Welcome! The purpose of the newsletter is to provide information regarding planning and assessment at Texas Tech and other universities.

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2005 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORTS TIMELINE

The following timeline has been established for preparation and submission of the 2005 Annual Assessment Reports:

November 1, 2005 – Assessment reports are opened to allow data input
March 10, 2006 – Friday – Academic departments, centers/institutes, and support departments submit reports to Deans and VPs.
April 24, 2006 – Monday – Deans and other Area Leaders reporting to the Provost submit reports to Provost.
May 8, 2006 – Monday – Provost and VPs submit reports to President.
June 2006 – University Assessment Report is completed.

Area leaders may set earlier timelines for their units to submit the annual assessment reports. After November 1, unit and area reports may be locked (submitted) at any time.

SOME BASIC HOUSEKEEPING TASKS

- Verify that the strategic plan for your area/unit is linked to the Strategic Planning and Assessment homepage.
- Check the contact information for the area and unit leader.
- Assign others with specific privileges for the assessment reports.

Instructions for linking strategic plans, updating contact information, and assigning others with privileges were included in the first newsletter (Vol. 1, Number 1) which is now posted to our Strategic Planning homepage.

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Web pages or cannot login, contact us at StatPlanHelp@ttu.edu.

PROGRAM-LEVEL ASSESSMENT PLANS ARE DUE
DECEMBER 15, 2005

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) requires that all institutions identify expected outcomes for its educational programs and for its administrative and support services (institutional effectiveness). Additionally, SACS requires that each educational program establishes and evaluates program and learning outcomes.

Academic departments are to submit program-level assessment plans for all degree programs to their academic deans by December 15, 2005.

Significant resources on program assessment are available on the Strategic Planning and Assessment Report homepage (follow the Related Links menu to the Outcomes Assessment Resources).

Go to: http://techdata.irs.ttu.edu/stratreport/index.asp
A final assessment workshop will be held on Friday, November 11, from 2 – 4 PM in 151 TLTC. The purpose of the upcoming workshop is to answer lingering questions and address issues related to the submission of the program-level assessment plans. Department chairs, program coordinators and interested faculty are encouraged to attend. People can register online at www.tltc.ttu.edu. If they have any problems, they can contact Dr. Andrea McCourt (2-0133 or andrea.mccourt@ttu.edu).

Dr. Reeve, Director of Strategic Planning, is available to meet with individual departments to discuss learning outcomes assessment for academic programs. Please contact him at 2-2121 or Gilmour.Reeve@ttu.edu to schedule a meeting.

NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR COURSE SYLLABI

SACS also requires that our course syllabi include statements about expected learning outcomes and methods of assessment. OP 32.06, Faculty Responsibility, was revised to require the inclusion of this information in the course syllabus. As now stated in OP 32.06, “Specifically, within the first week of the semester, faculty members must provide a course syllabus that includes:

a. The course outline;

b. The expected learning outcomes from the course;

c. The methods of assessing those outcomes; and

d. The criteria for grade determination.

And the OP continues with other specific recommendations for the syllabi and teaching classes.

Also, department chairs have a new responsibility related to faculty evaluations and the course syllabi requirement. OP 32.32, Performance Evaluations of Faculty, states that “As one part of the evaluation, the chairperson will verify the inclusion in the course syllabi of the expected student learning outcomes and the methods used to assess those outcomes (as required by OP 32.06, Faculty Responsibility).”

The Chairperson’s Evaluation Form in OP 32.32 (Attachment C) now includes a box to verify that faculty syllabi have been reviewed for inclusion of expected learning outcomes and methods of assessment.

Dr. Andrea McCourt in the TLTC has written a handbook on preparing course syllabi. The handbook and other resources are available online at http://dev.tltc.ttu.edu/Redesign/assessment/index.asp.

Faculty may contact Dr. McCourt for consulting on issues related to assessing student learning in the classroom at 2-0133 or andrea.mccourt@ttu.edu

REVISING AND REFOCUSING THE UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The current university strategic plan was prepared in 2001. Since that time, the university has experienced significant changes in the administrative leadership at all levels. President Whitmore requested that the strategic plan be revised to be more focused and to address emerging critical issues.

The Strategic Planning Council provided recommendations to reduce the overall number of goals and to improve the benchmarks used in the university strategic plan during the past year.

In preparing the final revision of the university strategic plan, it became apparent that the plan served two important purposes. For internal planning purposes, clear goal statements with benchmarks were important. However, for external purposes, the need existed to identify the priorities that would capture the overall important issues addressed in the plan. Thus, the university strategic plan now has four Strategic Priorities and seven Strategic Goals.

The goals are the internal operational statements that each area and unit will focus on, as well as their own strategic goals. Attached to this newsletter is a one-page
summary of the revised university strategic plan. The full-document, with benchmarks, will be distributed shortly.

Areas and units will be instructed to update and revise their strategic plans (specific instructions will be provided) so that their plans are both aligned with the university strategic plan and also better capture the important strategic goals within their areas and units. In other words, each area and unit should take more ownership of the strategic plan, so that the documents serve as central planning tools for each area and unit.

The process for planning and assessment has been followed since 2001, but has not been formally recognized. During the summer 2005, a new operating policy was approved that outlines the policy and procedures for planning and assessment at Texas Tech (see OP 10.13, Strategic Planning and Assessment for Texas Tech University, Including All Academic Programs and Support Operations at http://www.depts.ttu.edu/opmanual/Contents.htm#10).”

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ASSESSMENT REPORTS

One common question about the annual assessment reports is “who uses the reports.” A related question that I often hear as Director of Strategic Planning is “have you read my report yet?” On the one hand, these and similar questions are appreciated because they show interest in the reports and a desire to know how the reports are to be used. On the other hand, the questions suggest a misunderstanding about the assessment reporting process.

Unlike the annual assessment reports from the mid-1990s through 2001 that were sent from the departments to the Office of Institutional Research, the current assessment reports are sent through the same administrative structure as all other budget, personnel, and program requests. On the academic side for example, reports originate in the departments and are submitted to the academic deans who in turn submit college assessment reports to the provost.

So, to answer the question, “who uses these reports,” one must answer two other questions:

1. Who wrote the report?
   These reports are first intended to allow the individual departments to assess their own accomplishments and areas of needed improvement over the past year. So, there is an important self-assessment involved in this process.

2. Who received the report? The administrative leader who receives the report is to use the information in the reports to evaluate the work of the unit. An academic dean receives from each department a detailed report (prepared by the department) of its accomplishments and areas of needed improvement.

As noted previously, SACS requires that our institution be engaged in an ongoing process of planning and assessment that uses the information to make decisions to further our institutional effectiveness. Such decisions must result in improvements to the programs and services of the university.

The Office of Strategic Planning coordinates and facilitates planning and assessment but does not “use the reports” because all decisions regarding budget, personnel, and programs are the responsibility of other administrative areas and units.

INPUT REQUESTED

If you have comments or questions about strategic planning and assessment, contact Dr. T. Gilmour Reeve (2-2121; Gilmour.Reeve@ttu.edu)
TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION STATEMENT
Committed to teaching and the advancement of knowledge, Texas Tech University, a comprehensive public research university, provides the highest standards of excellence in higher education, fosters intellectual and personal development, and stimulates meaningful research and service to humankind.

VISION STATEMENT
Texas Tech University will be a national leader in higher education—manifesting excellence, embracing diversity, inspiring confidence, and engaging society. The university aspires to a national recognition of excellence and performance in scholarship through teaching, research, and service.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND GOALS

INVEST IN THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
Access and Diversity: Recruit, retain, and graduate a larger, more academically prepared, and more diverse student body.

Human Resources and Infrastructure: Increase and use resources to recruit and retain quality faculty and staff and to support an optimal work environment.

ENRICH THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE
Undergraduate Teaching and Learning: Provide nationally recognized instruction in our undergraduate programs.

Graduate and Professional Education: Enhance graduate and professional education opportunities.

Engagement: Provide scholarly outreach opportunities that contribute to students’ learning and that benefit our communities, the state, and nation.

ADVANCE RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ENDEAVORS
Research Productivity: Increase research productivity and funding for all areas of inquiry within the university.

STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS
Partnerships: Build strategic partnerships and alliances with community, government, business, industry, and schools (K-12, community colleges, and universities).

Note: Texas Tech initiated its current strategic planning effort in December 2001 when the Board of Regents approved the university plan. Over the past 4 years, Tech has conducted annual assessments for the university, and all areas and units based on the strategic plans. Benchmarks are used to measure the progress toward each goal. In the fall semester 2005, the university revised the strategic plan by focusing the goals around specific strategic priorities. All areas and units within the university will align their strategic plans with the university’s priorities and goals and also reflect the unique mission and vision of each area and unit. More information regarding the university strategic plan and annual assessment reports is available at http://techdata.irs.ttu.edu/stratreport/.