

**Institutional Effectiveness
Unit Planning Guide for Non-Academic Units**

***Key Elements in
The University of Texas
at Tyler
Planning and Evaluation Process***



Linking the planning process to budget decisions and continually assessing the effectiveness of the process itself ensures that planning and evaluation are meaningful.

Prepared by
The Office of Planning and Institutional Research

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN ADMINISTRATIVE AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT UNITS

Institutional effectiveness is the demonstration that an institution is accomplishing its purposes. It is based on the philosophy that institutions that engage in a comprehensive, systematic, and conscientious assessment will become stronger and more effective. Engaging in this process increases the likelihood that members of an institution will share a sense of its mission, that programs and resources will be effectively directed to meeting the mission, and that academic programs and administrative services will continuously self-examine in order to create the most effective learning environment and experiences for students.

Within institutional effectiveness, departments are not held accountable for failure or success, only for having in place a process to measure effectiveness.

Institutional effectiveness seeks to encourage honest assessment and creative effort to make program improvements without fear of failure or personal retribution. Each unit is evaluated on the quality of its mission statement, objectives, assessment activity, and effort to make program improvements. Within institutional effectiveness, departments are not held accountable for failure or success, only for having in place a process to measure effectiveness. This process is separate from the personnel evaluation process.

THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN ADMINISTRATIVE AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT UNITS

Each administrative and educational support unit must provide evidence that its operations support, directly or indirectly, implementation of UT-Tyler's statement of mission and goals (*Millennium Vision*).

In order to conduct a meaningful and systematic program of institutional effectiveness, four essential tasks must be completed for all administrative and educational support units:

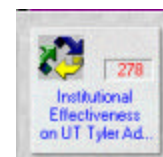
- TASK A** The formulation of a *Unit Effectiveness Plan*, including a unit/department mission statement, linkage to one or more university goals, unit/department goals and objectives, and means of assessment;
- TASK B** The conduct of an annual assessment;
- TASK C** The use of assessment results to improve methods and policies of the unit/department;
- TASK D** The integration of assessment activities within the University's planning and budget processes

TASK A FORMULATE A UNIT EFFECTIVENESS PLAN

Each administrative and educational support unit should have a Unit Effectiveness Plan that includes

- articulation of a department mission statement
- linkage to one or more university goal statements,
- unit/department objectives, and
- a description of means of assessment to be used to determine progress in meeting the objectives.

A carefully written Unit Effectiveness Plan serves as the foundation for all assessment activity. Nevertheless, it can be modified at any time as decisions are made to sharpen or extend the mission and/or as program objectives and means of assessment are modified. The Unit Effectiveness Plan for each administrative and educational support unit is maintained by the Office of Planning and Institutional Research in the Lotus Notes *Institutional Effectiveness Database*.



PREPARATION OF SOUND UNIT EFFECTIVENESS PLANS

(This is a **departmental** brainstorming activity conducted before effectiveness tables are filled out.)

The formulation of a sound unit effectiveness plan for any administrative and educational support unit is a fairly straightforward process that involves three specific activities:

STEP 1 – Development of a unit/department mission statement.

[The mission statement should be reviewed and updated yearly or as necessary]

The statement should follow these guidelines:

1. The mission statement should show how the department supports the overall mission of the university;
2. The mission statement should accurately address the targeted client(s) and the intended effects;
3. The mission statement should be a description of what you do within your department;
4. The mission statement should be succinct but should include the essential mission of the unit (rather than the mission of any individual staff member). Most statements are about 1—3 paragraphs in length.

STEP 2 -- Choose 3 to 5 specific goals/objectives from your department's list for this year's evaluation.

Timetable: Do this at the beginning of each academic year (September).

(These will ultimately be displayed in **column 1** of the effectiveness table in the database)

Gather at least the professional staff and also in many units the nonprofessional staff

- Revise or refine the unit mission into operational functions accomplished by the unit.
- Identify from these functions those that seem to be the most important three to five from the standpoint of the institution. Do not try to evaluate each goal you have set for your department. Ask, "if UT-Tyler could only have us do three to five of these functions (objectives), which would it select?"

You may reselect the objectives from last year, or new objectives may evolve from results of last year's plan, or you may write new objectives.

- These objectives should be stated simply, in general terms.
- Each objective must be measurable. Ask the group, "How can we ascertain how well we are accomplishing these functions?" and "Given current resources, how can we tell if more can be done in this area?"

STEP 3 -- Development of means of assessment

Timetable: Do this at the beginning of each academic year (September).

(These will ultimately be displayed in **column 2** of the effectiveness table in the database)

The means of assessment is the method used in measuring the extent to which stated goals/objectives are being accomplished. Have you succeeded in accomplishing your goals?



How will you recognize success? Choose a mechanism that allows you to determine whether your objective has been achieved.

The means of assessment most frequently identified with nonacademic departments include

- 1. clientele satisfaction or attitude,**
- 2. direct measures or counts of departmental operations, and**
- 3. use of an external evaluator.**

Potential Assessment Mechanisms for Non-Academic Units

1. Measures of Client Satisfaction

Since non-academic departments do not operate on a profit basis or contribute in a clearly discernible way to student learning, *satisfaction of clientele with services provided* is one of the primary means of assessment available.

Surveys

Ex: "Eighty percent of the faculty responding to an annual survey will respond either "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement, "The bookstore's performance in ordering textbooks and supplies meets my expectations".

"Client" evaluations

Systematic Interviews

Group conversations, i.e., Advisory Committees, Focus Groups

® If choosing a survey, consider piggybacking onto existing campus surveys to avoid "survey fatigue" in respondents

2 Direct Measures/Counts of Operations

Volume (number served, number produced, etc.)

Example: Number of campus tours "At least three campus tours will be conducted per week during spring semester"

Efficiency (time spent, deadlines, etc.)

Example: Average time for a student to complete registration. "95% of students will complete the registration process within one hour"

Performance Quality (accuracy, precision)

Example: Vendor statements for services will be date stamped upon their arrival and again as they are paid. A random sample of ten such statements monthly will reveal no more than an average of five working days between receipt and payment".

3. External Evaluators

Reports of nationally or regionally recognized external evaluators

- Contracted consultant
- Auditors
- OSHA
- Fire Marshals

For each intended outcome/objective, provide at least one valid means of assessment to determine the accomplishment of that outcome.

Whenever possible, Means of Assessment should specify

- **what** data will be collected,
- by **whom**,
- from what **sources**,
- using what **methods**,
- in what **time frame** (annually, every 3 years, etc.), and
- performance **standard**: what level of attainment is required
The performance standard is the *criteria for success* that indicates the level of achievement necessary in order for the objective to be judged accomplished and successful.



Use quantitative measures (percentage, average, etc.)

Choose a level that is realistic

Assessment must evaluate the extent to which the outcome is achieved, not whether or not the step was completed.

TASK B CONDUCT AN ANNUAL ASSESSMENT, GATHER ASSESSMENT DATA

Timetable: Do this at the end of the academic year (May) or when assessment data become available.
(This information will ultimately be displayed in column 3 of the effectiveness table in the database)

When you measured (or observed, or surveyed, etc.) what did you find? Document assessment results. Don't stop at simply stating the results. Include the relevant interpretation of the results.

TASK C USE ASSESSMENT RESULTS TO IMPROVE METHODS AND POLICIES OF THE UNIT/DEPARTMENT

Timetable: Do this at the end of the academic year (May) or when assessment data become available.

(This information will ultimately be displayed in column 4 of the effectiveness table in the database)

The end product of assessment activities is the improvement of academic programming based upon the use of assessment results. Without being able to demonstrate such use of assessment results, all previous activities fall short of their intended purpose.

Document how you will use the results of your assessment for program or improvement

What impact did this assessment have on the program or unit?

How will these results be used for program or unit improvement?

CLOSING THE LOOP

Without being able to demonstrate such use of assessment results, all previous activities fall short of their intended purpose.

Recommendations for Change:
Receipt of assessment results usually results in one of the following actions:
a. Restructuring the outcomes/objectives, or improvement of means of assessment;
b. The decision to take no action based on findings that outcomes have been accomplished
c. Use of assessment data to change and improve the program. Recommend ways to improve and remedy identified weaknesses.
Describe adequate procedures for review and follow-up. When recommended changes must go through an approval process, i.e., committee approval, changes to the HOP, etc., this process must be documented.

COMPLETING THE INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS TABLES ON LOTUS NOTES DATABASE



Double-click this icon to find your administrative office. Then double-click on your department.

An annual Unit Effectiveness Plan must be conducted for each administrative and educational support unit. The plan used at UT-Tyler is based on a model constructed by James Nichols, Ph.D., of the University of Mississippi.

To facilitate entry and accessibility, effectiveness tables have been added to Lotus Notes in a database called “*Institutional Effectiveness on UT Tyler Admin.*” The plan begins with university mission statement and university goals, followed by academic department mission statement, unit objectives, means of assessment, results of assessment, and use of results to improve program. The documentation of plans involves annual development of a four-column grid (below is a hypothetical example from an accounting department):

Linkage to University Goal Statements and Unit/Department Mission Statement:

Identify the program’s linkage to one or more of the University’s goals (located in the pop-up on the screen), and the department’s own mission statement. These and the first two columns of the table are completed each September.

Examples are offered in red:

University Goal Statement *GOAL 9. Exercise continued excellent stewardship over the University's fiscal and physical resources.*

Unit (Dept) Mission Statement: *The mission of the Office of Business Affairs is to manage UT Tyler's business operations in a manner that (1) facilitates the achievement of the university's teaching, research, and public service missions and (2) safeguards the financial well-being of the institution.*

EXAMPLE:

Column 1: Unit (Dept) Objective: The first two columns are completed each September, at the beginning of the academic year. The objectives selected may or may not change from year to year.

(Hypothetical data)

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4
<p style="text-align: center;">Academic Outcome/Objective - OR - Unit (Dept) Objective</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3-5 major outcomes for each degree program or administrative unit recommended</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Means of Assessment</p> <p style="text-align: center;">How will you measure this outcome? At what level, or to what degree, do you expect these outcomes to be present?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Results of Assessment</p> <p style="text-align: center;">When you measured (or observed or surveyed, etc.) what did you find?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Use of Results to Improve Program</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What impact did this have on the program or unit and how will it be used for program or unit improvement? (This should lead to your next year's plan)</p>
<p>1. Provide timely, complete, and understood reports by object of expenditure concerning expenditures and remaining balances to departments.</p>			

EXAMPLE:

Column 2: Identification of the means of assessment (*see below) that will be used to examine the selected objectives. Each means should contain a criterion or threshold of success; this is the level at which one would conclude that the objective has been reasonably met. In the following example, 90% establishes this threshold. The criterion should be set at whatever level is appropriate and meaningful.

(Hypothetical data)

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<p>1. Provide timely, complete, and understood reports by object of expenditure concerning expenditures and remaining balances to departments.</p>	<p>1a. Monthly reports of expenditures and remaining balances by object of expenditure will be found to have been produced within the first three working days of the past twelve months.</p> <p>1b. Ninety percent of those completing a two-hour workshop for the department heads/chairs each year will "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement, "I understand and feel comfortable with the monthly financial statement" contained on a survey of participants conducted at the end of the workshop.</p>		

EXAMPLE:

Column 3: Results of the applying the means of assessment. This column describes what has been learned from each means of assessment about performance relative to the corresponding objective. It must contain information that allows determination about whether or not the criterion level has been reached. **This column is completed whenever the results from the means of assessment are available or in May, at the end of the academic year.**

(Hypothetical data)

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4
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EXAMPLE:

Column 4: (“Closing the Loop”) Identification of efforts to make program/service improvements based on what has been learned and reported in column 3. If assessment shows that an objective is being met, and no one has ideas for doing better, the fourth column simply reports that. When assessment shows that an objective is not being met and/or ideas are suggested for doing better, then the fourth column reports the changes designed to enhance program performance. This column is completed in May, at the end of the academic year.

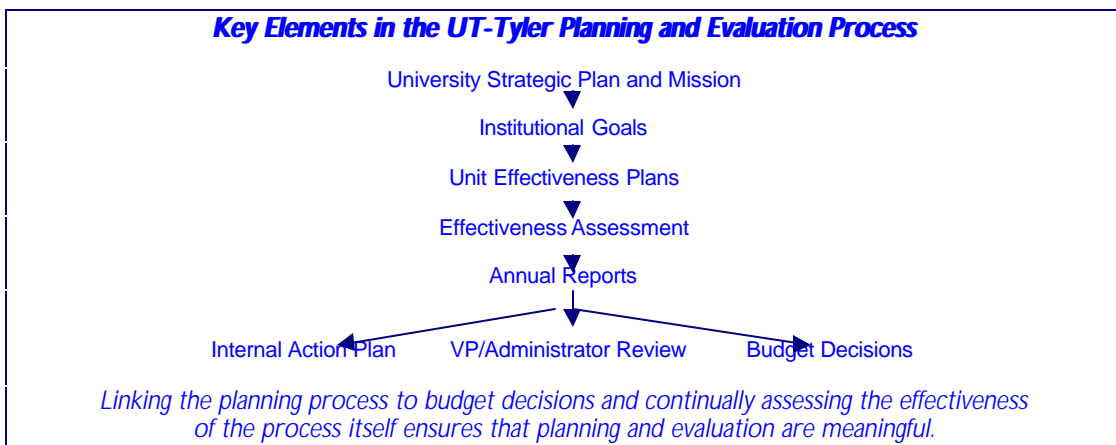
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TASK D INTEGRATING ASSESSMENT IN PLANNING AND BUDGETING

The assessment process will typically produce plans and activities designed to improve the program or service and to increase the likelihood of meeting the designated objectives. The work involved in making these changes should logically be incorporated into the department's goals for the ensuing year.

Program and/or service changes that require financial support should be incorporated into the department's budget request. The process is implemented by the Annual Report. The purpose of the Annual Report is to demonstrate the use of results of assessment to improve educational programs, services, and operations.



PREPARATION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT

The Annual Report summarizes assessment results, describes recommendations for program improvement, delineates implementation (how, who, what, when) for recommended improvements, and provides justification for budget increases.

Assessment results will typically take one of the following forms:

1. improvement in the means of assessment or restructuring of the statement of intended educational outcomes;
2. the decision to take no action based upon findings indicating accomplishment of intended outcomes; or
3. utilization of the assessment data to change and improve the performance of programs.



Step 1 Information for the Annual Report comes from Column 4 of your unit effectiveness table. Wherever you have indicated plans for program improvement based on assessment results, transfer these plans into one of the categories on the Annual Report form (choose “*Create Annual Report*” from the Institutional Effectiveness database.) Pop-ups programmed into the report also facilitate automatic transfer of information from the effectiveness table to the Annual Report form.

Where **budget increases** are required, a copy of the Annual Report should be printed and attached to the **Request for Budget Increase** form at the appropriate time. (Now you have demonstrated a clear linkage of assessment to budget.)

Step 2 Academic departments notify Deans that their Annual Report is completed and available for review.

The Office of Planning and Institutional Research will maintain the database containing the tables and Annual Reports.

EXAMPLE
Annual Report
[Unit Name]
20xx-20xx

List the improvements that can be implemented with existing resources. *(These proposals are synthesized from all departments and used as action plans within the college or department.)*
(Example:)

- To raise ExCET scores, C&I will establish ExCET review sessions to help students prepare for exam
-
- Better coordination of scheduled class offerings will avoid students' class conflicts
-
- etc.
-
-

Assistance needed from other units in implementing proposed improvements. *(These proposals are synthesized by Deans or administrators and are forwarded to the appropriate Vice President or administrator)*
(Example:)

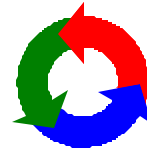
- An additional classroom is needed in the Academic Computing Lab for supplementary class exercises requiring special technology.
-
- Personnel using information technology systems need additional training sessions to do their jobs adequately
-
- etc.
-
-

Proposed improvements requiring additional resources and estimated additional cost
(Input for Request for Budget Increase form)
(Example:)

- Add a masters program in sociology, est. \$50,000
-
- Staff an Office of External Grants/Sponsored Research, est. \$30,000
-
- etc.
-

CONTINUING THE EFFECTIVENESS CYCLE—ON TO NEXT YEAR!

Each September, begin a new effectiveness table for coming Academic Year. Open the *Institutional Effectiveness Database* and complete columns one and two for the new year.



You may want to:

- a) Copy and paste the information from columns one and two of your previous table into the first two columns of your new table for continued assessment; or
- b) Copy and paste the information from column one but modify the performance standard or means of assessment for column two of your new table; or
- c) Discontinue an outcome/objective, or add new ones.