students have learned by having them actually demonstrate their learning. Indirect measures gather opinions from students about their learning. In addition to assessing the impact of Divisional programs and services, the cumulative effects of the curricular and co-curricular educational process should be considered (Upcraft and Schuh, 1996).

**Strategic Plan**

Strategic planning documents will utilize the iterative assessment model. Each unit should draft a strategic plan clearly articulating the unit goals and strategies. For each strategy the following should be documented:

- Leadership;
- Timeline;
- Budget;
- Outcomes;
- Assessment Methods and Results;
- Analysis and Recommendations.
Iterative Assessment Model

Unit Goals
A goal is a projected state of affairs which a person or system plans or intends to achieve or bring about—a personal or organization desired end point in some sort of assumed development. Goals should reflect:
- Institutional Priorities
- CAS Standards
- Student Development Research
- Best Practices
- Unit Vision and Mission

Analysis and Recommendations
Data analysis leads to recommendations for changes in implementation strategies and allocation of resources.

Strategies
A strategy is a plan of action designed to achieve particular goal. SMART strategies are:
- Measureable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Specific
- Time Framed

Assessment Metrics
Measurement process - qualitative and quantitative (evaluations, pre/post test, rubrics, focus groups)

Identification of performance indicators (participation, cost per participant, retention impact, longitudinal or benchmark data analysis, satisfaction)

Student Outcomes
Specific statements derived from goals; what will the audience be expected to know/do as a result of strategy. Learning outcomes are linked to the Co-curricular Agenda.
A review of the literature included:
1. The Student Learning Imperative: Implications for Student Affairs (ACPA 1996)
2. Principles of Good Practice in Student Affairs (ACPA/NASPA 1997)
3. Foundations of Experiential Education (NSEE 1997)
5. The Bases of Competence: Skills for Lifelong Learning and Employability (1998)
8. The Meaning of the Baccalaureate (Miller 2003)
9. Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-wide focus on the Student Experience (ACPA/NASPA 2004)

A review of theories and models included:
1. Perry Intellectual and Ethical Development
2. Kohlberg Cognitive and Moral Development
3. Kolb Theory of Experiential Learning and Learning Styles
4. Banning Campus Ecology and Astin College Environment
5. Astin Involvement Theory
6. Mattering vs. Marginality (Schlossberg, Lynch, Chickering)
7. Tinto Freshman Development
8. Chickering Vectors of Development
9. Minority and Majority Identify Development Theories
10. Just Community Model
11. Kegan's Theory of Human Development
12. Social Change Model of Leadership Development
13. Leadership Identity Development Model
14. Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences
15. Constructivist Theory (Bruner)
16. Social Development Theory (Vygotsky)
17. Cooperative Learning (Johnson, Johnson & Smith)
18. Prescriptive vs. Developmental Advising Model
19. Structural Theories / Trait and Factor (Holland)
20. Developmental Theory (Super)
21. Socioeconomic, Social Learning (Krumboltz), Decision-making theories
22. Cognition Career Theory (Lent, Brown & Hackett) -- making meaning
23. Steps Career Development Model
24. Wellness Wheel
25. Student Health Ecological Model
26. Precede / Proceed Model
27. Emotional Quotient / Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, Mayer & Salovey)

A review of UNLV documents included:
1. The University of Nevada, Las Vegas: The Engaged Research University: Extending the Agenda 2002-2007
4. UNLV Statement of Student Expectations (2000)
7. Student Satisfaction Inventory and Institutional Priorities Survey Executive Overview (Noel-Levitz, 2002)
References


