UST

Institutional Effectiveness Report Preparation:
Administrative Support Units

September 2018
The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement

Adopted by the College Delegate Assembly
December 2017

SACS/COC
Section Association of Colleges and Schools
Foundation and Colleges

7.3 The institution identifies expected outcomes of its administrative support services and demonstrates the extent to which the outcomes are achieved.

(Administrative effectiveness)

Rationale and Notes

It is critical that administrative support services are provided effectively in order for the institution to obtain its strategic goals as well as operational efficiency. Administrative support service units normally include offices and departments such as finance and procurement, facilities and physical plant, administrative services, development/advancement, research office, the president’s office, etc. These offices serve the educational mission of the institution in a much more indirect way than do offices related to educational programs or academic and student services, but they are just as critical for the ability of the institution to achieve its mission. The efficient operation of these units is critical whether these functions are provided internally or outsourced to a contractor.

While these units rarely have “expected learning outcomes,” “expected outcomes” for administrative units typically include outcomes such as efficiency and quality of service targets (e.g., energy usage, response times, error rates, “clean report” targets, satisfaction rates); monetary targets (e.g., fund-raising targets, research grant targets, auxiliary income targets). Many times, the goals are explicit parts of the budgeting process or components of the strategic plan. For this standard, institutions should interpret “expected outcome” in a manner consistent with that administrative unit’s role in the institution. It is the institution’s responsibility to explain how and why these expected outcomes are determined.
Filing Assessment Report

UST uses XiTracs for all Assessment Reporting
Obtain your login from Nathan Dugat, Office of Institutional Assessment & Effectiveness and access XiTracs at
https://stthom.xitracs.net/survey/portallogin.jsp.
### What is the difference between objectives and outcomes?

**Objectives**

- 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
Outcome

- Aquinas Writing Scholar (AWS) students will be retained at a higher level compared to first-year non-Honors students at UST.

Objective

- The QEP will increase AWS student retention at UST.
Summary:

1. Objectives and outcomes are both tools for accomplishing what you want to achieve.
2. Objectives are long term and outcomes are usually accomplished in the short or medium term.
3. Objectives are nebulous and you can’t definitively say you have accomplished one whereas the success of an outcomes can easily be measured.
4. Objectives are hard to quantify or put in a timeline, but outcomes should be given a timeline to be more effective.
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

- Analysis of Existing Data
  - Number of transactions
  - Turnaround time
- Effort/cost of obtaining data
  - Surveys
  - Focus Groups
Types of Performance Measures

What do we do?
• # Clients/customers served
• # Activities (by type of activity)

How well do we do it?
• Client to staff ratio
• Staff turnover rate
• % satisfied customers
• Worker safety
• Turnaround time

Is anyone better off?
• Improvements over time
Unit Specific Measures

Personnel
- Average time to fill a vacancy
- % requests pending 30 days or more
- Workforce stability - % vacant positions
- Turnover rate (non-promotions)
- % managers who rate personnel as “helpful or very helpful“
- Rate of sick leave usage
Unit Specific Measures

Budget
- % Budget reviews on time
- % Forecasting accuracy
- % Surplus or deficiency
- Audit liabilities as % of budget
- % Managers who rate support from the budget unit "good or better"

Sources:
http://raguide.org/3-1-what-are-the-basic-ideas-behind-performance-accountability/
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?

Focus-groups

Surveys

- Insight not rules
- Social not individual
- Homogeneous not diverse
- Flexible not standardized
- Warm not hot
- Words not numbers
Elements of Focus Groups

**Participants:** Selected, by invitation only; should have similar characteristics

**Size:** 8-12 participants per session; invite up to twice as many

**Length:** 90 to 120 minutes

**Number of different sessions:** varies; should be more than 1

**Data collection:** Audiotape; transcription

**Formats of reporting:** Selected quotations; analysis of repeated themes
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:

  The survey was sent to 45 clients for projects that were financially closed out in calendar year 2015. There were (10) questions and each was given a Likert scale of: (1) Very Dissatisfied, (2) Dissatisfied, (3) Neutral, (4) Satisfied, and (5) Very Satisfied.

  Questions asked of clients in regard to the Construction Phase were:

  1. Reasonableness of the budget
  2. Adherence to the established budget
  3. Reasonableness of the schedule
  4. Adherence to the established schedule
  5. Clarity of written and verbal communication
  6. Timeliness of communication
  7. Understanding of your requirements and needs
  8. Willingness and ability to answer your questions
  9. Responsiveness to work scope changes and special requests
  10. Construction lead's knowledge and professionalism
Findings

- Findings would ideally provide information about common strengths and weaknesses. It is *insufficient* to provide one number or an average:
  - *We kept our available hours billed out to projects at an average rate of at least 95%.*
  - *Over the period of fiscal year 2012 there were 12 accidents.*
  - *95% of clients were satisfied with our services.*
  - *Of 785 invoices, 745 (95%) were accurate. 40 (5% of random sampling) contained errors.*

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

- If other data are used, think of best ways to classify the data, i.e. timing, type of accidents, type of errors.
Use of Findings for Improvement

Improvements should be linked to findings.

Examples:

• The results of the Village Dining Food Court survey indicated that the least popular options were Nathan’s Nachos and Home Plate. Campus Dining responded by replacing those less popular concepts with Fiery Fajitas and Tiger Wok. An end of semester survey will be employed to gauge the student’s satisfaction with the changes. (Campus Dining)

• The review of accident counts by program over two years revealed that accidents most frequently occur in Slips/Trips/Falls (7 accidents), Motor Vehicle Safety (7 accidents), and Ergonomics (6 accidents). In 2012, the main emphasis of safety training sessions was in Slips/Trips/Falls and Ergonomics. (Maintenance)
Assessment Report Due Date:
November 15, 2017