Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research meets Institutional Planning and Assessment

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Titles and Tasks

- Planning
- Research
- Effectiveness
- Assessment
- Accountability
- Evaluation
- Accreditation
- Compliance
- Analyst
- Instruction
- Reporting
- Strategic
- Quality
- Advancement
- Development
- Organization

- Associate
- Commissioner
- Chancellor
- Provost
- President
- Vice President
- Consultant
- Director
- Assistant
- Analyst
- Coordinator
- Specialist
- Manager
- Programmer
- Representative
- Administrator

OIER Duties

- Serving as a repository for and attempting to maintain the integrity of data related to the various components of the University.
- Developing and publishing institutional studies in such areas as student enrollment, retention, and performance; program evaluations; and students and faculty.
- Responding to state and federal reporting requirements.
- Responding to external surveys/questionnaires with information contained in an accurate, annual Common Data Set.
- Maintaining a web site that shares information reported to various agencies, including the annual fact book.
- Developing and maintaining a data warehouse that provides accurate and accessible historical data.
- Processing student evaluations of instructional faculty and summarizing the results in a timely and accurate manner for faculty, department heads, deans, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- Providing ad hoc reporting support to internal and external constituents in a timely and accurate manner.
- Supporting Performance Funding, Institutional Effectiveness, and Self Study and other accreditation initiatives.

IPA Duties

- IPA focuses on continual improvement in institutional quality through assessment of TSU's performance on student learning and the core business functions that support student success.
- Major responsibilities include leadership and oversight of strategic plans, assessment, and documentation in *Compliance Assist*.
- College Annual Reporting on key performance indicators; student evaluation of faculty instruction.
- Faculty evaluation of department heads and deans.
- Coordination of system-wide strategic planning and performance funding initiatives.

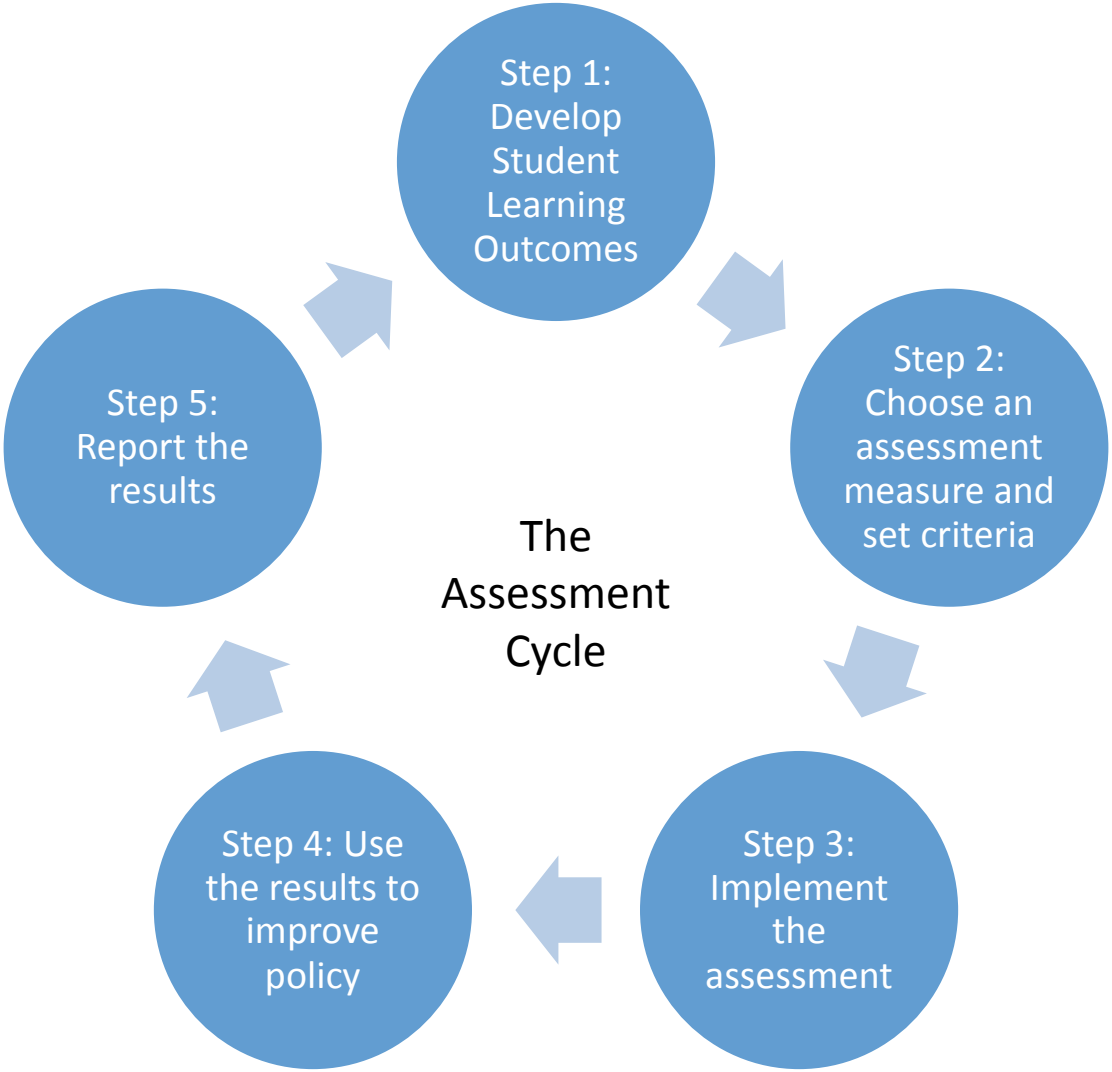
In performing its responsibilities, the Office of University Assessment is guided by the following five themes:

- Enhance student learning
- Improve academic quality
- Improve educational support services and administrative processes
- Meet external accountability requirements such as the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) and accreditation agencies, including the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)
- Increase campus communication among administrators, faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders about the value of assessment in improving student learning, academic reputation, and quality at TSU.

Institutional Assessment

- As defined by Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology
  - Institutional Assessment: A tool for monitoring the effectiveness of the school in serving its mission and purposes by collecting and analyzing data to answer the question, “are we meeting our goals?” The ongoing Institutional Assessment evaluates and identifies the successful areas and the areas in need of improvement across the entire university.

Assessment Cycle



Step 1: Create Student Learning Outcomes

- Learn what you want to assess and create significant student learning outcomes.
- Student Learning Outcomes are derived from course and university objectives.
- This section is completed by campus units and provides information on University Mission, University Goals (Strategic Plan and Academic Master Plan), Program Mission/Goals, and Program/Unit Expected Outcomes).
- Campus units show how Program Mission/Goals and Expected Outcomes are linked to University Mission/Goals.

Step 2: Choose an Assessment Measure and Set Criteria

Methods for assessing outcomes should:

- Gather evidence that will provide the best representation of the learning that is expected
- Determine the basis for comparison
- Detail what evidence will be gathered, how that evidence will be gathered, and who is responsible for gathering that evidence
- Determine the standard or level necessary to achieve success
- Reflect on the methods used for assessing

Step 3: Implement the Assessment

- Your choice of assessment method will dictate when you do the assessment
- The methods and tools collect the data needed to measure progress toward the specified goals and objectives
- The staff and information systems are willing and able to collect the data as required

Step 4: Use Assessment Results

- Did the data tell us if we met this objective?
  - The first question calls for a review of the assessment methods and tools.
  - Use results to make Improvements to SLOs or POs (i.e. Campus units develop and implement action plans that utilize assessment results to make improvements in student learning and educational support services. The action plans are linked to planning and budgeting processes)
- Did we meet this objective? If we did not, does the data tell us why?
  - The second question is most often answered by hard data: a percentage, an amount, or a rating or ranking.
  - The answer to the final question may be found in the hard data, such as a closed-ended survey, or the team/taskforce might have to review qualitative data to explain the quantitative results.
  - Document the improvements, if any, that resulted from the Action Plan.

Step 5: Report the Results

- Report the results and intended improvements
  - The university
  - The departments and program as owners of the goals/objectives
  - The students and alumni
  - All other stakeholders

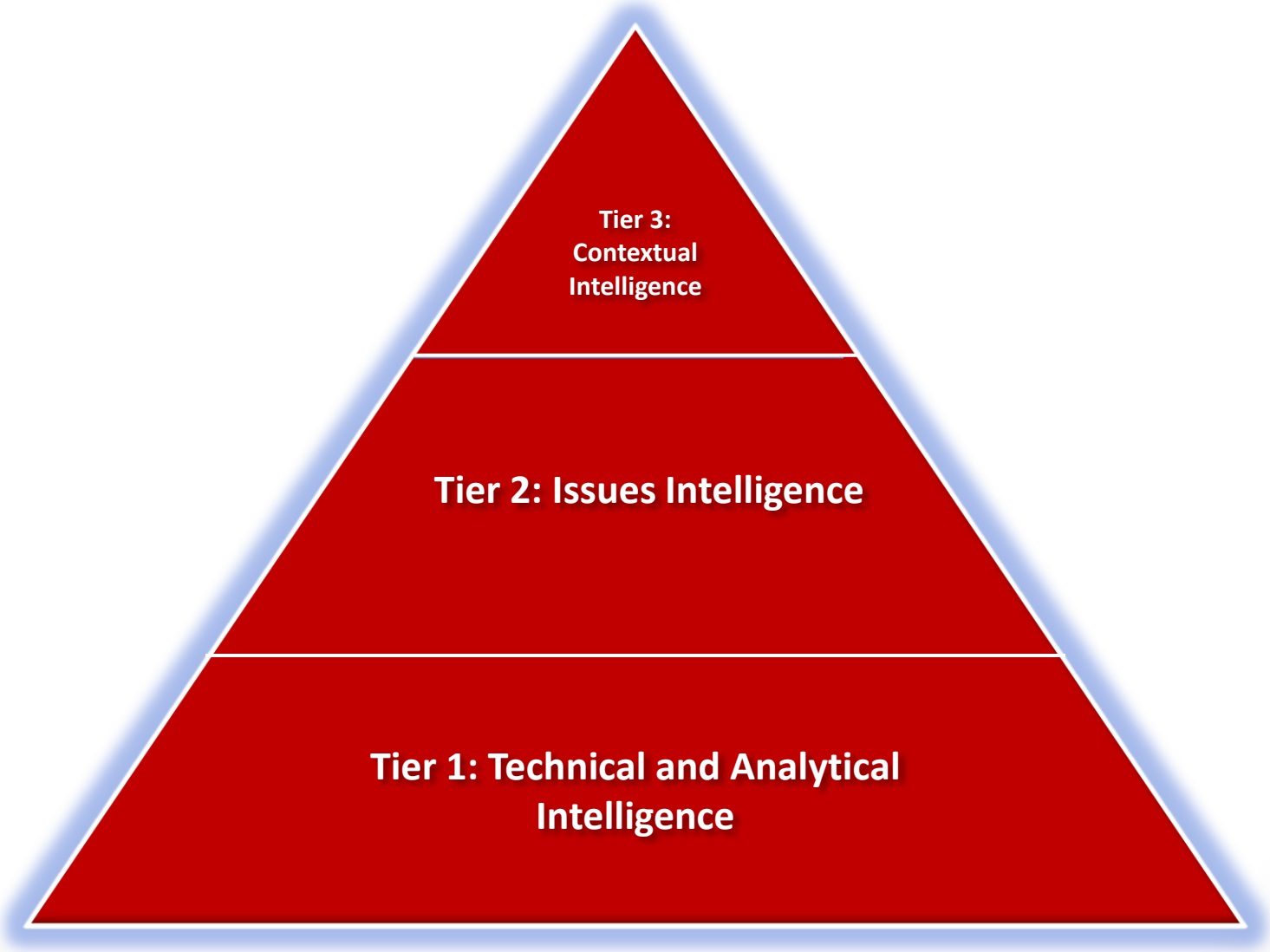
Purpose of Assessment

- According to Webber (2012), the two primary purposes for assessment are: accountability and improvement.
- Gray (2002) suggests that there are advantages to defining assessment for both improvement and accountability because considered together they can allow us to objectively find answers to context-specific questions while also including many campus colleagues in discussions and decisions that ultimately build a culture of assessment.

What is an Institutional Researcher?

- The Institutional Researcher provides information to support university decision-making through a variety of analytic activities, data-gathering tasks, and research projects.
- His/Her respective office serves as a clearinghouse for most statistical information about the university. The office reports to and places first priority on work for the Provost and for the Officers of the University, while also working regularly with many other offices and individuals both inside and outside of the university.
- The IR researcher is valued for his or her three tiers of knowledge (Terenzini 1993), and must at all times be consciously aware of the need to remain objective and report information clearly, and in a way that can be used by senior level officials to make balanced and informed decisions.

Three Tiers of Organizational Intelligence (Terenzini 2012)



Tier 1 “The Foundation”

- The institutional researcher must be familiar with the institution’s information and data structures, variable names and operational definitions, and the counting rules that are the basic building blocks of the institution’s major data systems (e.g., admissions, registration, personnel). It includes knowing what’s in the data warehouse, how to access it, and how to manipulate it.
- By itself, it consists of data without information, processes without purposes, analyses without problems, and answers without questions (Terenzini 1993).

Tier 1 Personnel Needs

- The danger in being preoccupied with technology is that institutional researchers will increasingly be seen as technicians, good at what they do, but having a limited perspective and understanding of important academic and administrative issues.

Tier 2 “Substantive”

- IR professionals must have a knowledge of the kinds of issues and decisions that middle- and upper-level administrators encounter.
  - Strategic planning
  - Course evaluations
  - Faculty Dean and Department Chair Evaluations
  - Enrollment goal setting
  - Retention persistence and graduation rates
  - Benchmark Data
  - Allocation (and reallocation) of faculty, staff, financial, and facilities resources
  - Tuition and fee-setting
  - Salary determination
  - Program and institutional planning, outcome assessment, and program evaluation
  - Budget development and execution
  - Fund raising and alumni relations

Tier 2 Personnel Needs

- IR professionals today and in the future must know something about the contents of the literatures in at least a couple of those substantive and functional areas. The need for a more specialized professional will arise.
- Seemingly common and developed university information leads to well-meaning but time-short administrators and faculty members will fall back on common sense, anecdote, hearsay, and personal beliefs.
- Outsourcing background information from colleagues on campus or around the country who can provide an “inside track” to a particular topic or area can be useful, but it is no substitute for a deeper substantive knowledge of the major pieces of literature in one or more areas of institutional functioning.

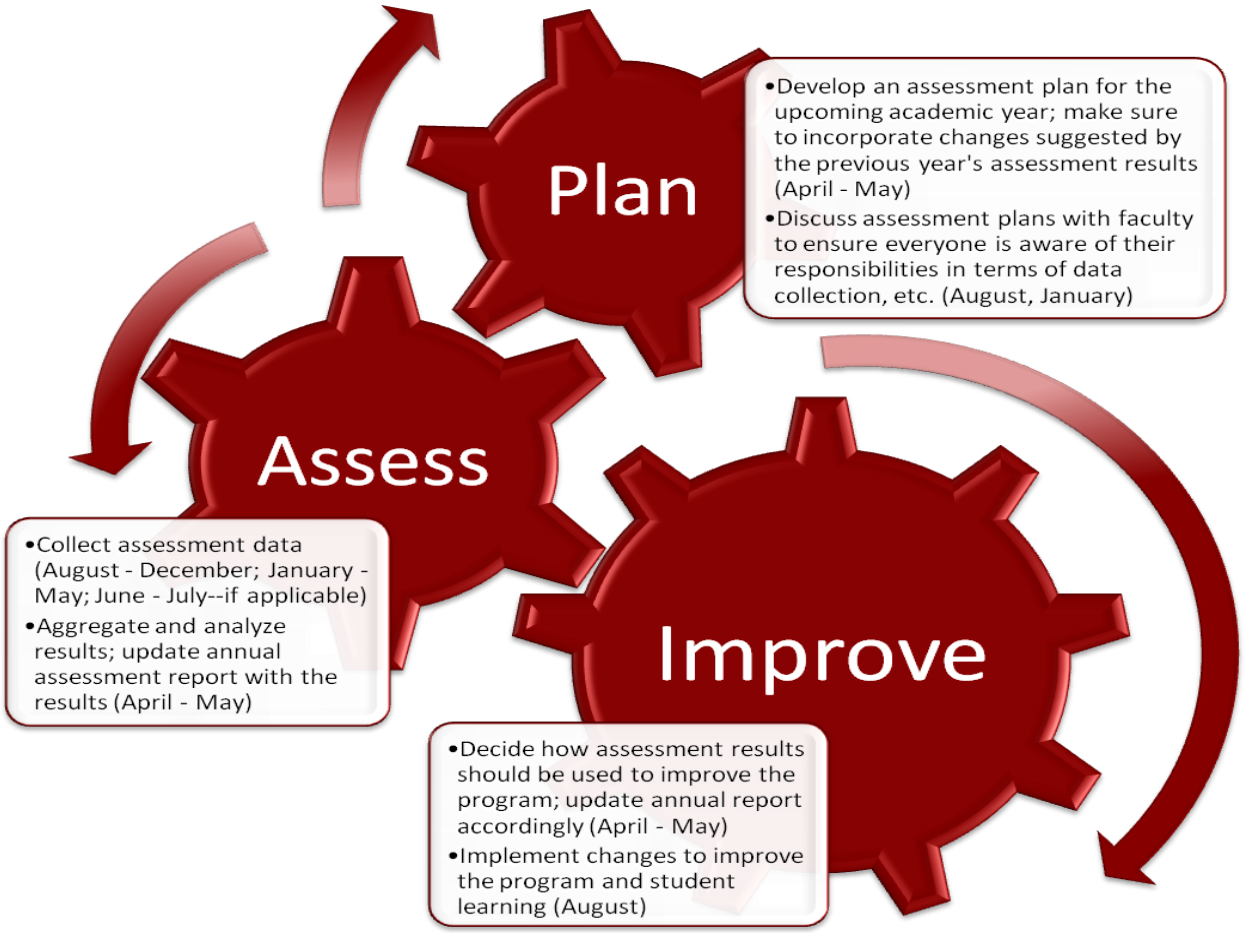
Tier 3 “Queen Tier”

- It includes an understanding of the institution’s historical and philosophical evolution, its faculty and organizational cultures, its informal as well as formal campus political structures and codes, governance, decision-making processes, and customs.
- It includes knowledge of how business is done in this particular college or university and who the key players are in both organizational and governance units.
- Knowledge of the local, state, national, and international environments within which the institution must function. This can expose opportunities and constraints within the department as well as the university.

Tier 3 Personnel Needs

- Some awareness and understanding of state, regional, national, and international contexts, issues, and events, as well as their potential implications for our campuses.
- The sense of urgency pushes decision- and policy-makers toward simple solutions for complex problems. We latch-on to easy and readily available metrics of productivity and an ill-defined ‘‘quality.’’
- The urgency of responding is trumping serious consideration of effectiveness. In responding quickly, we risk trivializing the complexity of our missions and the processes needed to fulfill them.

Yearly Collaboration Methods



Types of Collaboration

- Administrative support for the USPC and UAIC meeting
- Assembling of the Annual Performance Funding Report
- Compilation and Distribution of the University Annual Report Card
- Gathering and Distribution of university Fact Book and Common Data Set
- Site manager for Compliance Assist, the university assessment tool, (Password resets, role assignments, creating new users, etc)
- First line training for Compliance Assist (initial set-up, individual training sessions)
- Management and implementation oversight of Student Evaluations
- Management and implementation oversight of Dean and Chair Surveys
- Workshop evaluations (creation, analysis, and reporting)
- Management of office assessment processes
- Data analysis and interpretation

Collaboration Benefits and Setbacks

Benefits

- Able to specialize
- Split Workloads
- Multiple eyes, ears, and opinions
- Teamwork
- Exposure to other areas/building of context
- Planning and acting strategically can aid in overcoming these potential obstacles to the success of the assessment and to implementing the improvement plan.

Setbacks

- Goals are difficult to clarify
- Data collection systems are poor
- Departments are independent and cooperation is low
- Interpretation v. Generation of data and information -- one office might be "face" of data while data generation and housing might be in another office
- With multiple offices, campus confusion on data sources
- Location and lack of regular communication between all data driven departments.

Recommendations for Continuation

- Establish a DATA (Departments of Analysis, Technology, and Assessment) Council. Monthly meetings with representatives of departments responsible for producing, extracting, and interpreting data.
- The Council will be responsible for all data driven university initiatives.
- Discussions will include troubleshooting, analysis requests, upcoming workshops, and annual data based reporting.

QUESTIONS….

“Any database, if tortured long enough, will confess to anything”.

– Patrick T. Terenzini