ESTABLISHING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A Framework for Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Planning

Goals and objectives are directly derived from the unit’s mission. The process of establishing goals and objectives helps us deconstruct the mission into achievable, concrete, time-bound actions that we can measure in order to track progress. Clear goals and objectives are, therefore, critical to the IE process.

What Is a Goal?

Goals are general statements of what it is we want to achieve. Goals derive directly from the mission (the overall purpose and core values) of your unit. Goals must be relevant, realistic, and achievable. You should develop 3-5 goals from your mission statement. For each goal, you will need to develop a series of objectives.

What Are Objectives?

Objectives state the specific actions you will take to achieve your goals. Objectives must be specific, measurable, and time-bound. For each goal, you should develop 3-5 objectives.

Common ways of describing goals versus objectives:

- **Goals** are broad     | **Objectives** are narrow
- **Goals** are more long-term | **Objectives** are more short-term
- **Goals** are general intentions | **Objectives** are precise actions
- **Goals** are often intangible | **Objectives** are often tangible
- **Goals** are abstract | **Objectives** are concrete
- **Goals** are difficult to measure | **Objectives** are measurable

- **Goals** are desired results that provide direction and guide decision-making. **Objectives** are specific, measurable steps that can be taken to achieve goals.
- We use **goals** to turn our mission into achievable end-results. We use **objectives** to operationalize and measure achievement towards goals.
- Measurable **objectives** are essential for evaluating progress.

| GOALS | OBJECTIVES |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Something you try to achieve | Actions you need to take to achieve a goal |
| Define direction and destination | Steps that get us there |
| Where we want to go | How we will get there |
| Big picture | Specific tactics |
EXAMPLES

Goal:
The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE) will develop and implement a campus-wide process for Institutional Effectiveness.

Objective 1:
OIRE will work with TTUHSC EP leadership to determine TTUHSC EP organizational structure, divisions, and define units.

Objective 2:
OIRE will establish an IE Task Force with representation from all divisions, and organize regular, monthly task-force meetings starting in August 2015.

Objective 3:
OIRE will develop and present a series of workshops and materials to teach IE principles to task force members.

CHECKLIST (for both Goals and Objectives)

Do/Are your goals and objectives:

☐ Use the SMART criteria
  S  Specific
  M  Measurable
  A  Achievable (attainable, action-oriented)
  R  Relevant (realistic, reasonable)
  T  Time-bound

☐ Use action verbs (e.g., define, explain, identify, illustrate, apply, organize); refer to “Useful Action Verbs” attachment

☐ In complete sentences
  ☐ At least 3 in total (e.g., minimum of 3 goals per mission statement and minimum of 3 objectives per goal)

☐ Aligned with your program’s/office’s/department’s mission statement
CHECKLIST (for goals)

Do/Are your goals:

- General statements
- Broad
- Define direction/destination
- Long-term

CHECKLIST (for objectives)

Do/Are your objectives:

- answer the five ‘W’ questions (usually, but not always all are answered):
  - What: What do I want to accomplish?
  - Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits or accomplishing goal.
  - Who: Who is involved?
  - Where: Identify a location.
  - Which: Identify requirements and constraints.
- Distinctive from one another
- Not “bundled”
  - Example: The Office of Institutional Planning and Assessment will facilitate the preparation for reaffirmation of accreditation by SACSCOC AND work cooperatively to monitor progress of the TTUHSC strategic plan.
- Avoid directionality (e.g., use of the words “increase” or “decrease”)
- Not specify a quantifiable target
- Simply stated
- Measurable – Is it possible to collect accurate and reliable data for each?
- Accurately reflect the key results of the operations or service offered by your program/office/department