

Since 2012, planning for courses in the Department of Art and Design has increasingly focused on Student Learning Outcomes, rather than on goals and objectives. Assessing freshmen-seniors artwork and writing at the Initial, Emerging, Developed, or Highly Developed levels each spring has given the department a valuable overview of student achievement and program effectiveness. Assessment data has indicated the art/design programs remain effective, relative to their freshman-senior years.

More importantly, accreditation expectations have brought art/design faculty members together in common conversations specifically about content and student outcomes. Faculty conversations have led to recommendations for updates and changes in the Graphic Design Major. In addition, as a result of student outcomes assessments 2011-2015, new writing assignments in studio courses have been added to build on student analysis skills in the various levels of art criticism. The Artist Statement writing sample for senior SLOs has also been replaced by a more inclusive analysis assignment in the final capstone course.

Full-time art/design faculty members are fully engaged in the outcomes-driven pedagogical shift at PLNU. More alignment and clarity about program (PLO) and course (CLO) learning outcomes have become evident in curriculum planning at the departmental level. Art/design faculty members are increasingly attuned to building cumulative coursework in Key Assignments within the academic majors. Exceptions to compounded learning have also been uncovered. Some art and non-art majors have excelled in selected upper-division art electives without traditional prerequisites (allowed by “Consent of Instructor”.)

Overall, Institutional Research assessment has motivated the PLNU Department of Art and Design to more formally use Student Learning Outcomes to evaluate student performance on a yearly basis, determine how prepared its graduates are for art/design careers or graduate school, and make recommendations for curricular updates.

Outcomes Data now includes information on PLNU Visual Arts graduates. For example:

- Since 2008 23% of our Visual Arts Majors have gone on to receive an MFA (10% is the CCCU national average).
- Of our graduates who received MFAs, 80% have been earned at institutions consistently ranked among the top 10 MFA programs in the country (US News).

- The national average for undergraduates that go on to receive an MFA is 16% (STRATEGIC NATIONAL ARTS ALUMNI PROJECT).