**Student Services Assessment**

**Assessment:** The assessment of student services is an ongoing process designed to monitor and improve the effectiveness of the student services program/unit. Professionals in each program:

* Develop explicit program/unit mission and outcome statements
* Verify that the operation of that program/unit are organized to foster the outcomes
* Collect practical data that indicate how well the outcomes are being met.
* Use these data to improve the program/unit’s effectiveness (Close the loop).

**Why so much emphasis on assessment?**

* Accreditation expectations for institutional effectiveness
* Assessment establishes a culture of evidence for supporting effective, reflective, self-monitoring, self correcting institutions.

**Student Services Mission Statements should:**

* Describe the purpose of the program/unit. What services are provided? To whom?
* Be brief.
* Be aligned with the campus mission. (*The mission of Reedley College is to offer an accessible, student-centered educational environment that provides high quality learning opportunities*.)
* Be known by the staff.
* Be used by the staff to make decisions and set priorities.

**Examples of Mission/Outcomes Statements:**

**Example 1**: Student Affairs Division (Oregon State University. Retrieved 9/21/07 from

http://oregonstate.edu/studentaffairs/missionvision.html)

**Our Mission.** The Division of Student Affairs contributes to and facilitates the success of

students and Oregon State University.

**Our Vision.** Faculty and staff provide leadership for the positive development of community at

Oregon State University. We collaborate with others to enhance the educational environment and support the teaching and learning process. We value and respect the individual and believe that sharing knowledge changes lives.

**Example 2**: Library Mission Statement (Nichols & Nichols, p. 36)

“The university educates students to assume leadership roles in the state, nation, and world

through its nationally recognized programs of undergraduate, graduate, and professional study.

Its fundamental purpose is the creation and dissemination of knowledge. The university libraries

support this mission. Specifically, the university libraries strive to meet the information needs of

the academy, its students, faculty and staff, by employing contemporary knowledge management techniques to develop collections, provide access to information sources, and instruct individuals in contemporary bibliographic methodologies.”

**Example 3**: Accounting Office Mission Statement (Nichols & Nichols, p. 36)

“The Accounting Office seeks (1) to provide administrators with accurate and timely financial

data to assist them in the management of the institution’s resources, and (2) to ensure that

financial records are maintained in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and guidelines as established by State and Federal Agencies.”

**Example 4.** Student Affairs Goals: Ferris State University (2003; Retrieved 9/21/07 from

http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/studentaffairs/assessment/03SAReport.pdf)

“The primary goal of Student Affairs is to provide activities, programs, and facilities that support

the personal development, educational progress and career goals of all students.

**Effective outcomes should be:**

* Consistent with the unit and campus mission.
* Realistic.
* Few in number.
* Assessable.
* Used by staff to set priorities and make decisions.

Examples:

1. Accurate, real-time class enrollment data are continuously available to faculty and

administrators.

1. Students who attend a Career Orientation Workshop can prepare a resume and use our online bulletin board to monitor potential employment opportunities.
2. All students attending orientation will receive email accounts and will know how to use the

email system to communicate with students, faculty, and staff.

1. Interlibrary loan materials will be delivered within eight working days.
2. Students report satisfaction with Health Center Services; ratings will average at least 3.80 on

5-point rating scale.

1. On average, at least 100 students will attend each cultural event sponsored by the ASI.
2. Faculty who attend Blackboard workshops will be able to create and update online course

materials.

1. Student government meetings follow procedures defined in the Handbook.
2. Staff who are certified to use the enrollment management system can independently add and delete courses, place enrollment restrictions on courses, and monitor course enrollments.
3. Students who use the Writing Center at least three times in a semester improve writing skills.
4. Students who participate in the diversity retreat will report increased understanding of people of racial and ethnic backgrounds different from their own.
5. Students who attend New Student Orientation can describe General Education requirements and an array of services available to them on campus.

**Properties of Good Assessment Techniques**

• Valid—directly reflects the objective being assessed

• Reliable—especially inter-rater reliability when subjective judgments are made

• Actionable—results help reviewers identify what’s working well and what needs more

attention

• Efficient and cost-effective in time and money

• Interesting—staff care about results and are willing to act on them

• Triangulation—multiple lines of evidence point to the same conclusion

**Frequently-Used Strategies (Nichols & Nichols)**

1. Counts (e.g., number of students who eat in the cafeteria or the number of days to process an invoice)

2. Client satisfaction measures (e.g., ratings from surveys, interviews, and focus groups; broad-based and point-of-contact data may be collected).

3. External evaluation reports (e.g., Health Department review of the food service unit)

4. Learning Outcomes (e.g., quality of student resumes after a workshop at the Career Center). Try to concentrate on direct, authentic assessment—to verify that learners can demonstrate what you want them to learn. Rubrics are useful for making subjective judgments about students’ learning. If you do indirect assessment of the achievement of learning outcomes (based on perceptions of learning), consider gap analysis (comparing importance and achievement ratings).

**More information on Student Services assessment:**

Upcraft, M. L., & Schuh, J. H. (2000). *Assessment Practice in Student Affairs: An Applications*

*Manual*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Upcraft, M. L., & Schuh, J. H. (1996). *Assessment in Student Affairs: A Guide for Practitioners*.

San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Schuh, J. H., & Associates, (2008). *Assessment Methods for Student Affairs*. San Francisco:

Jossey Bass. [expected release is October 24, 2008]

Adapted from **Mary Allen’s** “Assessment for Student Affairs Staff and Other Campus Professionals”

**(CSU Northridge)**

**Selected Assessment Terms and Definitions**

**Accountability**: Reporting to the public on educational process to show trends within and relationships among school data (e.g., institutions are held accountable for the use of public funds, institutions must demonstrate that they are efficient and effective in serving the needs of the state). Summative data is used for making decisions about resources, people, and institutions. AAHE Assessment: *Frequently Asked Questions*, http://www.aahe.org/assessment/assess\_faq.htm#define

**Analytical Scoring:** Evaluating student work across multiple dimensions of performance rather than from an overall impression (holistic scoring). In analytic scoring, individual scores for each dimension are scored and reported. *Glossary of Useful Terms,* SABES Home Page

**Assessment:** Assessment is the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development. T. Marchese, 1987

**Assessment Steps:**

1. Develop learning objectives.
2. Check for alignment between the curriculum and the objectives.
3. Develop an assessment plan (must use direct measures).
4. Collect assessment data.
5. Use results to improve the program.
6. Routinely examine the assessment process and correct, as needed

*Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education* by Mary J. Allen

**Benchmark:** A detailed description of a specific level of student performance expected of students. A defined measurement or standard serves as a point of reference by which process performance is measured**.**

**Closing the Loop:** Assessment results are acted upon.  Assessment data are turned back into program improvement.  This is part of the assessment process. http://www.und.nodak.edu/dept/datacol/assessment/glossary

**Curriculum Alignment**: Curriculum and learning objectives are aligned or matched to ensure that students are provided appropriate learning opportunities in order to achieve the identified learning objectives or outcomes.

Definition from *Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education* by Mary J. Allen

**Direct Assessment:** Assessments that involve examination of student work or performance, such as embedded test questions, written papers, oral presentations, student projects, competence interviews, performances, or portfolios. Assessment results will be even more convincing if different assessment strategies triangulate to support the same conclusion. *Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education* by Mary J. Allen

**Efficacy of Assessment**: Assessment results are being used to make effective programmatic improvements. The department/program is maturing through continual improvement based on evidence. Faculty care about teaching and know their role in assessment. <http://www.und.nodak.edu/dept/datacol/assessment/glossary>

**Embedded Assessment:** A means of gathering information about student learning that is built into and a natural part of the teaching learning process. Often used for assessment purposes in classroom assignments that are evaluated to assign students a grade. Can assess individual student performance or aggregate the information to provide information about the course or program; can be formative or summative, quantitative or qualitative. Example: as part of a course, expecting each senior to complete a research paper that is graded for content and style, but is also assessed for advanced ability to locate and evaluate Web-based information (as part of a college-wide outcome to demonstrate information literacy). *Assessment Terms Glossary*, Northern Illinois University, <http://www.niu.edu/assessment/_resourc/gloss.shtml>.

**Holistic Scoring:** Evaluating student work in which the score is based on an overall impression of student performance rather than multiple dimensions of performance (analytic scoring). *Glossary of Useful Terms,* SABES Home Page

**Indirect Assessment:** Assessments that supplement and enrich what faculty learn from direct assessment studies, such as alumni surveys, employer surveys, satisfaction surveys and interviews. *Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education* by Mary J. Allen

**Performance Criteria:** The standards by which student performance is evaluated. Performance criteria help assessors maintain objectivity and provide students with important information about expectations.

**Portfolios:** Collections of multiple student work samples usually compiled over time and rated using rubrics. The design of a portfolio is dependent upon how the scoring results are going to be used. *Assessment Terms Glossary*, Northern Illinois University, <http://www.niu.edu/assessment/_resourc/gloss.shtml>.

**Program Assessment**: an ongoing process designed to monitor and improve student learning. Faculty develop explicit statements of what students should learn, verify that the program is designed to foster this learning, collect empirical data that indicate student attainment, and use these data to improve student learning. *Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education* by Mary J. Allen

**Rubric:** A set of scoring criteria used to determine the value of a student's performance on assigned tasks. The criteria are written so students are able to learn what must be done to improve their performance in the future. *Music Assessment Glossary* by Edward P. Asmus, Ph.D., <http://www.music.miami.edu/assessment/glossary.html>

**Scaffolding:** An instructional technique whereby the teacher models the desired learning strategy or task, then gradually shifts responsibility to the students. *Scaffolding* by North West Regional Lab, http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/learning/lr1scaf.htm

**Self-Assessment:** Analyzing and making decisions about one's own performance or abilities. *Music Assessment Glossary* by Edward P. Asmus, Ph.D., <http://www.music.miami.edu/assessment/glossary.html>

**Student Learning Outcomes** (AKA student learning objectives)**:** Statements of what students are expected to know and be able to do by the time they complete the major or degree. They may be stated in terms of expected knowledge, skills or attitudes. These outcomes must be consistent with the mission of the department, college, and university. *Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education* by Mary J. Allen

**Triangulation:** Multiple lines of evidence pointing to the same conclusion. It refers to the collection and comparison of data or information from three difference sources or perspectives. *Glossary of Useful Terms,* SABES Home Page

**Value Added:** The increase in learning that occurs during a course, program, or undergraduate education. Requires a baseline measurement for comparison.