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

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- SACS: planning and assessment
- Preparing the Annual Assessment Report
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- Updating the Area and Unit Strategic Plans

2005 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORTS TIMELINE

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

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.

DO THIS FIRST: 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 to help prepare and review the report.

SACS: THE UNIVERSITY’S OBLIGATIONS TO PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

In its Principles of Accreditation, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools states that “The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that incorporate a systematic review of programs and services that (a) results in continuing improvement, and (b) demonstrates that the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission.” Also, SACS requires that “The institution identifies expected outcomes for its educational programs and its administrative and educational support services; assesses whether it achieves these outcomes; and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results.”

Based on these standards for accreditation, Texas Tech, as well as every other institution in the southern region, must be continually engaged in a process of planning and assessment. There are three requirements in these standards:
1. That the institution does planning and assessment;
2. That the institution uses the results of our assessments;
3. That the institution documents the improvements resulting from the assessments.

AND ANOTHER REASON TO DO PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT is that these activities allow for open and informed decisions to be made regarding program improvement and resource allocations. In other words, PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT ARE THE “RIGHT THINGS TO DO.”
PREPARING THE ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT: GUIDELINES AND SUGGESTIONS

- Ensure that assessment reports are:
  - Consistent with current strategic plan
  - Complete (provide information in all sections of the report)
  - Accurate (the information reported is correct and current) and meaningful and useful (the report reflects information needed to make decisions and is used by the unit and area)
  - Timely (update plan and assessments as needed)

- Document what has been assessed, how the assessments were used, and what improvements occurred based on using the results of the assessments.

- When new courses, curriculum changes, or new faculty/staff hires are made, document the process used to determine that such changes or additions were needed. This might require stating that a faculty member was hired in a certain area to advance research in that area; or that a course was added because of an evaluation of student learning indicated the need for addition material to the curriculum. Such changes never take place without some evaluation and decision about what is needed to improve the program or unit. However, we have not adequately documented the assessments that led to the decision about resource allocation.

- Allow others in unit/area to contribute to and review the assessment report

- Include information from faculty and staff evaluations (publications, awards, etc.)

- Academic departments must include program-level assessment of student learning (use the assessment plans that were developed)

- Hold an annual meeting to discuss the assessment report, make decisions about what needs to be improved, and then document the meeting and decisions made in the next year’s assessment report.

- Use online newsletters to report on accomplishments throughout the year as they occur and then retrieve that information to be included in the annual assessment report.

- In the 2005 academic departments’ assessment reports indicate that outcomes assessment plans were developed and submitted for all degree programs.

OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING is to be reported in the annual assessment reports for academic departments. (The following information is adapted from the Strategic Planning and Assessment Report newsletter, V1, N2, January 2005).

Based on the results from the outcomes assessment, one of four options is possible:
1. No changes are required;
2. Program purpose and goals need to be revised;
3. Program courses and curriculum need to be revised;
4. Assessment measures need to be revised.

In most cases, the revisions involve changes to the courses and curriculum to achieve the intended purposes and goals of the program. The annual assessment report allows academic departments to report outcomes assessments. All academic programs have a goal related to teaching and learning (academic excellence). For this goal, the specific measures to be used for assessment of student learning should be identified and reported in Sections 3.a and 3.b of the department’s annual assessment report.

Section 3.a allows for reporting of the quantitative measures that are part of the program assessment plans. The degree program can be identified and
the quantitative data that are part of the assessment plan can be reported each year.

Section 3.b can be used to report qualitative measures associated with each degree program. For example, if the department conducted a focus group for students majoring in a specific degree program, the major finding from the focus group can be identified in section 3.b. Also, reference to longer reports used in the assessment of programs can be identified in section 3.b, stating the nature of the report and indicating where the report is maintained (file, Web site, etc.). For example, when a department completes its graduate program review (done once every 6 years for all graduate programs), the department should include a statement in Section 3.b regarding the program review. Similarly, if external program accreditation has occurred, then that too can be indicated in Section 3.b.

Additionally, elaboration of what was learned from the review can be indicated in Section 4. Plans for revising programs, curricula, and courses based on the assessment data can be indicated in Section 4 of the annual assessment report. The assessment data should be discussed in the Commentary part of Section 4, and an overview the changes to be made should be indicated in the Implementation Plan part of Section 4.

Improvements that have been made and implemented should be highlighted in Section 1 of the annual assessment reports as accomplishments for the goal on improving teaching and learning (i.e., academic excellence).

Hypothetical examples of how to report quantitative and qualitative outcomes assessments of student learning are provided at the end of this newsletter. Also see the January 2005 (V1, N2) newsletter.

PLEASE NOTE THAT ENHANCEMENTS TO OUR WEB SITE HAVE BEEN MADE BASED ON FEEDBACK RECEIVED! THANKS FOR YOUR INPUT!

REVISING AND REFOCUSING THE UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN
(Adapted from V2, N1 Fall 2005 newsletter)

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 are provided at the end of this newsletter) 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).

**AREA LEVEL DASHBOARDS: A NEW FEATURE FOR THIS YEAR**

This year when area leaders lock (submit) their annual assessment reports a new menu will appear on their screens. The menu will only be available when an area’s assessment report is locked. The menu will provide the information and options needed for each area to develop its own dashboard (similar to Tech’s state accountability dashboard; see http://techdata.irs.ttu.edu/stratreport/index.asp). The dashboard will provide a visual display of the primary quantitative measures from the annual assessment report. The programming allows goals to be identified and measures (benchmarks) to be selected for each goal. The dashboard will show the most recent values for the benchmark and a colored arrow indicating whether the data has moved up or down and whether the direction of the change was positive or negative (toward or away from the desired target value) for that benchmark. The dashboard will allow one to “drill” the data base to see a 6-year graph of performance on the benchmark. For a measure to be in the dashboard it must be in Section 2 or 3a of the annual assessment report. Additional instructions will be provided for preparing the dashboards, once areas lock their annual assessment reports.

**RESEARCH ON INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS**

During the past 4 years, Ms. Phuong Nguyen, a doctoral student in Higher Education Administration at Texas Tech, has been doing research on the SACS reaffirmation of accreditation criteria and processes. In her research she worked with administrators at Tech and several other institutions in the southern region. Her dissertation identified 16 critical elements that contribute to the success of the internal review processes (the self-study component in reaffirmation). The materials from her SACS presentations are retrievable on the Strategic Planning Web site (see “Related Links – Presentations” at http://techdata.irs.ttu.edu/stratreport/index.asp).

Dr. Jim Brink and Dr. Brent Cejda served as co-chairs for Phuong’s dissertation. Other members of the committee included Drs. Bonita Bulter and Dr. Lee Duemer.

Throughout Phuong’s graduate studies at Tech, Dr. Diane Oliver, formerly with the Vietnam Center and now a Visiting Assistant Professor in the College of Education, served as a mentor and provided strong support for Phuong.

In addition to her dissertation research, Phuong co-authored papers presented at the 2004 and 2005 SACS Commission on Colleges annual conferences. Both SACS’s presentations involved co-authors (Dr. Diane Oliver and Dr. Gil Reeve) and several panelists including Dr. Rebecca Owens from the PASS Center at Tech at the 2005 SACS meeting. Phuong also completed a research internship in the Office of Strategic Planning at Tech.

Phuong has returned to her home in Vietnam and is working with educational leaders in her country to establish accreditation standards and processes in higher education.
HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLES FOR INCORPORATING PROGRAM-LEVEL OUTCOMES ASSESSMENTS OF STUDENT LEARNING IN ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORTS

The purpose of this example is to show how specific measures of student-learning outcomes from program-level assessments can be included in the annual assessment reports. Possible measures for outcomes assessment include students’ performances in capstone courses and internship experiences, comprehensive examinations, performance-based mastery tests, certification tests, embedded course assessments, evaluation of portfolios of students’ work, results of satisfaction surveys and focus groups. Other outcomes assessment examples are found in the Related Links on the strategic planning home page (http://techdata.irs.ttu.edu/stratreport/).

In the hypothetical example below, only those parts of the annual assessment report that include outcomes assessment for the Department XYZ are presented. Obviously, the annual assessment report includes information other than that only related to outcomes assessment. For academic departments, outcomes assessment of student learning must include measures from all of their degree programs.

In the example below, please note the following:

- **In Section 1**, an accomplishment related to student learning is identified. Other accomplishments related to outcomes assessment could include changes made in courses or curricula based on assessment; new faculty hires in specializations to address identified needs for student learning; or any departmental improvements (new classrooms or lab spaces, etc.) to improve student learning. One accomplishment for all academic departments is that they prepared and submitted outcomes assessment plans for all degree programs in 2005.

- **In Sections 3a (Quantitative Information) and 3b (Qualitative Information)** provide the specific information from the program-level assessment plans. If your program-level assessment plans require that the first round of data collection will not occur until later this semester or in the fall semester, indicate in Section 3b that the data collection will begin in 2006. All degree programs must report the results from their program-level assessments in the 2006 assessment reports (which means that those assessments must be begun now). Sections 2, 3a, and 3b are to include the data bases necessary for tracking the department’s outcomes assessments of student learning. Sections 3a and 3b are the most important sections for reporting the data necessary for outcomes assessment of student learning.

- **In Section 4**, the department must comment on how students have performed on their outcomes assessments. Also, the department must indicate what plans it has for implementing improvements in the teaching/learning experiences during the coming year to improve student learning in the degree program.

- **Variations in these suggestions are acceptable** because not all programs use the same assessment methods. However, all departments must include program-level student learning outcomes in their annual assessment reports.

- **Academic Department Chairs** are responsible for including outcomes assessment in the departments annual assessment reports, for using the results of the assessments to improve student learning, and for documenting the use and improvements made through outcomes assessment.

- **Each academic Dean** is responsible for ensuring the outcomes assessments of student learning are being done for all degree programs within the college and should state that such assessment have conducted in the college’s assessment report.
HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLES FOR INCLUDING ASSESSMENTS OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES IN DEPARTMENTAL ASSESSMENT REPORTS

Strategic Planning Annual Assessment Report for Department XYZ
(Only the information related to outcomes assessment is included in this example.)

Section 1. Goals and Accomplishments

**Goal 2.** Academic Excellence. The department of XYZ will attain national recognition through its educational and research programs.
- Students graduating from the XYZ program achieved a 76% pass rate on the national exam.

Section 3a. Area/Unit Specific Quantitative Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program-level Outcomes Assessment of Student Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Science in XYZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass Rate on National Exam (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduating Senior Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 or better score on test in XYZ 4300 (%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 3b. Area/Unit Specific Qualitative Indicators

- BS in XYZ Focus Group: “Courses were valuable in preparing for the national exam.”
- BS in XYZ Focus Group: “Internships should require a greater variety of experiences to better prepare the student for real-world employment.”

Section 4. Strategic Planning Update

**Goal:** Academic Excellence. The department of XYZ will attain national recognition through its educational and research programs.
- Review internship assignments and requirements
- Develop strategies to improve graduating senior survey scores

**Commentary:** The Department of XYZ is committed to maintaining a quality undergraduate program...Although the average score on the Graduating Senior Survey continues to improve, a clear need exists to further improve the content of our program. Review of course content and instructional approaches is needed to improve students’ performances in the undergraduate capstone course XYZ 4300. The internship experience must be revised to provide the best educational opportunities for our students. ...

**Implementation Plan:** The Department of XYZ … Additionally, the need exists to assign a coordinator and supervisor for the internship experience. Resources to provide appropriate workload assignment for a faculty member to serve in this capacity are needed. The department will conduct a thorough review of the undergraduate courses to improve student performances on the comprehensive test in the capstone course.
GUIDELINES FOR UPDATING AND FOCUSING STRATEGIC PLANS FOR AREAS AND UNITS

The University Strategic Plan has been revised to better focus the plan. In revising the University Strategic Plan, the total number of goals has been reduced from 9 to 7 and broader statements have been added to organize the goals around strategic priorities.

All areas and units (including departments, centers, and institutes) are asked to revise and update their strategic plans. The strategic plans should be aligned with the university priorities/goals when appropriate but more importantly the strategic plans for the areas and units must reflect the critical goals for the individual areas/units. That is, each area or unit strategic plan must represent the mission and vision for that area/unit.

For the area and unit strategic plans, the following outline should be followed:

Mission – a statement of the key functions or purposes of the area or unit.
Vision – a statement of what the area or unit wants to achieve in the near future (usually a 5-year time period). The vision should indicate a level of achievement or recognition based on the mission of the area or unit.
Core Values – those characteristics that serve as the foundation upon which the area or unit will operate. Values include such characteristics as honesty, support of diversity, academic freedom. In most cases, areas and units will not need to revise their mission and vision statements, nor their core values.
Strategic Goals – statements that advance the area/unit to fulfill its mission and achieve its vision.

Benchmarks - measures of the degree of success in achieving each goal over the next 5 years. Benchmarks are measurable, specific indicators of performance for each goal. There should be multiple benchmarks for each goal.
Objectives – focused statements to address a specific benchmark in each goal. Objectives support the work toward the benchmarks.
Strategies – statements of actions to achieve objectives

The above outline differs from the 2001 strategic plans in two ways:
1. The term Benchmarks is now used rather than Critical Success Factors, although the intent of the new term is the same as the former phrase;
2. The “Assessments” that were included with each Objective have been deleted. The Objectives focus on the Benchmarks and different measures within each Objective are not necessary.

Suggestions for revising area and unit strategic plans:
1. Align the area and unit strategic plan with the university strategic goals to the extent that such an alignment is consistent with the mission and vision of the area or unit.
2. Be sure to include the important goals that advance the area/unit toward its vision.
3. The goals do not need to address policy, procedures, or area/unit normal operations as these should be addressed in other documents (OPs, operational handbooks, etc.)
4. Keep the number of goals limited to those most critical to achieving area/unit’s vision. Goals can be updated as situations demand. Keep the strategic plan manageable.
5. Use only benchmarks that are clearly measurable (quantitative or qualitative measures may be used) and directly relate to the goal.
6. Program-level assessment of student learning must be addressed in the annual assessment reports and should be reflected in the academic colleges and departments as appropriate. Goals related to the undergraduate and graduate educational experiences can capture the program-level assessments (course-level outcomes and assessments are not included).
7. Engage faculty, staff, and students in the revision of strategic plans.

Resources are available on the Strategic Planning and Assessment Reports homepage.
http://techdata.irs.ttu.edu/stratreport/index.asp

Please contact Dr. T. Gilmour Reeve, Director of Strategic Planning (742-2121; Gilmour.Reeve@ttu.edu) for additional information or questions about revising the area and unit strategic plans.
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.

Texas Tech University is committed to the values of
• mutual respect;
• cooperation and communication;
• creativity and innovation;
• community service and leadership;
• academic and intellectual freedom;
• pursuit of excellence;
• public accountability; and
• diversity.

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. Benchmarks for the strategic plan are being reviewed and will be included with the plan when finalized. Additional information is available at http://techdata.irs.ttu.edu/stratreport/.