Learning outcomes at selected peer and aspirational institutions

The following institutions were selected to provide a range of different approaches to learning outcomes. Their selection does not imply an endorsement, simply a starting point for our own thinking as a campus. The current University Core of Common Studies at Marquette has two different sets of learning outcomes: 27 knowledge area learning outcomes (3 outcomes for each of the 9 knowledge areas) and 4 Integrated Core Learning Outcomes.

**Boston College**
- Fellow AJCU institution.
- A single overarching set of 8 learning outcomes (see Appendix A).
- Signature revision: “Enduring Questions and Complex Problems” courses have additional “course characteristics” similar to learning outcomes.

**James Madison University**
- Widely considered a national leader in assessment.
- Similar to Marquette in having five “clusters” somewhat similar to knowledge areas, with learning outcomes associated with each cluster (to view outcomes, click on the hyperlinks below):
  - skills for the 21st century
  - arts and humanities
  - the natural world
  - social and cultural processes
  - individuals in the human community

**Loyola University Chicago**
- Fellow AJCU institution.
- Similar to Marquette in having knowledge areas, Loyola University Chicago has only one learning outcome per knowledge area (see appendix B).
- In addition, Loyola University Chicago has four course requirements for “values across the curriculum” instead of Marquette’s Integrated Core Learning Outcomes. These outcomes can be fulfilled through the Core, major or elective course work, or co-curricular experiences.

**Purdue University**
- Purdue explicitly draws its rubrics from the AACU values rubrics
- To make its assessment more manageable, it introduces the idea of “key skills” for foundational outcomes and the language of “key outcomes may include” for embedded outcomes to enable flexibility.
- Like Marquette, its Core has two different sets of outcomes: foundational and embedded.
- Foundational learning outcomes have five areas: written communication; information literacy; oral communication; science, technology and mathematics; human cultures. For each area, there is a definition and a list of key skills that correspond to learning outcomes (see appendix C. To read all of the outcomes, click on the hyperlink above).
- Embedded learning outcomes have three areas: communication; ways of thinking; interpersonal skills and intercultural knowledge.
Santa Clara University

- Fellow AJCU institution.
- Explicitly created to utilize AACU High-Impact Practices.
- Similar to Marquette and having knowledge areas and having multiple learning outcomes for each area.
- Has one of the most detailed and numerous set of learning outcomes (approximately 67 learning outcomes. To read them all click on the hyperlink above).

University of Notre Dame

- Catholic but not Jesuit institution.
- Still in process of Core revision.
- Has a very small set of institutional undergraduate outcomes, not yet separated into knowledge area outcomes (see Appendix D).

Xavier University

- Fellow AJCU institution.
- Document begins with an aspirational paragraph, and then indicates that University has a more modest function to “facilitate this life-long integration,” thus enabling them to articulate boldest aspirations without having to measure them within the context of an undergraduate academic curriculum.
- One single set of 14 learning outcomes (see Appendix E).

American Association of Colleges and Universities

- National organization with more than 1300 member institutions. Describes itself as: “the leading national association concerned with the quality, vitality, and public standing of undergraduate liberal education.”
- Designed 16 VALUE rubrics, broken up into three primary areas (rubrics can be downloaded from hyperlink above):
  1. Intellectual and practical skills: inquiry and analysis, critical thinking, creative thinking, written communication, oral communication, reading, quantitative literacy, information literacy, teamwork, problem-solving.
  2. Personal and social responsibility: civic engagement—local and global, intercultural knowledge and competence, ethical reasoning, foundations and skills for lifelong learning, global learning.
  3. Integrative and applied learning: integrative learning.

Additional resources for writing learning outcomes:
The following sites provide some practical advice for formulating outcomes:
http://ctl.iupui.edu/Resources/Planning-the-Learning-Experience/Writing-Student-Learning-Outcomes
http://sa-assessment.uoregon.edu/ResourcesandTraining/WritingStudentLearningOutcomes.aspx
Appendix A: Boston College learning outcomes

1. Demonstrate the critical, mathematical, informational, analytic, expressive, and creative skills that are essential tools of the educated person well-prepared for a meaningful life and vocation.

2. Understand the major ideas and methods of inquiry of the scholarly disciplines that comprise the university and be able to use those methods of inquiry as beginning practitioners to address complex contemporary problems.

3. Be able to identify and articulate the strengths and limitations of the disciplines and the relationship of the disciplines to one another, and demonstrate an understanding of the breadth and diversity of human knowledge as well as its openness to integration in more comprehensive wholes.

4. Be conversant with and able to discuss intelligently enduring questions and issues that are fundamental to human inquiry and that have shaped the traditions from which the university has emerged.

5. Demonstrate the ability to apply more than one disciplinary perspective to the same enduring question or complex contemporary problem.

6. Be familiar with the scholarly exploration of religious faith and understand how faith and reason are related in the search for truth.

7. Demonstrate the ability to examine their values and experiences and integrate what they learn with the principles that guide their lives.

8. Be prepared and disposed to use their talents and education as engaged global citizens and responsible leaders in service of the common good.
Appendix B: Loyola University Chicago learning outcomes

Loyola University Chicago has one learning outcome per knowledge area.

1. **College writing seminar for first-year students**: demonstrate effective written communication skills.
2. **Artistic knowledge and experience**: demonstrate knowledge of, or experience in, artistic traditions and expressions.
3. **Historical knowledge**: demonstrate an understanding of history as a form of inquiry and understanding that encompasses all aspects of the human experience.
4. **Literary knowledge and experience**: demonstrate knowledge of, or experience in, literary traditions and expressions.
5. **Quantitative analysis**: demonstrate an understanding of and the ability to analyze quantitative information presented in a variety of formats.
6. **Scientific literacy**: demonstrate literacy in the fundamental principles, concepts, and knowledges of the sciences and the methodology of scientific inquiry.
7. **Philosophical knowledge**: demonstrate an understanding of philosophical questions and traditions.
8. **Societal and cultural knowledge**: demonstrate cultural, societal, and self understanding.
9. **Theological and religious studies knowledge**: demonstrate an understanding of theological and religious questions and traditions.
10. **Ethics**: demonstrate ethical awareness, the ability to do ethical reflection, and the ability to apply ethical principles in decision-making.
Appendix C: Example of one of Purdue University’s foundational learning outcomes

Written Communication—Clear expression of ideas in writing; includes grammar, organization, and structure. Varying levels and types of writing skills are required for different jobs. The ability to convey ideas concisely and coherently is important.

Key Skills:
- Demonstrates understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses on all elements of the work.
- Uses appropriate and relevant content to explore ideas and/or demonstrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer’s understanding, and shaping the work.
- Demonstrates attention to and successful execution of organization, content, presentation, format and stylistic choices in writing.
- Demonstrates use of credible, relevant resources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of writing.
- Uses language that effectively communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency.
Appendix D: University of Notre Dame learning outcomes

A. Acquire, synthesize, and communicate knowledge by incorporating relevant disciplinary approaches, cultural perspectives, and Catholic intellectual tradition.
B. Recognize moral and ethical questions in lived experiences, evaluate alternatives, and act with integrity.
C. Contribute to the common good by displaying a disciplined sensibility and committed engagement in response to complex challenges facing local, national, or global communities.
D. Demonstrate the vision and self-direction necessary to articulate, set, and advance toward their goals.
E. Think critically in formulating opinions or accepting conclusions.
F. Exhibit creativity or innovation in the pursuit of their intellectual interests.
G. Display a level of mastery in their major field(s) of study that enables them to successfully pursue professional careers or advanced study.
Appendix E: Xavier University learning outcomes

1. Articulately express themselves orally.
2. Articulately express themselves in writing.
3. Think and to solve problems, critically, analytically, and creatively.
4. Work collaboratively in a group to think and to solve problems, critically, analytically, and creatively across multiple disciplines.
5. Understand the methodology of the humanities.
6. Understand the methodology of the social sciences.
7. Understand the methodology of the natural sciences.
8. Understand the interrelationships of the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.
9. Understand and analyze significant religious, ethical, and moral issues within a rapidly changing global society.
10. Analyze societal issues critically in terms of human values.
11. Develop a sense of compassionate solidarity with others.
12. Develop a willingness to provide service to those in need.
13. Develop an understanding of the opportunities cultural diversity presents.
14. Develop an understanding of the issues of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination and their relation to the exercise of power in American society.