Assessment Planning in the Division of Student Affairs
Oregon State University

Mission
Describes the purpose of the organization and the constituents served, supports the missions of the College or Division and the University. The mission describes:
- The purpose of the organization, constituents served
- Supports the mission of the Division & University
- Is succinct and clearly understandable
- Conveys the essence and focus of the organization
- Provides foundation for the work of the unit
- Is long lasting

Goals
Overarching statements that describe what a program is trying to accomplish (programmatic goals) or what a learner is expected to learn (educational goals). Sometimes educational goals describe a state of being; while educational goals should be stated as specifically as possible, sometimes it’s difficult to do so; as a result, goals are often a bit vague and open to interpretation.
- Related to mission
- Reflects core responsibilities of the unit
- Broad statements of what the program is trying to accomplish
- Clear to others outside the unit
- Capable of spanning multiple years

Outcomes
Specific statements derived from goals which help clarify and define the meaning of the goal.

Learning outcomes articulate the measurable expected results of an instructional activity or program effort. Outcomes are not knowing, thinking and understanding, but rather a demonstration of knowing, thinking or understanding. Outcomes describe measurable behaviors achieved using active verbs. Verbs used in Bloom’s Taxonomy are a good resource when writing outcomes.

* If the target audience of the outcome is a student at Oregon State University, we are interested in mapping the outcome to the Learning Goals for Graduates.

Operational/Business outcomes articulate the measurable expected results of a process or program. Describe those elements of a program or activity that can be measured, for example: number of students served, level of satisfaction, number of advisees, number and type of appointments with students, etc.

Outcomes are:
- Specific and detailed action statements
- Congruent with the unit’s mission and goal
- Able to provide evidence of the educational or operational benefits
- Observable
- Able to guide the decision making process
- Learning or operationally centered

Outcomes articulate:
- Audience
- Behavior
- Condition
- Degree

Doran, 1981
Heinrich, et al., 1996
Assessment Methods
Assessment methods include the criteria, process, and tools used to determine if the intended outcomes were reached. In the assessment plan and report, articulate the target audience of the assessment, the methods and tools for data collection, criteria or targets that specify that the outcome has been met, and how the data will be analyzed. A combination of methods to measure outcomes is desirable.

Methods:
- Should be linked to specific outcomes
- Articulates the criteria for meeting the identified outcome
- Multiple methods incorporated into the plan
- Direct methods for assessing learning are used, as appropriate
- Logical choice for measuring stated outcome

Implementation of Assessment Plan
An implementation plan describes who is responsible, what is being assessed, how data are collected, and the timeline for assessment activities. Not all assessments must be conducted annually; a table is often useful for visualizing the process.

References:


Student Affairs Strategic Planning Initiative 6 (2014). Envisioning a Culture of Inquiry. Oregon State University: Corvallis, OR.