Welcome! This is the first issue of the Strategic Planning and Assessment Newsletter. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide information regarding planning and assessment at Texas Tech and other universities. It is hoped that the newsletter will serve as a resource to enhance strategic planning and assessment at all levels of the university. Your comments and suggestions are invited. You may contact Dr. Gil Reeve, Director of Strategic Planning via e-mail at Gilmour.Reeve@ttu.edu.

2003 Annual Assessment Reports Now Online!

The 2003 Strategic Planning Assessment Reports are now online. The assessment reports for all areas and units are linked to the strategic planning and assessment homepage. The URL for accessing the reports is http://techdata.irs.ttu.edu/strareport/. Our homepage also has links to resources related to strategic planning and assessment. Visit our homepage for great ideas!

2004 Annual Assessment Reports

The preparation and submission of the 2004 Strategic Planning Assessment Reports will follow a similar timeline as used in previous years. However, the assessment reports are available for data entry now, allowing more time for areas and units to prepare their reports.

The strategic planning assessment reports are to reflect the contributions of the faculty in achieving the goals of a department’s strategic plan. Academic departments must include assessments of student learning outcomes for their academic programs. Other areas and units must include outcome assessments related to their specific goals.

Three timeframes are represented in an annual report: the Fiscal Year, for financial data that are budgeted from September 1 – August 31; Calendar Year, for data derived from faculty annual reports; Fall Semester, for data that are reported officially in that semester.

Area leaders may establish specific timelines for their units within the timeline below. That is, if an area leader needs to receive reports prior to an established deadline, the area leader may require her/his units to submit reports when needed. Areas or units needing to submit reports after the established deadline must receive permission from the individual to whom the report is being submitted and also notify the Office of Strategic Planning that the report will be submitted late.

Assessment Report Timeline

November 2004 – Assessment Reports are opened to allow data input. http://techdata.irs.ttu.edu/strareport/

March 11 – Friday – Academic departments, centers/institutes, and support departments submit reports to Deans and VPs.

April 25 – Deans and other Area Leaders reporting to the Provost submit reports to Provost.

May 9 – Provost and VPs submit reports to President.

June 2005 – University Assessment Report is completed. All reports posted on the Web.
**DO THIS FIRST!**

Area and unit leaders should **verify that the strategic plan for their area/unit is linked to the Strategic Planning and Assessment homepage.** This link is maintained by logging in and selecting the option to “Manage Users/URL.” Under the Manage Contact/Website Information select “Add/Edit Strategic Plan URL.” Provide the requested information and click on “Save.” The link between our homepage and your strategic plan which is on your Website is established.

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**AND WHILE YOU’RE AT IT!**

It is important to check the **contact information for the area and unit leader.** Follow the same steps as above, but select “Add/Edit Contact Information.” This link will allow you to update the leader’s name, mail stop and e-mail addresses, and phone number.

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**DID YOU KNOW?**

Did you know that the area/unit leader can assign others with specific privileges for the assessment reports? To explore these options, follow the above links but select options under the **manage users menu.** You should verify who has specific privileges in your area or unit. If a faculty or staff member has left your area/unit, you will want to check that they no longer have privileges in your area/unit.

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**ENHANCEMENTS TO THE WEB PAGES.**

Each year following submission of the annual assessment reports, the **Office of Institutional Research and Information Management** conducts a survey of the process used to prepare the reports. Based on the feedback from the survey, specific changes are made to enhance the process. This year there are **several enhancements that are significant:**

1. Area leaders have been given the **authority to lock and unlock unit reports** in their area. This change will allow the area leader to request changes in a locked unit report without needing to contact our office, saving time and allowing for more direct control of unit reports at the area level.

2. In the area/unit specific quantitative information section (3.a), it is now possible to **rearrange sections, categories, and variables.** If new measures are added, these measures can now be repositioned, rather than being added at the end of the list of variables. See the new option to “Rearrange Quantitative Data” in the area/unit specific information section.

3. When a new user is given privileges in an area/unit, **that individual will receive an e-mail notification** that she/he has been added as a user.

4. **Area reports can now be locked or unlocked** by the Director of Strategic Planning, saving a step when such actions are required. To lock or unlock reports, e-mail request to Gilmour.Reeve@ttu.edu.

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**REPORT PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS AND TROUBLESHOOTING**

On the Strategic Planning and Assessment Report homepage are links for instructions and guidelines for preparing the assessment reports. Use the pull-down menu for **TTU-SPAR HELP** to open the Instructions and Guidelines. If you are experiencing trouble using the assessment report Web pages or can’t login, contact us at StatPlanHelp@ttu.edu.
STATE-MANDATED ACCOUNTABILITY.

An emerging trend in states throughout the country is the focus on accountability in higher education. See for example the article in The Chronicle of Higher Education “How can colleges prove they’re doing their jobs?” (B6 – B10, September 3, 2004). The State of Texas is not an exception to this trend. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), working in conjunction with the Governor’s Office, has identified 5 categories of performance measures that will be used in the state-mandated accountability reports. The 5 categories are Participation, Success, Excellence, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness and Efficiencies. For each category, a set of key and contextual measures have been identified. The key measures have target values set for the university.

Each university’s measures will be posted on the THECB’s Web pages (http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/Accountability/) and shared with the State Legislature. The first set of these accountability reports is to be posted by December 17, 2004.

It is obvious that our performance as reflected in the accountability reports will become increasingly important. Strategic planning is essential to ensure that we are successful in achieving the targets set by the state.

AND MORE ON ACCOUNTABILITY.

President Jon Whitmore was an invited presenter at the recent national symposium “A New Compact for Higher Education: Accountability, Deregulation, and Institutional Improvement” held at the University of Texas – Austin, on October 27- 28, 2004. President Whitmore focused his comments on the issue of to whom are our accountability reports important and for what purpose. His position was that we need different sets of accountability data to address our different constituencies. For Texas Tech, those constituencies are the State, our System and Board of Regents, and our selves (students, faculty, and staff) as related to our strategic plan. He concluded with the point that there is an important responsibility on the part of the State to provide the necessary resources to allow the university to achieve the target values set by the State.

EVER SEEN A DASHBOARD?

Closely tied to the emphasis on accountability is the use of dashboards (or balanced scorecards) to display performance data. Similar to the dashboard in your car, an accountability dashboard provides a visual display of the “workings” of the university on important performance measures. President Whitmore presented a prototype model of a dashboard for the State accountability measures at the October Board of Regents meeting. Our goal is to have this accountability dashboard posted on the Web by the end of the fall semester. It will be linked to the Strategic Planning and Assessment Report Website.

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS INVITED!
Please send comments to Gilmour.Reeve@ttu.edu.