

ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT SERVICES OUTCOMES

Best Practices in Assessment

Purposes of Assessment

The four main purposes of assessment should be:

- **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 heads and other decision-makers of the contributions and impact of the administrative unit to the development and growth of students.
- **To prove** – The assessment process should encapsulate and demonstrate what the administrative unit is accomplishing to students, faculty, staff and outsiders. (*Adapted from WEAVE and Wisconsin*).
- **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.

Characteristics of Effective Assessment

- Effective administrative unit assessment should answer these questions:
- What are you trying to do?
- How well are you doing it?
- Using the answers to the first two questions, how can you improve what you are doing?
- What and how does an administrative unit contribute to the development and growth of students?
- How can the student learning experience be improved?
- *(Adapted from Hutchings and Marchese, 1990)*

Developing the Administrative Unit Assessment Plan

- **Step 1: Organize for assessment.**
- **Step 2: Define the mission of the a
administrative unit.**
- **Step 3: Define the goals of the administrative unit.**
- **Step 4: Define the Outcomes of the administrative unit.**
- **Step 5: Identify performance criteria for each outcome.**
- **Step 6: Inventory existing and needed assessment methods.**
- **Step 7: Determine how assessment results will be used for administrative unit improvement.**

Collect and review current administrative unit goals

- Review any existing goal statements such as those from:
- Catalog descriptions
- Unit review reports
- Mission statements
- External agencies (e.g. SACS)
- Studies done at other universities
- List five to seven of the most important goals identified in the literature listed above. Prioritize the goals depending on their importance to your organization. Conduct open discussions and brainstorming sessions with the staff.

Definition of Outcomes

- Outcomes 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 define exactly what the services should promote (understanding, knowledge, awareness, appreciation, etc.).
- Outcomes 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.

Writing Outcomes

Use the acronym SMART

- Specific
- Measurable
- Aggressive but Attainable
- Results-oriented
- Time Bound

Examples of Outcomes

- Administrative units should focus on critical functions, services, and processes that impact customer satisfaction.
- The outcomes may include the specification of expectations of demand, quality, efficiency and effectiveness, and other gauges of productivity.

Examples

- **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 football, baseball, softball, men's basketball and women's basketball during the spring semester.
- **Assessment Support Office**
- The Assessment Support Office will demonstrate knowledge and expertise to meet the needs of the customers.
- Operational definition: *Knowledge and expertise will be examined from five dimensions (technical skills and knowledge, teaching and training skills, consulting skills, report writing, and presentation) for each of the three support function areas (assessment support, process analysis and special studies support, and survey and statistical studies support).*

Exercise

- List two primary functions or goals of your office.
- Try writing an outcome for one of those goals or functions.
- Remember to use the SMART acronym.
- Specific
- Measurable
- Aggressive but Attainable
- Results-oriented
- Time Bound