

DSL Student Employee Learning Outcomes

This document outlines the recommendations of the Student Employee Learning Outcomes Work Group including learning outcomes for student employees across the Division of Student Life and a process to support departments in operationalizing learning outcomes within the department.

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Charge

The Division of Student Life is the largest employer of students on campus, employing approximately 2,000 students every semester. A key tactic in the DSL 2021-2026 Strategic Plan is to, “Invest in the student employment experience by providing high-impact practices through Iowa GROW® and essential skill development.” Iowa GROW® uses brief, structured conversations between student employees and their supervisors to help students connect the skills and knowledge they are gaining in the classroom with the work they are doing, and vice versa. A core skill set we need to help student develop for their work now and in the future is around diversity, equity, and inclusion. A strategy in the DSL Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan is to, “Identify the essential diversity, equity, and inclusion learning outcomes for all student employees and deliver training in ways that ensure consistency.”

The Student Employee Learning Outcomes Work Group was charged with outlining learning outcomes for student employees across the Division of Student Life and creating a process to support departments in operationalizing these learning outcomes within the department.

Scope: These outcomes should:

- Affirm and clarify the ten outcomes of student employment outlined by Iowa GROW®
- Include more detailed diversity, equity, and inclusion learning outcomes
- Be broad enough to capture the various work of student employees across the division

Work Group Representation:

- Mallory Valentine, Recreational Services (chair)
- Sarah Lobb, Human Resources
- Kristi Finger, Iowa Memorial Union
- Danielle Barefoot, Assessment, Improvement & Research and University Housing & Dining
- Emma Welch, Multicultural and International Student Support and Engagement
- David Rooney Student Disability Services
- Brandon Ewoldt, Student Life Communications
- Julie Potter, University Dining
- UI Students

Sponsor: Office of the Vice President for Student Life

Deliverables: The work group is responsible for delivering the following:

- List of student employee learning outcomes with associated criteria
- Template for assessing the student employee learning outcomes
- Process to support departments in operationalizing these learning outcomes within the department
- Communication plan for sharing learning outcomes with DSL staff, supervisors, and student employees

Timeline: Due date for above deliverables is July 1.

Framework

The Student Employee Learning Outcomes Work Group framework was developed based on previously established practices with Iowa GROW® and the Student Leadership Competencies.

Iowa GROW®

Employment during college helps contribute to student success when meaningful connections between learning in the classroom and learning on the job are made evident.

Iowa GROW® (Guided Reflection on Work) uses brief, structured conversations between student employees and their supervisors to help students connect the skills and knowledge they are gaining in the classroom with the work they are doing, and vice versa. Iowa GROW® is focused on making student employment a "high-impact activity" - one that requires students to reflect on their learning and connect their learning within and beyond the classroom.

Iowa GROW® conversations are guided by four quick questions:

1. How is this job fitting in with your academics?
2. What are you learning here that's helping you in school?
3. What are you learning in class that you can apply here at work?
4. Can you give me a couple of examples of things you've learned here that you think you'll use in your chosen profession?

The **Student Employee Survey** is sent to all student employees in the Division of Student Life. The results are compared for GROW® participants and non-GROW® participants. DSL administers the Student Employee Survey every spring semester (late April/early May) to all student employees.

Student Leadership Competencies

Student Leadership Competencies were developed from five years of research conducted by Dr. Corey Seemiller who analyzed learning outcomes in all 522 accredited academic programs in higher education. The results: 60 essential leadership competencies for the 21st century.

Student Leadership Competencies can be used as a framework to develop a program or course, infuse meaningful competency-based activities into the curriculum, assess competency learning and development, and help students reflect and apply their learning in future academic, professional, and life contexts.

Competencies are knowledge, values, abilities, and behaviors that help and individual contribute to or successfully engage in a role or task.

- Knowledge: knowledge of or understanding of the value of a competency
- Values: value placed on a competency
- Ability: internal motivation to engage in a certain behavior or the skill level to perform a certain behavior
- Behavior: engagement in a certain behavior

University of Iowa Student Leadership Competencies (SLCs)

1. Analysis: Detecting patterns and trends across multiple sources of information.
2. Collaboration: Working with others toward a common objective by sharing ideas and distributing responsibilities equitably across team members.
3. Diversity: Effectively interacting with people of different backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences.
4. Ethics: Behaving in an ethical manner and adhering to established code of ethics.
5. Goals: Creating goals that are measurable and have timetables for completion.
6. Group Development: Helping team members develop a shared sense of purpose, commitment, and trust.
7. Problem Solving: Identifying a variety of potential solutions to a problem and determining the best possible course of action to solve the problem.

8. Productive Relationships: Developing relationships with others that are healthy, trusting, and respectful.
9. Self-Development: Seeking opportunities to better oneself both personally and professionally.
10. Verbal Communication: Verbally communicating clearly and concisely.
11. Writing: Expressing thoughts in writing in a manner that is clear, logical, and understandable.

Reference: [LINK](#)

Utilizing these preexisting frameworks, the work group first explored student leadership competencies as a potential guide for developing division wide learning outcomes. According to Corey Seemiller, author of *Assessing Student Leadership Competency Development*, a competency is the knowledge, value, ability, or behavior that assists one in achieving an outcome (Seemiller, C., 2016). Therefore, it was decided that the framework could not be fully established only using student leadership competencies. With that knowledge in mind, the work group evaluated the university competencies (Iowa 11) for relevance and identified additional competencies to be considered. Based on the research, the work group identified the following competencies for student employees:

Diversity, Inclusion, Productive Relationships, Collaboration, Group Development, Verbal Communication, Written Communication, Functioning Independently, Follow-Through, Self-Development, and Ethics

The work group used these competencies to identify overarching themes. Themes that emerged were:

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Self-Development
Productive Relationships

The work group used the three overarching themes to develop learning outcomes and corresponding criteria. The work group also considered professional standards and the DSL Strategic Plan to ensure learning outcomes were broad enough to capture a diverse area of learning but also relevant to the work happening across the Division.

Initial outcomes and criteria were vetted through DSL leadership to ensure satisfaction with the draft proposal. The final framework for the Division of Student Life Student Employee Learning Outcomes can be found on the following page.

Note: This framework was developed specifically for student employees. The work group acknowledges that some departments within the Division of Student Life employ part-time employees that are not students but work in a very similar role. If supervisors would like these employees to be considered within this framework it would need to be evaluated on a department-by-department basis to see if the strategies fit for those part-time employees.

Student Employee Learning Outcome Framework

| Category | Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) | Self-Development (SD) | Productive Relationships (PR) |
|-------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Learning Outcome | As a result of working in the Division of Student Life, student employees will be able to: Cultivate an inclusive environment within their work setting. | As a result of working in the Division of Student Life, student employees will be able to: Apply skills that further their success, within and outside of their job. | As a result of working in the Division of Student Life, student employees will be able to: Collaborate effectively with people of varying backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences/identities. |
| Criteria | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize the components of an inclusive environment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respectful communication Encouragement for staff to bring their authentic selves Accessible opportunities for staff to participate and achieve their potential Provide excellent customer service to partners and customers across the full range of identities. Address non-inclusive aspects of their environment. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Manage time effectively. Consistently complete job responsibilities. Apply problem solving skills to meet varying needs and challenges within their role. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the backgrounds, beliefs, and identities of others. Explain how their background, beliefs, and identities impact how they work with others. Communicate effectively across various formats. Demonstrate active listening skills. |
| Competencies | Diversity, Inclusion, Productive Relationships, Collaboration, Group Development, Verbal Communication, Written Communication, Functioning Independently, Follow-Through, Self-Development, and Ethics | | |
| CAS Standards | Humanitarian and Civic Engagement | Intrapersonal Development | Interpersonal Development |
| DSL Strategic Plan Connection | Goal 3: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Goal 4: Community and Sense of Belonging | Goal 1: Student Engagement Goal 4: Community and Sense of Belonging | Goal 1: Student Engagement Goal 3: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion |

Assessment

In order to effectively capture the learning across the Division, the work group is recommending using existing practices through the Division of Student Life. The work group is proposing a four-part assessment plan in order to effectively assess student employee learning.

Further details regarding specific questions and mapping to student employee learning outcomes and corresponding criteria can be found in the Appendix.

Student Employee Pre-Assessment

The pre-assessment would be a new survey implemented in the fall of 2021. This assessment would help set a baseline of confidence, knowledge, and skills the employee has related to each learning outcome. Trainings and supplemental materials may be created and provided to supervisors based on that information collected.

After the initial survey is sent, Human Resources (HR) would provide the survey for all new hires moving forward to continue to understand the baseline knowledge of new employees.

Iowa GROW® Conversations

Iowa GROW® conversations are a staple within the Division of Student Life. Since many of the student learning outcomes organically map back to the Iowa GROW® supplemental questions, the work group recommends encouraging the use of supplemental questions.

In addition, the work group recommends adding the following supplemental question to provide additional opportunities to capture learning:

What have you learned about creating an inclusive environment at work, and how will that be important in your future career?

Iowa GROW® Survey

The Student Employee Survey, distributed every spring semester, already does a great job capturing learning. The work group is recommending no changes to this survey but rather use this data to map results to student employee learning outcomes.

Human Resources Exit Evaluation

The Division of Student Life Human Resources currently provides an exit evaluation to all part-time employees to better understand their experience while working for the Division. The work group is recommending adding questions to specifically capture student employee learning as a part of the exit evaluation.

Process to Support Departments

To ensure full time staff within the Division of Student Life understand the basics of learning outcomes, the work group recommends staff complete a learning outcomes training utilizing online training provided by Assessment, Improvement, and Research. In addition, providing supplemental resources for staff to reference should be included. Utilizing [AIR's assessment handbook](#), staff will be able to reference the foundation of learning outcomes.

Once the foundation of learning outcomes is provided, demonstrating the connection between the established learning outcomes and the student employee learning outcomes, and preexisting frameworks like Iowa GROW®, will be explained. This should take place at a departmental level so specific learning outcomes examples applicable to the corresponding department could be given to further ensure understanding. In addition, expectations from supervisors around creating a learning environment for student employees will also be explained.

Equipping Division of Student Life Leadership Team and Division of Student Life Human Resources staff with information to further support student staff supervisors is encouraged. More specifically, outlining the importance of learning outcomes for student employees, how they will be utilized for the Division, and expectations for supervisors who oversee full time staff that supervise student employees.

Communication Plan

In order to effectively implement this proposal across the Division of Student Life, the work group recommends the following communication plan.

On Common Ground

Given the nature of On Common Ground and the scope of people it reaches, the work group would like to spend time at an upcoming meeting to explain the process of how these learning outcomes were developed, how they will be implemented and what is required of supervisors and departments to successfully support the process.

A recorded presentation should be created and housed on a website to access at a later date with details regarding the plan.

Email Communication

To help supplement the in-person presentation, a supplemental email would be provided to all DSL employees to outline the process. Furthermore, the work group recommends the plan be outlined in a Vice President for Student Life update email to demonstrate the Division's commitment to this plan.

Student employees who work for the Division of Student Life should also receive an email regarding the plan. This information could be explained in the initial email containing the pre-assessment.

Finally, contact information for a work group member or the Office of Assessment, Improvement, and Research should be provided for help and questions.

Website Communication

To provide information that is readily accessible, a resource page should be created for supervisors to access at any time. Potential locations for promoting this plan are the [Division of Student Life Initiatives](#) page, [Assessment, Improvement & Research](#) page, or [Student Life Human Resources](#) page. In addition, information could be provided through Student Life Connect.

Print Material

The work group recommends print materials be created and provided to supervisors across the Division of Student Life. Note: Due to recommended changes in the Iowa GROW® supplemental questions, those materials should be updated as well.

Student Employee Support

To help ensure student employees understand the learning that should take place while they are employed with the Division of Student Life, the work group recommends that information about student employee learning outcomes be added to the job descriptions, DSL Human Resources website, as well as divisional and departmental onboarding documents.

Recommendations

Given the scope of the charge, the work group has a few recommendations to ensure this proposal is successful.

Pilot Program

Since this is the first year implementing across the Division of Student Life, the work group recommends that a pilot regarding assessments be conducted the first year. Based on the data collected, assessments would be altered to better capture learning as it relates to each learning outcome and the corresponding criteria.

Assessment, Improvement, and Research

Since this proposal expands beyond a divisional department, the work group recommends that Assessment, Improvement, and Research oversee implementation and dissemination of information in order to ensure the process is happening across the Division. This would include a final report sent to departments at the end of each calendar year. In addition, continual collaboration with university Human Resources would be needed to maintain accurate lists of employees and surveys.

Additional Assessments

Future consideration should be given to adding questions or criteria to annual evaluations. Due to inconsistencies across the Division, the work group does not recommend adding them at this time. The work group believes student learning should not be tied to potential raises and until that is not a factor, should not be considered.

Iowa GROW® Conversation Questions

Due to the discontinuation of the Strengths component of the Be Better initiative, the work group recommends the removal of the following questions from the supplemental question list:

- Think of one of your Top 5 Strengths – how do you see this strength helping you at work? In classes?

Additional Learning Outcomes

If departments would like to add additional learning outcomes to their area, it is recommended that they work with Assessment, Improvement, & Research to ensure consistency in wording and processes across the division. The work group does not discourage additional learning outcomes, but rather encourages consistency.

Additional Trainings

After the first year of collecting data from departments within the Division of Student Life, learning outcome achievement should be mapped across all departments. If data indicates that learning is not taking place consistently across the division or within a specific department, additional resources should be provided or created to further supplement the learning opportunities for students.

If after the first year of collecting data there is a relationship found between supervision quality based on the Student Employee Survey Human Resources questions and a student's ability to meet learning outcomes, we would recommend partnering with DSL HR to develop a training for supervisors that focuses on improving supervision skills.

Appendix

A mapping exercise was conducted to identify which questions throughout existing practices would help provide data to demonstrate learning for each outcome and criteria. Below are the learning outcomes and corresponding criteria with mapping codes following each statement. Mapping details regarding number of questions corresponding to each outcome or criteria is listed below.

| Category | Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) | Self-Development (SD) | Productive Relationships (PR) |
|------------------|---|--|--|
| Learning Outcome | As a result of working in the Division of Student Life, student employees will be able to: Cultivate an inclusive environment within their work setting. (DEI Overall) | As a result of working in the Division of Student Life, student employees will be able to: Apply skills that further their success, within and outside of their job. (SD Overall) | As a result of working in the Division of Student Life, student employees will be able to: Collaborate effectively with people of varying backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences/identities. (PR Overall) |
| Criteria | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize the components of an inclusive environment. (DEI-1) <i>An inclusive environment is one where all members are and feel respected, have a sense of belonging, and are able to participate and achieve to their potential.</i> Provide excellent customer service. (DEI-2) Address non-inclusive aspects of their environment. (DEI-3) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Manage their time effectively. (SD-1) Consistently completing job responsibilities. (SD-2) Apply problem solving skills to meet varying needs and challenges within their role. (SD-3) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the backgrounds, beliefs, and identities of others. (PR-1) Explain how their background, beliefs, and identities impact how they work with others. (PR-2) Communicate effectively across various formats. (PR-3) Demonstrate active listening skills. (PR-4) |

| Assessment Mapping of Iowa Grow Connections | | | | | |
|---|-------|------------------|-----|--------------------------|------|
| Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion | | Self-Development | | Productive Relationships | |
| DEI Overall | X | SD Overall | XX | PR Overall | XXXX |
| DEI 1 | X | SD1 | X | PR 1 | XX |
| DEI 2 | XXXXX | SD 2 | X | PR 2 | XX |
| DEI 3 | XX | SD 3 | XXX | PR 3 | XXXX |
| | | | | PR 4 | XXX |

In addition to the mapping above, some questions would provide additional ways to look at the overall data collected. Several questions connected to a supervisor or the training the student received. We would like to explore if how a student responds to these questions correlate to what students learn.

Iowa GROW® Conversation Questions Mapping:

The four standard Iowa Grow Questions were mapped broadly to all learning outcomes. Due to the breadth of these questions, the work group believes responses could vary greatly depending on the role of the student and their corresponding academic classes. Supplemental questions should be used to directly apply to each LO.

- How is this job fitting in with your academics? **Overall LO**
- What are you learning here that's helping you in school? **Overall LO**
- What are you learning in class that you can apply here at work? **Overall LO**
- Can you give me a couple of examples of things you've learned here that you think you'll use in your chosen profession? **Overall LO**

Supplemental questions were specifically mapped to learning outcomes or criteria.

- What have you learned here [in this job] about working with diverse populations [or any other employment outcome] that you think might be helpful in your academic courses? **PR-1, PR-2**
- What have you learned from your studies and classes so far about working with diverse populations that you find helpful in this job? **PR-1, PR-2**
- When have you used conflict negotiation skills [or any other employment outcome] at work and in class? **SD-3 DEI-2, PR-3, PR-4**
- What have you learned about communicating effectively with your supervisor that also is effective with faculty? - **PR-3, PR-4**
- What types of problems have you solved at work and how will you use that in your courses? -**SD-3, DEI-2**
- How has working as a team member here at work helped you with group projects in your classes? - **PR**
- Think of one of your Top 5 Strengths – how do you see this strength helping you at work? In classes? -**Recommend cutting due to discontinuation of Be Better**
- When you think about your classes, what types of academic tasks do you enjoy most? How about here at work, what types of tasks do you enjoy most? -**Open**
- How do you think your Strengths tie into the types of tasks you enjoy most? - **Recommend cutting due to discontinuation of Be Better**
- How has working here helped you with group projects? - **PR**
- What are your strengths and how have you used them at work and in class? - **Recommend cutting due to discontinuation of Be Better**
- Are there aspects of this job that have helped you discover things you might want (or not want) in a career? -**SD**
- What is one thing you've learned here about workplace culture and expectations that you think will help you in a full-time position? - **Open**

Iowa GROW® Survey Questions Mapping:

- My job has helped me develop more effective time management skills.* -**SD-1**
- My job has helped me improve my verbal communication skills.* **PR-3, DEI-2**
- My job has helped me improve my writing skills.* **PR-3, DEI-2**
- My job has helped me develop conflict negotiation skills.* **SD-3, DEI-2, PR-3, PR-4**
- My job has helped me use critical thinking skills to form opinions and solve problems.* - **SD-3, PR, DEI-3**
- Because of my job, I am able to work effectively with individuals with a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and cultures.* - **PR, DEI-1**
- I can see connections between my job and my academic major/coursework.* -**Open**
- My job has helped me learn about career options.* - **SD**

- My job has helped prepare me for the world of full-time employment.* - **Open**

Human Resources questions that could be mapped to learning outcomes or criteria.

- My supervisor helps me make connections between my work and my life as a student.* - **Connects through measuring effectiveness of supervisor in helping students make meaning of their experience and would point to potential training needs.** *HR questions were specifically mapped to learning outcomes or criteria.*
- Please describe one specific way your work as a student employee has positively influenced your experience at the UI. - **Code responses and map to criteria**
- Please describe one specific skill you have learned as a student employee that contributes to your success as UI student:- **Code responses and map to criteria**
- How did you learn about working for the Division of Student Life?--**Does not directly align**
- How well did the training provided to you prepare you to do your job? - **Potential indicator or control factor to see differences in responses.**
- Thinking of your employment experience, please rate your agreement with the following statements. -
 - My supervisor makes sure that I have the tools and resources to do my job well. - **Connects through measuring effectiveness of supervisor**
 - My supervisor values diversity, equity and inclusion. - **Connects through measuring effectiveness of supervisor**
 - My supervisor understands the importance of my academic obligations and works with my schedule. - **Connects through measuring effectiveness of supervisor**
 - I am valued by my supervisor. - **Connects through measuring effectiveness of supervisor**
 - My department is known as a great place to work. - **DEI**

The following questions currently do not exist and were not included in the initial mapping process. However, the questions would further supplement the learning process across the division.

Pre-Assessment/On-boarding Survey

Matrix Likert Scale Questions –Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree – No Neutral

- When I have multiple tasks, I can prioritize my work to meet my deadlines. **SD-1**
- I regularly complete projects or tasks on time. **SD-1**
- When helping someone, I am typically able to understand what their needs are. **-PR-4 and DEI-2**
- If I am not sure how to answer a question, I know who I can ask for help. **SD-3, DEI-2**
- I am able to clearly answer questions over written communication. **PR-3**
- I am able to clearly answer questions verbally. **PR-3, DEI-2**

Explanation of what we mean by an inclusive environment-

- In your own words, how would you summarize the three components of an inclusive environment?

Develop a broad scenario or a scenario that would make sense for each department where an environment has non-inclusive aspects. After students read through the scenario ask the below questions:

- What component(s) of an inclusive environment are not being met in the above scenario?
- If you were to see the above scenario in your work environment, what is an action you could take to help address the issue?
- In reviewing the below skills- what 3 skills do you feel **most** prepared to do in your role?
 - Summarize the components of an inclusive environment.
 - Provide excellent customer service.
 - Address non-inclusive aspects of your work environment.
 - Manage your time effectively.

- Consistently complete your job responsibilities.
- Apply problem solving skills to meet varying needs and challenges within your role.
- Identify the backgrounds, beliefs and identities of others.
- Explain how your background, beliefs and identities (or experiences) impact how you work with others.
- Communicate effectively across various formats.
- Demonstrate active listening skills.
- In reviewing the below skills- what 3 skills do you feel **least** prepared to do in your role?
 - Summarize the components of an inclusive environment.
 - Provide excellent customer service.
 - Address non-inclusive aspects of your work environment.
 - Manage your time effectively.
 - Consistently complete your job responsibilities.
 - Apply problem solving skills to meet varying needs and challenges within your role.
 - Identify the backgrounds, beliefs and identities of others.
 - Explain how your background, beliefs and identities (or experiences) impact how you work with others.
 - Communicate effectively across various formats.
 - Demonstrate active listening skills.
- How can a supervisor help you learn during your time as an employee?

Human Resources Exit Survey Questions

Based on the information collected in the Pre-Assessment, Exit Survey questions would be developed. Below are example questions that could be utilized.

- Add a matrix question of: During your employment do you feel like you learned how to:
 - Summarize the components of an inclusive environment.
 - Provide excellent customer service.
 - Address non-inclusive aspects of your work environment.
 - Manage your time effectively
 - Consistently complete your job responsibilities.
 - Apply problem solving skills to meet varying needs and challenges within your role.
 - Identify the backgrounds, beliefs and identities of others.
 - Explain how your background, beliefs and identities (or experiences) impact how you work with others.
 - Communicate effectively across various formats.
 - Demonstrate active listening skills.

References

Seemiller, C. (2016), Assessing Student Leadership Competency Development. *New Directions for Student Leadership*, 2016: 51-66. <https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.20200>