Administrative Assessment:

**A KEY COMPONENT IN DEMONSTRATING INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

SHANNON NIX, ASSISTANT PROVOST
KAREN MANLEY, OPERATIONS & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER
OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS & PLANNING
OIEP@GMU.EDU | 703-993-8834

What is Administrative & Student Support Unit Assessment?

The process by which units engage in & document cycles of evaluation and continuous improvement.
Who needs to do it?

Any unit, office, or department that directly or indirectly supports the mission and strategic goals of the institution.

Why do we do it?

1. To demonstrate what the unit is accomplishing as it relates to students, faculty, staff, and external stakeholders.

2. To inform senior leadership and other decision makers of the contributions and impact of the unit.

3. To improve unit operations & services.

4. To support campus decision-making activities such as unit review & strategic planning, as well as external accountability activities such as accreditation.
What happens if we don’t do it?

- Potentially impacting
  - Productivity
  - Reliability
  - Efficiency
  - Quality
  - Satisfaction
  - Cost
- Missed opportunities to strengthen and improve operations and services
- Uninformed / poorly informed decision-making
- Compromise accreditation with SACSCOC

SACSCOC
SECTION 7: Institutional Planning & Effectiveness

*Effective institutions demonstrate a commitment to principles of continuous improvement, based on a systematic and documented process of assessing institutional performance with respect to mission in all aspects of the institution.*

7.1 The institution engages in ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and evaluation processes that (a) focus on institutional quality and effectiveness and (b) incorporate a systematic review of institutional goals and outcomes consistent with its mission.

7.3 Administrative Effectiveness: The institution identifies expected outcomes of its administrative support services and demonstrates the extent to which the outcomes are achieved.
How do we do it?

- We approach Administrative Assessment by assessing the achievement of **Objectives** for each of the units **Goals**.

Preliminary Questions:

- What are we trying to do/achieve?
- How well are we doing our work?
- How can we improve what we are doing?
- How do we know that we’ve achieved success?
Additional Points to Keep In Mind:

- You are the experts in your area
- It’s okay to make mistakes
- It’s okay to be different
- It’s not about hitting a target
- OIEP is here to support you

Developing an Assessment Plan

- **Step 1:** Review/revise/define administrative unit **Mission** or **Purpose**.
- **Step 2:** Define 3-5 **Goals** for the unit.
- **Step 3:** Define 1-3 **Objectives** that support achieving each Goal and include a **Target** or **Performance Criteria** for each Objective.
- **Step 4:** Develop **Measures** for each Objective.

*Once the plan is complete...*

- **Step 5:** Collect and Analyze data.
Once the assessment cycle is complete

**Step 6:** Identify changes made (or planned) as a result of the insight obtained through the assessment process (Improvement Plans).

**Step 7:** Report Measures/Methods, Results/Analysis and Improvement Plans for each Objective measured in Tk20.

---

**Guidelines**

- Each administrative unit should have **3 - 5 Goals** with **1 - 3 Objectives** for each Goal.

- If applicable, units may also report on relevant student learning outcomes. If student learning is in the unit’s mission, assessment of student learning should be happening.

- Administrative Assessment Reports due **August 15th** of each year. Reports are submitted to the assessment management system **Tk20**.
Mission Statement

RAISON D’ÊTRE

Effective Mission Statements Should:

- be brief and memorable
- clearly support the university’s mission
- plainly state the purpose of the unit
- indicate who are the clients/stakeholders
- state the primary function or activities of the unit
- differentiate your unit from others on campus with related functions
Simple formula

The mission of <the name of your unit> is to <your primary purpose(s)> by providing <your primary functions or activities> to <your stakeholders>.

► Note: Add additional clarifying statements judiciously.

Example Mission Statements from Mason Administrative Units

Enrollment Management:
Enrollment Management connects students to educational resources that open doors to opportunity by providing exemplary service from recruitment through graduation.

Office of the University Registrar:
It is our essential Mission to implement the academic policy of George Mason University as well as applicable federal and commonwealth laws. Central to this mission is to provide high-level, customer-oriented services – and information about both services and policies – to our student, faculty, and administrative customers.
Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning

OI EP advances the strategic goals of George Mason University through collaborations and partnerships that engage stakeholders in data-informed strategic, operational and tactical decisions. OIEP does this by capitalizing on our experience and professional judgment drawing upon quantitative and qualitative analytic information.

University Life

University Life engages students in educationally purposeful experiences resulting in student learning and development, academic success, and degree completion. University Life will:

Example Mission Statements Cont’d
Characteristics of Effective Administrative Goals

- Grounded in the mission of the unit
- Broad and general
- Reflect aspirations for long-term, positive change
- Should focus on strengthening and improving critical functions, services, and processes that impact client/stakeholder satisfaction.
  - What about compliance-related issues, mandates and other required actions? Is maintaining the current level of operations okay?

Developing Unit Goals: Guiding Questions

- Who are your clients/collaborators/stakeholders?
- What would you like your clients to experience, receive or understand as a result of the work your unit does at Mason?
- What impact would you like for your functions, processes and services to have on those you serve or work with?
- How can you strengthen and improve critical functions, services, and processes?
- How can/do you support Mason’s strategic plan?
Types of Goals

- Operational
- Strategic Planning
- Student Learning

What are the most important priorities for your unit for the next 3–5 years?

Operational Goals = Beneficiary + Action Verb + Benefit

- Directly related to mission and key functional responsibilities
- Focus is on the consequence of the work of your unit on clients/collaborators/stakeholders

Examples:
- University administrators will be able to attain current and accurate financial information for their units in a timely manner.
- Faculty, staff, and leadership will be able to locate institutional data for use in planning & decision-making.
- Students will be able to easily access information regarding fulfillment of degree requirements, graduation status, transfer credit, and changes to degree requirements.
- The help desk will promptly and satisfactorily resolve customer service requests.
Strategic Goals

- Tied to strategic priorities of the institution, division, college or unit.
- Focus is on ensuring initiatives have intended/positive results and improving/strengthening operations & services.

Examples:
- Retain more high-achieving students through increased scholarship funding and work-study opportunities.
- Implement best practices and tools that enhance and support the planning and budgeting process.
- Create a campus free of discrimination and harassment.
- Provide students the tools to make an impact on the world.

Learning Goals

- Describes the knowledge, skills or abilities students have achieved as a result of a learning experience.

Examples:
- Students will identify correct degree requirements for their major.
- Students will produce high-quality resumes.
- Students will be able to locate financial aid resources for which they qualify, submit applications and meet deadlines.
- Students will be able to use appropriate search terms and limit features to narrow or broaden a search topic.
Objectives

ACCOMPLISHING YOUR GOALS

Objectives are designed to support achieving the unit’s Goals

Well-written objectives are S.M.A.R.T.

- **Specific:** What are we going to do for whom?
- **Measurable:** Is it quantifiable and can WE measure it?
- **Attainable:** Can we get it done in the proposed time frame with the resources and support we have available?
- **Relevant:** Will this objective have an effect on the desired goal?
- **Time-bound:** When will this objective be accomplished?
What does that look like?

- Increase graduating senior exit survey response rates by 2021.
- Students who complete the study skills workshop will report improvement in their time management and organization skills six months later.
- Meet annual enrollment targets for first year, transfer and international students.
- Reduce response time to service requests over the next academic year.

Performance Target

What does success look like?

- Indicate levels of achievement or progress that reasonable and feasible.

- By 2021, increase graduating senior exit survey response rate by at least 25%.
- At least 80% of students who complete the study skills workshop will report improvement in their time management and organization skills six months later.
- Reduce response time to service requests by 40% over the next academic year.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>vs.</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad &amp; general</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty, staff and leadership will be able to locate institutional data for use in planning &amp; decision-making.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.M.A.R.T.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide six workshops each academic year on topics related to institutional data resources and using data to inform planning, strategic initiatives and decision-making.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Important Note:**

ONE CHALLENGE OF DEFINING GOOD OBJECTIVES IS TO ENSURE THAT THEY REFLECT OBJECTIVE MEASURES AND NOT INITIATIVES OR ACTIVITIES.
Revise Objective

Goal
Faculty, staff and leadership will be able to locate institutional data for use in planning & decision-making.

S.M.A.R.T. Objective
Over the next three years, 100% of faculty, staff and administrators who participate in a data resources workshop will be able to identify and locate one or more data resources for use in planning and decision making.

Also, keep in mind that...

Often, more than one objective will be required in order to meet a specific goal.
Enrollment Management Example

**GOAL:** Retain more high achieving students (GPA of $\geq 3.0$) through increased scholarship funding and work-study opportunities.

- **OBJ 1:** By spring 2021, the number of scholarships available to this population will be increased by 20% and work study opportunities increased by 25%.
- **OBJ 2:** By fall 2021 increase in the number of scholarship applications from high achieving students by 50%.
- **OBJ 3:** Starting in 2022 observe a 25% decrease in students reporting on exit surveys that they are “unable to afford the cost of continuing their education” as the primary reason for leaving.
- **OBJ 4:** By 2023 there will be a 20% increase in the retention of high achieving students.

When is the goal accomplished?

- **When all the objectives are achieved**
  - **Are you sure?**
    - If the goal is still relevant and important, it may be time to revisit and establish new objectives that further the change or improvement you are working toward.
  - **What happens if all the objectives are not achieved?** (a.k.a. Are we in trouble?)
    - There can be many reasons an objective or even a goal is abandoned.
    - Provide an explanation and discuss plans for the future
      - New goal and related objectives
      - New/revised objective(s)
Measures & Methods
HOW TO DETERMINE IF THE OBJECTIVE IS MET

What to Select and Collect
DIRECT AND INDIRECT EVIDENCE
Comparison

**Direct**
- Requires individual or team to demonstrate achievement.
- Uses work products to indicate the level of achievement.
- Provides objective, self-explanatory evidence of what has or has not been accomplished.

**Indirect**
- Asks individual(s) to reflect on experience rather than demonstrate achievement.
- Captures perceptions and or levels of satisfaction with service, functions, processes etc.
- Provides anecdotal evidence of what has occurred or been achieved.

Examples

**Direct**
- Audit Reports
- Productivity Reports
- Financial Reports
- Performance Evaluations
- Review of work products with rubric/evaluation form
- Institutional Data (enrollment, degrees awarded, etc.)
- Tracking logs
- Error rates, processing time

**Indirect**
- SWOT Analysis
- Surveys
- Interviews or focus groups
- Self-studies
- Course Evaluations
- Exit Interviews
- Number of training sessions, participants, applications, users, complaints, etc.
Recommendations

- Use direct evidence of achievement whenever possible.

- Use multiple measures when feasible and appropriate.
  - Direct complimented by indirect

- Use data and information you are collecting or producing as part of the work you already do.
  - New data may be needed, but create “new” work judiciously

- Keep good records of what worked and what did not
  - Remember it’s okay to make mistakes

Results & Analysis

PUTTING YOUR DATA TO WORK
How most spend their time with data

- Using
- Analyzing
- Collecting

How you *should* spend your time with data

- Using for improvement
- Analyzing
- Collecting
The Results should reflect the Objective

Objective:

80% of students who participate in a Career Center resume workshop will receive a minimum average score of 4 (out of 5) on a resume quality rubric...

...don’t report that 302 students received a satisfactory score.

Instead:

Report that out of 316 resumes evaluated:
16% received 5/5
67% received 4/5
17% received 3/5

Was the objective met?
What don’t these Results tell you?

How to use Results for Improvement

Out of 316 resumes reviewed:
16% received 5/5
67% received 4/5
17% received 3/5

Even better...

Criterion 1: 100% scored 4 or better
Criterion 2: 90% scored 4 or better
Criterion 3: 73% scored 4 or better
Criterion 4: 87% scored 4 or better
Criterion 5: 67% scored 4 or better

Can you identify an area for improvement?
Always Report Your Results

ASSESSMENT IS NOT ABOUT HITTING A TARGET!

ASSESSMENT IS ABOUT MAKING PROGRESS TOWARD A GOAL AND USING RESULTS TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS.

Improvement Plans

CLOSING THE LOOP
Using Results for Improvement

Results:  
- Criterion 1: 100% scored 4 or better  
- Criterion 2: 90% scored 4 or better  
- Criterion 3: 73% scored 4 or better  
- Criterion 4: 87% scored 4 or better  
- Criterion 5: 67% scored 4 or better

Actions:
- Provide students with a checklist that will help them identify and address deficiencies with particular emphasis on Criteria 3 & 5.  
- Provide students with multiple, disciplinary specific examples of excellent (5 out of 5) resumes.  
- Initiate discussion to develop an online submission system that will allow for multiple revisions and more timely feedback.

Improvement & Increased Institutional Effectiveness

Improvement Plan

Results:
- Criterion 1: 100% scored 4 or better  
- Criterion 2: 90% scored 4 or better  
- Criterion 3: 73% scored 4 or better  
- Criterion 4: 87% scored 4 or better  
- Criterion 5: 67% scored 4 or better
## Demonstration

## Reporting Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission/Purpose</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Methods &amp; Measures</th>
<th>Results &amp; Analysis</th>
<th>Improvement Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>