

Committee on Academic Policies
Report on the APTF “Academic Learning Outcomes”
April 11, 2012

The Institutional Academic Learning Outcomes discussed here are in Appendix B of the Academic Planning Task Force report, dated January 2010. Appendices A and B are attached to this document; the entire report is available at <http://www.jcu.edu/avp/APTF.pdf>.

The APTF began its work in April of 2009, and Jeanne Colleran and Nick Santilli gave an update to the faculty at the August 2009 faculty workshop. This update included the Learning Outcomes and the goals of a JCU education (Appendices B and A of the Phase One Report, respectively). The APTF engaged faculty in listening sessions in August, received a few comments in the fall of 2009, and delivered a report to John Day in December 2009. Dr. Day accepted the report, distributed it to the faculty in January 2010, and delivered the report to the Faculty Council. In September 2010, the Faculty Council “endorsed” the report, and the Phase Two process started shortly thereafter.

The Committee on Academic Policies discussed the Learning Outcomes and held open hearings to garner faculty input during Spring 2012. CAP raised two issues with the APTF Steering Committee regarding the Learning Outcomes:

- None of the nine Learning Outcomes mentions anything about depth of study in a particular area (i.e., a major), even though Appendix B uses language like “The following set of institutional academic learning outcomes articulates the gains in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that a student is expected to have achieved as a result of obtaining a degree at John Carroll University” and “... these nine learning outcomes represent the entirety of a John Carroll University education ... they represent in the aggregate the most important things we wish a John Carroll student to accomplish academically” The majority of the members of CAP were not concerned about this issue.

In its response, the APTF Steering Committee referred to two paragraphs in Appendix A of the APTF report:

“As a result of the intentional learning that has taken place through a student’s choice of courses, John Carroll University students develop the ability to recognize, frame, and solve problems, to contribute new ideas to his/her field of endeavor, and to adapt to changing professional expectations and social relations.”

“For undergraduates, the rigorous study of core academic courses in the humanities, social sciences, mathematics and natural sciences will provide complementary breadth to the chosen program of study as well as deepening the habits of inquiry that are necessary for meeting lifelong personal, professional, civic, and global challenges.”

- The last sentence in the first paragraph in Appendix B reads "The outcomes express the essential academic learning outcomes expected of a JCU graduate at graduation, whether it is at the culmination of the undergraduate or graduate experience." CAP was concerned about the "graduate experience" phrase. In a two-year graduate program in a single discipline (say, Mathematics), it is unlikely that all nine learning outcomes will be addressed, even superficially.

The APTF Steering Committee responded that in practice, graduate programs would be expected to meet only the Learning Objectives that were suitable to the field of study. Again, they referred to statements in Appendix A:

“For undergraduates, the rigorous study of core academic courses in the humanities, social sciences, mathematics and natural sciences will provide complementary breadth to the chosen program of study as well as deepening the habits of inquiry that are necessary for meeting lifelong personal, professional, civic, and global challenges.”

“For graduate students, a John Carroll education emphasizes advanced and specialized levels of research and analysis, further professional development, and enhanced leadership skills, doing so within the framework of values that characterizes Jesuit education.”

The Learning Outcomes provide a framework for the John Carroll educational experience. They will help guide future modifications to the curriculum, and they will give us a starting point in assessing the overall effectiveness of our various programs and requirements. The outcomes have been carefully crafted, and have been subjected to review by numerous faculty and administrators over the past two years. The Faculty as a whole have had ample opportunity to critique and make suggestions regarding these outcomes.

CAP is satisfied that the Institutional Academic Learning Outcomes as presented in Appendix B of the APTF report are sound, and urges the Faculty to formally accept them.

Appendix A: John Carroll University: Educational Goals for Learning, Leadership and Service

The historic foundation of excellence that defines John Carroll University is grounded in the proposition that academics are the heart of a Jesuit education and the central feature of a John Carroll University education. Through its Jesuit Catholic heritage, John Carroll University offers an education that values: the importance of a liberal arts core, teaching and classroom excellence, rigorous academic programs, individualized advising, the recruitment, development and retention of high quality faculty, staff, and administrators, and a commitment to social justice. The contemporary vision of Jesuit higher education for the 21st Century and beyond produces graduates with a well-educated solidarity---morally responsible, aware of the fundamental challenges facing the modern world, with the strength of character to work for a more just and humane world . At John Carroll, education for the 21st Century and beyond is based on the respect for the individual student and the recognition of individual talents (*cura personalis*), enlivened by our commitment to engaged teaching and supportive learning. The following statements summarize John Carroll's educational goals.

As a result of the intentional learning that has taken place through a student's choice of courses, John Carroll University students develop the ability to recognize, frame, and solve problems, to contribute new ideas to his/her field of endeavor, and to adapt to changing professional expectations and social relations.

For undergraduates, the rigorous study of core academic courses in the humanities, social sciences, mathematics and natural sciences will provide complementary breadth to the chosen program of study as well as deepening the habits of inquiry that are necessary for meeting lifelong personal, professional, civic, and global challenges.

For graduate students, a John Carroll education emphasizes advanced and specialized levels of research and analysis, further professional development, and enhanced leadership skills, doing so within the framework of values that characterizes Jesuit education.

In accordance with the Jesuit practice of *eloquentia perfecta*, John Carroll University students excel in written expression and oral communication and are able to engage effectively with rapidly emerging technologies.

In consonance with the Jesuit tradition of solidarity with the marginalized, a John Carroll University education emphasizes personal responsibility and ethical conduct.

A John Carroll University education deepens the values that characterize lives of service, including the integrity to call attention to all forms of discrimination and oppression, the dedication to work persistently on behalf of social justice, and a respect for all human dignity.

As world citizens cognizant of global interdependence, John Carroll University students recognize the importance of historical and cultural context in order to promote equitable exchange, respect for difference and pluralism, and environmental responsibility.

John Carroll graduates have the skills for civic and professional leadership and productive collaboration.

Appendix B: John Carroll University: Institutional Academic Learning Outcomes

The following set of institutional academic learning outcomes articulates the gains in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that a student is expected to have achieved as a result of obtaining a degree at John Carroll University. These outcomes frame the student experience in its totality and serve as the standard to judge the goals of the JCU experience. The outcomes express the essential academic learning outcomes expected of a JCU graduate at graduation, whether it is at the culmination of the undergraduate or graduate experience.

Because these nine learning outcomes represent the entirety of a John Carroll University education, no single program of study (whether core, major, minor, concentration, undergraduate, or graduate) is expected to cover all the learning outcomes; they represent in the aggregate the most important things we wish a John Carroll student to accomplish academically. While they are stated in more general terms, they correspond with the educational goals stated above linking our contemporary learning outcomes with the traditional goals of a John Carroll University education.

These institutional learning outcomes form the basis of the regular self-assessment and accountability that is done at the core, departmental, and program level. It is at these levels that the learning outcomes will be made more specific – for courses, sequences, or programs—as faculty members determine how their curricular and pedagogical goals for individual courses or programs support the institutional learning outcomes.

These institutional learning outcomes also articulate a framework for the development of new academic programs. In order to have a global overview and assessment of how well we are achieving the institutional academic learning outcomes, it will be important to establish a mechanism for such review.

We expect that graduates of John Carroll University will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an integrative knowledge of human and natural worlds;
2. Develop habits of critical analysis and aesthetic appreciation;
3. Apply creative and innovative thinking;
4. Communicate skillfully in multiple forms of expression;
5. Act competently in a global and diverse world;
6. Understand and promote social justice;
7. Apply a framework for examining ethical dilemmas;
8. Employ leadership and collaborative skills;
9. Understand the religious dimensions of human experience.