Creating an Outcomes Assessment Plan

Charlise Anderson, Ed.D.

Director of Assessment and Accreditation

March 18-20, 2020

Workshop Goals

- Assessment – Why Are We Here
- Institutional Effectiveness Model
- Learn how to develop a mission statement
- Become knowledgeable about outcomes assessment in relation to unit or department activities
- Identify outcomes statements based on unit's mission
- Identify appropriate ways to measure the outcomes and criteria for success
- Become knowledgeable about evidence of improvement based on analysis of results
- Accountability and report due dates
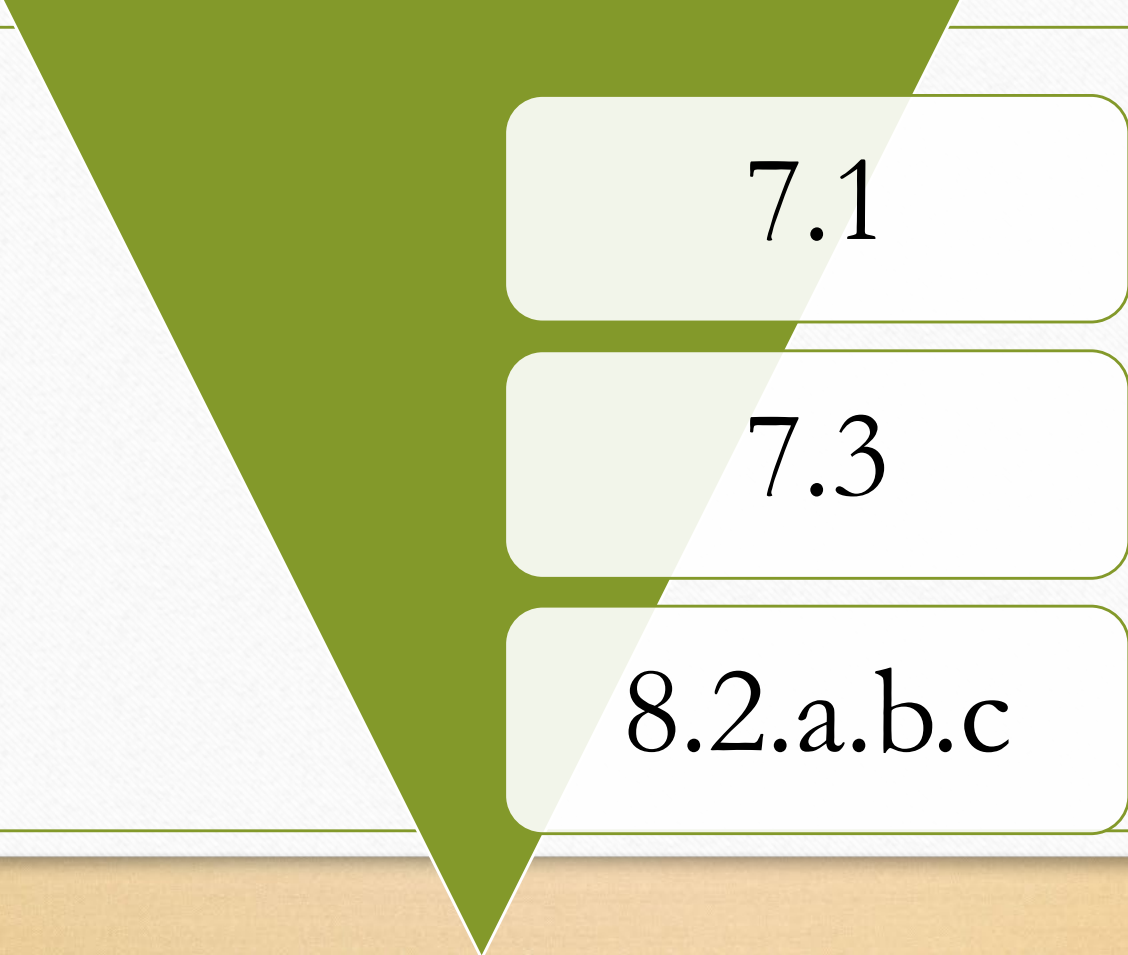
What is assessment?

- Assessment is any systematic procedure for collecting information that can be used to make inferences about the characteristics of people or objects (AERA et al., 1999).
- Dary Erwin defines assessment as "The systematic basis for making inferences about the learning and development of students…."(Erwin, 1991).
- Fred Volkwein maintains that "assessment is a process, not a product; it is a beginning, not an end" (Bauer & Volkwein, 2000).
- The ongoing, cyclical nature of assessment means that it is an administratively complicated but highly challenging process.
- Resource: See page 3-4 of the *Outcomes Assessment Guidelines* manual

Purposes of Assessment

- **To improve –** The assessment process should provide feedback to determine how the administrative support, academic or student service unit can be improved.
- **To inform –** The assessment process should inform department heads and other decision-makers of the contributions and impact of the unit to the development and growth of students or effectiveness of the institution.
- **To prove –** The assessment process should encapsulate and demonstrate what the administrative support, academic or student service unit is accomplishing to students, faculty, staff and other external stakeholders.
- **To support –** The assessment process should provide support for campus decision-making activities such as unit review, strategic planning, as well as external accountability activities such as accreditation.

Assessment for Accreditation Purposes

Standards Related to Outcomes Assessment

7.1

7.3

8.2.a.b.c

Requirement 7.3

The institution identifies expected outcomes of its **administrative support services** and demonstrates the extent to which the outcomes are achieved. (*Administrative effectiveness*)

Requirement 8.2

The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below….
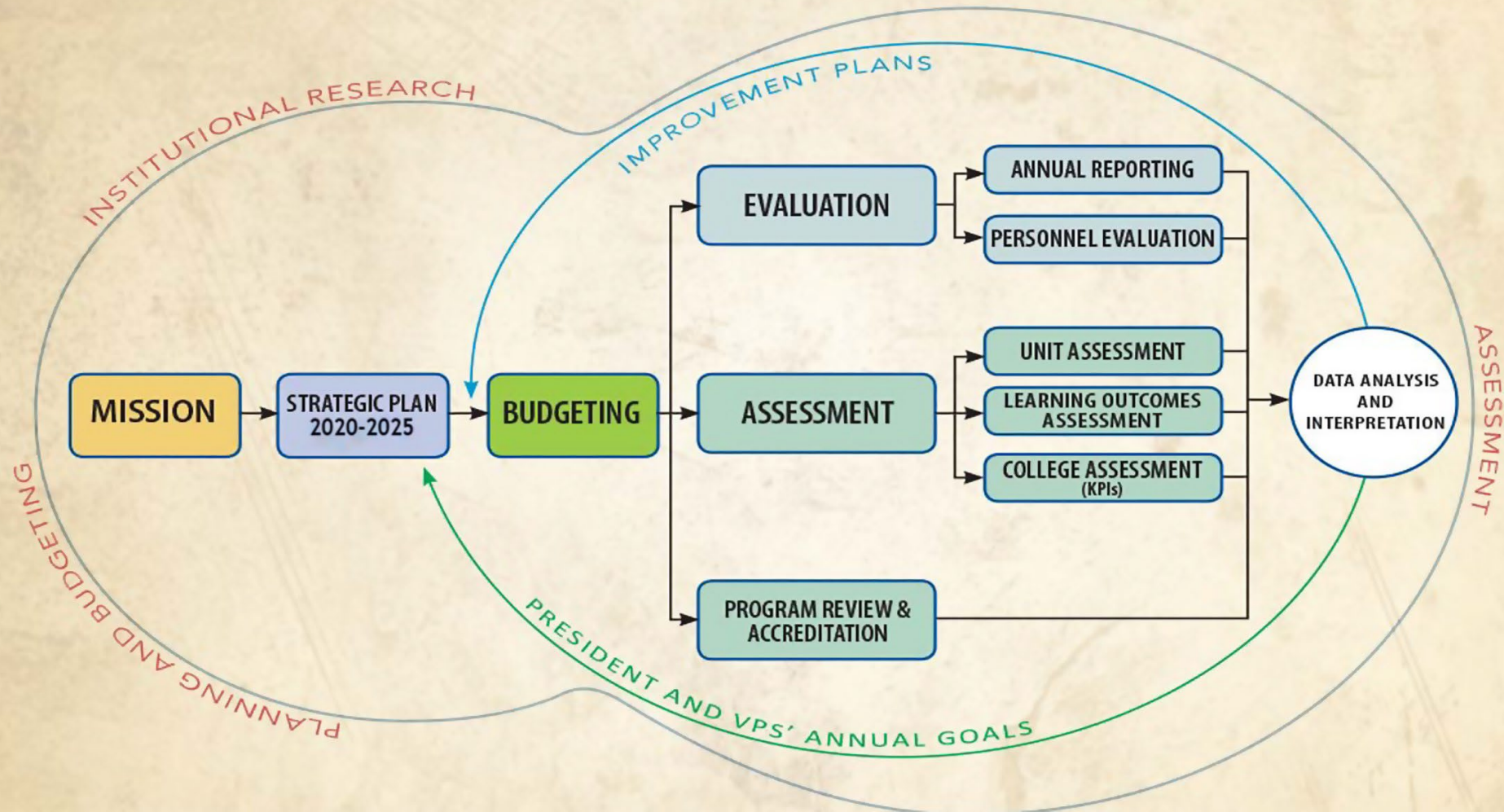
8.2.a Student outcomes: educational programs
8.2.b Student outcomes: general education
8.2.c Student outcomes: **academic and student services**
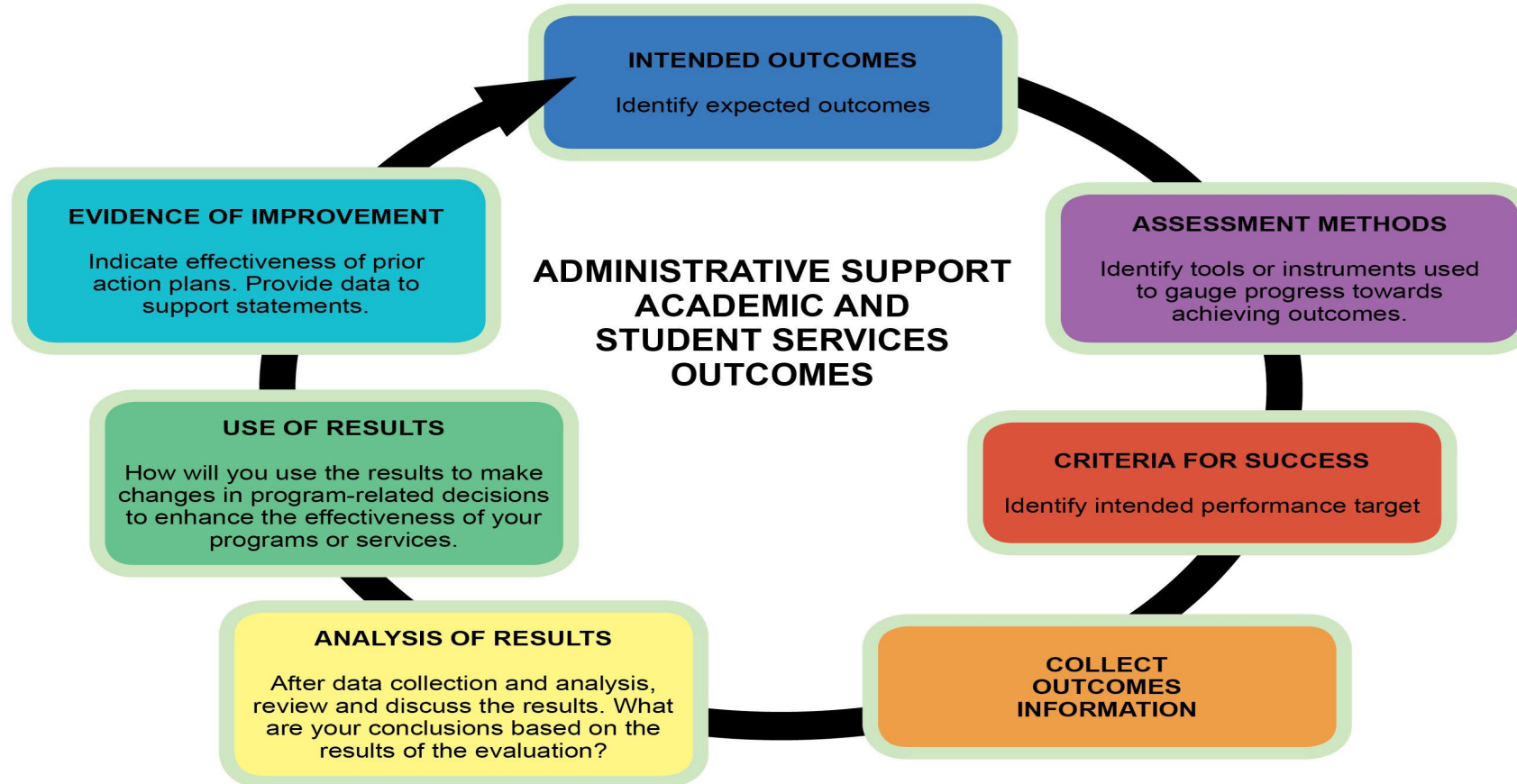
Institutional Effectiveness Model

Tennessee State University Institutional Effectiveness Model

Mission Statement

Tennessee State University

Annual Cycle for Continuous Improvement

INTENDED OUTCOMES

Identify expected outcomes

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Identify tools or instruments used to gauge progress towards achieving outcomes.

EVIDENCE OF IMPROVEMENT

Indicate effectiveness of prior action plans. Provide data to support statements.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT ACADEMIC AND STUDENT SERVICES OUTCOMES

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

Identify intended performance target

USE OF RESULTS

How will you use the results to make changes in program-related decisions to enhance the effectiveness of your programs or services.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

After data collection and analysis, review and discuss the results. What are your conclusions based on the results of the evaluation?

COLLECT OUTCOMES INFORMATION

Unit or Department Mission Statement

Assessment works best when the programs or units it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes or missions (American Association of Higher Education).

Go to page 24 of the manual.

Mission Statement Example

Department Name

Primary Purpose

The mission of University Planning & Assessment is to promote and guide comprehensive university strategic planning and assessment activities through encouraging and utilizing useful feedback in the planning process, educating the campus community regarding planning and assessment activities, facilitating the planning and assessment processes, and ensuring that outcomes are used to further university excellence. UPA effectively and efficiently maintains the university policy and procedure statement system in an effort to keep the university community fully informed and compliant in accordance with System, state, and federal mandates.

Core functions

Stakeholders

Develop Intended Outcomes

- **Outcomes Defined–** Outcomes are the desired end result (not goals, objectives or strategies). See page 25 of the manual.

- What are your expectations regarding the department goals?

- Administrative Effectiveness Units – is addressed under Section 7 – link outcomes to strategic goals.

- What is the end result you hope to see once department goals have been implemented?

- What are the intended outcomes you hope to accomplish?

Writing Intended Outcomes

☐ **FORMAT FOR WRITING OUTCOME STATEMENT:**

[Intended audience] who [action verb 1] [program/service] will be able to [action verb 2] [intended outcome].

- Intended audience – students, faculty, staff, users, employees within division, employees within department, alumni, customers, administrators, clients, the university, etc.…
- Action verb 1 – complete, engage in, participate in
- Program/service – respond to maintenance requests, process payments in the drop box, prepare revenue forecast report, etc.
- Action verb 2 – demonstrate, describe, discuss, explain, identify, list, summarize, prepare, rate, utilize, use, select, plan

Or [Intended audience or the department] will be able to [action verb to describe what it will do, achieve or accomplish

Writing Intended Outcomes

- Do not join multiple outcomes in one statement.
  - Customers will be highly satisfied with the service <u>and</u> requests for service will increase.

- State so that the outcome can be assessed by more than one method (ideally).
  - Advisors will provide high quality academic information to students.
    - As evidenced by "very good" to "excellent" student ratings on a point of service questionnaire from 90% of the students served
    - As evidenced by reduced number of follow-up phone calls from students served

Being SMART with Student Learning Outcomes

- S – specific and significant

- M – measurable and meaningful

- A – attainable and achievable

- R – realistic, but also relevant and results-oriented

- T – time-based, but also can be tracked timely

Outcomes Statement Examples

- Let's Review Handout
- Employees have the benefit information they need to make insurance plan enrollment elections.
- The library collection effectively supports the curriculum and research needs of the University.
- Students living in residence halls are satisfied with the overall cleanliness of their residential facility.
- Relationships are built and fostered with alumni, former students and friends who have the capacity to make gifts.

Evaluating Quality of Outcomes

- Outcomes should be aligned with mission and goals. For administrative effectiveness units link to institutional strategic goals.

- It should be possible to collect accurate and reliable data for each outcome

- Taken together, the indicators associated with the outcomes should accurately reflect the key results of the programs, operations, or service offered by the department

Evaluating Quality of Outcomes

□ Outcomes should be stated so that it is possible to use a single method to assess the outcome

□ Outcomes should be stated so that more than one assessment method can be used

□ Outcomes should be used to identify areas to improve

□ Is there anything missing? Let's do exercise

Outcomes Exercise

Checklist for Outcomes

- Are at least three outcomes presented?

- Do the outcomes focus on issues that are pertinent and important to the department, *as specifically defined in the mission statement*?

- Do the outcomes concentrate on key areas where outcomes assessment will enable the department to improve, with a focus on *the end result* and not the means to get there?

Checklist for Outcomes

- ☐ Is it possible to measure achievement of the outcomes?

- ☐ Do the outcomes clearly articulate the intended result or action desired?

- ☐ If applicable, do revisions to outcomes align with last year's action plans?

Continuous Improvement

- Outcomes assessment is a continuous process
- Focus should be on how to best *improve our services*
- Culture of assessment should be embraced and inclusive of all stakeholders within the department
- Outcomes assessment is here to stay!

Challenges and Pitfalls

□ One size does not fit all — some assessments work well for one office/unit but not others

□ Do not try to do the perfect assessment all at once — take a continuous improvement approach

□ Allow for ongoing feedback

□ **Match the assessment method to the outcome and not vice-versa**

Step 2 and 3: Identifying Assessment Methods and Performance Targets

Methods of Assessing Outcomes

- Should align with the intent of the outcomes

- Should indicate **what** you will assess

- Should indicate **who** you will assess (if applicable)

- Should indicate **how** you will assess each of your outcomes

- Should indicate **when** you will assess each outcome

- Preferably provide **two** ways to assess each outcome – **MUST** provide one good/direct method.

Categories of Assessment Methods

- **department or unit processes**
  - **direct assessments** evaluate *actual* performance
    - error rates, time, cost, efficiency, productivity
  - **indirect assessments** evaluate the *perceived* performance
    - perceived satisfaction, perceived timeliness, perceived capability

Examples of Direct Methods

- department standard reports
  - performance statistics
- activity logs
  - calls received; complaints resolved…
- counts of activity
  - event attendees; number of students served…
- review of documents/work products
  - number of errors; response time…

Examples of Indirect Methods

- questionnaires/surveys
  - customers
    - students, applicants, staff, faculty, hall residents, alumni, visitors…
  - students
  - employees
  - alumni
- interviews and focus groups

Describing Assessment Methods

- **How** are you going to assess (tool or instrument)?
  - departmental report, call log, document review, survey, attendance headcount
- Of and/or by **whom**?
  - student, employee, customers
- Context (e.g., **where** or **when**)?
  - point-of-service, throughout the year, annually
- For **what** purpose?
  - desired intended outcome
- *example: Review sample of student transcripts monthly to determine accuracy of data entry.*

Creating Assessment Methods

What	Who	Where/When	Outcomes
Department report	Student	Point-of-service	Quality
Attendance count	Staff	First week of semester	Efficiency
Document review	Customer	Monthly	Timeliness
Survey	Alumni	Throughout the year	Usage
Observation	Hall resident	End of year	Satisfaction
Tracking log	Visitor	End of program	Income
Website analytics		Biannually	Cost savings

Hints on Selecting Methods

- □ **match assessment method with the intended outcome**
  - ▪ Routine work orders are completed in a timely manner to ensure service needs are met.

    - □ Review of completed work orders for length of time from open to closure.
    - □ Review number of repeat work order requests for same service.

    Not related to outcome

- □ **the assessment results should be usable**
  - ▪ Resident Assistants are effectively trained for their role in supporting residents.
    - □ RAs will be surveyed at the end of the end of the academic year to determine the effectiveness of various aspects of the training.
    - □ RAs will complete Resident Assistant Training program. Completion of the program will be recorded. *Not Useful*

Hints on Selecting Methods

☐ results should be easily interpreted and unambiguous

☐ data should not be difficult to collect or access

☐ information should be directly controllable by the unit or department

☐ multiple methods are available for assessing each outcome

- direct and indirect methods
- qualitative and quantitative
- passive or active methods
- conducted by different groups

☐ Sub-elements are available within existing assessment tools (e.g., one specific question in an existing survey or a particular line item within a report)

Identifying Measures/Performance Target

- What target level of performance would you like to achieve or strive for?
  - Expressed as a number
- Is this level realistic for a period of at least three years?
- Can the measure be obtained from the method (tool) you will be using?
- Are you collecting the right information?

Example – Academic and Student Service Unit

☐ **Outcome:** Students have timely and reliable access to appropriately equipped general (open) computer labs to assist in the completion of their instructional assignments.

- The end of semester summary report, reviewed each long semester, of the open lab daily inoperable computer rate is less than or equal to 1%. (direct measure)

  `target` `When?` `What?` `How?`

- In the open lab student survey, administered continuously during the semester via computer-generated questionnaire, the student satisfaction rate is 85% good or excellent for computer access in the lab as noted in the end-of-semester summary report. (indirect measure)

Example – Administrative Support Unit

☐ **Outcome:** Faculty and staff experience excellent customer service delivered by Custodial staff.

■ Work requests are sorted to determine incidental items and those that could have been addressed by more proactive planning, with a goal of at least 50% being incidental. Data is tabulated and analyzed semi-annually in June and December. (direct measure)

■ A feedback form is provided for customers to rate the completion of work, response time, customer service and quality of work, with a goal of at least 95% customer satisfaction overall. Data is tabulated and analyzed for semi-annual reporting in June and December. (indirect measure)

Who?

What?

How?

target

When?

Exercise

Checklist for Methods/Measures

- Are there two methods/measures provided for *each* outcome?
- Do the methods/measures selected align with the intent of the outcome?
- Do the methods/measures address all of the following:
  - WHO will be assessed (if applicable)?
  - WHAT will be assessed?
  - HOW the assessment will be conducted?
  - WHEN will the assessment take place?
- Do the methods/measures include performance targets such as percentages and numbers?

Selecting the "Best" Assessment Methods

- relationship to assessment — provide you with the information you need
- reliability — yield consistent responses over time
- validity — appropriate for what you want to measure
- timeliness and cost — preparation, response, and analysis time; opportunity and tangible costs
- motivation — provide value to student, respondents are motivated to participate
- other
  - results easy to understand and interpret
  - changes in results can be attributed to changes in the service

Example

☐ **Outcome:** Students with disabilities demonstrate self-advocacy skills through the coordination of their individual services and accommodations.

- Individual students with disabilities will provide faculty members with an academic accommodation letter and form at the beginning of each academic semester for signature, and discuss their accommodation needs specific to each class. The ODS will track how many of the accommodation letters were created versus returned and the date on which they were returned. After the twelfth class day, the ODS will count the number of letters that have been returned as a measure of the proactiveness of our students, with a goal of having 80% of all requested letters returned within this time period. (direct measure)

- A random sample of faculty members will be sent an on-line survey at the end of the Spring semester to solicit feedback on their perceptions of the self-advocacy skills of registered ODS students. At least 70% of respondents will "agree" or "strongly agree" that students with disabilities utilize self-advocacy skills in the classroom. (indirect measure)

Example

□ Outcome: The enrolled freshmen and transfer class is more ethnically diverse, and more closely represents the demographics of the State of Texas's high school seniors.

- The number of Hispanic applicants is increased by 5 percent. Official 12th class day enrollment data provided by the Office of Institutional Research will be used to count the number of applicants compared to the previous year and assess whether the target was achieved. (Direct measure)
- The number of African American applicants is increased by 5 percent. Official 12th class day enrollment data provided by the Office of Institutional Research will be used to count the number of applicants compared to the previous year and assess whether the target was achieved. (Direct measure)

Continuous Improvement

- Outcomes assessment is a continuous process
- Focus should be on how to best *improve our services*
- Culture of assessment should be embraced and inclusive of all stakeholders within the department
- Outcomes assessment is here to stay!

Challenges and Pitfalls

- One size does not fit all — some assessments work well for one office/unit but not others

- Do not try to do the perfect assessment all at once — take a continuous improvement approach

- Match the assessment method to the outcome and not vice-versa

Example

□ Outcome: University Publications are consistent in look and feel and carry the university voice.

- Prior to printing or web release, publications are rated by the associate director for compliance with branding standards, graphic identity guidelines and university voice on a checklist scale of 1-5, with 1 meaning the publication did not comply and 5 meaning complete compliance. 100% of the ratings will be 4 or better. (direct measure)

- A professional development workshop is presented, covering editorial style guide, graphic identity, and branding standards. Each participant will complete a quiz at the end of the workshop measuring the knowledge gained. At least 90% of the participant quizzes will correctly answer 80% or more of the questions. (indirect measure)

When is Assessment Successful?

- When departments measure their performance, implement changes, and improve their services

- When the service continues to improve as a result of the ongoing assessment process

Step 4 and 5: Collect Outcomes Information (Results) and Analyze Results

- Assess whether and to what extent the outcomes were achieved.
- At this stage, put a value on the results of your analysis to determine how well the unit achieved or did not achieve its established performance target.
- What do the results mean – conduct a meaningful analysis

Step 6: Use of Results Seeking Improvement

Improvement Based on Analysis of Results

- See page 30-31 and 35-37 for example of manual.
- Assessment results are meant to be used: to improve effectiveness and inform decision-making and resource allocation. Once assessment results have been collected and analyzed, the department needs to return to the department's expected outcomes – how do the results of the assessment meet those expectations? Were the standards that were set appropriate? Should performance expectations be changed? What aspects of the assessment process worked well and what changes might make it more effective? What were the most effective assessment tools? Can you use the information to modify policy, practice, or structure?

Step 7: Evidence of Improvement (Close the Loop)

See page 31 and Example on page 37

Impact of Changes Made to Seek Improvement

- This is the most critical step in the assessment process.
- See page 31-32 of manual.
- Revisit the improvements made based on prior year improvement or improvement plan implemented.*
- Reflect on your findings and reassess - state the impact the improvement actions have made on the quality of the unit's service (success or non-success)

Accountability, Due Dates, Reporting Template, and Resources

Accountability

Assessment Coordinator/Staff Complete Assessment Report

Division Vice President Reviews and Approves Assessment Report

Office of Assessment & Accreditation Critiques and Returns

Assessment & Improvement Committee Evaluates & Scores Assessment Reports

President

Due Dates

- 2017-2018 and 2018- 2019 – Completed assessment reports submitted to Office of Assessment and Accreditation **April 1, 2020**
    - Office of Assessment and Accreditation provides critique and feedback and returns to unit **April 15 – April 30, 2020**
    - Units revise the reports according to feedback and submit complete package 2 weeks after receipt (assessment report, documented results, and documentation of changes made for improvement as stated in the report) to division Vice Presidents for review and approval **May 1 - May 15, 2020**.
- 2019-2020 end of year reports (apply feedback to the current academic year reports provided for earlier reports) with supporting documentation of results and changes made for improvement submitted to division Vice President **June 15, 2020**
    - 2019-2020 reports due to Office of Assessment and Accreditation **July 1, 2020**
    - 2019-2020 reports - Office of Assessment and Accreditation critiques, provides feedback and returns to unit **July 15, 2020**.
    - Units revise the 2019-2020 reports 1 week after receipt, submit to Vice President for approval, and on to Office of Assessment and Accreditation **July 30, 2020.**
    - Assessment and Improvement Committee will evaluate and score the 2019-2020 assessment reports **August 7**.

Reporting Templates

Tools for Outcomes Assessment

Informational Website: www.tnstate.edu/assessment

Questions?

Thank you