Measuring What Matters

Performance Measures
• The starting point for using performance measures to improve your organization's operations is to develop an assessment plan based on a unit's mission.

• The assessment plan drives the process of defining and measuring outcomes/objectives.
Assessment is a process of gathering and interpreting information to discover if a program is meeting established goals and then using that information to enhance the program.
Why *must* we Assess?

**Accountability**

- Federal requirements
- State oversight
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) reaffirmation

"The institution demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded (a) is approved by the faculty and the administration, and (b) establishes and evaluates program and learning outcomes."

-- SACS Comprehensive Standard 3.4.1
Why *should* we Assess?

- What assessment at UVa is **NOT** about:
  - evaluating individual faculty, staff and students.
  - usurping faculty academic freedoms with respect to course content.
  - centralizing decision making on program priorities and areas of focus.

- What assessment at UVa **IS** about:
  - Program improvement.
  - Maintaining, fostering, and improving the University of Virginia’s unique teaching and research environment.
More About How

► The unit of analysis for assessment is the program/office.
► Begin with what the program/office values most.
► Programs/offices define their own most important outcomes.
► Broad faculty and staff involvement is essential.
► Assessments should be feasible and useful:
  • Minimize burden on faculty, staff and students.
  • Methods should be as simple as possible and connected to what faculty
    and staff are already doing.
► Results should be used for program/office improvement and

    not used punitively.
► Documentation is critical.
Outcomes Assessment Process

1. Identify important outcomes.
2. Develop methods to assess the outcomes.
3. Collect the data.
4. Analyze the findings.
5. Consider appropriate action.
How much assessment?  
How often?

► Start with the most important office/program outcomes. Focus on what is useful for office/program improvement.

► Not all outcomes can, or should, be assessed.

► Stagger assessments over multiple years.

► Allow time for analysis.

► Assessment is an iterative process and should be ongoing.

► Reporting cycle will be annual or biannual, depending upon program/office.
Characteristics of a Mission Statement

- Free of jargon, understandable to those not in your field.
- Use proactive verbs to describe what the organization does.
- Resonate with organization members and external audiences.
- States purpose, business and guiding principles.
- Short enough to fit on a t-shirt.
- Current--review every five years or so.

Example Mission Statement

The Office of Institutional Assessment and Studies (IAS) conducts institutional research and supports assessment at the University of Virginia. The office provides the University community with data and analysis needed for decision-makers to maintain and improve institutional effectiveness. IAS staff gather, analyze, interpret, and disseminate data, employing the highest professional standards of accuracy, objectivity, and timeliness.
Example Goals

- Collect, analyze, interpret, and disseminate information that is accurate, timely, useful, and responsive.

- Serve as consultants to University offices, departments, and individuals about:
  - 1. Project design
  - 2. Methodology
  - 3. Data collection strategies
  - 4. Analysis and reporting
  - 5. Appropriate use of results

- Anticipate and fulfill external reporting requirements within established deadlines.

- Support assessment activities by providing relevant training and feedback, and designing practical methods of measurement and evaluation.

- Coordinate the development and implementation of school and program assessment plans that define, measure, and evaluate student learning goals and outcomes.

- Conduct surveys of academic and student services programs that effectively meet client needs and do not pose an undue burden to the respondents.
Writing Goals and Outcomes for Assessment Purposes.

- List of goals should be comprehensive.
- Outcomes to be assessed should focus on areas of concern or critical functions.
- 1-2 outcomes per year.
- Make sure your outcomes are SMART.
Characteristics of SMART Outcomes

- Specific
  - Measurable
    - Attainable
      - Realistic
        - Time bound
Example Outcomes

- Survey respondents will express high satisfaction with the survey process (length of questionnaire, perceived invasiveness, timing, relevance of content, incentives, timeliness of incentives going out).
- IAS survey clients will be express high satisfaction with communication during the field period in a survey to be administered in Spring 2008.
- All program assessment coordinators will complete an assessment plan that meets IAS` minimum acceptable level before the SACS compliance report is due (Sept 2006).
- Migrate the Query System to the SAS1 server by the end of the calendar year (2008).
- Within 6 months of implementation of the new third level web navigation system, merge Historical Data and Data Digest components of the Data Catalog.
University Mission Statement
The central purpose of the University of Virginia is to enrich the mind by stimulating and sustaining a spirit of free inquiry directed to understanding the nature of the universe and the role of mankind in it …

Unit Mission Statement
To achieve international prominence as a student-focused school of engineering and applied science that educates men and women to be leaders in technology and society and that contributes to the well-being of our citizens through the creation and transfer of knowledge.

Unit Goals
To provide graduates with the technical competencies necessary to practice civil engineering and have an impact on the profession.

Unit Outcomes
A graduate of the program can design a component of a civil engineering system, incorporating social, economic, ethical, and contractual considerations.
Some Strategies to Help Jump Start and Manage the Assessment Process

- Assign responsibility for assessment.
- What is the unit already doing? Work backwards from existing processes.
- Identify issues already being discussed.
Some Tools to Help Manage the Assessment Process

- Assessment Matrix
- Assessment Guide
- WEAVEonline

**PROGRAM OR SCHOOL**
Assessment Coordinator for Program or School:
Program or School
Mission Statement:
Program or School
Goals (2-3 min.):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Outcomes/ Objectives (3-5 min.)</th>
<th>Check if this is a Student Learning Outcome (min of 2)</th>
<th>Assessment Methods/ Measures</th>
<th>Standards of Comparison/ Target Level</th>
<th>Interpretation of Results/Findings</th>
<th>Use of Results/Action Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What will students know and be able to do when they graduate? Should be specific &amp; measurable.</td>
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</table>
WEAVE – Capabilities

- Information management system
  - Monitor program-level assessment plans
    - Mission
    - Goals/Outcomes (flag Student Learning)
    - Measures
    - Findings
    - Action plans
    - Annual reports

- Reporting system
  - Track other program, school, & University initiatives
  - Create annual reports at the program level
  - Supporting Document repository
  - Accreditation standards can be tracked
2008-10 University Assessment

Mission/Purpose

Description:
The Office of Institutional Assessment and Studies (OAS) conducts institutional research and supports assessment at the University of Virginia. The office provides the University community with data and analysis needed for decision-makers to maintain and improve institutional effectiveness. OAS staff gather, analyze, interpret, and disseminate data, employing the highest professional standards of accuracy, objectivity, and timeliness. Institutional Studies provides management information to decision-makers in University departments and units, satisfies governmental agency reporting requirements, and responds to other external requests, including those from higher education institutions and college information guides. University Assessment conducts, supports, and coordinates research to maintain and improve academic programs and student services. The Assessment team implements and supports useful and feasible assessment approaches in order to foster the University's unique learning and research environment.

Additional Information:
Established in Cycle: 2006-2007
Entry Status: Final
Last Updated by Jonathan Schnyer on 10/9/2008 Established by Migration Tool on 7/30/2008
2008-10 University Assessment

Goals

- 0: Conduct surveys effectively
- 1: Provide user-friendly Web-based query system
- 2: Collect, analyze, and disseminate information (Not Ready for Review)
- 3: Serve as consultants (Not Ready for Review)
- 4: Fulfill external reporting requirements (Not Ready for Review)
- 5: Support assessment activities (Not Ready for Review)
- 6: Administer general and core competency assessments (Not Ready for Review)
- 7: Coordinate implementation of assessment plans (Not Ready for Review)

Outcomes/Objectives

- 1: Respondent Satisfaction (Related Goals: 0)
- 2: Client Satisfaction (Related Goals: 0, 1, 2, 3)
- 3: Respondent Confidentiality (Related Goals: 0)
- 4: Respondent Satisfaction - Incentives (Related Goals: 0)
- 5: Client Satisfaction - Communication (Related Goals: 0, 2, 3)
- 6: Respondent Satisfaction - Results (Related Goals: 0, 2)
- 7: Assessment Plans - Student Learning Outcomes (Related Goals: 5, 7)
2008-10 University Assessment

Action Plan Tracking

View Actions: Planned, In-Progress, Finished, On-Hold, Terminated

Planned
No action plans present for status Planned.

In-Progress
- Improving data definitions in the query system.
  Priorit: Medium / Target Date: 5/1/2009
  Established in Cycle: 2008-10

Finished
- Improving communication after the field period.
  Priorit: Medium / Target Date: 5/1/2008
  Established in Cycle: 2008-10

On-Hold
No action plans present for status On-Hold.

Terminated
No action plans present for status Terminated.
“Good assessments give reasonably accurate, truthful information.”

Why do we insist on measuring it with a micrometer when we mark it with chalk and cut it with an axe?

--Peter Ewell

In assessment, “the perfect is the enemy of the good.” Let’s keep striving for the good.

--Tom Angelo

An approximate answer to the right question is worth a good deal more than an exact answer to an approximate question.

--J. W. Tukey

*Slide replicated from Linda Suskie’s Achieving Middle States’ Expectations for Assessing Student Learning, a presentation to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, May 2005. Used with permission.*
Data Sources

• IAS Website
• Other UVa Sources
• External Sources (samples)
IAS Website
Data Digest

Purpose and Goals
University History
Student Costs
Financial Aid
Admission
Enrollment
Academic Progress
Degrees

Alumni
Student Housing
Employees
Finance
Libraries
Facilities
Medical Center

Historical Data

Admission GPA
Degrees Graduation Rates
Employees Tuition and Fees
Enrollment

Common Data Set

Admission
Academic Offerings
Student Life
Expenses

Financial Aid
Faculty/Class Size
Degrees Conferred

http://www.web.virginia.edu/iaas/data_catalog/institutional/cds/cds.htm
Other IAS Sites

- Enrollment Projections
- Faculty Awards
- Tuition and Fees (national survey)
- IAS Dashboard (limited access)
Recent/Current IAS Surveys

NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement)
AccessUVa Surveys
Alumni Surveys

Past Surveys
Other IAS Assessment Projects

Core Competency Assessment

Program Review Dashboard

Longitudinal Studies of Undergraduate Education

CIRP Cooperative Institutional Research Program Surveys
Other UVa Sources
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administration</th>
<th>Finance &amp; Endowment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admission</td>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
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<td>Alumni</td>
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<td>Arts</td>
<td>Rankings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current Enrollment</td>
<td>Schools &amp; Degrees</td>
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<td>Faculty &amp; Staff</td>
<td>Tuition &amp; Fees</td>
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## Stats and Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basics</th>
<th>Student Profile</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admission</td>
<td>Faculty &amp; Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>Sponsored Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information Warehouse

Student Data

Financial Aid Data

Facilities Data

Finance Data (historical)

ISDS (Integrated System using Discoverer)

HR Data

Finance Data

Units’ Websites (e.g. Sponsored Programs)
## External Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHEV</th>
<th>CUPA-HR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IPEDS Peer Analysis</td>
<td><em>US News &amp; World Report</em></td>
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<td>IPEDS Tool Finder</td>
<td>AUTM</td>
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<tr>
<td>AAUDE</td>
<td>NSF Research Data</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUG</td>
<td>AAUP Faculty Salaries</td>
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Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)
Ranking Systems Clearinghouse