



To: Carol Brown, Vice-Chancellor,
Academic and Student Affairs
OK

From: Martin A. Orlowski, Director
Institutional Planning & Analysis

Date: July 30, 1998

Subject: Revised College-Wide Outcomes Assessment Methodology and Progress Report

Over the past several months the Office of Institutional Planning & Analysis has been developing a revised model for assessing eleven of the College-wide outcome measures. The past five years of conducting two cohort studies has resulted in a realization that outcomes assessment is much more complex and time consuming than what we originally anticipated. Although informative, analysis of the first two cohorts indicates a lack of reliability and validity in many of the measures. Given the importance of outcome assessment within the larger context of accreditation and continuous improvement, it is necessary that the implementation of assessment activities be significantly improved in order to yield more meaningful and useful information. Thus, I consider the redesign and full implementation of College-wide outcomes measure as a top priority for the office. It is critical that we immediately move forward with implementing the new model in order to attain sufficient information prior to NCA's focus visit.

The contextual framework for establishing the next cohort is outlined in the attached report. Basically we are suggesting a modified cohort study that will consist of all First Time In Any College (FTIAC) students in the fall of 1998. These students will be segmented into different groups based on their intent and in relation to the College's Purposes. Assessment activities will take place at many different points throughout the students' experiences at the College.

Furthermore, all eleven outcome measures are being operationalized based on what we discovered with the 1994 and 1996 cohorts as well as in accordance with the relevant literature. In other words, each measure is being treated as a unique data collection process driven by its operational definition. In addition, it is necessary to develop survey instruments that get at all aspects of the measure. As a result, the new model will demand greater time and attention to its design and especially its implementation and interpretation.

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In addition to the revised model report, I have enclosed a list of tasks that must be completed before the new model can be implemented as well as a sample of the profile sheets we are developing for each of the eleven outcome measures. These documents will keep us on track and will serve as reference materials as we get closer to full implementation.

Once you have had an opportunity to review the attached materials, I would like to discuss with you the implementation of this process in relation to other competing initiatives (institutional effectiveness, state and federal reporting, needs assessment, etc.) and our current staffing level. I am very concerned about the office's ability to fulfill its obligations in light of our current budget allocation and staffing situation. I look forward to discussing all of these matters with you in the very near future.

Attachments

pc: L. Hill

/s