

Senate of College Councils Policy Briefing

S.R. 1106 – In Support of Increased Transparency of and Student Involvement in Learning Outcomes

Briefing prepared by: Carisa Nietzsche, nietschec@mail.utexas.edu

Briefing prepared on: October 13, 2011

BACKGROUND	After discussions with Dr. Linda Dickens in the assessment office, Senate determined that degree plan learning outcomes are not posted anywhere online. Further, students do not have an active role in formulating learning outcomes.
PURPOSE	This gave rise to two main problems: (1) students do not know what to expect out of their majors (2) students are not equal partners in their education. These problems play a role in the four-year graduation rates issue.
SUMMARY	Learning outcomes are created by departments to provide the overall goal of that department. Senate recommends the learning outcomes be published online in a central location for incoming students and on department websites. Senate recommends that students have involvement in creating and reevaluating learning outcomes.
WHEREAS SUMMARY	
lines 7-16	Explanation of the various uses for learning outcomes (departmental goals, used to create curriculum, used in accreditation)
lines 18-32	Explains that the current learning outcomes are not published and explains the benefits of having them published (to improve 4 year graduation rates, more clearly outline current student expectations)
lines 34-35	Explains that learning outcomes are available to students for each course they take through the syllabus
lines 37-44	Explains that students have no process in the formation of learning outcomes and explains why this is valuable
lines 46-48	Outlines the comparison schools that publish their learning outcomes
SUMMARY	
lines 50-52	Recommends that the learning outcomes be published in a centralized location on the UT website as well as on departmental websites

lines 54-56

Recommends that students have input in the formation and reevaluation of learning outcomes

SENT TO

Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs Neal Armstrong, Director of Institutional Accreditation and Program Assessment Linda Dickens, Provost Steven Leslie, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Faculty Governance Gretchen Ritter, all college deans, and all department chairs

NEXT STEPS IF PASSED

- There will be a follow-up meeting with Dr. Linda Dickens to work out logistics of getting the learning outcomes posted on each department website.
- There will be a proposal created that outlines the process for more student involvement.
- Meetings will be conducted with each department chair to discuss publishing the learning outcomes and a plan for student involvement in the process.

CONTACT INFO

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Carisa Nietsche (nietschec@mail.utexas.edu) or Emily Van Duyn (emily_vanduyn@yahoo.com)