

NAU Institutional Student Learning Outcomes **Senate approved March 20, 2017**

Background

In spring 2012, faculty in the Liberal Studies Committee and the University Assessment Committee recognized the need for institutional student learning outcomes and charged a small group of faculty to develop a set of university-level outcomes that reflect degree program, liberal studies, diversity, and global learning initiative goals. Throughout the fall 2012 semester, faculty were invited to review, reflect upon, and revise the draft outcomes. The “NAU Graduates Can” outcomes were approved by the Faculty Senate in November of 2012.

In spring 2015, faculty and staff were invited to participate in a roundtable discussion at the NAU Assessment Fair to consider where the “NAU Graduates Can” outcomes should be expanded/ revised to better encompass the undergraduate experience as a whole—academic and co-curricular. These newly integrated outcomes are presented to the Faculty Senate for review, reflection, and revision, following the input from the Senate Council for Learning. Upon Faculty Senate approval, it is anticipated that these outcomes will continue to be the focus of conversation among the university community regarding teaching and learning at NAU for years to come.

Purpose

Framed by NAU’s mission to provide an outstanding undergraduate education, the institutional learning outcomes define the essential educational expectations for all graduates, regardless of major. The outcomes explicitly state our shared goals for what students will know, what they will be able to do, and how they will approach problem-solving and decision-making after successfully completing academic requirements and co-curricular experiences at NAU.

The institutional student learning outcomes serve several purposes. For students, the outcomes guide them on their journey through the undergraduate academic curriculum and co-curriculum by explicitly describing what they are learning –and why—and how their NAU education can contribute to their future careers and to their lives as citizens of the world. For faculty and staff, the collectively agreed-upon outcomes provide direction for the development of Student Affairs programming as well as the intentional design of more specific student learning outcomes at the degree program level or within specific curricular requirements for all NAU students. For example, the Global Diversity requirement increases students’ awareness of values, perspectives, and experiences of various Western and non-Western cultures. For the state of Arizona and future employers, the outcomes highlight the skills and knowledge areas that NAU graduates possess and contribute to the world.

No single program is responsible for all of the outcomes, but every program makes a contribution to these expectations for student learning and development. At the same time, no single assessment method or measure is used to assess the outcomes. Programs use a variety of assessment approaches—qualitative and quantitative, direct and indirect, summative and formative—to capture student achievements and as well as areas for growth regarding the outcomes and use this evidence to continuously improve student learning and development at NAU. NAU’s student learning outcomes reflect the institution’s vision to deliver transformational learning experiences and prepare graduates to excel in local and global endeavors.

NAU Graduates.....

Analyze, integrate, synthesize, and reflect on knowledge and experience to identify and creatively solve problems and to meaningfully contribute as productive and engaged members of local and global communities.

NAU Graduates.....

1. Demonstrate the depth and breadth of knowledge required to meaningfully participate in local and global societies through critical evaluation, problem-solving, and decision-making that incorporates ethical reflection.
2. Articulate the shared and unique contributions that result from diversity in global, social, cultural, and environmental systems.
3. Apply critical thinking, information fluency, and quantitative and scientific reasoning to solve problems and make decisions.
4. Communicate effectively in written, oral, and non-verbal forms of expression.
5. Reflect on, refine, and act in congruence with one's identity(s), sense of meaning and purpose, and goals.

NAU Graduates.....

1. Demonstrate the depth and breadth of knowledge required to meaningfully participate in local and global societies through critical evaluation, problem-solving, and decision-making that incorporates ethical reflection.

- Analyze and articulate disciplinary and interdisciplinary theories, concepts, principles, skills, and practices.
- Synthesize and apply knowledge from multiple sources and other experiences in a range of contexts to identify and creatively solve problems that inform decision-making.
- Manage complex problems by reflecting on what is known and not known, identifying solutions/options, making decisions, choosing courses of action, and adapting to changing circumstances.
- Apply knowledge gained from academic and co-curricular experiences to further personal and career goals with the highest standards of professionalism.
- Seek and build the knowledge, skills, and abilities to navigate work environments and community(s).

2. Articulate the shared and unique contributions that result from diversity in global, social, cultural, and environmental systems.

- Articulate the importance of equity and diversity of ethnic, cultural and socio-economic perspectives.
- Articulate the importance of and options for environmental sustainability, both locally and globally.
- Analyze important local, national, and global issues from multiple viewpoints, with an understanding of the interdependence of political, economic, environmental, and social systems.
- Appreciate the importance of artistic expression.
- Develop and nurture positive and healthy relationships by treating others with respect, by seeking to understand various points of view and needs, and cooperating with others to achieve mutual goals.
- Observe and respond to group dynamics and various roles and opinions with sensitivity when interacting with others and working in teams.
- Cultivate a sense of belonging for self and others by exploring diverse and shared perspectives/experiences and engaging in community and workplace activities.

3. Apply critical thinking, information fluency, and quantitative and scientific reasoning to solve problems and make decisions.

- Develop well-reasoned positions that include ethical reflection.
- Use appropriate strategies, tools, and technologies to identify, evaluate, analyze, integrate, and represent information from a variety of sources.
- Analyze and interpret quantitative information to help solve problems.
- Use formal reasoning such as logic and mathematics to complement reasoning skills in other disciplines.
- Apply the scientific methods of inquiry when appropriate as a problem-solving approach.

4. Communicate effectively in written, oral, and non-verbal forms of expression.

- Effectively communicate ideas.
- Create written documents that demonstrate competence in a variety of subjects and mastery of the grammar, mechanics, and format that are effective for a range of purposes and audiences.
- Create and deliver effective oral presentations that demonstrate competence in a variety of subjects and mastery of presentational techniques and styles for a range of purposes and audiences.
- Constructively engage with others to accomplish desired goals.
- Use non-verbal communication effectively.
- Listen actively, thoughtfully, and critically to the points of view of others.

5. Reflect on, refine, and act in congruence with one's identity(s), sense of meaning and purpose, and goals.

- Examine and reflect on experiences, feelings, knowledge, and skills to identify and clarify values, beliefs, interests, and areas for growth.
- Set life and career goals and initiate action toward fulfilling them.
- Demonstrate integrity by acting based on ethical reflection and in accord with one's beliefs and values.
- Exhibit self-responsibility for one's commitments.
- Establish a balance among leisure, work, and other activities/obligations.
- Manage and monitor thinking, emotions, motivations, and behavior to achieve one's goals and aspirations.