UNIVERSITY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

A Cal Poly education is the result of experiences taking place in the major and in general education, as well as in the curriculum and co-curriculum. The University Learning Objectives (ULOs) allow these experiences to be aligned to a common set of academic expectations.

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The ULOs state that all students who complete an undergraduate or graduate program at Cal Poly should be able to:
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1. Think critically and creatively
2. Communicate effectively
3. Demonstrate expertise in a scholarly discipline and understand that discipline in relation to the larger world of the arts, sciences, and technology
4. Work productively as individuals and in groups
5. Use their knowledge and skills to make a positive contribution to society
6. Make reasoned decisions based on an understanding of ethics, a respect for diversity, and an awareness of issues related to sustainability
7. Engage in lifelong learning

Cal Poly shares some of these expectations with other universities (See ULO 1, 2 and 7). Others reflect Cal Poly's unique character as a comprehensive polytechnic that provides students with the breadth of a liberal education and the depth of a disciplinary or professional education (ULO 3-6).

ULO 6 states that all Cal Poly graduates should be able to make reasoned decisions based on a respect and appreciation for diversity and an awareness of issues related to sustainability. Because of the complexity of this objective, the Academic Senate adopted the Diversity Learning Objectives (DLOs) in 2008 and the Sustainability Learning Objectives (SLOs) in 2009, both as addenda to the ULOs.

Diversity Learning Objectives

The DLOs state that all Cal Poly graduates should be able to:

1. Recognize and understand the contributions to knowledge and civilization that have been made by members of diverse cultural and gender groups and other historically marginalized people in the United States and across the world
2. Understand the history of issues related to diversity, social and economic inequities, and political power in the United States and across the world
3. Analyze the current social, political, artistic, and/or economic lives of historically marginalized people in the United States and across the world
4. Analyze the various institutions and structures that create and maintain social, economic, and political inequality in the United States and across the world; and, identify those that offer redress for these issues
5. Define and describe the various issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in their respective disciplines
6. Critically examine their own personal beliefs, attitudes, and biases about historically marginalized people and cultures in the United States and across the world

Please see University Policies (https://catalog.calpoly.edu/universitypolicies/) for the Statement on Diversity and Inclusivity and the Non-Discrimination Policy.

Sustainability Learning Objectives

Cal Poly defines sustainability as the ability of the natural and social systems to survive and thrive together to meet current and future needs. The SLOs state that all Cal Poly graduates should be able to:

1. Define and apply sustainability principles within their academic programs
2. Explain how natural, economic, and social systems interact to foster or prevent sustainability
3. Analyze and explain local, national, and global sustainability using a multidisciplinary approach
4. Consider sustainability principles while developing personal and professional values

Please see Sustainability Practices (https://catalog.calpoly.edu/welcome/campus-life/sustainability-practices/) for more campus sustainability information and the Sustainability Catalog (SUSCAT) (http://suscat.calpoly.edu/) website for lists of sustainability courses.

Both the DLOs and SLOs should be understood as operating at a level below the institutional level of the ULOs.

Assessment of Student Learning

To determine the effectiveness of various educational experiences, Cal Poly assesses student achievement of learning objectives/outcomes at the course, program, and university levels. This kind of evaluation should usually take the form of a direct assessment of student work (assignments, exams, projects, performances, etc.), perhaps using standardized rubrics. In other cases it may be more feasible to use an indirect assessment of perceptions via surveys administered to students, graduates, faculty, and employers. The results are intended to be used primarily for the improvement of curricula and pedagogy, although they may also be used for accountability purposes to demonstrate the educational effectiveness of courses, programs, and the institution as a whole. As a result, Cal Poly students should expect that their academic work may be used for assessment purposes.