Creating Administrative and Support Services Outcomes/Measures

Purpose of Assessment

**To process** \_ The assessment process should encapsulate and demonstrate what the administrative unit is accomplishing to students, faculty, staff and outsiders. **To improve** \_ The assessment process should provide feedback to determine how the administrative unit can be improved. **To inform** \_ The assessment process should inform department leaders and other decision-makers of the contributions and impact of the administrative unit to the development and growth of students. **To support** \_ The assessment process should provide support for campus decision-making activities such as unit review and strategic planning, as well as external accountability activities such as accreditation.

Important Points about Administrative Assessment Outcomes/Measures

First, do not confuse outcomes with action plans. For example, setting up a table at Open House is not an appropriate outcome even though it may be part of an academic department's action plan to meet an outcome about increasing enrollment. One common problem with assessment reporting is that a unit might list tasks accomplished like a check list rather than focus on goals for continual improvement.

Second, it's ok to set lofty outcome/measures. Always remember that assessment is about improvement. If the unit is constantly setting outcomes/measures that are immediately attainable, then the unit probably has not set expectations high enough. Units are encouraged to set outcomes/measures that may be a stretch and will take some time to achieve. What is important is that the unit can show that they are making progress on achieving that which is most important to the unit.

Writing Outcomes/Measures

* Outcomes/measures can be defined as statements that describe the desired quality (timeliness, accuracy, responsiveness, etc.) of key functions and services within the administrative unit.
* Operational outcomes/measures define exactly what the services should promote (understanding, knowledge, awareness, appreciation, etc.).
* Outcomes/measures also can be stated in terms of student learning outcomes. This is most appropriate for services that aim to increase students’ knowledge or understanding of specific concepts.

Use the acronym **SMART**.

* **S**pecific
* What do we want to accomplish?
* Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefit of accomplishing the goal
* Who: Who is involved?
* Which: Identify requirements (essential attributes) and constraints.
* **M**easurable
* Need to establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of the outcome/measure.
* Measurable outcomes/measures use active verbs to describe specific expectations.
* Measuring progress helps you to stay on track, reach target dates, and experience the success of achievement.
* Guiding questions: How much are we looking for? How many are we seeking? How will I know when it is accomplished?
* **A**ggressive but **A**ttainable
* Outcomes/measures must be realistic and attainable.
* Attainable outcomes/measures may stretch a team in order to achieve it; the outcome/measure is not extreme.
* Outcomes/measures are neither out of reach nor below standard performance, as these may be considered meaningless.
* When you identify outcomes/measures that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, and financial capacity to reach them.
* Guiding questions: How can the outcomes/measures be accomplished? Does the outcome/measure represent a goal toward which you are both willing *and* able to work? Is the outcome/measure both high and realistic? Does the outcome/measure represent substantial progress?
* **R**esults-oriented, **R**ealistic, **R**elevant
* Choose outcomes/measures that *matter.*
* Many times you will need support to accomplish outcomes/measures: resources, a champion voice, someone to knock down obstacles.
* Outcomes/measures that are *relevant* to your leadership, your division or college, and your organization will receive that needed support.
* Relevant outcomes/measures (when met) drive the department, division, and organizations forward.
* An outcome/measure that supports or is in alignment with other objectives would be considered relevant outcomes/measures.
* **T**imely
* Outcomes/measures must be grounded within a time frame, giving them a target date.
* A commitment to a deadline helps a team focus their efforts on completion of the outcomes/measures on or before the due date.
* Tips for designing time-limits:
* Provide a timeframe for the completion of the measure.
* Describe what can be done in a year, 6 months, 6 weeks, or today.
* Set a sequence of activities that will serve as benchmarks for achieving the measure.

Examples of Outcomes

* Administrative units should link outcomes to the services described by the unit-level mission statement and lead to improvement of these services; the assessment of the outcome provides useful information for this improvement.
* The outcomes may include the specification of expectations of demands, quality, efficiency and effectiveness, and other gauges of productivity.

1. **Academic Services for Student Athletes**

The Office for Student Athletes will measure the impact of regular study sessions by generating baseline data on attendance, mean term GPA’s and number of semester hours earned in the sports of baseball, softball, and golf during the spring semester.

1. **Financial Aid** After attending a financial aid session, students will be able to accurately fill out the FASFA form.
2. **Office of Admissions**

Reduce the application response time for all (i.e. 100%) of prospective students by 20% by October 31st.

1. **Office of Student Affairs**

Provide a minimum of 4 professional leadership and volunteer service opportunities for juniors by the end of the 2020-2021 academic year.

### Why Assessment Data?

Assessment is not simply data collection. Assessment involves evidence-based decision making. You often hear people refer to "closing the loop" as the most important part of the assessment process. "Closing the loop" involves using data that has been collected to inform decisions and making any appropriate changes to a program. After changes are made, data is collected again to see if changes had an impact on the program.