What is the Difference between Program Goals and Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's)

- **Program Goals** are broad statements identifying learning parameters, content and relationships between content areas – what students should *learn, understand*, or *appreciate* as a result of their studies by the time they finish a program or a major. Goals may be incorporated in the mission statement.

  Examples of Goals:

  - **Christian Understanding**
  - **Critical Thinking**
  - **Competence in Written and Oral Communication**
  - **Active Societal Engagement**
  - **Team Work and Collaboration**
  - **Ethics**

However, goals are too general to guide assessment and planning, so SLO's have to be developed to make goals specific.

- **Student Learning Outcomes** describe in concrete terms what program goals mean. SLO statements identify what students will be able to *demonstrate, produce or represent* as a result of what and how they have learned in a program. Unlike Program Goals, SLO's are not fixed. You are expected to assess the SLO's developed for the current six-year assessment cycle and implement your assessment results by making required changes in your curriculum, pedagogies, faculty professional development, student support, or resource allocation. After that, you can revise, modify or change your SLO's for your next assessment cycle.

  Examples of SLO's

  - **Math: students will be able use arithmetical, algebraic, geometrical and statistical methods to solve problems**
  - **Modern Languages: students will be able to interpret primary texts in their target language literatures and cultural context**
  - **Chemistry: students will be able to conceptualize chemical processes qualitatively at the molecular level**
  - **Ethics: students will be able to apply principles of scientific ethics and academic integrity**
  - **Team work: students will be able to acknowledge and build on the ideas of others**

If your department has already developed Program Goals you may need to develop one-three SLO's for every goal.

It is a good practice -- and WASC requirement -- to have SLO's developed for the entire program and for every course taught in your program.

While developing or refining your SLO's, please keep in mind that **effective SLO's** are:

- ✓ Consistent with the program mission and goals
- ✓ Realistic
- ✓ Few in number
- ✓ Assessable
- ✓ Used by faculty/staff to set priorities and make data-driven decisions concerning curriculum, pedagogy, faculty support, student support, and resource allocation.

Publishing your Program Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

Both Program Goals and SLO's should be published on your departmental website along with the mission statement, Alignment Chart and Multi-Year Assessment Plan. If you have posted these documents on your departmental website do not include them in your Annual Assessment Update Report.

If you have any questions regarding Program Goals, SLO's or other assessment issues, please call # 6070.