

# Developing Mission, Outcomes and Methods to Assess Student Improvement

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# Workshop Goals

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To develop the knowledge and skills to:

- become more adept in the assessment of student outcomes and
- refine the *mission* of the program
- identify *student outcomes* appropriate to the mission of the program
- design appropriate *methods* to assess achievement of outcomes
- locate data sources to establish administrative outcomes, methods, and targets

# SACSCOC Influence

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## Institutional Effectiveness Continuous Improvement

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:  
(Institutional Effectiveness)

- a. Student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs, (Student outcomes: educational programs)
- b. Student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs, (Student outcomes: general education)
- c. **Academic and student services that support student success.** (Student outcomes: academic and student services)

# Expectations

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- In Fall
  - programs revisit Mission, Outcomes, and Method
  - Reports in system with Level 1 approval: Sept 30
  - Audits complete October 15
  - Dean's approval October 31
- In Spring
  - programs report Results, Action Plans, and Evidence of Improvement
  - Reports in system with Level 1 approval: May 31
  - Audits complete June 15
  - Dean's approval June 30

# SACSCOC Reaffirmation of Accreditation

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- Off-site review will be this October 2020.
- Results of the review will be communicated in December 2020.
- On-site visit will be March 30-April 1 2021.
  - Mostly virtual.
  - May asked to meet with departments.
- May have to provide more reports based on results of review.
  - Therefore, we asked that you don't reset all of your outcomes this fall.

# Mission Statement

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- A broad statement of what the program is, what it does, and for whom it does it
- A clear description of the **purpose** of the program and the environment that surrounds how students interact with the program
- Reflects how the program contributes to the education and careers of students impacted by the program
- Aligned with department, college, and university missions
- Distinctive for your program and the level of the program

# Mission Statement Components

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- **Primary functions** or activities of the program
  - most important functions, operations, outcomes, and/or offerings of your program
- **Purpose** of the program
  - the primary reasons why you perform your major activities or operations
- **Stakeholders**
  - groups or individuals that participate in the program and those that will benefit from the program

# Mission Statement Example

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## *Counseling Center*

*The Texas State Counseling Center provides high quality mental health services to promote the overall well-being, retention, and success of our diverse student population. As part of our role in higher education, the Counseling Center also contributes to the advancement of the mental health field through the training of new professionals. Our work is guided by ethics, professional standards, and respect for diversity*



# Mission Statement Example

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## Writing Center

*The mission of the Texas State University Writing Center is to develop Bobcats by helping them use writing as an intellectual activity integral to productivity in scholarly, civic, professional, and cultural lives. Through workshops, writing activities, and individualized appointments, accomplished peer consultants support writers from across the disciplines—students (freshman to doctoral), staff, and faculty—at any stage of the writing process in a variety of genres.*

# Checklist for Mission Statement

- Is it distinctive, specific to the program, and at the appropriate level?
- Does it clearly state the core purpose of the program?
- Does it indicate the primary function or activities of the program?
- Does it indicate who the stakeholders are?
- Does it clearly support the department's, college's, and university's missions?
- Is it appropriate for the level of the program?
- Is the statement brief and memorable?

# Outcomes

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- Aligned to mission and goal statements
- Clearly describe expected abilities, knowledge, values, and attitudes of those impacted by the program
- Stated so that a single method can be used to measure
- Written so that more than one measurement method can be used
- Focus on the learning or administrative results and not the process
- Measurable and there are resources available
- Can be used to identify areas to improve

# Outcome Requirements

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- Academic and Student Services Programs:
  - A minimum of three outcomes for each program
  - Outcomes should be student centered, based on what students will be able to do because of the program, not what the program will do to or for them
  - Two methods identified to assess each outcome

# Student Learning Outcomes

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- Describe specific knowledge and skills that a student should demonstrate as a result of their interaction with the program.
- Focus on the intended abilities, knowledge, values, and attitudes
  - three questions
    - What does the student know? (**cognitive**)
    - What can the student do? (**psychomotor**)
    - What does the student care about? (**affective**)

# *Student Learning Outcomes Examples*

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## Counseling Center:

*Students who receive counseling at the Counseling Center will report decreased symptoms of depression.*

## Distance Learning

*Students who enroll in self-paced correspondence courses successfully complete those courses for academic credit in a timely manner.*

# Checklist for Outcomes

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- Are the outcomes aligned with the mission, vision, values, and goals?
- Do outcomes focus on issues important to the level of the program?
- Do outcomes reflect learning through the (required) program curriculum?
- Is it possible to collect accurate and reliable data for each outcome?
- Do outcomes describe the knowledge abilities, values, and/or attitudes students graduating from the program are expected to demonstrate?
- Are they stated so that it is possible to use a single method to assess the outcome?
- Are they stated so that more than one assessment method can be used?
- Can they be used to identify areas to improve?
- Are they stated in clear and precise language?

# Methods and Measures

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- Should provide an objective means of measuring the extent to which students achieve the outcome and the efficiency or productivity of course and related activities
- Provide multiple (at least two) ways to measure each outcome
- Should indicate **how and when** you will assess each outcome
- Preferably should be indicated through **direct methods**
- Indicate a preferred **target** of attainment



# Method Descriptions

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- **What** are you going to use?
  - presentation, assignment, test, survey, observation, performance rating
- Of and/or by **whom**?
  - Student, supervisor, focus group
- **Context** (e.g., where or when)?
  - mid-semester, end of program
- For what **purpose**?
  - desired learning outcome
- To what **extent**?
  - hard targets, year to date attainment, or comparison to other programs in department, school, or college
- **example:** Test (essay) the students at the midpoint of the course for their level of knowledge in XYZ. Students are expected to score 85 percent or higher.

# *Methods Example - student learning*

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## **Office of Distance Learning**

*Student completion rates will be compiled from student records in the course database on May 30 annually. Student completion rates within the period provided for established course duration (either nine or six months) will increase by 2 percent annually.*

## **Counseling Center**

*Student clients complete the CCAPS-62 during their first visit to the Counseling Center and then complete repeated assessments using the briefer CCAPS-34 every three to four sessions. Both versions of the CCAPS include a critical item that tracks client-reported suicidal ideation on a rating scale of zero to four. Our goal is that students will reduce their reported level of suicidal ideation, with at least 50 percent reporting an absence of suicidal ideation (rating of 0) on their last assessment.*

# Data for Administrative Outcomes

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- Data may be obtained from Institutional Research
  - CatStats (only available from on-campus)  
<https://catstats.txstate.edu/>
  - Self-Service Tools on the Institutional Research Website  
<http://www.ir.txstate.edu/ir-self-service/self-service>
- Contact
  - Institutional Research
  - JCK 883
  - 512-245-2386
  - ir@txstate.edu

# Checklist on Methods

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- Does the method describe who, how when, where and what will be assessed?
- Is assessment derived from required components of the curriculum?
- Have clear performance targets been identified?
- Are the data reasonably easy to collect or access within the year?
- Does the method build on existing data?
- Are students motivated?
- Is the information directly controllable by the program?
- Can subcomponents of a measurement be identified to allow deeper analysis?
- Does method focus on direct measures?

# Overall Considerations

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- Is the plan written in terms that are understandable to someone outside of the field or institution?
- Are outcomes, methods, and targets stated simply, consistently and clearly?
- Do learning outcomes focus on learning rather than grades, attendance, participation or other activities?
- Is there a link between the mission, outcomes, and methods?
- How will findings be reported? Is there enough information in the methods to clearly analyze and report results? Do results need to be disaggregated for mode or location of delivery?
- Will you be able to develop an action plan if results don't meet the target?

# Outcomes Assessment Resources

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- Outcomes Assessment Website with Process Information  
<http://www.avpie.txstate.edu/assessment/outcomes-assessment.html>
- Outcomes Assessment Data Repository for Entering or Reviewing Reports  
<https://tim.txstate.edu/sacsoutcomes/>
- CatStats (only available from on-campus)  
<https://catstats.txstate.edu/>
- Self-Service Tools on the Institutional Research Website  
<http://www.ir.txstate.edu/ir-self-service/self-service>

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