

President's Leadership Program and Leadership Studies Minor
Student Learning Outcome Assessment Plan

President's Leadership Program (PLP) and Leadership Studies Minor

Colorado State University-Pueblo

Assessment Plan: 2011-2012 (piloting for Fall 2012)

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President's Leadership Program

Mission: The mission of the PLP is to develop and train emerging leaders at Colorado State University-Pueblo, through a high-quality leadership program focused on academic, experiential, and service learning. Through 18 hours of required coursework, PLP scholars fulfill and receive a minor in Leadership Studies. PLP Scholars are selected based on leadership potential, intellectual curiosity, and commitment to something outside one's self. Established in 2000, this cohort-based program attracts and recruits students entering the University as first-time, full-time students.

Institutional Mission: The President's Leadership Program supports the mission of the university by providing enhanced leadership learning experiences for students. In addition to providing visibility and prestige as a special program of the University, PLP assists in the transition of leadership students, through experiential and service learning opportunities, to become civically and socially responsible leaders in society and the working world. PLP also creates and develops new leadership opportunities between students and campus/community leaders (government, for-profit, non-profit) via volunteerism, leader shadowing, service projects, and internship placements. The President's Leadership Program at CSU-Pueblo is a founding member of the Colorado Leadership Alliance (CLA), a collaborative effort that includes 11 Colorado member campuses with leadership programs.

Program Goals: The President's Leadership Program Goals include the following:

- To provide a sequence of courses and professional placements centered in the concept of transformational leadership.
- To offer challenging experiential opportunities for students in diverse leadership settings.
- To showcase individual student interests and goals through mentorship, personal development strategies, and internship placements.

Because PLP is both a special program and an academic minor, student enrollees have helped to shape the following vision: To create multi-culturally competent transformational leaders who will serve the communities in which they live and work. Crucial to the development of participants' leadership skills and practices are the acquisition of intercultural competence, social consciousness and civic responsibility, as well as ethical and altruistic attitudes and behaviors.

A core curriculum of four sequential courses (12 credits) is supplemented by elective courses chosen by each student, for a (minimum) total of 18 credits. Because we can only assess the value of the four required courses (US 160, US 260, US 360, US 460 or US 489), faculty members continue to review recommended electives for Leadership Studies minors. (See attached **Leadership Studies Minor worksheet** with descriptors.)

Program Assessment

The program has several methods of program and curriculum assessment. The pilot assessment process (2011-12) will provide opportunities for PLP faculty and students to review two key learning outcomes and project plans for upgrading and updating courses as well as co-curricular activities. Typical forms of assessment used include:

- Interaction, teamwork, and completed leadership tasks at annual scholar retreats each August
- Student Leadership Practices Inventory (Pre-Test/Post-Test in First and Last Semesters)
- Social Responsible Leadership Scale (administered under the auspices of CLA)
- Student online course evaluations each semester
- Online Alumni and Current Student Surveys conducted through Survey Monkey
- Student composite GPA analysis and comparison each semester for faculty and staff review
- Evaluations from professionals who oversee students in projects and internships
- Anecdotal insight from alums, board members, and other professional supervisors
- **Scholar Portfolios (US 260 and US 460/489)**

Student Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Outcomes are necessary to program assessment as they relate directly to evidence gathering and evaluation of what students have learned in their experience as PLP scholars with a Leadership Studies minor. These include student competence in personal leadership skills, interpersonal skills (coupled together under **self-leadership**), **leadership theory** and history, **ethical behaviors**, **critical thinking**, **problem-solving** and decision-making, and **civic engagement**. These outcome categories initially were established in tandem with the Colorado Leadership Alliance in 2005-2006 as CLA member schools began to share academic and programmatic best practices. Academic directors from each campus met over a period of three to five months to determine a set of common outcomes through which individual campuses might share and compare goals and opportunities. Although individual campus outcomes varied in priority and execution, all campuses shared a set of similar ideas about what scholars should know by completion of their programs.

It is from this process that CSU-Pueblo PLP faculty began tying individual course goals and objectives to overall program outcomes. Such ongoing student learning assessment insures the program remains adaptable, current, and strategic, thereby continuing to produce outstanding graduates who are successful in a variety of leadership roles.

In the initial planning for university assessment procedures, PLP staff referred to the initial eight program goals developed through the self-study process. These goals were translated into outcomes and summarized on the **PLP Curriculum Map** (attached) where outcome measures could be tracked on a course by course basis. Also included on the Map are “other” opportunities for measuring outcomes in co-curricular activities. In review, we have eliminated two of the goals Student Learning Outcomes. These outcomes are noted below, and the measures on a course by course basis are itemized in the curriculum map.

- 1) **Self-Leadership:** PLP Scholars will understand, synthesize, and evaluate their personal readiness for leadership by communicating effectively through written and oral means as measured by course assignments and a final portfolio.
- 2) **Ethics:** PLP Scholars will manifest an understanding of leadership ethics and service to others, illustrate, analyze and assess ethical behaviors as demonstrated in written work and oral presentation in the classroom and in community/public settings.
- 3) **Leadership Theory/Qualities:** PLP Scholars will describe, apply, and criticize major leadership theories and be able to interpret theoretical foundations through a historical perspective. Students will be prepared to assess their own leadership qualities in relation to theoretical principles as they practice their leadership styles in placement settings such as the internship.
- 4) **Critical Thinking Skills:** PLP Scholars will understand the methods and skills needed for critical thinking and decision-making and be prepared to interpret situations and cases beyond surface arguments. Students will observe and understand the critical thinking habits of mentors and leaders.
- 5) **Problem-Solving Skills:** PLP Scholars will apply problem-solving skills by taking on volunteer and community service projects, through case management activities, and through tasks assigned in internship placements.
- 6) **Civic Engagement:** PLP Scholars will understand and demonstrate the importance of civic engagement and community activism as measured through volunteerism, community and campus service, team projects and class assignments.

Understanding leadership qualities, noted on the Curriculum Map, was combined with leadership theory because much of the literature and the practices related to it are focused on qualities and standards of leadership developed over time. An “eighth” goal—diversity/globalism—cannot be discretely measured currently but will be developed in the future.

For purposes of piloting the assessment process, PLP faculty chose to evaluate two SLOs—Self Leadership and Critical Thinking. The results of this pilot will be reported on or before June 1, 2012.

2011-2012 PILOT PROJECT

Student Learning Outcome One: Self Leadership

Self-leadership refers to the process of becoming a leader. As scholar Pentti Sydananlakka notes, “Self-leadership is an enabling process whereby a person learns to know him/herself better and through this better self-understanding is able to steer his/her life better.” This consciousness includes development of the physical, mental, social, spiritual, and professional nature of the individual. The development of self-leadership includes attention to oral and written communication skills, interpersonal behaviors, recognition of thought and practice in leadership settings, and readiness for the leadership roles ahead. In Lois Medina’s words, it is “exploring the embodiment of leadership” through identity and behaviors.

Students will define, monitor, and explain their leadership skills as measured by their abilities to speak and deliver **oral** presentations. They will develop clearly articulated arguments about leadership qualities and traits as measured by **written** assignments, reports, presentations, and the portfolio. They will comprehend and report on leadership styles and skills through **reflective activities** such as journaling and oral presentations. For this pilot, we are measuring at two levels: sophomore (second year in program) and senior (final semester in program.)

Sophomore Level:

- Students will demonstrate leadership readiness (self-leadership) through self-reflection, journaling, discussions, and interaction with shadow mentors and will devise and integrate learning experiences into a portfolio for faculty review.
- Students will analyze and synthesis leadership skills and qualities through oral discussions with mentors and faculty.

Senior Level:

- Through reflective journaling, oral discussion, and essay reports in his/her portfolio, generate a clear picture of the internship experience as it compares to the experience of leadership readiness. The senior portfolio will critique leadership perspectives and measure the student’s growth in the President’s Leadership Program.

Student Learning Outcome Four: Critical Thinking

Students will understand and utilize the skills that are needed to lead a successful project, event, and/or the duties and activities required of a non-profit or for-profit organization within the realities of everyday experiences and beyond the comforts of the university setting. Further, students will assess

their own capacities for thinking and reasoning as exemplified by the essay and oral presentation components of the US 460/489 portfolio.

Senior Level:

Working With Experienced Leaders, US 460. Students are placed in a semester-long, individual internship experience that is accompanied by class discussion. This requires the composition and negotiation of a contract that is agreed upon by both the organization and faculty advisor. The contract specifies the terms and conditions of the internship and poses fundamental questions the student hopes to answer through the internship experience. US-460 requires an average of 4-6 hours per week spent focusing on the internship (minimum semester requirement: attending class as scheduled and 60 hours+). This requires regular contact with a senior, primary supervisor who can work with the student and evaluate his/her work. It also requires consultation with Career Center staff to develop resume, internship access, and other opportunities preparatory to graduation.

Each scholar submits a comprehensive internship portfolio that includes a 10-page essay reflecting on the both the experiences of the internship and his/her skills in self-leadership, ethical behavior, problem-solving, and self-evaluation. This encourages each student to examine the Leadership Studies minor through the application of learned and applied principles.

Considerations for 2012-13

1) Two outcomes are being measured currently. We anticipate reviewing “self leadership” each year as it is the backbone of our program. Student Learning Outcome Six, Civic Engagement, is targeted for 2012-2013. Example:

Student Learning Outcome Six: Civic Engagement

Students will demonstrate ability to research, select and propose, implement and evaluate an approved project plan. They will know how to practice team leadership through active group participation.

Primary Assessment Method

Applied Leadership Course, US 360. Successful implementation of group project under the supervision of a selected advisor. Students are graded on both the product they deliver and evidence of progressive learning throughout the course. Assessment includes evaluation by fellow team members and the advisor, as well as self-evaluation through a written final paper, a journal of documented hours and a group presentation that includes a visual production describing the project’s purpose, methodology, key insights and recommendations.

2) The student focus groups established in spring semester 2012 will develop into a full-fledged student board for strategic planning purposes.

3) Current syllabi will be re-written to include specific rubrics and to outline specific SLO within the goal statements for each class.

3) Funding for additional assessment tools will be targeted.

Other Assessment Methods

The President's Leadership Program uses both direct and indirect assessment activities to review the progress of students and student teams. In addition to specific assignments outlined in each course syllabus, students also submit a report at the end of each semester with a minimum of 30 hours of documented community service activities.

Further, students will complete a nationally-normed instrument called the Student Leadership Practices Inventory (SLPI) during the first class meeting of the first year and complete a follow-up during the senior year. Students also have opportunities to participate in other surveys through CLA and related agencies.

Pilot Assessment Planning

In preparation for annual assessment activities beginning in 2012-2013, PLP faculty have agreed to the following during spring semester 2012:

- Update all core course syllabi to include learning outcomes language as outlined in the PLP Curriculum Map (attached).
- Convene a student review board to provide feedback regarding specific leadership courses.
- Review comments from Fall 2011 US 460 internship portfolios to assess self-reported goals and outcomes reported by students and their supervisors.
- Develop outcomes that will help to measure our diversity goals in the future.
- Add SpCom 103 to the list of required courses. Utilize course syllabi to further measure written and oral presentation skills.