Shared Governance Proposal

    I.   **Date:** February 23, 2017
    II.   **Sponsoring Constituent**: Office of Assessment and the A-State Assessment Committee
    III.   **Statement of the Issue:** Revising the University Learning Outcomes (ULOs)

History of the Issue: In 2011, the General Education Committee crafted a shared governance proposal (11FA-21) that established the current ULOs and assigned the assessment of the ULOs to the Learning Outcomes Assessment Council (see 2011 Fall proposals here: http://www.astate.edu/a/shared-governance/previous-shared-governance-proposals/). All pertinent constituency groups and Dr. Dan Howard, interim Chancellor, approved the proposal (see 2011 *Responses from the Chancellor* here: http://www.astate.edu/a/shared-governance/responses-from-the-chancellor/).

In spring 2016, the Learning Outcomes Assessment Council voted to divide itself into three committees with the A-State Assessment Committee (AAC) taking responsibility for the ULOs (see meeting minutes from March 2, 2016 and April 13, 2016 meetings at http://www.astate.edu/a/assessment/archive/). In Fall 2016, the AAC voted to revise the ULOs (see meeting minutes from October 31, 2016 at http://www.astate.edu/a/assessment/a-state-assessment-committee-aac/).

The AAC developed a list of seven possible learning-outcome themes and surveyed the members of the General Education Committee, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, Graduate Council, Program-Assessment Committee, Co-curricular Assessment Committee, Graduate Student Council, and the Student Government Association during Fall 2016 and early Spring 2017. Participants were asked to rank the seven learning-outcome themes from most important to least important and points were assigned to the rankings (Ranking of 1 = 7 points; Ranking of 2 = 6 points; and so forth). There were 104 surveys returned. The results of the survey narrowed the learning-outcome themes to the following top contenders:

- Critical Thinking (660 points)
- Communication Skills (604 points)
- Social and Civic Responsibility (402 points)
- Globalization and Diversity (338 points)

The AAC studied several other universities' ULOs, the Higher Learning Commission's accreditation guidelines, and best practices in student-learning assessment, which recommends 3-5 outcomes. At the AAC's meeting on February 16, 2017 (meeting minutes coming soon), the AAC developed the following four university outcomes:

Creative and Critical Thinking: Students will demonstrate the creative and critical thinking skills needed to evaluate relevant information and/or ideas, formulate innovative strategies, and solve problems.

Communication: Students will communicate effectively in social, academic, and professional contexts using a variety of means, including written, oral, numeric/quantitative, graphic, and/or visual modes as appropriate to topic, audience, and discipline.

Social and Civic Responsibility: Students will understand the impact and consequences of their actions upon themselves and others, as well as their roles as citizens of a free democratic society.

Diversity and Globalization: Students will be able to live and work effectively with others as an engaged member of a diverse and global society. [1]

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[1] Inspired by and adapted from the following universities' ULOs: Portland State University, Texas A&M, California Polytechnic State University, and San Diego State University

The AAC began developing a proposed assessment process for the ULOs as well. The projected process would include several steps: (1) the Office of Assessment would ask program leaders to align program-level outcomes to the relevant and applicable ULOs; (2) the Office of Assessment would add the alignment to all workspaces in Taskstream; (3) the AAC will develop survey questions to adjust the current Senior Exit Survey; and (4) the Office of Assessment will create a University Assessment Report in the future and disseminate the results to the AAC and campus for review.

It is important to note that faculty will NOT be asked to collect new or unique data to address the ULOs. Data that is already being collected at the program-level will be used to support the relevant and applicable ULOs.

IV. **Rationale for Proposal:** There are three reasons for this proposal:

First, the current ULOs are approximately 10 years old and need to be reconsidered by the campus. Second, the current ULOs are worded as if they continue to represent former General Education courses that were removed from the curriculum when the Arkansas Legislature approved ACT 747. The current wording does not have the scope needed to embrace the diversity of programs at A-State. Third, the campus must adopt a manageable and sustainable assessment process for the ULOs. The current ULOs do not lend themselves to a manageable or sustainable assessment process. Furthermore, key assessment leaders on our campus would like for the ULOs to be updated. Therefore, this proposal is requesting that the campus approve the new ULOs and continue to grant authority to the A-State Assessment Committee to develop and guide the assessment process for the new ULOs.

V. **Type of review:** Expedited