

The Institutional Effectiveness Process

The University of St. Thomas (UST) engages in a multifaceted planning and evaluation process to determine the appropriateness of the mission and the extent to which the mission is accomplished. The planning and evaluation consist of the strategic planning process, the Institutional Effectiveness process, and operational planning and analysis. Figure 1 demonstrates the relationship of these components to one another.

The mission of the University of St. Thomas is to embody and instill in our students the core values of our founders, the Basilian Fathers: goodness, discipline, and knowledge. As a learning-centered institution, planning and assessment are focused on continuous improvement of student learning outcomes and the administrative and educational services that support student success.

Figure 1: Strategic, Operational, and Institutional Effectiveness Planning and Assessment



The Institutional Effectiveness (IE) process is structured around the use of the Continuous Improvement Cycle Model (Figure 2) and the Institutional Effectiveness reporting forms. The institutional mission and objectives provide oversight and guidance to the colleges and support units of UST. Mission statements for various departments are reviewed to determine congruency with the institutional mission and objectives. Objectives are developed to determine expected outcomes for the programs and services provided. Assessment and reporting of results are accomplished through the use of the Institutional Effectiveness plans.

Figure 2: Continuous Improvement Cycle Model



The Institutional Effectiveness plans have various components (Table 1) as briefly described here. The department Mission outlines the ultimate principles that guide the work of the program, whom it serves, in what ways, and with what results. The Objective describes what the unit is striving toward; objectives are used to make policy and planning decisions. In this section, departments show support for university Strategic Initiatives by linking them to their objectives. Expected Outcomes describe desired outcomes in relation to objectives; they are usually classified as process, target, or satisfaction oriented. Assessment is targeted at the educational program or department level with desired outcomes listed for assessment in the IE plans.

The next portion of the Institutional Effectiveness plan consists of the assessment components. Assessment methods identify the assessment tools used to determine success at meeting the stated goals. Benchmarks establish a target for completion of the goal for assessment purposes. The assessment timeline, which is embedded in Expected Outcomes, is not included on the plan/report form but should be established for internal control. The assessment Results represent the actual results of the measurements.

The Use of Results section of the IE plan represents one of the most important portions of the plan as it represents the "closing the loop" component of the assessment process. Variance between the expected outcomes and assessment results are identified and analyzed with the intent of making changes to improve student learning, service, and operation. How results are used to make improvements is recorded in this portion of the report.

Assessment Results and Rationale are the final components of the IE plan. This area provides a summation of the unit assessment process for the cycle. Assessment plans are completed on a yearly basis with a mid-cycle report of progress. The Rationale discusses plans for future assessment activities.

Table 1: Description of the Institutional Effectiveness Plan of Administrative and Educational and Student Support Services Template Components

Section	Description
Department Mission	The mission or purpose statement for each program or department
Objectives	Objectives generally have a broad scope. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge, skills, behaviors graduates will demonstrate upon completion of the program <i>Strategic Initiatives supported by the department are linked in the Objectives field.</i>
Expected Outcomes	Describe desired outcomes in relation to objectives. They are usually classified as one of the three: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process-oriented: what the unit intends to accomplish. Typically described in terms of level or volume of activity, efficiency of processes, and compliance with good practices/regulations • Target-oriented: what clients will be able to know, do, value, and believe after receiving the unit's services • Satisfaction-oriented: client satisfaction level after receiving service Academic Programs must include both PROGRAM outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the overall timeline for the assessment • What steps need to be taken to conduct the assessment For each step: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When will it take place ○ Person(s) responsible for the assessment What is being assessed
Assessment Methods	Assessment methods (measurement tools) used to gauge the progress toward specific goal completion. Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What measures will allow determination of goal achievement? • What assessments are currently available for use in measuring goal achievement? • Are the current assessments providing the appropriate information?
Benchmarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What constitutes success of goal achievement? • What is the target level for goal achievement?
Results	The assessment results include the actual results of assessment and should answer these questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the actual results of the assessment? • What did the findings indicate? • Is the supporting data and statistical information included? • Was the intended outcome met?
Use of Results	Based on the assessment findings and analysis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the resulting plans • What changes will occur to improve the degree of goal completion
Will This Expected Outcome Be Evaluated again in the Next Cycle?	Yes or No
Rationale	Explanation of why this Expected Outcome will be used in next year's plan

Linkage of Outcome Assessment to the Strategic Plan:

The strategic planning process represents the long range planning process for the institution and provides a three-year map for accomplishing the mission of the institution (Figure 1). Specific objectives and actions are developed to accomplish each strategic goal. The Institutional Effectiveness process represents an outcome-oriented process. The IE plans submitted by academic programs and support services provide evidence of the extent of accomplishment of the mission of UST. The strategic planning and IE process are integrated processes focused on the achievement of the mission of the institution.

Timeline and Cycles:

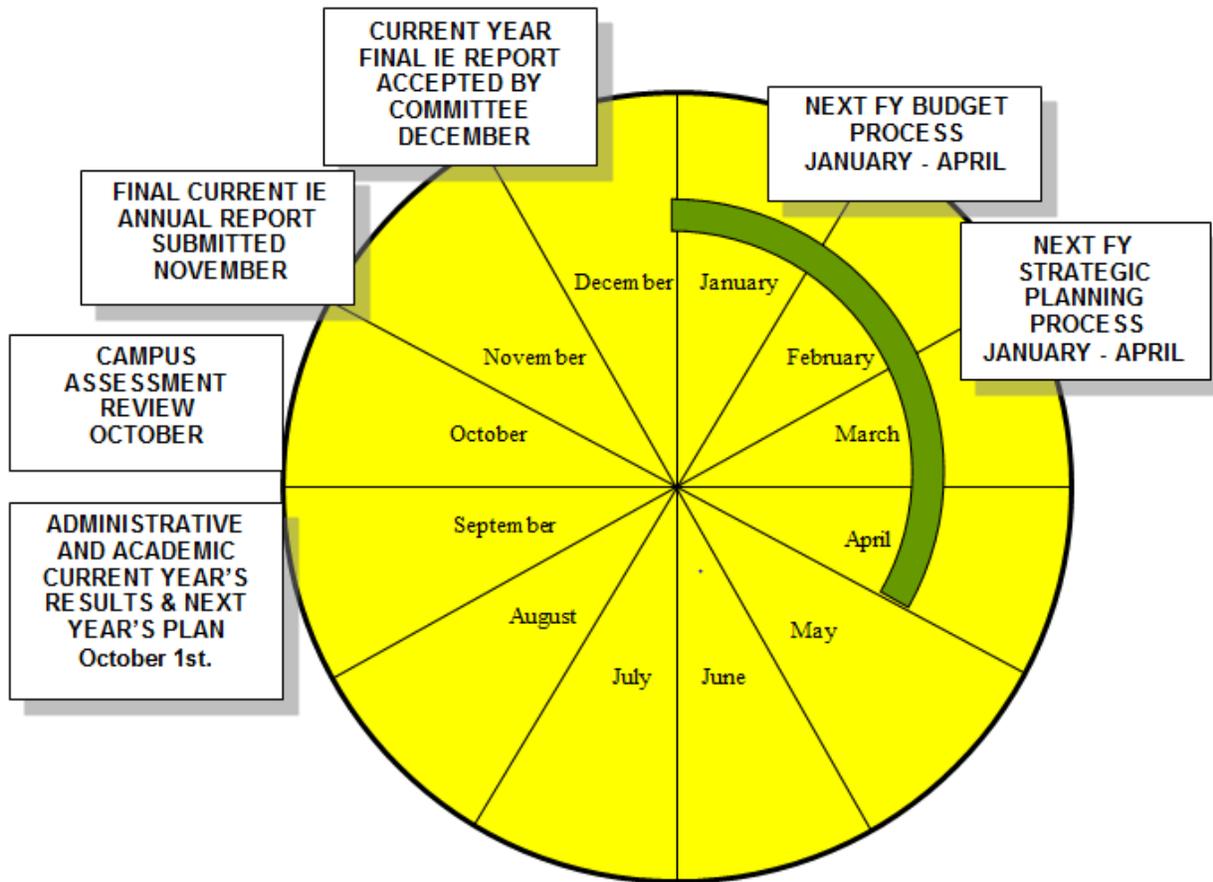
- The assessment cycle coincides with the academic year of UST: end-August to mid-August. (Figure 3)
- Completed Institutional Effectiveness plans are submitted by October 1st.
- IE plans for the upcoming year are due at the time of Institutional Effectiveness report submission.
- The Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness will review reports and provide feedback to departments.
- Assessment data should be added to the Institutional Effectiveness plans throughout the year as data are collected.
- Departments should plan quarterly reviews throughout the year to ensure that activity completion is current and the college community is aware of progress.

Time is provided from the end of the assessment cycle, to the dates for submission of reports and the next year's plans, for analysis of results by departments. Analysis of assessment data should involve all members of the department to determine the best use of results for improvement of educational programs and services.

Operational Planning and Analysis:

Operational planning involves budget, facilities, and human resource planning to support the strategic initiatives and expected outcomes for the institution (Figure 1). UST continuously generates data that play a significant role in the operational planning and assessment process. Data collection used for operational planning includes, but is not limited to, student persistence, student satisfaction, graduation rates, job placement and beginning salaries of graduates, employee satisfaction, graduate employer surveys, alumni or graduate surveys, consolidated quarterly reports, financial reports, and admissions reports. Longitudinal data for these key metrics are available. Evaluation of this information occurs on a weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly basis and is used to support programs and services. Significant components of these data are compiled in the weekly key statistics report that is reviewed at executive committee meetings each week. This process allows the key administrative units of the institution to have their fingers on the “pulse of the campus” and make informed, data-driven decisions that are vital to efficient operation of the institution.

Figure 3: Timeline



Institutional Effectiveness plans are completed by faculty, staff, and administrative units of the institution and submitted to the Office of Institutional Assessment and Effectiveness (Figure 4). IE plans are reviewed and feedback provided concerning quality of data, data interpretation, and use of assessment results for program/service improvement. A scoring rubric for evaluating IE plans is available to guide the evaluation of reports submitted by each educational, administrative, and educational support area (Table 2). It is important to note that the Institutional Effectiveness process should not be used to evaluate departmental or individual performance. Assessment of goal achievement should be used to determine where improvement in educational programs, administrative, and educational support services are required to improve the student learning experience. The assessment results should never be used for yearly performance review.

Figure 4: The Institutional Effectiveness Model

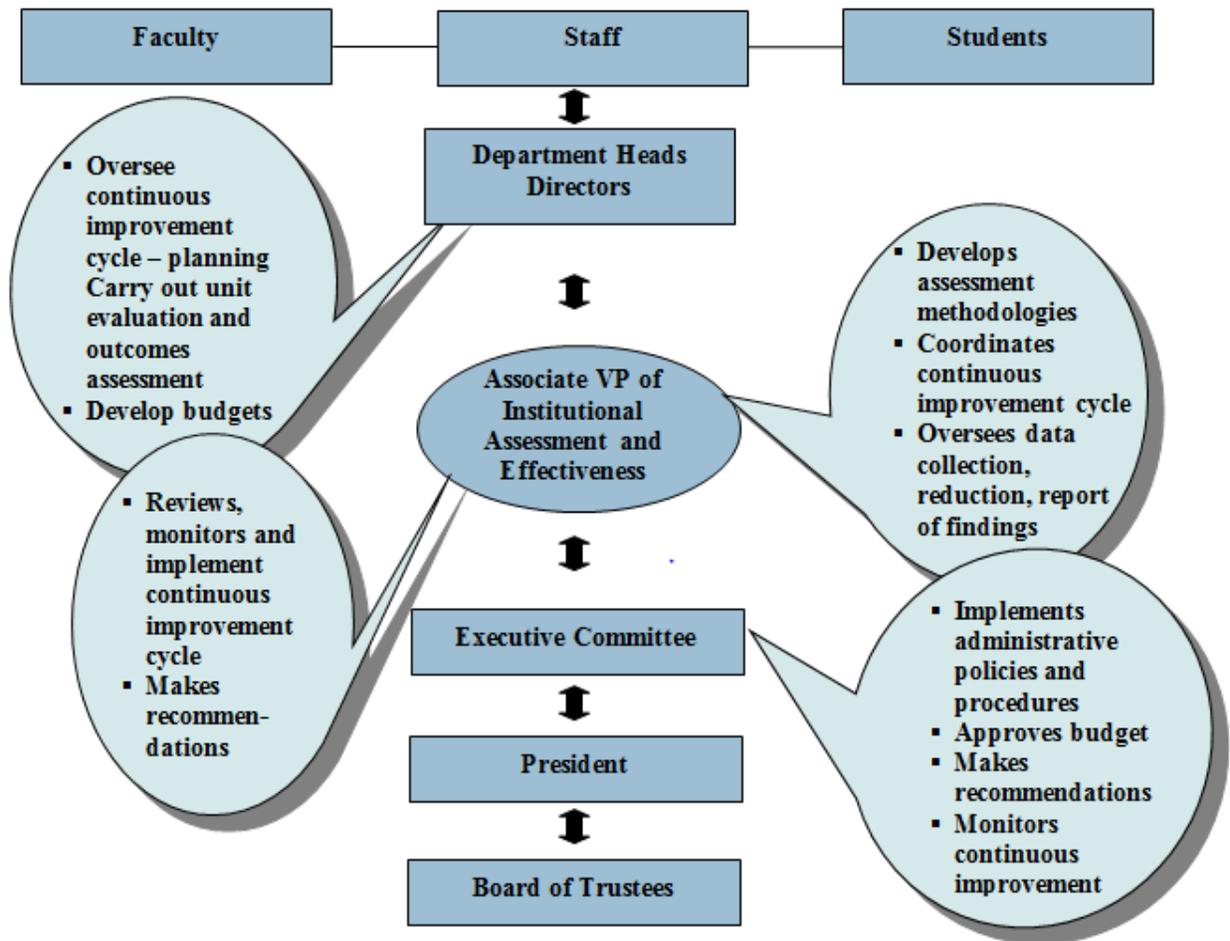


Table 2: UST’s Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness Plans

	Developing	Acceptable	Exemplary
Strategic Initiatives (linked in Objectives)	The institutional goals supported are listed and are clearly linked.	The institutional goals supported are listed, but the linkage is unclear.	No institutional goals supported are listed.
Program Mission	General statement of the intent of the program. Identifies the functions performed but not the greater purpose. Does not identify stakeholders. Fails to demonstrate clear alignment with college or division mission. Too general to distinguish the unit or too specific to encompass the entire mission.	Statement of the program's purpose and who it serves. Aligned with the college and division mission statements. Scope and reach may be limited.	Clear and concise. Specific to the program (identifies what it does that separates it from other units or programs.) Addresses the larger impact of the program. Identifies stakeholders. Aligned with the college and division mission and with respective professional organization, if applicable.
Program Objectives	Mission is not linked to objectives; objectives are missing or not stated in measurable terms; objectives do not focus on student learning and/or program effectiveness; objectives do not have stated targets. NB: objectives should not state an activity the unit is doing (i.e. hiring a staff member, expanding hours of operation). The objective should be to improve the effectiveness of the unit.	Mission is linked to objectives; most objectives are stated in measurable terms; most objectives focus on learning outcomes and/or program effectiveness; some objectives address longitudinal outcomes; most objectives have stated targets	Mission is clearly and logically linked to objectives; all objectives are stated in measurable terms; all objectives focus on learning outcomes and/or program effectiveness; some objectives address longitudinal outcomes; objectives have stated targets.
Expected Outcomes	There are no clearly defined outcomes.	Outcomes are defined but are not aligned	Outcomes are clearly defined, clearly

		with the objective, strategic initiative, or mission.	support the objective, and are process-, target-, or satisfaction-oriented.
Assessment Method	Not all outcomes have associated measures. Few or no direct measures used. Methodology is questionable. Instruments are vaguely described; may not be developed yet. Course grades used as an assessment method. Do not seem to capture the "end of experience" effect of the curriculum/program.	At least 1 measure or measurement approach per outcome. Direct and indirect measures are utilized. Described with sufficient detail. Implementation may still need further planning.	Multiple measures for some or all outcomes. Direct and indirect measures used; emphasis on direct. Instruments reflect good research methodology. Feasible - existing practices used where possible; at least some measures apply to multiple outcomes. Purposeful - clear how results could be used for program improvement. Described with sufficient detail (documents; e.g. rubrics, assignments, attached in Document Repository, where appropriate).
Benchmark	Targets have not been identified for every measure, or are not aligned with the measure. Seem off-base (too low/high). Language is vague or subjective (e.g. "improve", "satisfactory") making it difficult to tell if met. Aligned with assessment process rather than results (e.g. survey return rate, number of papers reviewed).	Aligned with measures and outcomes. Target identified for each measure. Specific and measurable. Some targets may seem arbitrary.	Aligned with measures and outcomes. Represent a reasonable level of success. Specific and measurable. Meaningful - based on benchmarks, previous results, existing standards.
Results	Incomplete or too much information.	Complete and organized. Align with	Complete, concise and well-organized.

	<p>Not clearly aligned with achievement targets. Questionable conclusion about whether targets were met, partially met, or not met. Questionable data collection/ analysis; may "gloss over" data to arrive at conclusion.</p>	<p>the language of the corresponding achievement target. Address whether targets were met. May contain too much detail or stray slightly from intended data set.</p>	<p>Appropriate data collection/ analysis. Align with the language of the corresponding achievement target. Provide solid evidence that targets were met, partially met, or not met. Compares new findings to past trends, as appropriate. Supporting documentation (rubrics, surveys, more complete reports*, etc.) are included in the document repository. *Reports must be free of student identifiable information.</p>
<p>Use of Results</p>	<p>Not clearly related to assessment results. Seems to offer excuses for results rather than thoughtful interpretation or "next steps" for program improvement. No action plans or too many to manage. Too general; lacking details (e.g. time frame, responsible party).</p>	<p>Reflects with sufficient depth on what was learned during the assessment cycle. At least one action plan in place.</p>	<p>Exhibits an understanding of the implications of assessment findings. Identifies an area that needs to be monitored, remediated, or enhanced and defines logical "next steps". Possibly identifies an area of the assessment process that needs improvement. Contains completion dates. Identifies a responsible person/group. Number of action plans is manageable.</p>

Review of the Institutional Effectiveness plans determines the extent of unit Objective completion, linkage to Objectives, and the extent to which the mission and goals for the institution have been accomplished. The Office of Institutional Assessment and Effectiveness also reviews proposed plans for the next yearly cycle. The evaluation summary is then submitted to the president's cabinet.

The Institutional Effectiveness process is an important component of UST assessment and planning. Coupled with the strategic planning process and operational planning and analysis, the Institutional Effectiveness process completes a multifaceted, integrated, and continuous evaluation of the institutions mission and goals. The decision making process is data driven and results in improvement of programs and services for all areas of the institution. Review of Institutional Effectiveness plans provides a means of determining achievement of the mission of each component of the institution and through linkage to the mission and goals of the institution a measurement of achievement of the mission of the University of St. Thomas.