

Bennett College for Women
Institutional Effectiveness Manual

2007-2008

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research

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Introduction

What is Institutional Effectiveness? The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools defines Institutional Effectiveness as follows:

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 the analysis of those results.

(Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1, *Principles of Accreditation*, SACS Commission on Colleges, 2004)

From the definition we see that the Institutional Effectiveness is a process in which an institution demonstrates how well it succeeds in accomplishing its mission and meeting its goals. The process allows a college to choose its expected outcomes based on its self-identified mission. The faculty and administrators develop mission statements for each academic program and administrative unit that are derived from the College mission statement. They then define the program and expected outcomes they believe are most appropriate and report these in an annual IE assessment cycle. These outcomes are assessed to determine the extent to which they were achieved in the planning year. Finally, the assessment results are used as the basis for making changes for continuous improvements in the academic and administrative programs and services.

So the process of Institutional Effectiveness involves planning, assessment, and using the assessment results for continuous improvement.

The purpose of this manual is to provide guidance for faculty, academic administrators, and college's educational support and services administrators to develop and evaluate their Institutional Operational Plans, Student Learning Outcomes and Program Outcomes, and use the assessment results.

Institutional Mission Statement and Goals

The Institution's Mission Statement describes what the college is trying to do as an educational institution. To accomplish its mission the College has eleven goals listed in its 2003-2008 Strategic Plan that are derived from the mission statement. All academic departments and administrative units' mission statements should be tied to the college mission statement and one or more of these college goals. The IE assessment plan links each department's or unit's mission statement and goals

to the College mission statement and goals. The College mission statement and the College goals and objectives are found at the Institutional Effectiveness and Research website <http://www.bennett.edu/web/administration/insteff.htm>.

Types of Expected Outcomes

There are two types of expected outcomes: Student Learning Outcomes and Program Outcomes (academic and non-academic). **Student Learning Outcomes** are the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes or values that students are expected to have or exhibit when they complete an academic program. **Program Outcomes** are specific, programmatic, operational, and administrative objectives that academic departments and administrative units intend to accomplish. They are not directly related to student learning.

In order to determine whether or not objectives/learning outcomes are achieved, some kind of evaluation is in order. This mechanism for assessment should be built into the plan to specify the objective/learning outcomes.

Assessment

Assessment represents the systematic and on-going process of collecting, and reviewing evidence about the College's academic and administrative programs and services and using it to evaluate these programs and services to improve their quality. It is focused on improving student learning and the services delivered to the College community. Assessment performs two functions for the College. The **first function** is to provide information for improving programs of the College. It accomplishes this function by providing feedback to

1) the faculty by identifying areas where students are performing well and where they are not so that changes can be made that will improve teaching and the curricula. The expected outcome is improved student learning.

2) the staff by identifying areas where services are good, contributing to the improvement of student learning, and where changes need to be made that will result in better services to improve the educational environment.

The **second function** of assessment is evaluation of College programs for accountability purposes. Accountability in this sense means both internal and external accountability. External accountability involves providing evidence to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools that the College is meeting accreditation requirements. In addition it meets state and federal demands for proof that the College is performing at acceptable levels. Internal accountability also involves evaluating the quality of programs and services to determine continuity or modification.

Examples with academic and non-academic objectives and their corresponding assessments are provided below.

Example 1

Objective: Increase the cumulative GPA of the entering class.

Outcomes: For regularly admitted first-time freshmen, show an increase in the median cumulative GPA of at least 0.1 grade points.

Example2.

Objective: Monitor student attitudes on a range of issues related to the college environment using the Student Satisfaction Inventory, and create plans to address apparent deficiencies.

Outcomes: At least one important area of student dissatisfaction will be identified and addressed.

Institutional Planning and Assessment Timeline

Institutional Effectiveness is an on-going process which involves planning, assessment, and using the assessment results for continuous improvement. The following table outlines the timeline for the process.

| When | What | Who |
|-------------|--|---|
| July | Non-academic Area develops plans, shares the plan with its functional units, and submits the completed plan to IE by July 15 th . | Vice Presidents |
| | Non-academic functional units develop plans and submit to IE by July 30 th . | Educational Support Units |
| August | Academic departments develop annual operational plan and degree program student learning outcomes assessment plan, and submit to IE by August 15 th . | Educational Units |
| January | Operational Plans are re-visited and assessed formally by all functional units in a mid-year planning meeting. | Educational and Educational Support Units |
| | Mid-year performance reports from all functional units submitted to IE by January 15 th . | Educational and Educational Support Units |

| | | |
|------|---|---------------------------|
| May | End of year planning meeting to complete the assessment of student learning outcomes. | Educational Units |
| | Academic units submit end of year reports to division chairs by May 15 th . | Educational Units |
| | End of year academic division plan reports submitted to Area Vice President by May 30 th . | Division Chairs |
| June | End of year planning meeting to prepare operational planning report and submit to IE and Vice Presidents by June 15 th . | Educational Support Units |
| | End of year report from all Area Plans submitted to IE by June 30 th . | Vice Presidents |

Operational Planning and Assessment

Each administrative or academic unit is required to have an operational plan that includes the following elements (Form IE5000):

- **Goals** – must be aligned to the strategies goals of the college, are broad enough to cover the main areas of responsibility
- **Objectives** -- describe what the unit wants to accomplish specifically
- **Enabling Strategies** -- action items that will enable the unit to achieve the objectives
- **Resources** – budgets, personnel time etc, needed for achieving the goal and objective(s)
- **Responsibility** -- designate who makes sure it gets done
- **Timeline:** Indicate when data will be collected and analyzed, when reports will be available, or when the task will be accomplished.
- **Expected Outcomes** -- describe how the unit knows if the objective is accomplished, the outcomes should be specific, and measurable,
- **Assessment Measures** – Target(s) or criteria that can be used to evaluate the quality of the outcome so that a determination can be made whether the objective is met or not.
- **Projected Use of the Assessment Results** -- Based on the expected outcome, what changes you plan to make for continuous improvement.

Any goals of the current strategic plan that apply, and all applicable requirements from the 2007 Interim SACS *Principles for Accreditation* must be incorporated into unit objectives.

Characteristics of an Institutional Operational Plan

1. Clearly stated with specific and measurable outcomes

2. Assessment should be systematic using suitable methods to determine to what extent the expected outcomes are met. These methods may be direct or indirect -- quantitative or qualitative.
3. The assessment results should be used to improve the performance of academic programs and administrative units of the College.

Assessment Measures for Administrative Programs

Once an expected outcome is identified and the methods of assessment are chosen, the next step is to determine the measures for success or performance for each expected outcome. An assessment measure identifies how well a program is expected to perform on the assessment, or to what extent an objective is met based on its actual outcome. Measures can be quantitative or something tangible so that it is clear that the objective was or was not met

Examples of Assessment Measures for Administrative Programs

1. Feedback from the annual survey will indicate that 60% of the users using the newly implemented technology services will be very satisfied or extremely satisfied with the newly implemented services.
2. To increase participation in the T.E.A.M. 101 program by 15% for 2005-2006
3. Updated fact book is accessible on the web by November 2006. Data presented are current and accurate.

The expected performance or target on a given assessment measure should be determined before data on that measure is collected. Notice in the examples above that exact targets are set. Avoid vague targets such as "The department will increase retention over the base year of 2003-2004." This implies that any increase, even of just one student, is acceptable.

When considering a specific target or measure, be sure to set one that can be achieved. Setting an unrealistically high target makes success unlikely. It is better to set realistic success measure so that successful incremental improvement can be shown. Also avoid setting unrealistically low targets to assure success so as to avoid being viewed as failing or as an excuse for not attempting to make improvements. That a target is not reached does not mean that a program is weak or ineffective provided that the department uses the data collected to make improvements in the program or service to move toward the desired target level of the expected outcome.

Methods of Assessing Administrative Program Outcomes

The following are examples of the methods that can be used to assessing the expected outcomes of administrative programs.

1. Tracking the Use of a Service (e.g. hits on a website, use of computer technology)
2. Satisfaction surveys
3. Graduation rates
4. Retention rates
5. Establishing timelines and budgets
6. Recruiting results
7. Tracking program participation
8. Tracking complaints and how they are resolved
9. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
10. External measures of performance or quality, e.g. the Association of Research Library Index which ranks university libraries.

The non-academic assessment matrix form (Form IE[5500](#)) needs to be used to record the methods used for assessment.

Projected Use of Assessment Results

During the planning phase, the use of the assessment results is projected indicating what changes you are going to make based on the actual outcomes. Please refer to Reporting and Using Actual Assessment Results section for examples.

Operational Planning Assessment Summary Reports

Each administrative or academic unit is required to have a mid-year and annual report that aligns closely with the operational plan. The summary report includes the following elements (IE Form [5100](#), [5200](#))

- **Goals** – must be aligned to the strategies goals of the college, are broad enough to cover the main areas of responsibility (the same as in the plan)
- **Objectives** -- describe what the unit wants to accomplish specifically (the same as the plan)
- **Enabling Strategies** -- action items that will enable the unit to achieve the objectives (the same as in the plan)
- **Actual Resources Used** – state the actual use of the resources
- **Responsibility** – person who gets it done
- **Actual Timeline** – state when data was collected and analyzed, when the task was completed or when the report was available.
- **Actual Outcomes** -- describe what is in place, what changes have taken place or what has accomplished so that the unit knows that the objective is met or not. Supporting documents need to be attached.
- **Actual Assessment Measures** –the actual target(s) you have reached for your plan based on the actual outcome – quantitative or qualitative.

- **Objective Met or Not** –self evaluation of the quality of the actual outcome by comparing the Actual Assessment Measures reported in the summary report against the Assessment Measures set in the plan, comparing the actual timelines against the projected timelines, the actual resources used against the projected resources to determine to what extent the objective is met.
- **Actual Use of the Assessment Results** – state how the assessment results have been used or being used for continuous improvement.

All Summary Reports must demonstrate that expected outcomes were assessed, and evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results was provided.

Reporting and Using Actual Assessment Results

Actual assessment results must be reported for each objective in the operational plan. These results are reports and analysis of the data collected in the assessment. The results show whether or not the measures for success on the actual outcomes were met. As such they identify the strengths and areas that need improvement of an administrative program or services. The department will address what it intends to do as a result of the assessment.

Examples of Assessment Results and their Use for Administrative Units

1. **Results:**(1) Revised website published April 2003. (2) Unique visitors increased 48.4% from April-June 2002 to April-June 2003. (3) Pages visited increased by 124.2% from April-June 2002 to April-June 2003.
Use of the Results: (1) Continue marketing the website. (2) Monitor the website for timely updates. (3) Push for online appointment scheduling.
2. **Results:** Our goal is to increase participation in the T.E.A.M. 101 program by 15% for 2005-2006, but we only succeeded to increase by 12%.
Use of the Results: Additional promotion publicity plans are underway. We will be working closely with the Residence Life Office to promote the program heavily in the residence halls.
3. **Results:** Black and Hispanic freshman enrollment increased by 2.5 and exceeded the benchmark of an increase of 2 percent over the base year of 2003-2004.
Use of the Results: The target increase for next year will be 2.5 percent.

Analysis of the Assessment Results (Form IE[5300](#))

In addition to the summary report, non-academic units are required to complete the assessment form and submit it together with the summary report.

Planning and Assessment Guidelines for Academic Programs

A department's instructional goals and outcomes serve as the foundation for assessment of the quality of its academic programs. The first step in assessment, therefore, is for the faculty in each academic department to identify the goals and all of the student learning outcomes for each degree program or other program, e.g. developmental programs, in the department. In any given year these goals should be selected for assessment. These instructional goals and objectives should identify the program's student learning outcomes that answer the following question:

What should a graduate know, be able to do, and/or value after majoring in our program?

The assessment process lets the department know how well students are meeting the instructional goals and outcomes determined by the faculty. As a result program strengths and weaknesses can be identified. The faculty then has the information necessary to make changes in areas where students are not performing as well as the faculty expects in order to improve the quality of a program.

The assessment process is not designed to interfere with academic freedom or to punish individual faculty members or programs. Student learning outcomes should be determined by the faculty and then assessed to determine if they are being achieved at desired levels. These desired levels are also determined by the faculty. If the outcomes are not being achieved, then it is up to the faculty to determine why there is a problem with students not achieving what was desired. The faculty can then make improvements so that the desired level of student performance can be met.

Student Learning Outcome Assessment Plan

Each academic program must have its defined program mission, student learning outcomes to guide the program to achieve its intended results. Student learning outcomes assessment plan should consist the following elements (Form IE[5900](#)):

- **Mission of the Program:** a broad statement of what the program is, what it does, and for whom it does it. It reflects how the program contributes to the education and careers of students graduating from the program, and should align with the Department, College, and University missions.
- **Student Learning Outcomes:** specific statements that describe the required learning achievement that must be met on the way to attaining the degree. That is, the SLOs focus on the knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes of a student after the completion of your program.
- **Assessment Methods:** More than one assessment method should be used, direct and indirect.
- **Expected Outcomes:** describe to what extent the program intends to achieve the defined student learning outcomes. The expected outcomes

- should be specific, and measurable.
- **Actual outcomes:** describe the actual achievement of the student learning outcomes. Supporting data need to be attached.
- **Self evaluation of the actual outcomes:** evaluate the actual outcomes against the expected outcomes to determine the extent the expected outcomes are achieved.
- **Use of the outcome results:** Actions that need to take based on the assessment results of actual outcomes.

Example of Mission Statement of Academic Program

The mission of Hypothetical Engineering bachelor’s degree program is to educate students from diverse backgrounds in the fundamental skills, knowledge, and practice of Hypothetical Engineering (through courses and an internship) in order to (1) prepare them for Hypothetical Engineering positions in service or manufacturing industries and (2) prepare them for continuing for advanced degrees in Hypothetical Engineering or related disciplines. The program promotes a commitment to continued scholarship and service among graduates and will foster a spirit of innovation. Also, it promotes an environment that is inclusive and diverse.

Define Student Learning Outcomes in Action Terms

Student learning outcomes are not the same as individual course objectives. Instead, they are outcomes associated with more than one course. Learning outcomes use action verbs to describe what students are expected to know and do when they finish a program. These outcomes should be related to one of the goals in the College’s Strategic Plan.

Action verbs associated with student learning outcomes are verbs such as “explain”, “analyze” and “evaluate “and should be used instead of “be exposed to,” “have an opportunity to,” or “be familiar with.” The outcome should be stated in terms such as: “Students will be able to analyze, describe knowledge, demonstrate skills, or attitudes...”.

Action Verbs and Types of Learning

| Cognitive Learning | Examples of Action Verbs |
|--|---|
| Knowledge —to recall or remember facts without necessarily understanding them | articulate, define, indicate, name, order, recognize, recall, reproduce, list, tell, describe, identify, show, label, tabulate, quote |
| Comprehension —to understand and interpret learned information | classify, describe, discuss, explain, express, interpret, contrast, associate, |

| | |
|--|---|
| | differentiate, extend, translate, review, suggest, restate |
| Application —to put ideas and concepts to work in solving problems | apply, compute, give examples, investigate, experiment, solve, choose, predict, translate, employ, operate, practice, schedule |
| Analysis —to break information into its component to see interrelationships | analyze, appraise, calculate, categorize, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, distinguish, examine, investigate, interpret |
| Synthesis —to use creativity to compose and design something original | arrange, assemble, collect, compose, construct, create, design, formulate, manage, organize, plan, prepare, propose, set up |
| Evaluation —to judge the value of information based on established criteria | appraise, assess, defend, judge, predict, rate, support, evaluate, recommend, convince, conclude, compare, summarize |
| Affective Learning | appreciate, accept, attempt, challenge, defend, dispute, join, judge, praise, question, share, support |

Source: *Institutional Effectiveness Planning Workbook 2004-2005*, Texas A&M University

Examples of Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students completing the bachelor's program in Psychology will compare favorably in their knowledge of research methodology with students graduating from psychology programs in institutions comparable to Bennett College.
2. After completion of this program, the student will be able to effectively initiate and produce original design concepts using both traditional and electronic media.
3. (Graduates will)...understand and (be able) to integrate appropriate strategic management concepts in the design and implementation of a corporate/business strategy.
<http://cba.ualr.edu/dean/assessment/PID/33.htm>
4. Students who complete a Baccalaureate Degree Program in French will develop the necessary skills in French with regard to oral communication.

Notice that each example of a student learning outcome involves only one assessable outcome element. Avoid bundling two or more outcome elements that could be assessed separately.

Avoid: Students who complete a Baccalaureate Degree Program in French will develop the necessary skills in French in **oral and written** communication.

Use: Students who complete a Baccalaureate Degree Program in French will develop the necessary skills in French in **oral** communication.

Use: Students who complete a Baccalaureate Degree Program in French will develop the necessary skills in French in **written** communication.

Methods of Assessing Student Learning Outcomes

An assessment method is the means for measuring the degree of success that a department or unit has achieved in meeting a student learning or program outcome. More than one assessment method should be used. Direct measures are required plus indirect methods when applicable.

Direct methods measure what was learned or accomplished. **Indirect methods** measure perceptions of learning or what should have been learned as measured by surveys or other means. Employers may be surveyed to determine how satisfactorily Bennett graduates employed by them are prepared. Analysis of course syllabi for learning objectives can provide indirect evidence of what the faculty intended for students to learn. Indirect methods may not be able to provide specific information to identify how a program can be improved. For example, to know that graduates report that their major program did not prepare them adequately for graduate school does not allow the faculty to determine what specific types of improvements in the curriculum are needed. If both direct and indirect methods are used, then the perception of not being adequately prepared can be linked to direct learning outcome measures that allow targeted improvements in the curriculum. Generally indirect methods should be used with direct methods.

Examples of Direct or Indirect Assessment Methods

Direct Assessment Methods

1. ETS Major Field Tests
2. Capstone Courses
3. Grading Using Scoring Rubrics
4. Case Studies
5. Licensing or Certification Exams
6. Student Portfolios
7. Senior Research Projects

8. Senior Recitals
9. Locally Developed Tests
10. Course Embedded Assessment
11. Evaluations of Interns
12. External Examiners or Reviewers
13. GRE Subject Tests
14. Student presentations of research to professional organizations

Indirect Assessment Methods

1. Student Perception of Learning Surveys (e.g. NSSE)
2. Exit Interviews/Essays
3. Alumni Surveys
4. Analysis of Course Syllabi
5. Focus Groups
6. Employer Surveys

Good presentations of many of these methods can be found at the University of Wisconsin-Madison website www.wisc.edu/provost/assess/manual/manual2.html and in the Practitioner's Manual, pages 13-18, that is accessible at the Texas A&M International University website at www.tamui.edu/adminis/iep/resources.shtml.

Academic assessment matrix (Form IE5400 or IE5700) needs to be used to record the methods employed in the assessment.

When choosing an assessment method it is important to use one that actually meets the needs of the department. A nationally normed comprehensive examination such as an ETS Major Field Test provides comparative data so that the performance of Bennett students can be compared to a national sample of their peers at other universities. Make sure that the MFT has sub-scores and assessment indicators that allow the measurement of learning outcomes considered important by the faculty who teach in the program. Do not just look at the global score because it does not provide information about where program improvement might be possible. Major Field Tests have assessment indicators and multiple sub-scores for different areas of a major. More information on Major field Tests can be found at <http://ets.org>.

Validity and Reliability

Tests measuring learning outcomes can be developed by the faculty for each program offered. If a locally developed instrument is used, the validity and reliability of the instrument must be examined and reported. **Validity** of the test refers to the extent to which the test actually measures what it intends to measure. In another word, the test is relevant, and the data collected is accurate and useful. To achieve the validity, when faculty develops an instrument, make sure that the content coverage and the content representation are sound, the meaning of the questions are clear to every students, and the grading or scoring criteria are fair

and clearly specified before grading or scoring. **Reliability** of a test or other measure means that the results do not differ significantly over time, i.e. test results are not very high in one administration and then low in another if the content of the courses and the way these courses are being taught is not changed.

It is also important that the method of assessment be appropriate for the student learning outcome, that is, the means of assessment provides useful information. Consider the following student learning outcome:

Students completing the bachelor's program in Psychology will compare favorably in their knowledge of research methodology with students graduating from comparable institutions nationally.

A locally developed instrument cannot provide test results comparable with that of the peer institutions. Instead a nationally normed examination that includes a section that tests knowledge of research methodology should be used. Avoid using course grades or meeting degree requirements such as completion of specific courses as evidence of student learning.

Academic Program Outcomes

Academic program outcomes have specific academic program objectives, which identify what will be accomplished by the department or program and/or perceptions about what was accomplished. They are different from Student Learning Outcomes.

Examples of Academic Program Outcomes

1. Graduates will be successful in gaining admission to graduate school or professional programs. *Institutional Effectiveness Planning Workbook 2004-2005*, Texas A&M University.
2. BBA graduates from the Department of Accounting, Economics, and Finance will obtain employment in a field relevant to their major. *Department of Accounting, Economics, and Finance*, ASU.
3. Faculty research as evidenced by papers published or presented at professional conferences will increase by 5 percent.

Each program outcome involves only one assessable outcome element. Avoid bundling two or more outcome elements that could be assessed separately.

Avoid: Biology graduates will be competitive in obtaining **employment in a field relevant to their major** and **admission to post-baccalaureate programs**.

Use: Biology graduates will be competitive in obtaining admission to **post-baccalaureate programs**.

Use: Biology graduates will be competitive in obtaining employment in a field relevant to their major.

Methods of Assessing Academic Program Outcomes

Program outcomes are not designed to measure student learning. Instead they identify desired outcomes of the program or department that may provide indirect measures of program quality or the degree to which administrative goals are achieved. Academic program outcomes should be quantifiable.

Examples of Assessment Methods for Academic Program Outcomes

1. Tracking the Use of a Service (e.g. hits on a website)
2. Satisfaction surveys
3. Alumni surveys
4. Establishing timelines and budgets
5. Graduation rates
6. Retention rates
7. Job placement rates
8. Recruiting results
9. Tracking program participation by desired demographics
10. Faculty publications and presentations
11. Tracking complaints and how they are resolved
12. Acceptance rates to graduate and professional schools
13. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

The Practitioner's Manual, pages 13-18, at the Texas A&M International University website, www.tamui.edu/adminis/iep/resources.shtml has presentations of some of these methods.

Academic assessment matrix (Form IE5400) needs to be used to record the methods employed in the assessment.

A program outcome could in some cases be the completion of a project or activity, but this approach has the weakness of not providing any information for improvement. It is more meaningful to assess what the project or activity is intended to accomplish. As an example, assume that a new technology project involves the purchase and installation of new technology equipment in several classrooms. This type of program outcome should be assessed in two ways.

1. The outcome can be assessed as the degree to which the project was completed on time and within budget.
2. A second assessment method would be the degree to which the intended purpose of the technology enhancements is being achieved as the project progresses and indeed, even after the equipment has been installed.

In this case the timeline for implementing the program and the degree of success in achieving the purpose of the program would provide measures that could be used for improvement. From an Institutional Effectiveness standpoint a desired outcome is not to buy and install equipment or hire new personnel. The desired outcome is what is to be accomplished with the equipment or new personnel.

Assessment Measures for Academic Program Success

Once an intended student learning outcome or academic program outcome is identified and the method of assessing that outcome is determined, the next step is to establish measures or targets to assess the success or performance for each student learning and program outcome. A measure for success identifies how well a student or program is expected to perform on the assessment. Measures should be quantitative so that it is clear that the objective was or was not met. Generally speaking more than one measure for success should be used.

Examples of Assessment Measures for Academic Program Success

1. At least 80% of students completing this program will achieve a score on the Economics MFT above the 50th percentile of the national distribution.
2. The department faculty will increase the number of papers and professional presentations by at least five percent.
3. Feedback from the annual survey will indicate that 60% of the users using the newly implemented technology services will be very satisfied or extremely satisfied with the newly implemented services.
4. The percentage of biology graduates accepted into accredited medical, dental, optometry, and chiropractic schools will meet or exceed the state averages for NC state colleges and universities. The average for state institutions was 30%.

The expected performance or target on a given assessment measure should be determined before data on that measure is collected. Notice in the examples above that exact quantitative targets are set. Avoid vague targets such as "The department will increase retention over the base year of 2003-2004." This implies that any increase, even of just one student, is acceptable.

When considering a specific target, be sure to set one that can be achieved. Setting an unrealistically high target makes success unlikely. It is better to set realistic success measures so that successful incremental improvement can be shown. Also avoid setting unrealistically low targets to assure success so as to avoid being viewed as failing or as an excuse for not attempting to make improvements. That a target is not reached does not mean that a program is weak or ineffective provided that the department faculty uses the data collected to make improvements in the program or service to move toward the desired target level of the learning or program outcome.

Good assessment practice is to have more than one measure to aid in identifying areas where improvement in the quality of a program can be made. For example, suppose that the Business and Economic Department sets the following as measures for success on the Major Field Test in economics major:

1. Graduates of the economics program will achieve a score on the Economics MFT equal to or above the 50th percentile of the national distribution.
2. Graduates of the economics program will achieve a score on each Economics MFT subscore equal to or above the 50th percentile of the national distribution.

By explicitly examining the sub-scores on the test, program strengths and weaknesses can be identified. To get more information on the Major Field Tests go to <http://www.ets.org>.

Reporting and Using Actual Results

Actual results must be reported for each student learning and program outcome by May 30th of each year. These results are reports and analysis of the data collected in the assessment. The results show whether or not the measures for success on the student learning outcomes and program outcomes were met. As such they identify the strengths and areas that need improvement of an academic program. The department will address what it intends to do as a result of the assessment. This is the basis for constant quality improvement associated with Institutional Effectiveness.

Examples of Assessment Results and Their Use for Academic Units

1. **Result:** 81% of students completing this program scored above the 50th percentile of the national distribution on the Economics MFT. However results from analysis of the subscores showed that only 65% scored 50% or more in macroeconomics.
Use of the Result: The department will implement pedagogical changes in the macroeconomic courses and increase the coverage of New Classical economic theory.
2. **Result:** Of the 65 students who took the Major Field Test in Psychology, only 36.7 percent scored above the target of the national average.
Use of the Results: The department will add new courses in research methods and advanced social psychology. Also, we decided to change the pedagogy in several courses to include more experiential and writing excercises.

3. **Results:** The percentage of biology graduates accepted into accredited medical, dental, optometry, and chiropractic schools was equal to the target of 30%, the state average.
Use of the Results: Next year we plan to increase the target by 2 percent.
4. **Results:** Black and Hispanic freshman enrollment increased by 2.5 and exceeded the benchmark of an increase of 2 percent percent over the base year of 2003-2004.
Use of the Results: The target increase for next year will be 2.5 percent.
5. **Result:** The average score on the Agriculture department exit exam this year was 74 percent. This was the first year that that the average score has exceeded the benchmark set by the department of 70 percent.
Use of the Results: We will monitor the pass rate on the exit exam to determine if the trend continues. If students continue to score over 70 per cent, the standard will be raised.