Program Level Outcome (PLO) Assessment Report Summary

Program Level Outcomes for Photography:

Upon Successful completion of the Photography program, a student should be able to:

- Demonstrate effective technical proficiency with film and digital media.
- Structure visual information to produce images of intermediate level aesthetic quality
- Interpret and produce photographs that communicate intellectually and emotionally
- Demonstrate an intermediate knowledge of the history of photography
- Appraise and analyze an awareness of the influence of digital art and artists on the lives of all individuals, cultures, and societies

What we looked at: We looked at PLO #1: Demonstrate effective technical proficiency with film and digital media. In order to assess this program outcome, we focused on the ability of the students in the Photo 1 and Photo 2 courses. In particular the case study involved the following:

Photography 1:
We looked at the varying SLO results from all six sections to analyze both the assessment process and student learning. Also, using the view of the courses this assessment provided, we compared assessments to our classroom observations.

Photography 2:
We evaluated a capstone portfolio of 10 out of 12 class assignments. These are mounted, black and white prints produced in the wet lab. We looked at the technical execution of each image, including primary and wet lab exposures, contrast, focus and depth of field, spotting and other retouching, surface handling, and mounting.

What we found:

Photography 1:
While the aggregate average of 80% of students achieving 80% or better was just met this semester, this may be an overly lofty goal in the long run. While Photo 1 is an entry level course that meets humanities requirements for graduation and transfer, a large and growing number of students enrolling in this course lack the skills and discipline needed to successfully perform college level course work. If this trend continues, future classes will not be able to keep up this SLO result. Aside from the instructional changes described below, the assessment may have to be rethought and possibly altered to reflect a more realistic and consistently attainable outcome.

Instruction requires some changes to meet the challenges mentioned above. While there is no room in the Photo 1 curriculum to take time-out to attempt to teach a portion of our students how to read, comprehend, retain, and write at the levels required, we can assist students in the most prevalent area of difficulty thus far identified – reading the text book. Classroom text book based exercises show that fully 40% of Photo 1 students don't read or even purchase the text, which is also available in the library.
Quizzes based on reading assignments are always lower than those based on lectures that use the computer screen as the visual focus. This observation gave us a possible solution.

Photography 2:
While the course easily met the targeted SLO of 80% of students performing at 80% or better in SLO evaluations, we found that students generally had difficulty controlling the technical issues of wet lab created contrast, and spot toning. Overall the students who completed the course appear to excel in the other areas.

What our next steps are:

Photography 1:
We intend to use our off campus web site photo1salinas.org in class. This website, assembled by Trish Sullivan and Eric Bosler, was intended to supplement the course materials as well as supplement other on campus resources. We intend to use it as a classroom tool to attract the attention of all, but especially those students who need help, yet who fail to acquire it. At this writing, the site provides enough material to boost student outcomes if those who need it will use it, but we will attempt to add additional pertinent materials over the course of this semester. We feel that using the site in class can encourage targeted students to employ it more than they do currently.

Photography 2:
We feel that these issues can be best addressed by adding one additional practice session for contrast control and spotting.