Report of the Simpson College Team

of the

HLC Academy for Assessment of Student Learning

August 17, 2013

submitted by M. E. Waggoner, Director of Academic Assessment

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This is an update of the work of the Academy team. In the process of developing a sustainable plan for the assessment of the Engaged Citizenship Curriculum, the Academy team worked with the campus community to write Institution-level and Program-level Learning Objectives. This report gives the history of that development and the connection to the Engaged Citizenship Curriculum.

The next step is to write an assessment plan. That plan will be submitted to the Assessment and Program Review Committee in September for review.
Background on the Institution-level Learning Objectives (ILOs)

**What:** Institution-level learning objectives (ILOs) fit in between the College Mission statement and program-level learning objectives (PLOs) (see Figure 1). Usually both are written before the learning objectives for the general education curriculum. In our case, these ILOs and PLOs were distilled from the themes exist in our criterion-based Engaged Citizenship Curriculum (ECC).

![Levels of Student Learning Objectives (LOs)](image)

**Why:** Why write learning objectives other than the course level learning objectives? The ECC was developed by writing sets of course-level learning objectives, and the courses in the curriculum were developed to meet those objectives. The ECC is meant to be a living program that will be responsive to both changing needs and calls for development, but instead of responding to anecdotal information, the student learning objectives promote an evidence-based plan for improvement.

A feedback loop for continued improvement comes through assessment, but it is unfeasible to build an assessment plan that includes all 65 course-level learning objectives of the ECC in the left column of Figure 1. Even writing an assessment plan for 14 program-level learning objectives (middle column of Figure 1) would be daunting. The 5 institution-level learning objectives make assessment of the ECC manageable, and the PLOs will be used to write rubrics for the evaluation of student artifacts. In effect, the drafting of the PLOs and ILOs gave structure to the assessment plan of the ECC.

**Who:** Who was involved in the development of these learning objectives? In fall 2012, Simpson was accepted into the Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning (the “Academy”), a program administered by the Higher Learning Commission. The Academy provides training and mentors for assessment, but our participation also provided a structure through which we could complete the Quality Initiative for accreditation. Our Quality Initiative is the implementation of an assessment plan for the ECC.
Over the past year many faculty and administrators have had input into the Quality Initiative. Five faculty members attended a Roundtable at the HLC on assessment where the Quality Initiative was first drafted: Patricia Calkins, Tracy Dinesen, CoryAnne Harrigan, John Benoit and Murphy Waggoner. Monthly meetings called “Coffee, Tea and the ECC” were held in spring 2013 and included the five above and Sal Meyers, Lydia Sinapova, Jody Ragan, Steve Rose, Jim Palmieri, Kelley Bradder, Steve Griffith, Amy Doling. Materials were reviewed by the Assessment and Program Review Committee and other faculty and staff including Marilyn Mueller, Kedron Bardwell, Beth Beggs and Jule Thorson. Apologies to anyone who was left off of this list.

**When:** In meetings before the October Roundtable in 2012, a draft of ILOs was written. This was revised several times before it was presented in December. More revisions occurred before the January Coffee, Tea meeting. A final version of the ILOs with alignment to the designations in the ECC was reviewed by the team at the April Coffee, Tea meeting. The ILOs were presented to the faculty in May 2013. This document was written in August 2013.

Graduates of Simpson College’s undergraduate program will be able to …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course-level Learning Objectives (CLOs)</th>
<th>Program-level Learning Objectives (PLOs)</th>
<th>Institutional-level Learning Objectives (ILOs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. demonstrate an understanding of information, values, processes and theories that are essential to building just and democratic societies.
2. develop an awareness that information exists in various formats.
3. interpret representations of quantitative information and draw inferences from them. Representations of quantitative information can be symbolic (e.g., a formula or symbolic language), visual (e.g., a graph, diagram or schematic), numerical (e.g., a table of values or calculation) or verbal (e.g., written or oral work).
4. recognize academic integrity, how it relates to plagiarism and responsible use of information by understanding fair use of copyrighted materials and various forms of proper citation.
5. articulate one's arguments with clarity, precision, and civility.
6. organize thoughts in a logical fashion.
7. support arguments with credible evidence.
8. cite appropriate evidence to support claims.
9. articulate and justify their moral values and actions in light of moral theories, logical principles, foundational texts, or traditions.
10. identify and critically evaluate multiple approaches to ethical issues.
11. demonstrate an ability to make decisions about moral values and actions by incorporating and responding to a variety of other ethical, moral, or religious perspectives.
12. articulate one's arguments with clarity, precision, and civility.
13. formulate problems using the scientific method.
14. develop an awareness that information exists in various formats.
15. analyze ethical issues related to scientific inquiry (e.g., research involving the use of animals or humans, funding issues, safety issues, recognition that most scientific conclusions have caveats, etc.).
16. interpret and analyze information in order to recognize bias and identify unchecked assumptions.
17. recognize academic integrity, how it relates to plagiarism and responsible use of information by understanding fair use of copyrighted materials and various forms of proper citation.
18. articulate one's arguments with clarity, precision, and civility.
19. organize thoughts in a logical fashion.
20. support arguments with credible evidence.
21. cite appropriate evidence to support claims.
22. articulate and justify their moral values and actions in light of moral theories, logical principles, foundational texts, or traditions.
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61. organize thoughts in a logical fashion.
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63. cite appropriate evidence to support claims.
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65. identify and critically evaluate multiple approaches to ethical issues.
66. demonstrate an ability to make decisions about moral values and actions by incorporating and responding to a variety of other ethical, moral, or religious perspectives.

**Figure 2** Course-level, program-level and institution-level learning objectives
Simpson College Institution- and Program-level Learning Objectives (ILOs and PLOs)

**Disciplinary ILO:** Graduates of the undergraduate programs of Simpson College will be able to describe and apply the principles and methods of a specific academic discipline. Graduates will be able to

- Di PLO 1: explain principles and methods of a discipline necessary for a beginning practitioner.
- Di PLO 2: apply principles and methods of a discipline at the level of a beginning practitioner.
- Di PLO 3: communicate effectively within a discipline.

**Engagement ILO:** Graduates of the undergraduate programs of Simpson College will be able to actively and effectively engage with multiple communities. Graduates will be able to

- En PLO 1: describe the academic skills necessary for community engagement.
- En PLO 2: apply academic skills to community building experiences.
- En PLO 3: evaluate their role in community engagement.

**Expression ILO:** Graduates of the undergraduate programs of Simpson College will be able to communicate ideas through multiple media. Graduates will be able to

- Ex PLO 1: communicate ideas through written, oral and artistic expression.
- Ex PLO 2: evaluate expressive work.
- Ex PLO 3: provide supporting evidence for an argument.
- Ex PLO 4: organize information logically.
- Ex PLO 5: identify elements of expression that have specific meaning to an audience.

**Perspective ILO:** Graduates of the undergraduate programs of Simpson College will be able to recognize and analyze their own and others actions from the perspective of time, culture and power. Graduates will be able to

- Pe PLO 1: describe the perspective of people in a specific time, culture, social, political or power structure.
- Pe PLO 2: describe how people and events are influenced by factors such as the past, social inequities or culture.
- Pe PLO 3: analyze a societal, global, historical, cultural or power issue.

**Reasoning ILO:** Graduates of the undergraduate programs of Simpson College will be able to use critical reasoning to make decisions about quantitative, scientific and values issues. Graduates will be able to

- Re PLO 1: draw conclusions and solve problems using multiple problem solving methods
- Re PLO 2: communicate questions asked and decisions made providing appropriate justifications
- Re PLO 3: evaluate decisions made based on criteria appropriate to the context of the question and the method of solution
- Re PLO 4: describe the obstacles to and issues of reasoning for decision making
Relationship Between the Curriculum and the ILOs

Four of the Institution-level Learning Objectives (ILOs) will be used in the assessment of the Engagement Citizenship Curriculum – Expression, Engagement, Perspectives and Reasoning. The Disciplinary ILO is already assessed in the departmental assessment programs.

Figure 3 shows the relationship of the ILOs to the 7 Areas of Engagement and the 7 Embedded Skills. In Figure 4 through Figure 7 there are grids to show the alignment of the Course-Level learning Objectives to the ILOs. Figure 8 is a worksheet for seeing the connections between the ILOs and the college mission.
Engaged Citizenship Curriculum: Expression (WC, OC, AR)

**Expression ILO:** Graduates of the undergraduate programs will be able to express ideas through multiple media.

**Expression PLOs:** Graduates will be able to
- Ex PLO 1: communicate ideas through written, oral and artistic expression
- Ex PLO 2: valuate expressive work
- Ex PLO 3: provide supporting evidence for an argument
- Ex PLO 4: organize information logically
- Ex PLO 5: identify elements of expression that have specific meaning to an audience

While these learning objectives are reinforced throughout the curriculum, they are intentionally taught and assessed at the completion of these courses from the Engaged Citizenship Curriculum: **Written Communication, Oral Communication and The Arts.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corresponding Course-level Learning Objectives (Expression CLOs)</th>
<th>Expression: Program-level Learning Objectives (PLOs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Areas of Engagement</strong></td>
<td><strong>Communicate ideas through written, oral and artistic expression</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Arts</td>
<td>express ideas through an artistic medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Communication</td>
<td>communicate orally in response to a prompt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Communication</td>
<td>articulate an idea and formulate a thesis as appropriate to the discipline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4  Alignment of CLOs of Written Communication, Oral Communication and The Arts with the Expression ILO*
Engaged Citizenship Curriculum: Engagement (CE CL IC)

Engagement ILO: Graduates of the undergraduate programs of Simpson College will be able to actively and effectively engage with multiple communities.

Engagement PLOs: Graduates will be able to
- En PLO 1: describe the academic skills necessary for community engagement
- En PLO 2: apply academic skills to community building experiences
- En PLO 3: evaluate their role in community engagement

While these learning objectives are reinforced throughout the curriculum, they are intentionally taught and assessed at the completion of these courses from the Engaged Citizenship Curriculum: Civic Engagement, Collaborative Leadership and Intercultural Communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corresponding Course-level Learning Objectives (Engagement CLOs)</th>
<th>Civic Engagement</th>
<th>Collaborative Leadership</th>
<th>Intercultural Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Areas of Engagement</td>
<td>describe information, values, processes and theories that are essential to building just and democratic societies</td>
<td>articulate the skills and dispositions necessary to achieve a shared goal</td>
<td>identify distinctive cultural practices, products and perspectives of the cultures under discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Engagement</td>
<td>apply academic skills to community building experiences</td>
<td>demonstrate the skills and dispositions necessary for effective collaboration</td>
<td>improve their ability to communicate in a nonnative language about topics of cultural interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Engagement</td>
<td>apply the perspective of an academic discipline to civic initiatives</td>
<td>articulate the importance of their role in civic engagement</td>
<td>evaluate their ability to and the importance of being able to communicate with speakers of another language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5  Alignment of CLOs of Civic Engagement, Collaborative Leadership and Intercultural Communication with the Engagement ILO
### Engaged Citizenship Curriculum: Perspectives (GP HP DP)

**Perspectives ILO:** Graduates of the undergraduate programs of Simpson College will be able to recognize and analyze their own and others' actions from the perspective of time, culture and power.

**Perspectives PLOs:** Graduates will be able to

- **Pe PLO 1:** describe the perspective of people in a specific time, culture, social, political or power structure.
- **Pe PLO 2:** describe how people and events are influenced by factors such as the past, social inequities or culture.
- **Pe PLO 3:** analyze a societal, global, historical, cultural or power issue.

While these learning objectives are reinforced throughout the curriculum, they are intentionally taught and assessed at the completion of these courses from the Engaged Citizenship Curriculum: **Global Perspective, Historical Perspective and Diversity and Power.**

| Corresponding Course-level Learning Objectives (Perspective CLOs) | Perspective: Program-level Learning Objectives (PLOs) |
|---|---|---|
| **Areas of Engagement** | **Global Perspective** | **Historical Perspective** |
| Diversity and Power | describe the perspectives and experiences of a less powerful (often minority) group in the U.S. | describe the distinct perspectives of people who lived in the time periods or settings studied | |
| Diversity and Power | describe how people and events are influenced by factors such as the past, social inequities or culture | describe the relationship between the past and the present by considering the influence of the past on subsequent events, issues, and ideas | |
| Global Perspective | analyze a societal, global, historical, cultural or power issue | relate the subjects under consideration to the broader historical and cultural contexts in which they occurred | |
| Global Perspective | evaluate the social inequities resulting from power differentials via the perspectives of both the advantaged and the disadvantaged groups | |
| Historical Perspective | describe the power differentials between two or more groups within one or more communities in the U.S. | |

**Figure 6** Alignment of CLOs of Diversity and Power, Global Perspective and Historical Perspective with the Perspectives ILO
Engaged Citizenship Curriculum: Reasoning (CT, QR, SR, EV, IL)

**Reasoning ILO:** Graduates of the undergraduate programs of Simpson College will be able to use critical reasoning to make decisions about quantitative, scientific and values issues.

**Reasoning PLOs:** Graduates will be able to
- Re PLO 1: draw conclusions and solve problems using multiple problem solving methods
- Re PLO 2: communicate questions asked and decisions made providing appropriate justifications
- Re PLO 3: evaluate decisions made based on criteria appropriate to the context of the question and the method of solution
- Re PLO 4: describe the obstacles to and issues of decision making

While these learning objectives are reinforced throughout the curriculum, they are intentionally taught and assessed at the completion of these courses from the Engaged Citizenship Curriculum: Critical Thinking, Quantitative Reasoning, Scientific Reasoning, Ethic and Value Inquiry and Information Literacy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasoning: Program-level Learning Objectives (PLOs)</th>
<th>Corresponding Course-level Learning Objectives (CLOs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>draw conclusions and solve problems using multiple problem solving methods</td>
<td>make judgments about values and actions by critical evaluation from a variety of normative perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communicate questions asked and decisions made providing appropriate justifications</td>
<td>identify and critically evaluate multiple approaches to ethical, moral or values questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evaluate decisions made based on criteria appropriate to the context of the question and the method of solution</td>
<td>articulate and justify values and actions in light of normative theories, logical principles, foundational texts, or traditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>describe the obstacles to and issues of decision making</td>
<td>articulate and critically assess how various normative perspectives are relevant in contemporary society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Engagement</th>
<th>Critical Thinking, Scientific Reasoning, Information Literacy, Quantitative Reasoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethics &amp; Value Inquiry</td>
<td>draw conclusions by analyzing information critically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make judgments about values and actions by critical evaluation from a variety of normative perspectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identify and critically evaluate multiple approaches to ethical, moral or values questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>articulate and justify values and actions in light of normative theories, logical principles, foundational texts, or traditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>articulate and critically assess how various normative perspectives are relevant in contemporary society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Thinking</th>
<th>Scientific Reasoning</th>
<th>Information Literacy</th>
<th>Quantitative Reasoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>draw conclusions by analyzing information critically</td>
<td>execute a research strategy by identifying search terms and locating relevant information in a variety of resources</td>
<td>draw inferences, solve problems and make decisions using quantitative methods</td>
<td>draw conclusions and solve problems using multiple problem solving methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>generate and articulate an argument supported by appropriate evidence</td>
<td>develop a research strategy by asking relevant questions and refining a research topic</td>
<td>communicate solutions to quantitative questions in oral or written communication that incorporates symbolic, numeric or graphical representations</td>
<td>communicate questions asked and decisions made providing appropriate justifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evaluate arguments for validity, bias, unchecked assumptions and/or other appropriate criteria</td>
<td>evaluate information found through a research strategy for suitability</td>
<td>analyze solutions to quantitative questions for accuracy, precision, suitability and/or other appropriate criteria</td>
<td>evaluate decisions made based on criteria appropriate to the context of the question and the method of solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>describe the effect of one’s experiences on the development of critical thinking skills</td>
<td>use information responsibly by following copyright laws and guidelines for referencing and citation</td>
<td>describe the value, limitations and/or implications of quantitative decision making</td>
<td>describe the obstacles to and issues of decision making</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7  Alignment of CLOs of Ethics & Value Inquire, Scientific Reasoning, Critical Thinking, Information Literacy and Quantitative Reasoning with the Reasoning ILO
### Worksheet: What is the relationship of the ILOs the college mission?

**Simpson College Mission Statement**

Simpson College is an independent, selective, church-related, comprehensive, liberal-arts college dedicated to excellence in higher education.

The Simpson College community is equally committed to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission Statement Goals</th>
<th>Disciplinary</th>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Engagement</th>
<th>Perspectives</th>
<th>Reasoning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurturing values which foster personal worth and individuality within a creative, diverse and just community</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Promoting integrative learning that enables students of all ages to develop intellectual and practical skills</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduating students who continue to grow as free, responsible and fulfilled individuals in the world of family, work, service and scholarship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Drawing upon our relationship with the United Methodist Church and our religious traditions that guide us on issues of personal integrity, moral responsibility, social justice and global citizenship</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 8  A worksheet for making connections between the ILOs and our mission*