Auburn University’s Institutional Effectiveness Report Preparation:

Academic and Student Support Units

September 23, 2014
Institutional Effectiveness

**CR 2.5**
The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission.

(Institutional Effectiveness)

**CS 3.3.1**
The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas: (Institutional Effectiveness)

3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
3.3.1.2 administrative support services
3.3.1.3 academic and student support services
3.3.1.4 research within its mission, if appropriate
3.3.1.5 community/public service within its mission, if appropriate
Welcome to Auburn University's Institutional Effectiveness Site

News and Announcements

The Office of the Provost and the University Assessment Council announce the availability of small grants in support of efforts to improve the assessment of student learning and the use of assessment results to promote academic achievement. The goal of these grants is to encourage academic programs to engage in sound learning assessment practices. Initiatives funded by these grants will also serve as models for other programs. Click here for application guidelines.

Click here to submit a 2013-14 assessment report for your program or unit.

To begin a report for your unit, please click on “My Dashboard” in the navigation menu, then on the “Effectiveness Report” tab. On the new screen, select your program or unit from the expandable Auburn University organization chart in the left-hand navigation panel, and then click on "New Item." Click here for step-by-step list of instructions for completing 2014 assessment report.

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment offers training sessions to assist those preparing assessment reports. Four sessions have been scheduled for September 2014, with two equivalent sessions for educational programs and one session each for administrative and academic/student support units:

- Academic and Student Support Units: Tuesday, September 23 at 10:00 a.m.
- Administrative Support Units: Tuesday, September 23 at 2:00 p.m.
- Educational Programs: Wednesday, September 24 at 2:00 p.m.
- Educational Programs: Thursday, September 25 at 2:00 p.m.

All training sessions will be held in 105 Rouse Life Sciences Building and will last approximately one hour. Seating is limited to 20 participants. To reserve a seat, email OIRA@auburn.edu.
What is the difference between goals and outcomes?

**Do outcomes matter?**

**Goals**
- Broad, future-oriented statements
- What the program or office is striving toward
- Refer to process
- Used in policy making and program planning

**Outcomes**
- Brief statements of results
- Describe behaviors of stakeholders
- Refer to results of processes
- Used to assess effectiveness and provide improvement information
Goals or Outcomes?

• After visiting the Career Center, students will report a better understanding of career development and job search processes.

• The Career Center will increase student confidence and understanding of career development and job search processes.
Goals or Outcomes?

• First-year Honors College students will be retained at a higher level compared to first-year non-Honors students at Auburn University.

• Honors College will increase Honors student retention at Auburn University.
Properties of Good Assessment Techniques

- Valid—directly reflects the learning outcome being assessed
- Reliable—"consistency" or "repeatability" of your measures.
- Actionable—results help faculty identify what students are learning well and what requires more attention
- Triangulation—multiple lines of evidence point to the same conclusion

Assessment Method Examples

Assessment Methods

Quantitative
- Surveys
- Analysis of Behavioral Records

Qualitative
- In-depth Interviews
- Focus Groups
Assessment Methods

- Assessment method should be clearly linked to an outcome.
- Assessment method description should be detailed and include the time period when the assessment took place, number of students who participated in survey or were included in the analysis, and survey item descriptions:

  During the fall semester 2012, all students who visited the Career Center for an appointment or a walk-in session were asked to complete a satisfaction survey. Approximately 1,300 surveys were distributed with 452 completions for a return rate of 33%. The first question on the survey asked what type of assistance they were seeking and students were instructed to check all reasons that applied...

- In cases when the number of students is rather small, one can combine several years of data.
Student Surveys

- Do not limit the survey instrument to global item(s), such as:
  - I would rate the overall effectiveness of … as: (1) poor; (2) fair; (3) good; (4) excellent.
- Include open-ended questions
- Avoid the following question formulation mistakes:
  - Ambiguous or imprecise questions, such as:
    - My friends often use campus recreation facilities: (1) yes; (2) no; (3) do not know
  - Two questions in the same question
    - The advisor I saw was friendly and helpful.
  - Questions that presume a particular answer
    - Wouldn’t you like to receive our free brochure?
  - Questions where a respondent does not have needed information
    - Do you agree with the university’s current residency requirement?
### How Focus Groups Differ from Survey Methods?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus-groups</th>
<th>Surveys</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insight not rules</td>
<td>Words not numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social not individual</td>
<td>Warm not hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homogeneous not diverse</td>
<td>Flexible not standardized</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Elements of Focus Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Participants:</strong></th>
<th>Selected, by invitation only; should have similar characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size:</strong></td>
<td>8-12 participants per session; invite up to twice as many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length:</strong></td>
<td>90 to 120 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of different sessions:</strong></td>
<td>varies; should be more than 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data collection:</strong></td>
<td>Audiotape; transcription</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formats of reporting:</strong></td>
<td>Selected quotations; analysis of repeated themes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis of Student Behavioral Records

- Frequency of contacts between students and their advisors
- Enrollment patterns and academic progress:
  - Major changes
  - Retention rates
  - Degree completion
  - Time to degree
  - Grades
- Use of student services
Findings

- Findings would ideally provide information about common strengths and weaknesses. **It is insufficient to provide one number or an average for all students:**
  
  *95% of students were satisfied with services they received.*

- If a survey instrument was used, one can use averages for each survey item that measures an outcome.

- If student behavioral records are used, one can compare different groups of students.
Findings, Examples:

- Behavioral Records:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-Year Fall GPA by Honors Status</th>
<th>Left AU</th>
<th>Left Honors</th>
<th>Honors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-Year Fall GPA</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Retention rates in the Honors College declined substantially by high school GPA range. Those with a 3.75 or higher remained in the HC at a rate of 77%, compared to a 50% retention rate for those in a GPA range of 3.5-3.74. These retention rates increase when controlling for those who left Auburn all together. In this case, 79% of those with a 3.75 or higher remained in the Honors College, while 55% with a high school GPA in the range of 3.5 to 3.74 persisted. Further, differences in first semester college GPAs for those groups were significantly higher for all high school GPA ranges when compared to the average GPA of those who remained in the Honors College. Therefore we believe higher high school GPAs is a good predictor of retention in the Honors College.
Findings, Examples:

• Surveys:

*University services*

All students indicated that they knew who their academic advisor was and that 99% were meeting with their advisor once or more per semester. These students had not made use of Tiger Advisor; less than 2% had used this service. However, they were active users of DegreeWorks; 94% had accessed this curriculum audit system. Other university services showed varying levels of familiarity: Study Partners (80% Very to somewhat familiar, 20% have heard of it, but don’t know what services it provides or never heard of it); Miller Writing Center (83%, 17%); Student Counseling Services (59%, 41%); Office of Undergraduate Research (42%, 58%); AU Career Center (71%, 29%).
Use of Findings for Improvement

Improvements should be linked to findings.

Examples:

- Based on the high demand for resume/cover letter assistance, new software was purchased to provide recorded resume/cover letter feedback on-line. (Career Center)

- Based on lower retention rates for students in Honors College who had lower high school GPAs, only students with 3.75 or higher high school GPAs will be accepted into the Honors College and exceptions will not be made based on other circumstances. (Honors College)
How can the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) assist?

- Reports on student behavioral records
How can the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) assist?

- Survey design or setting up survey in Qualtrics
- Focus group moderator’s guide
- Feedback on draft assessment reports
- Incorporating questions in university-wide exit surveys
Assessment Report Due Date:
October 15, 2014