

St. Cloud State University Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability Process

Principles:

1. The ultimate goal is institutional improvement.

The process should exist, first and foremost, for the institution itself. It should be the means by which the institution critically evaluates its own performance and provides the information needed to move in a positive direction. Identifying institutional and unit weaknesses is among the goals of the effectiveness plan, is welcomed, and will be viewed in a positive light as changes and improvements are made.

2. The process is ongoing and will change with the institution.

The Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability Process was designed with the belief that institutional effectiveness is an ongoing and comprehensive planning and evaluation process composed of several layers of complementary processes. Institutions and units should try to be as comprehensive as possible in their goals and objectives, but effectiveness plans should be viewed as works in progress that are subject to change based on feedback about the plan itself, as well as changes in the institution.

3. Both accountability measures and effectiveness measures will be necessary.

The terms "effectiveness" and "accountability" are used to represent the fact that they are complementary processes that serve different functions. For purposes of this plan, accountability means the demonstration of an institution's performance measured in quantifiable terms to a public or political audience. Accountability measurement usually involves a demonstration that the institution is fulfilling its stated purpose and is using resources efficiently and effectively. Effectiveness is aimed at an internal audience and has institutional improvement as the goal. Assessment is a key component of the effectiveness process.

4. Goals and measures will vary, but the process should be consistent.

It is expected that measures will vary by unit throughout the institution, but the planning and reporting procedures used should be fairly consistent. The process of planning, measurement and improvement should be grounded in a common framework, and the recording and reporting of data should be consistent throughout the entire process.

Statement of Purpose:

The purpose of the Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability Process is to create a more coordinated and comprehensive approach to planning, assessment, and accountability at St. Cloud State University by:

- Integrating institutional and unit planning efforts to allow SCSU to act in a more focused, transparent, efficient and effective way
- Positioning the university so it can respond more quickly to new opportunities
- Providing a clear direction for future initiatives

- Demonstrating accountability to SCSU's stakeholders
- Providing a framework for quality improvement at the university, unit and department level
- Providing a framework for implementing a performance-based budgeting model

Process:

STAGES A & B: FOCUS AND CONSULTATION

Stage A: Environment, Relationships & Challenges

The planning process begins with a thorough review of external or environmental developments that will impact the future of St. Cloud State University. This will include an analysis of the institution's market, political and academic environments. It will also include information on the major planning initiatives of the Office of the Chancellor and a competitor analysis. The review should highlight potential opportunities and threats to its future success.

Stage B: SCSU Planning and Budget Advisory Process

[This section is under development. The sub-committee discussed forming a roundtable that was open to all similar to the TLTR model.]

STAGES 1 & 2: FUTURES PLANNING

Stage 1: University Strategic Plan (5-year cycle)

Through the strategic planning process, the University will develop a set of specific strategic goals, including measurable outcomes, which will be achieved in a five-year time frame. With an eye to the University's changing political and market environments, the President and key university leadership and the University's Strategic Planning Committee will develop a forward-thinking plan that will allow the institution to develop responses that are consistent with the University's mission but provide opportunity for continued institutional improvement and success.

1. A comprehensive environmental scan is developed by Office of Institutional Effectiveness for use during the strategic planning process. The document will be completed six months prior to the targeted date of completion of the 5-year strategic plan.
2. Through a series of planning retreats, the President and his designees meets with Strategic Planning Committee to review the institution's mission and vision statements, to discuss the current and future planning environment, including potential opportunities and threats, and to develop institutional priorities and goals, including expected outcomes, for the next 5-years. The planning process should be completed in six months. The outcome of the planning process is a finished plan that can be shared with the institution's internal and external constituencies.

Stage 2: Unit, College & Functional Level Strategic Plans (5-year cycle)

Based on the University's Strategic Plan, each unit, college and major functional area will develop a 5-year plan that supports the achievement of SCSU's institutional goals. Unit, college and functional level plans should be completed six months after the completion of the University's

strategic plan. Each plan should include these elements, though the format can follow discipline/department specific guidelines based on accreditation or external review requirements.

- Clear mission statement
- Explicit and measurable goals and objectives
- Report on current trends and best practices for the area
- Assessment or evaluation plan including a description of:
 - the assessment method to be used to measure achievement
 - how those results will be used to enhance performance
 - who is responsible for collecting the data
 - the interval at which the data will be collected
 - any comparative data available

Units and offices should develop 5-year strategic plans that align with the University's Strategic Plan in consultation with their unit vice president. These plans should be completed 6 months after the completion of the University's 5-year plan.

STAGES 3 & 4: PROCESS MANAGEMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

Stage 3: Annual Planning Timeline (2-year cycle)

Implementation of the institution and unit strategic plans occur at the annual work plan level. At the beginning of the planning cycle (July 1 for the next fiscal year), the university will provide annual work plan goals, along with an environmental scanning report to each unit/college. Managers will use the institutional goals and scanning report as the basis for annual planning within their unit. Annual work plans should contain information on trends or best practices for that area or discipline.

Based on the schedule below, each department, college and unit on campus will develop an annual work plan that outlines that area's planned activities and new initiatives for the next fiscal year, how those activities support the college/unit/university strategic plan, how results will be measured, how performance data will be collected and reported, and any new resource requirements necessary to implement new initiatives.

- **July 1 – Sept. 1:** Office of Institutional Effectiveness updates scorecards and writes environmental scanning report and institutional performance report using assessment data collected by institution and departments/offices. IE develops draft Annual University Work Plan.
- **Sept. 1:** Draft Annual University Work Plan goals and environmental scanning and institutional performance reports distributed to Deans/Vice Presidents to share with departments and offices.
- **Oct. 1:** Departments/offices electronically submit work plans with associated budget requests for the *next fiscal year* and update plan for current year if necessary. *For example, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness would submit its FY'07 work plan and an update to its FY'06 work plan in October 2005.*

- **Nov. 1:** Deans/Vice Presidents complete review of department/office work plans and submit College/Unit Work Plans to President.
- **Dec. 1:** University-wide Annual Work Plan for the next fiscal year is posted to internal web site for community review and shared with bargaining units through Meet & Confer process
- **June 30:** Year-end progress reports on all work plans for the current fiscal year are submitted electronically
- **Sept. 1 – Oct. 1:** Department chairs/office directors hold annual meeting w/their Unit VP or Dean to review department report and discuss issues or future initiatives based on assessment data collected at the department and institutional levels. This meeting will be in preparation for annual work plan submission.

Stage 4: Budget Allocation & Plan Implementation

On July 1 of each fiscal year, budget allocations are made to each department on campus.

The benefit of preparing annual work plans in advance is that it provides a method to connect SCSU's strategic plan with its budget process and allows for better budget planning by the institution. By requiring departments and offices to demonstrate an explicit link between their initiatives and the institution's strategic plan and the use of assessment data in performance improvement, SCSU moves closer to a performance-based funding process that rewards good performance as demonstrated through effective planning and evaluation.

SCSU's annual work plan for the next fiscal year should be completed by December 1. Because it is based, in part, on department-level work plans that contain associated budget requests, the institution will know budget needs for the next fiscal year by this date.

At the end of each fiscal year (by June 30), each department/office/unit will have submitted a year-end work plan progress report that demonstrates progress made and goals and objectives achieved based on data collected. The year-end progress report combined with annual work plan goals will provide a guide for university leadership to use in determining final budget allocation for each department each fiscal year.

It is clear that new initiatives cannot simply be funded through new money and that much of the funding decisions will be based on reallocation of existing funds. By asking departments to demonstrate a clear link between their actions and the eventual outcomes, it provides the institution an opportunity to incentivize positive, entrepreneurial activities and reallocate resources toward those activities that will further the institution's overall priorities.

Following are examples of budget reallocations and incentives:

- Allow departments to carry forward unexpended funds between fiscal years if they can demonstrate a clear use for those funds

- Allow departments to retain unspent funds from self-identified efficiencies if they can demonstrate a clear use for those funds
- Set aside funds at the institutional level to serve as matching funds for externally raised resources for priority programs (such as grants, contracts or private/corporate donations)
- Allow departments to share in the revenues from entrepreneurial activities

STAGES 5 & 6: MEASUREMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Stage 5: Data Collection

Each work plan (institutional and unit) will specify anticipated outcomes, how those outcomes will be measured and the data that will be collected. Because outcomes will vary based on the specific goals of each unit, data will be collected at various points throughout the fiscal year and stored in a central data warehouse.

Stage 6: Year-End Annual Work Plan Report

Each unit will submit a year-end work plan report using institutional and unit-specific data to demonstrate achievement of goals and outcomes. The results of this analysis will be used to update the next year's work plan and to identify areas of improvement or opportunities for growth or achievement to be addressed in future work plans. Examples of successful initiatives will be shared with the campus community to celebrate successes as examples of good practice that could be applied to other units.

Infrastructure and Support:

Institutional Effectiveness web site:

The Institutional Effectiveness web site will contain resources to assist units and departments in their planning efforts. The IE web page will contain:

- **Institutional, unit, and department scorecards** that contain data on identified performance measures for each area. The scorecards will be updated regularly as new information is available.
- **Best practices and resources** for higher education planning, assessment and accountability.
- **Electronic work plan reporting web site:** Annual work plans will be submitted electronically through the Institutional Effectiveness web site. Department and unit work plans will be stored in a password protected environment for review by individuals responsible for implementation and their supervisors. Information from the reports will be used for department/unit planning and institutional reporting.

The Institutional Effectiveness web site will have links to additional SCSU web sites that contain resources and information on the institution's planning, accountability and assessment efforts.

- **Strategic Planning web site:** Current strategic planning goals, objectives and anticipated outcomes will be maintained on the Strategic Planning web site. Other resources to assist departments/units in their planning efforts will be available through the site.

- **Office of Institutional Research web site:** This site contains institutional data and research reports for use in preparing accreditation reports, program reviews, and work plan and year-end progress reports.
- **Assessment web site:** The site contains information and resources on SCSU's assessment efforts.

Expanded institutional research and studies:

SCSU will conduct a series of local and national surveys/studies to gather data to be used to inform identified institutional and unit performance measures. Disaggregated data will be available to departments/colleges if possible. Summary reports and data will be available through the Institutional Research web site. Data will be collected on the following constituencies:

- Incoming students: annually
- Freshman experiences: annually
- Student engagement: bi-annually
- Faculty expectations: bi-annually
- Graduating seniors experiences: semi-annually
- General education assessment: annually
- Employee satisfaction: bi-annually
- Alumni satisfaction: annually
- Community and employers: every 5 years

Environmental and institutional reports:

At the beginning of each fiscal year, a report summarizing SCSU's performance on major institutional initiatives and identified performance measures will be created and distributed to the University's internal and external communities. An environmental scanning report that identifies major issues and trends that could affect the University will also be prepared. Both reports will be available to the departments/units to use to inform their annual work plans. A more comprehensive set of reports will be prepared every 5-years in preparation for a new strategic planning cycle.

Planning training and facilitation:

Staff from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness will be available to facilitate planning sessions for units on campus or to answer questions about the work plan submission process. Training sessions on higher education planning and accountability are being developed in conjunction with CETL.

Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability Model

