

Institutional Learning Objectives

A report created by the CoTL Task Force on Institutional Learning Objectives

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Introduction

In the Fall 2017 term, the Provost's Office invited the Faculty Council Standing Committee on Teaching and Learning (CoTL) to form a Task Force to develop recommendations regarding Institutional Learning Objectives (ILOs) to help provide a framework for the overall educational mission at CSU. The impetus for developing ILOs arose from the most recent Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation visit, when a suggestion was made that CSU consider developing ILOs. Nationally, many of our peer institutions have articulated ILOs to frame institutional educational objectives and help provide a coherent framework within which individual course and programmatic learning outcomes can be oriented.

ILOs are meant to provide a framework for curricular and co-curricular coherence; in principle, the ILOs are conceptually linked to the university [Principles of Community](#) and individual course-level and program-level student learning outcomes (SLOs). By design, the SLOs within any given course or program may justifiably be aligned with one or more ILOs as part of the overall curricular and co-curricular framework. The alignment between SLOs and ILOs allows for coherent curricular and program mapping and design, affords opportunities for reflection on the relationship between the All-University Core Curriculum (AUCC) and disciplinary coursework, and can provide students a framework for understanding the coherence between AUCC, discipline-specific, elective coursework, and co-curricular learning. Moreover, ILOs make explicit the guiding principles that form the basis of the educational experience at Colorado State University.

Colorado State University Institutional Learning Objectives

An education at CSU is an opportunity for rigorous engagement with people and ideas in an environment built on the foundation of intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas that are at the heart of academic and intellectual freedom and oriented toward the common good. The pursuit of learning is rooted in our fundamental commitment to diverse viewpoints, open inquiry, and constructive disagreement in our pursuit of scholarship and learning. This commitment is manifested as the sustained willingness to engage with and understand different perspectives, ideas, histories, and approaches to solving complex social problems - and the attendant responsible exercise of freedom of speech and freedom of association – that form the basis for the vibrant academic life of the university. It is equally manifested through practice in the components of a traditional liberal education - employing the habits of mind, stimulating imagination, developing appreciation for the creative arts, developing the ability to communicate effectively in speech and writing, and understanding the ethical implications and societal applications of discoveries in science and technology. Here, these components are joined with the distinctive features of a CSU education, including the consistent pursuit of environmental sustainability, multidisciplinary approaches to human and animal health, and our sustained commitment to equity and inclusive excellence that is oriented toward expanding educational opportunity and building collaborative communities that apply and adapt knowledge to pursue solutions to the complex problems that impact the citizens of Colorado, the United States, and the world. This commitment reflects our land-grant mission of access, excellence, and engagement to inspire responsible citizenship and promote lifelong learning and community development inside and outside the classroom. As a research-intensive university, CSU is committed to designing and delivering curricula informed by the best scholarship in the art and science of teaching and learning. This commitment to the science of teaching and learning informs our approach to continuous improvement in delivering on our educational mission. Given these foundational commitments, the CSU Institutional Learning Objectives (ILOs) toward which our educational experience and mission are oriented include:

Creativity

Education for creativity includes the development of an understanding of the ways in which the arts and sciences support expression of the diversity of the human experience and human community, and the development of the ability to apply creative skills in problem solving; it stimulates the imagination to inform new ways of understanding our place in the world and contributes to innovative solutions addressing the challenges we face locally and globally.

Reasoning

Education for reasoning includes the development and application of logic, analytic and synthetic skills, the reflective discovery and use of information, the ability to identify and understand problems, ask effective questions, understand and apply ethical principles appropriate to the task(s) and communities at hand, and the application of requisite knowledge and skills as part of multidisciplinary approaches to key challenges at all levels of society.

Communication

Education for personal and professional expression includes the development of written and oral communication skills for technical, professional, and public audiences. These skills include developing the capacity to listen substantively and communicate effectively and respectfully in settings where a variety of viewpoints, cultures, identities, and objectives may intersect; skills central to effective and equitable communication in a diverse society.

Responsibility

Education for personal and social responsibility is built upon an understanding of the social and educational advantages of viewpoint diversity and the ability to learn from those with perspectives, histories, cultures, and identities different from our own. Personal and social responsibility involves shared deliberation on the just ordering of political and legal systems, the presence of and options for responding to systemic barriers to equity and inclusiveness, and an understanding of the interconnectedness of societies worldwide. Finally, personal and social responsibility also includes understanding and being able to articulate and justify the values and principles involved in personal decision-making, taking responsibility for our own actions, speech, and reasoned convictions, engaging in critical reflection, and as warranted, self-correction or principled dissent; as well as understanding and participating in relevant governance systems.

Collaboration

Education for collaboration is oriented toward the effective and sustainable stewardship of human, economic, and environmental resources. This involves developing cooperative and mutually beneficial relationships with others; understanding of the advantages of shared discourse, open inquiry, and constructive disagreement regarding proposed solutions to social problems; demonstrating skill in guiding and assisting a group, organization, or community in meeting its goals; understanding the dynamics of a group and exhibiting democratic principles as a leader or group member; and communicating a vision, mission, or purpose that encourages commitment and action in others.

In order to deliver on these Institutional Learning Objectives, CSU graduates will throughout their education be immersed in sustained engagement with and reflection upon the interrelated core and discipline-specific knowledge domains including:

- **Creative and Aesthetic Expression**
- **Ethical Foundations of Sciences and Societies**
- **Economic and Financial Literacy**
- **Natural, Physical, Social and Behavioral Scientific Knowledge**
- **Qualitative and Quantitative Methods for Acquiring, Interpreting, and Using Data**
- **Historical Knowledge**
- **Civic and Political Knowledge**
- **Cultural and Global Knowledge**

These domains undergird the specific knowledge and skills requisite to contribute to society as graduates of CSU. They are integrated in a curricular and co-curricular design that prepares students for success both as professionals and as responsible and self-aware community citizens who are equipped to be lifelong learners.

