Introduction

Effective institutions demonstrate a commitment to ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and evaluation processes that (a) focus on institutional quality and effectiveness and (b) incorporate a systematic review of institutional goals and outcomes consistent with its mission. An institutional planning and effectiveness process involves all programs, services, and constituencies; is linked to the decision-making process at all levels; and provides a sound basis for budgetary decisions and resource allocations.

It is critical that administrative support services are provided effectively in order for the institution to obtain its strategic goals as well as operational efficiency. These offices serve the educational mission of the institution in a much more indirect way than do offices related to educational programs or academic and student services, but they are just as critical for the ability of the institution to achieve its mission.

While these units rarely have "expected learning outcomes," "expected outcomes" for administrative units typically include outcomes such as efficiency and quality of service targets (e.g., energy usage, response times, error rates, "clean report" targets, satisfaction rates); monetary targets (e.g., fund-raising targets, research grant targets, auxiliary income targets). Many times, the goals are explicit parts of the budgeting process or components of the strategic plan.

It is expected that administrative services engage in a process to evaluate their effectiveness.

What is Institutional Effectiveness?

Institutional Effectiveness is an ongoing, comprehensive, and institutionally integrated system, composed of several levels of complementary processes of planning, assessment, and evaluation designed to enhance and improve the institution, as well as demonstrate to what degree the institution has been effective in fulfilling or achieving its stated mission or purpose.

The Institutional Effectiveness Process

At TAMIU, the institutional effectiveness (IE) process consists of an IE plan (mission, outcomes, measures, and targets) and an IE report (findings). IE plans are submitted at the start of the IE cycle, and are reviewed by a designated department reviewer and our office. Units then collect data identified in the measures throughout the IE cycle year. After the year's completion, units will compose an IE report. The report asks units to analyze the data and draw conclusions from it. Strengths, weaknesses, and highlights are described.

Purposes for Institutional Effectiveness Process

The three main purposes of the institutional effectiveness process are to:

1. **Inform** – The IE process should inform department heads and other decision-makers of the contribution and impact of administrative unit for the institution as a whole.
2. **Prove** – The IE process should encapsulate and demonstrate how effective the administrative entity is for students, faculty, staff, and outside constituents.
3. **Support** – The IE process should provide support for campus decision-making activities such as unit review and strategic planning, as well as external accountability activities such as accreditation.

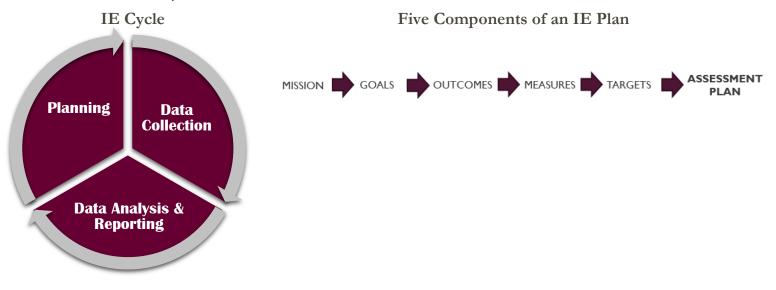Additionally, the IE process is **effective** when:

1. The administrative support unit have clear, explicitly stated outcomes.
2. It is ongoing, not episodic.
3. Representatives from across the university community are involved.
4. It is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.
5. Through the IE process, the institution meets its responsibilities to students and to the public.

The IE process should be done as a group effort of the unit. It is expected that IE plans be developed by a committee within an entity. It is unwise to put the responsibility for development of IE plans and reports in the hands of a single person. Instead, this process should be a group effort to ensure participation, implementation, and success in achieving a unit's, and advantageously, TAMIU's goals.

Step 1: Developing an IE Plan

The crucial part of developing an IE plan is to clarify the focus and content of your plan, which should be based on the needs of your administrative unit. The IE process approach will depend on your entity's mission.

The IE process should be understood as a cycle. We prepare plans at the beginning and we report our findings at the conclusion of the year

IE Cycle

Five Components of an IE Plan

MISSION → GOALS → OUTCOMES → MEASURES → TARGETS → ASSESSMENT PLAN

Component 1: Define/Refine the Mission Statement

The Unit **Mission** should support the Institutional Mission. Ask yourself these four essential questions:

1. **Who** are we?
   - State the name of your office/department (i.e. "The mission of TAMIU is _____")
   - Avoid vague pronouns like "Our mission is…"
2. **What** do we do?
   - Includes the primary functions or activities of the office/department.
   - Illustrates the most important functions, operations, outcomes and/or offerings of the office/department.
3. **Why** do we do it?
   - State the purpose of the office/department.
   - Should include the primary reasons why you perform your major activities or operations
4. **For Whom** do we do it?
   - These are the stakeholders (e.g., students) of your office/department.

Structure of a Mission Statement:

The mission of <the name of your office/department> is to <your primary purpose(s)> by providing <your primary functions or activities> to <your stakeholder(s)>. (Any additional clarifying statements.)

Note: The order of the pieces of the mission statement may vary from the above structure.

Example:

> **The mission of the Office of Institutional Assessment, Research & Planning (OIARP) is to support programs, faculty, and staff in achieving student success by promoting institutional effectiveness through ongoing, systematic planning and evaluation efforts; and by ensuring institutional data integrity, consistency, and accuracy.**

Component 2: Unit Goals

Goals are broadly defined end results of an activity, program, or service provided by the unit. They are not necessarily measurable, but are intended to help each unit develop its objectives/outcomes. Use TAMIU's Strategic Plan to help your unit discover your goals.

The **Strategic Plan** expresses the shared mission and vision of the university. Administrative Support (AS) units are responsible for aligning their unit mission, goals, and objectives to the Institutional Mission.

For a copy of the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan please visit the Office of Institutional Assessment, Research, & Planning website: http://www.tamiu.edu/adminis/iep/documents/StrategicPlan/Strategy_Plan_Workbook_2016-2020

Component 3: Develop Expected Outcomes

Expected Outcomes are statements of intention, describing a task to accomplish or a goal to meet. They are specific, measurable, and quantifiable statements that can be used to determine progress towards the overall mission of the entity. Expected outcomes can be reasonably achieved within an expected timeframe and with available

resources. Expected outcomes must be tied to either the division strategic plan or the overarching University strategic plan, so these must be considered when creating an assessment plan.

Formula for Expected Outcomes

A general formula for writing an outcome can be employed, although following this formula is not required:
Outcome = Target/Subject + Verb/Action + Object + Modifiers

Example:

> **Increase individual alumni donations for TAMIU by increasing our social media presence with alumni.**

Component 4: Identify Measures

A measure identifies evidence and methods you will use to determine whether you are achieving expected results and provide evidence that the entity is accomplishing its outcomes. Measures should be quantitative. For each outcome, at least 2 measures must be identified to gather this needed information, ideally two being direct measures. Each outcome must have at least one direct measure as a minimum.

A **Direct measure** is the actual demonstration of the outcome of a service provided.

An **indirect measure** typically captures information about perceptions of or attitudes towards an outcome.

Example of Measures	
Outcome	Measure
Administrative offices submitting their 2020-2021 budgets through our TAMIU system will do so on time.	**Tracking Usage:** A count of the total number of department budgets submitted through the appropriate system by the deadline. (direct)
Any services requested to our IR office through the IR website will receive timely responses from our office on their request.	**Tracking Timeliness:** A count on total days it takes to provide services to clients/students/faculty etc. (direct)
Customers of the Printing Service will express satisfaction with the services provided by our office staff.	**Satisfaction Survey:** The percentage of positive feedback on a survey (indirect).

Measures may not tell you why outcomes are or are not being met. However, they should be specific enough to answer whether or not the outcome is being met. When the expected levels of achievement are not met, the measures should help lead the entity to identify problem areas.

Targets should flow easily from the measures that are set. Targets have a single purpose, which is to communicate clearly the level accomplishment for the particular measure. Targets must always indicate what is expected to be achieved in this single, current administrative year.

Targets must have specific numbers in them which indicate the level of accomplishment for the measure. Targets can indicate a number or percentage of items, people, or activities, or they can indicate a designated level of proficiency, or both.

Example of Performance Targets

Outcome	Measure	Performance Target
Administrative offices submitting their 2020-2021 budgets through our TAMIU system will do so on time.	**Tracking Usage** A count of the total number of department budgets submitted through the appropriate system by the deadline. (direct)	45 administrative offices will submit their administrative 2020-2021 budget by August 24, 2020.
Any services requested to our IR office through the IR website will receive timely responses from our office on their request.	**Tracking Timeliness** A count on total days it takes to provide services to clients/students/faculty etc. (direct)	85% of IR requests through Wufoo will be responded to in 5 business days or less.
Customers of the Printing Service will express satisfaction with the services provided by our office staff.	**Satisfaction Survey** The percentage of positive feedback on a survey (indirect).	70% of customers will rate on our satisfaction survey an average of a 4 (Satisfied) or higher on a 5-point scale.

Targets Formula:

Target = Level + subject + action + object + modifiers

Example:

> **80% (level) of faculty (subject) will rate on a satisfaction survey (action) the amount of Professional Development provided (object) as a 3 or better (level) on a 5-point scale (modifiers).**

It is important to note that targets must be clear not just in numbers, but in words. "Satisfactory" and "successful" are positive, but they are not commonly understood. A better way to define these concepts, is to share the rating scale. Does "satisfactory" mean 3 out of 5 points? Does successful mean fewer than 5 mistakes? Define a target so that the meaning is easily understood.

Step 2: Data Collection

At the end of the administrative year, each unit must write an IE report which consists of the findings. The first step is to collect the findings (or results) associated with each measure. Findings are merely the quantifiable data that result when the measures listed in the IE plan are completed.

Assignment of Data Collection Responsibilities

In order to make the IE planning process smooth and effective, it is important to identify who is responsible for the administration of IE instruments and collection of IE data. The planning template has designated columns that allow programs to identify 1) where the assessment will take place, 2) when the assessment will take place, and 3) the individual responsible for data collection.

Step 3: Data Analysis & Reporting

At this point, the assessment team who defined the outcomes and measures for the assessment plan should reconvene to look at the data. By using the data, the team should determine if the outcome's target level was met, partially met, or not met. Details should be provided as to what the results were, and if the administrative offices are achieving their outcomes for the year.