



RANDOLPH COLLEGE

Institutional Effectiveness Guidelines

Adopted September, 2001
Current Revision: November, 2010

This document updates *Guidelines for the Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness, Major Program Assessment, Assessment of General Education, and Assessment of Non-Instructional Units*, April 2001.

The original *Guidelines* drew heavily on the work of Dr. James O. Nichols and Ms. Karen W. Nichols of Institutional Effectiveness Associates who consulted with the College during the early implementation phase of its institutional effectiveness program. The current *Guidelines* incorporate WEAVEonline web-hosted planning and assessment software.

This edition represents the consensus of the 2010-2011 Institutional Effectiveness Committee:

Dixie N. Sakolosky, Chair	Director of Institutional Research and Assistant to the President
Marc Ordower	Associate Professor of Mathematics
Jennifer Abassi	Professor of Political Science
Elizabeth Perry Sizemore	Associate Professor of Economics
Tina Johnson	Director, Experiential Learning Center
Sarah Swager	Vice President for Student Affairs
Kelly Malone Dudley	SACS Accreditation Assistant

Contents

I.	Introduction	1
	Institutional Effectiveness	1
	The Institutional Effectiveness Cycle	1
	Principles of Good Assessment Practice	2
	Purpose of Institutional Effectiveness at Randolph College	2
	Assumptions Underlying Randolph College's Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness.....	3
	Responsibilities	3
	Assessment Plans and Terminology	4
II.	Academic Major Program Assessment	5
	Guidelines for Major Program Assessment	5
	General Procedures for Major Program Assessment	5
	Assessment and Department Review Process	7
	Major Program Assessment Contact Person	8
	Funding for Major Program Assessment	8
III.	General Education Assessment	9
	Overview of the General Education Program	9
	Writing Skills Assessment	9
	General Education Assessment.....	10
IV.	Assessment of Administrative and Educational Support Units	10
	Guidelines for Administrative/Educational Support Unit Assessment	10
	General Procedures for Administrative/Educational Support Unit Assessment ...	11
V.	Calendar for Assessment Activities	12
VI.	Resources for Assessment	13
	Appendix A Randolph College Mission Statement and Statement of Purpose	14
	Appendix B Goals of the Strategic Plan	15
	Appendix C Academic, Administrative and Educational Support Units.....	16
	Appendix D WEAVEonline Instructions	18

I. INTRODUCTION

Institutional Effectiveness

Institutional effectiveness is the outcome of the systematic and ongoing process of collecting, analyzing and acting on data and information relating to the goals and outcomes developed to support the College's mission. Institutional effectiveness is oriented towards measuring results and using these results to aid in decision-making and improvement.

Institutional effectiveness is not the result of a one-time process, but rather is the outcome of a cyclical process in which continuous improvements and refinements on goals and methods are undertaken. Furthermore, institutional effectiveness, like the College itself, is not static, but rather an ever-changing and evolving process. Thus, it needs to be revisited continuously to ensure that the needs, purpose, and mission of the College are being met.

Institutional effectiveness focuses on three main categories of organizational functions:

1. instructional/student learning outcomes,
2. administrative services outcomes, and
3. educational support services outcomes.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges indicates that institutional effectiveness is central to its philosophy of accreditation and is a core requirement of the Principles of Accreditation. "The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. [Core Requirement 2.5]"

Successful assessment of institutional effectiveness requires an environment characterized by effective leadership, administrative commitment, adequate resources, faculty and staff development opportunities, and time.¹

The Institutional Effectiveness Cycle

Randolph College employs a continuous institutional effectiveness process that includes an ongoing planning-assessment-improvement cycle that is applied to specific functions and outcomes at each level of the college, department, and program. Regardless of the organizational level, the following phases are essential to this process:

1. stating central or core expectations of program outcomes that are related to the program's/department's primary function and that support the College's mission;
2. identifying and/or developing specific assessment procedures appropriate for measuring each intended outcome;

¹ Banta, T. W., Lund, J. P., Black, K. E., and Oblander, F. W. *Assessment in Practice: Putting Principles to Work on College Campuses*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996.

3. systematically conducting assessment activities;
4. using assessment data to evaluate the extent to which outcomes have been accomplished and identifying possible explanations for results obtained (evaluative and diagnostic functions);
5. based on assessment findings, developing and implementing specific strategies for program enhancement and/or improvement;
6. integrating assessment findings with budgeting requests; and
7. modifying expectations of program outcomes based on enhancements and repeating the cycle.

Principles of Good Assessment Practice

The American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) has developed nine "Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning." While these principles were developed primarily for use in instructional assessment, many of them are also applicable to other types of assessment such as the evaluation of non-instructional units. These principles serve as the foundation for the development and maintenance of the institutional effectiveness program at Randolph College.

The principles are as follows:

1. The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.
2. Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.
3. Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.
4. Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.
5. Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.
6. Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.
7. Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.
8. Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.
9. Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.

Purpose of Institutional Effectiveness at Randolph College

There are two general purposes for institutional effectiveness: improvement and accountability. The issue of institutional effectiveness is recognized by Randolph College as being integral to the standards that it has for its academic and support programs, as well as to SACS accreditation. Assessment items are keyed to the College's mission as expressed in the College's mission statement and statement of purpose (appendix A) and the goals of the strategic plan (appendix B).

Randolph College is involved in a full program of activities for assessing institutional outcome components. Instructional and student learning outcomes are evaluated through Major Program Assessment and General Education Assessment. Administrative and Educational Support services outcomes are evaluated through each unit's assessment.

Assumptions Underlying Randolph College's Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness

- a. The main purpose of Institutional Effectiveness is program improvement. While Randolph College recognizes that the institution must be accountable to accrediting agencies, the public, and students, accountability is secondary to program improvement.
- b. Institutional effectiveness results are to be used for program/department/unit assessment and improvement only. They are not to be used for tenure and/or promotion review, merit review, or any other personnel decisions.
- c. Students are encouraged to complete all assessment procedures related to general education and/or Major Program assessment.
- d. Major Program assessment and general education assessment activities should be embedded as much as possible into courses and program experiences. This linkage between assessment activities and courses will help to increase the amount of student participation as well as to emphasize the importance of assessment. Assessment activities should be regarded as integral elements to teaching and learning.
- e. It is assumed that faculty and staff will engage willingly in assessing institutional effectiveness for the betterment of the College and its programs.

Responsibilities

Director of Institutional Research: Assumes responsibility for leading the assessment process, including providing workshops and training for faculty and staff, ensuring deadlines are publicized, and evaluating campuswide results for budgeting and planning purposes. Chairs the campus-wide Institutional Effectiveness Committee, and other planning groups as needed.

President: Provides leadership and support for assessment and data-driven planning initiatives. Ensures that the assessment process has adequate human, time and financial resources for effective and continuous improvement of the process. Supports strategic initiatives that are consistent with the College mission and indicated by sound needs assessments.

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College: Ensures academic departmental and program participation in the College assessment process. Provides support for the faculty to ensure consistent, high quality and effective academic participation in the assessment process.

Institutional Effectiveness Committee: The purpose of the committee is to support assessment and reporting of institutional progress toward the accomplishment of the College's mission. The

committee, comprising faculty and administrative members, works in close cooperation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College on academic matters and with other senior administrators on non-academic matters. Its functions include the following:

1. developing, reviewing and recommending policies and procedures for academic and administrative unit assessment;
2. reviewing each unit's goals and assessment plan on an annual basis and providing feedback to each submission; and
3. serving as a resource on assessment information.

Membership: Director of Institutional Research, at least two administrators (at the director level) designated by the President, and three faculty members recommended by the Faculty Representative Committee. The Director of Institutional Research chairs the committee. Ideally, members serve three-year staggered terms.

Department Chairs, Chair of General Education Committee, and Administrative

Directors: Give active support to the assessment process, provide coordination of assessment activities, keep assessment records and submit an annual report including strategic initiatives/potential budget needs that may arise from the assessment findings.

Academic, Administrative and Educational Support Units: Faculty and staff members in these respective units implement assessment. At Randolph College, the academic units include the majors, teacher education, and the general education program. The nonacademic units include administrative and educational support areas. A listing of academic and administrative/educational support units is contained in Appendix C.

Assessment Plans and Terminology

Assessment plans for academic and administrative units evolved from forms originally designed by James O. Nichols². In 2010-11, the College implemented WEAVEonline, a web based software program for assessment and planning (Appendix D). WEAVE facilitates the formulation of the assessment plans in a consistent manner and provides a permanent record of the assessment process. The WEAVE model of assessment includes:

1. Statement of departmental or unit mission that supports the Institutional Mission or Purpose,
2. Expected Outcomes/Objectives,
3. Criteria for success,
4. Data informed assessment of performance against identified criteria, and
5. Use of results to inform improvements through actions.

² Nichols, J.O. *The Departmental Guide and Record Book for Student Outcomes Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness*. New York: Agathon Press, 1995.

II. ACADEMIC MAJOR PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Guidelines for Major Program Assessment

By definition, Major Program Assessment is the evaluation of program effectiveness for each subject area offered as a major at Randolph College. The determination of program effectiveness is made by assessing student outcomes in the cognitive, affective, and performance domains. That is, a program is deemed effective if students have certain knowledge, values, and skills at the completion of the program. Major Program Assessment is the evaluation of the program; it is not the same as the evaluation of student performance.

Major Program Assessment is keyed to the College's mission and strategic plan. Because the programs at Randolph College are diverse in nature and content, the methods used for Major Program Assessment will also be diverse.

Faculty input is essential to successful Major Program Assessment. Faculty are in the best position to identify desired educational outcomes and the strategies to be used to measure those outcomes. Multiple measures of student learning including achievement, performance, and attitude measures are important in establishing an effective Major Program Assessment plan.

As much as possible, Major Program Assessment activities should be tied directly to course and program experiences, thereby increasing the amount of student participation as well as emphasizing the importance of assessment. For example, program level surveys could be part of non-graded course requirements in a senior level course for majors. Naturally, such assessments as senior projects, performances, and portfolios should be part of advanced courses in the major.

General Procedures for Major Program Assessment

The departments will be expected to:

- establish statements of intended educational outcomes that are related to or supportive of the College's mission,
- play a major role in the identification of procedures and means to assess the extent to which departmental intended outcomes or objectives have been accomplished, and
- use the results of assessment to improve student learning or departmental operations.

Format for Academic Assessment Plans and Reports

Beginning in August, 2010, the College adopted WEAVEonline as our vehicle for assessment planning and results reports (Appendix D). All faculty chairs have access to their unit's assessment forms through WEAVEonline and can submit their plans, outcomes, criteria, results and future actions to that central electronic database. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee provides training to new personnel and periodically offers campus-wide workshops to help all users become familiar with the software.

Intended Educational Outcomes

Statements of intended educational outcomes are descriptions of what academic departments intend for students to know (cognitive), think (attitudinal), or be able to do (behavioral) when they have completed their degree programs. Departments such as English and Mathematics (due to their heavy service course commitments) may also have an interest in including statements of intended student learning outcomes as established by the General Education program.

It is logical to begin the focus of assessment on those expectations for graduates which have been identified as of primary importance.

Guidelines for Writing *Clear and Effective* Educational Outcomes

- Use action verbs that specify definite, observable behaviors.
- Use simple language.
- Describe student rather than teacher behaviors.
- Describe a learning outcome rather than a learning process.
- Focus on the end of instructional behavior rather than subject matter coverage.
- Indicate a single outcome per objective.
- Can be assessed by one or more indicators (methods).
- Is clearly linked to a goal.
- Is realistic and attainable.
- Is not simple when complexity is needed.
- Is clear to people outside the discipline.
- Is validated by departmental colleagues.

Number of Intended Educational Outcomes to be Assessed at a Given Time

Departments should have a long list of intended educational outcomes for their graduates. They should limit assessment to between three and five at a time. When an outcome is achieved, a different student learning outcome should be pulled down from the long list for assessment purposes. Limiting the number of statements of intended educational outcomes is the first (and many would say most important) step in keeping the process as simple and manageable as possible.

Criteria for Program or Departmental Success

This is the benchmark that the department sets and against which its performance is judged by the faculty within the department. These criteria are most often stated in terms of percentages, percentiles, averages, or other quantitative measurements.

The Accomplishment of Intended Educational Outcomes Should be Ascertainable

Ascertainable outcomes are not restricted to those which are (a) accurate (in the scientific sense), (b) entirely quantified and precluding qualitative judgement, or (c) perceived primarily as standardized cognitive examinations.

It is suggested that several or multiple means of assessment be identified for each outcome.

How High Should Intended Educational Outcomes be Set?

This depends on what are considered reasonable expectations for Randolph College based on the selectivity of the admissions process.

Examples of Means of Assessment Available to Academic Departments

Qualitative: Capstone courses/seminars
Senior research projects
Senior comprehensives (written/oral)
External examiners/peer review
Internships
Interviews
Self-assessments
Attitudinal measures
Portfolio reviews
Behavioral change
Public performances
Oral presentations
Senior project papers

Quantitative: Locally-made objective tests
Standardized tests
Measures of cognitive learning
MFAT (Major Program Achievement Test)
Professional school admission tests

Assessment activities should be perceived as a means toward improvement. The end product of all assessment activities is the improvement of academic programming based upon the use of assessment results. Without being able to demonstrate such use of assessment results, all previous activities fall short of their intended purpose.

Assessment and Department Review Process

The Randolph College process for submitting assessment information annually is as follows:

- **Meeting with the Dean:** Each department (or department chair) will meet with the Dean to discuss the department's current annual assessment report and plan for the upcoming year. They will discuss progress toward goals, changes that have occurred in the department, and documented issues and needs included in the assessment materials. These meetings also will provide an opportunity to discuss budgeting needs and new strategic initiatives emerging from the assessment process. The Dean may advocate for budget support for these ideas.

- **Develop and Submit Assessment Reports:** All academic departments will complete and submit assessment reports each academic year through WEAVEonline software. Reported data should document what student outcomes were assessed, the results of the assessment, and how the department plans to use the results to improve the program.
- **Develop and Submit Assessment Plans:** All academic departments will submit a plan for the upcoming academic year through WEAVEonline, including what the departmental goals are for the year, what vehicles are being used to work toward the departmental goals, how progress toward goals is to be measured, and the criteria for success.
- **Review of Assessment Reports and Plans:** Both the Dean and members of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee will review the assessment documents between June and October to provide feedback about the completeness and quality of the documents. Together, they may identify new strategic initiatives that have emerged from the assessment process and share them with the standing Budget Committees and Senior Staff for consideration.
- **Record Keeping:** WEAVEonline keeps electronic records of the assessment plans and reports indefinitely. Prior to the launch of WEAVE, copies of the assessment plans and annual reports were kept in departmental offices and in the office of the Director of Institutional Research, where those historical documents may be reviewed if desired. Electronic versions of pre-2011 plans and reports are also available through the College portal for those with appropriate College passwords.

As part of a ten-year review process, academic departments examine assessment reports from previous years and summarize the information in a report that includes the following:

1. analysis and/or discussion of the department's learning goals for students;
2. commentary on how the learning goals for the major are met in terms of the major's content, the structure and sequence of course work, senior program, pedagogical approaches, use of technology, study abroad experiences, internships, other co-curricular programming or activities;
3. a summary of the department's assessment results and how they have been used; and
4. a needs analysis indicating material resources and professional development requests related to improving the program.

Major Program Assessment Contact Person

The department chair will coordinate the assessment projects for the departmental programs. All faculty members in the department are expected to be involved in assessing the programs, and their input should be obtained before program and/or curricula changes are made. The Dean of the College and the department chair are responsible for providing new faculty members with the orientation required to participate in the assessment activities of the department. All faculty will be expected to participate in training activities associated with Major Program Assessment.

Funding for Major Program Assessment

The Dean of the College has an annual budget for assessment and department review activities. Department chairs may request assessment funds as needed throughout the year; however, advance budgeting will facilitate funding procurement. Testing expenses, travel, materials,

professional development, consultant expenses, and honoraria are examples of items which department chairs may request from the assessment budget.

III. GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

Overview of the General Education Program

Randolph College's General Education Program, described in the College's academic catalog, has a two-fold thrust:

1. the achievement of skill thresholds in writing, mathematics, and foreign language; and
2. a breadth of study supportive of the College's mission statement and characteristic of a liberal arts curriculum.

Each student is required to complete the general education program successfully prior to graduation, and each candidate's academic record is scrutinized for compliance prior to the student's being certified to graduate.

The current general education program assessment structure evaluates student outcomes on a course level basis. This assessment evaluation program was implemented in the spring 2010 semester with the use of faculty or externally developed rubrics. These rubrics are based on common course objectives within the general education categories. Success is generally assumed by students' achieving a proficiency score of adequate or better in courses that address identified distribution studies, dimension studies, or skills. A program for assessing writing skills was implemented in 1986. Additionally, the College's regular use of the National Survey of Student Engagement provides measures of self-reported student development in capacities generally associated with bachelor's degree programs and enables the College to compare its students' development with that of students at peer institutions and other comparison sets.

The faculty voted in December 1999 to establish a standing General Education Committee to oversee the general education program. The committee's purpose is to ". . . establish college-wide criteria for what general education courses should accomplish, approve courses to be listed as part of the general education program, bring proposals about general education to the faculty, and be responsible for ongoing assessment of the program." (Approved by faculty 12/14/99.)

Writing Skills Assessment

The current writing evaluation system, approved by the faculty, is published in the College's academic catalog. At the end of each semester, the faculty of all courses assess the writing competence of each of their students using the following scale:

- 1 = Excellent
- 2 = Adequate for satisfactory academic work
- 3 = Weak or inadequate for satisfactory academic work
- N = No basis for judging writing performance

To ensure that students who need to strengthen writing skills receive the assistance they need, the procedures described below have been adopted by the faculty.

Any student who receives a rating of 3 from two different faculty members will be required to elect one of the following options during the semester following the low evaluations in order to maintain eligibility to continue at the College for the subsequent semester:

1. Enroll in and satisfactorily complete a composition course in the English Department,
2. Complete an individual tutoring program under a contract with the Director of the Writing Program in the Writing Lab, or pass a writing proficiency examination to be prepared and evaluated by the Director of the Writing Program and one or two other faculty members of the Writing Board.

Choice of option will be made by the student based upon the recommendation of the Director and in consultation with the faculty advisor.

General Education Assessment

Each of the different general education categories has a rubric specific to criteria present in common objectives from courses within the category. At the end of each semester, the faculty who teach courses within the general education categories will assess each of their students' achievement of the criteria identified in the rubrics using the following scale:

- 1 = High Proficiency
- 2 = Adequate Proficiency
- 3 = Weak or clearly inadequate Proficiency
- N = No basis for judgment

The General Education Committee evaluates data collected at the end of several semesters to inform recommendations with respect to improving the General Education Program.

IV. ASSESSMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT UNITS

While the focus of institutional effectiveness is naturally on student outcomes in academic programs, those programs are inextricably intertwined with the activities and services of administrative and educational support units. Integrated assessment provides the means of evaluating and improving programming in these non-instructional units on a regular basis.

Guidelines for Administrative/Educational Support Unit Assessment

Assessment in non-instructional units is the evaluation of each unit's effectiveness in supporting the College's mission, either through a direct link to the mission statement, statement of purpose, or strategic plan goals. Generally, assessment should occur at the departmental or equivalent level that is headed by a director or other professional. The units that are currently expected to engage in assessment are listed in appendix C.

All professional staff should engage in formulating the assessment plans for their units. This type of collaboration yields a consensus about a unit's mission and helps focus departmental initiatives.

General Procedures for Administrative/Educational Support Unit Assessment

Suggested steps in administrative/educational support assessment

1. Establish a link to the College's mission statement, statement of purpose, or strategic plan goals. Identify which portion of those statements the unit supports.
2. Establish the administrative/educational support unit mission statement or goals.
3. Formulate the unit's objectives for the assessment period.
4. Identify the means of assessing achievement of the objectives and state the criteria or standards for success.
5. Conduct the assessment activities and collect data as objectives are completed.
6. Demonstrate and document the use of results to improve services.
7. Submit items that emerge from the assessment results for consideration for funding in the upcoming budgeting cycle.

Administrative Objectives

Administrative objectives tend to describe what the department plans to do; however, when possible, statements of objectives should focus upon the results of administrative operations rather than the processes themselves.

Types of assessment frequently used by administrative and educational support units

Effectiveness measures are likely to be counts of services, measures of client satisfaction, or external validation by a professional organization. Examples of each of these are given below.

Attitudinal measures of user satisfaction:

- General assessment (example: institutional level surveys)
- Detailed evaluation (example: user point-of-contact survey)

Direct measures or counts of unit services:

- Volume of activity (example: number of persons served)
- Level of efficiency (example: average time for response)
- Measure of quality (example: average errors per audit)

External validation: periodic assessment of the relationship of the unit's efforts to "good and acceptable practice" by a neutral person who is knowledgeable in the field

- Auditor
- Public Health Inspector
- Fire Marshall

- Professional Standards (Council for the Advancement of Standards, CAS, see Nichols, J.O., 1995, A Practitioner’s Handbook for Institutional Effectiveness and Student Outcomes Assessment Implementation)

Format for Assessment Submissions

The College began using WEAVEonline to compile assessment materials in the fall of 2010. Prior to that time, copies of all assessment plans were kept by departments and by the Office of Institutional Research and were posted online on the Portal (MyLinks/Staff/Administrative Assessments). WEAVEonline has tutorials and a “help” function to assist users in providing clear and concise materials. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee also provides periodic assessment workshops and one-on-one assistance to faculty and staff as needed.

V. CALENDAR FOR ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

All assessment reports from the previous academic year and assessment plans for the new academic year are submitted through WEAVEonline by May 31 of each year. The unit head should ensure that both the current report and future plans have been approved by the appropriate senior administrator prior to submission. It is recommended that all academic and administrative units take advantage of the annual planning and assessment day to meet with their colleagues to complete the assessment activities for submission by the May 31 deadline. The Dean of the College will review reports and plans from academic programs and departments.

Early May One work day between the conclusion of finals and Commencement will be designated as a “planning and assessment day” to remind all personnel of the need to complete their assessment reports and plans for submission later in the month. The members of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, including the Director of Institutional Research, will be available for consultation as needed that day. *In 2011, the designated planning and assessment day will be Monday, May 9, 2011.*

May 31 All administrative and academic assessment reports from the recently completed academic year are due to be submitted through WEAVEonline.*

All administrative and academic assessment plans for the upcoming academic year are due to be submitted through WEAVEonline.

Budget and other resource needs indicated through the assessment cycle are due to be submitted to the Senior Staff for funding consideration.

June - October Assessment reports and plans are reviewed by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee. Budget items that emerge from the assessment reports are reviewed and discussed with Senior Staff as appropriate.

*Some administrative units may request extensions to this deadline due to the natural course of their work being heavily tied to the fiscal year which ends June 30.

VI. RESOURCES FOR ASSESSMENT

- Astin, A.W. (1993). Assessment for excellence: The philosophy and practice of assessment and evaluation in higher education. Phoenix: Oryx Press.
- Banta, T.W., Jones, E.A., and Black, K.E. (2009). Designing effective assessment: Principles and profiles of good practice. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Banta, T.W. (Ed.). (1990). Making a difference: Outcomes of a decade of assessment in higher education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Banta, T.W., Lund, J.P., Black, K.E. & Oblander, F.W. (1996). Assessment in practice: Putting principles to work on college campuses. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Middaugh, M.F. (2009). Planning and Assessment in Higher Education: Demonstrating Institutional Effectiveness. The Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series.
- Nichols, J. O. (1995). A practitioner's handbook for institutional effectiveness and student outcomes assessment implementation (3rd ed.). New York: Agathon Press.
- Nichols, J. O. (1995). Assessment case studies: Common issues in implementation with various campus approaches to resolution. New York: Agathon Press.
- Palomba, C.A., Banta, T.W., and Associates. (1999). Assessment essentials: Planning, implementing, improving.
- Rhodes, T. (2010). Assessing outcomes and improving achievement: Tips and tools for using rubrics. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Stevens, D.D., and Levi, A.J. (2004). Introduction to rubrics: An assessment tool to save grading time, convey effective feedback and promote student learning. Stylus Publishing.
- Suskie, L. (2009). Assessing student Learning: A common sense guide. Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series.
- Walvoord, B.E. (2010, 2nd Edition). Assessment clear and simple: A practical guide for institutions, departments, and general education. Jossey-Bass Higher Education Series.

Appendix A

RANDOLPH COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT

Randolph College prepares students to engage the world critically and creatively, live and work honorably, and experience life abundantly.

Approved by the Faculty, May 13, 2010; approved by the Board of Trustees June 29, 2010

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Since its founding in 1891 as Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Randolph College has offered students a rigorous education in the liberal arts and sciences. In keeping with the College motto, *vita abundantior*, integrated living and learning provide a foundation for meaningful lives characterized by a lifelong joy in learning.

Randolph College encourages each student to set and meet high personal goals. Campus life is grounded in the Honor System, which fosters individual integrity and mutual trust. As students from diverse backgrounds study and live together, they are expected to respect the rights and dignity of others, to be open to cultural differences, and to exercise personal and social responsibility. They are encouraged to develop confidence and to participate fully in a community in which women and men work together and treat one another as equals.

Through excellence in teaching, advising, and scholarship, the faculty provides the challenges requisite to the intellectual development of each student. With faculty support, the undergraduate students design individualized and coherent programs of study that combine academic and co-curricular components. While each student's educational plan is unique, all programs of study foster these capacities: to think critically; to write and speak with clarity and accuracy; to employ quantitative reasoning; to use technology effectively and ethically; to cultivate an aesthetic sensibility; to understand key dimensions of the heritage of more than one society; to approach problems with creativity and imagination; to work both independently and collaboratively; and to recognize the power and limitations of knowledge. The graduate students pursue more narrowly focused programs of rigorous study designed to add specialized knowledge to their undergraduate education. The graduate programs are directed by faculty members who are especially knowledgeable about the professional standards to be met by those who earn advanced degrees.

Through their experiences at Randolph College, students are challenged to think ambitiously and to prepare thoughtfully for their futures in a diverse society and an increasingly complex world that offers them expanding opportunities for leadership, responsibility, and service.

Approved by the Faculty May 8, 2007; approved by the Board of Trustees June 7, 2007

Appendix B

Goals of the Strategic Plan

In 1994-95 the College began a comprehensive, institutional-wide planning process to develop specific goals to support the mission. The result of that effort, the RANDOLPH COLLEGE Strategic Plan, continues to guide the work of the College. The goals of the Plan are:

1. Assure that each student develops an integrated, individualized, and coherent educational program for the twenty-first century. Develop a four-year advising framework that promotes and facilitates the Randolph Plan, our vision of integrated studies.
2. Strengthen the sense of community that has long characterized Randolph College, preserving the civility and respect for differences that are institutional hallmarks. Increase opportunities for positive interaction and discourse among all members of the academic community and encourage socially responsible participation of the College and its members in the wider community.
3. Promote the College's identity as an international and multicultural liberal arts college by diversifying the student body, faculty, and staff; expanding opportunities for international and cross-cultural experiences for students and faculty; and increasing the global dimensions of the curriculum.
4. Integrate state-of-the-art technology into teaching, learning, and research; ensure that all members of the community have the capacity to use technology effectively and to understand how it affects their lives.
5. Strive to attain faculty and student workloads consistent with those at institutions in our peer and aspirant groups – workloads that support excellence in teaching and learning and that promote community.
6. Increase the size, quality, and diversity of the student body through a larger applicant pool, greater admissions selectivity, and improved retention.
7. Achieve greater national and international visibility for the College, building on areas of strength and distinctiveness.

Appendix C

Academic, Administrative and Educational Support Units

Academic Departments (2010-11)

Offering the Major

Art
Biology
Chemistry
Classics
Communication Studies
Dance
Economics & Business
Education
English
Environmental Studies
French
Global Studies
History
Interdisciplinary
Mathematics
Music
Philosophy
Physical Education
Physics
Political Science
Psychology
Religious Studies
Sociology
Spanish
Theatre

Administrative/ Educational Support Units (2010-11)

Academic Advising
Admissions/Recruitment
Alumnae Office
Athletics Department
Buildings and Grounds
Business Office
College Relations
Counseling Center
Dean of Students
Enrollment/Student Success
Ethyl Science and Mathematics Center
Experiential Learning Center
Health Center
Human Resources
Information Technology
Institutional Advancement
Institutional Research
International Student Services
Learning Resources Center
Lipscomb Library
Maier Museum of Art
Multicultural Student Services
Nursery School
Office of College Relations
Registrar's Office
Residence Life
Safety and Security
Student Activities
Student Affairs
Writing Center

Appendix D

WEAVE Online Assessment Software Quick Start Guide

Accessing WEAVEonline

Logging In

1. Type the following into the address line of your browser:
<https://app.weaveonline.com/randolphcollege/login.aspx>.
2. The screen should say: “*Welcome Randolph College WEAVEonline user...*”, if it does not, double check the address you entered. Once correct, create/edit a bookmark/favorite with this exact address before logging in.
2. Enter your WEAVEonline ID and password and click **Login**.
3. Click **Password Trouble?** to email your WEAVEonline Administrator from this page.

Home

1. Review **Local News** for important institutional information and **WEAVEonline News** for announcements.
2. Use the **Email Admin** link on the bottom left of all application pages to send an email to your WEAVEonline Administrator.
3. In the **Cycle and Entity Selection** section, just below the navigation bar, use the dropdown boxes to select the Cycle and Entity in which you wish to work.

Assessment: Mission through Findings

Entering and Editing the Mission

1. In the navigation bar located below the WEAVEonline logo, point to **Assessment**.
2. Select **Mission/Purpose** from the dropdown menu.
3. To add a Mission, click **Add Mission/Purpose**.
4. In the appropriate text boxes enter the entity’s mission, and any additional information about that mission.
5. Select in which cycle the Mission is established and the cycle through which it will be active.
6. Select the appropriate Entry Status (**Draft/In Progress** or **Final**).
7. When done, click **Save**.
8. Click **Edit** to make changes.

Entering a Goal

1. In the navigation bar located below the WEAVEonline logo, point to **Assessment**.
2. Select **Goals** from the dropdown menu.
3. Under Goals, click **Add**.
4. In the appropriate text boxes, enter a condensed description (title) and a complete description.
5. Select in which cycle the Goal is established and the cycle through which it will be active.
6. Select the appropriate Entry Status (**Draft/In Progress** or **Final**).
7. When done, click **Save**.

Entering an Outcome/Objective

1. In the navigation bar located below the WEAVEonline logo, point to **Assessment**.
2. Select **Outcomes/Objectives** from the dropdown menu.
3. Under Outcomes/Objectives, click **Add**.

4. In the appropriate text boxes, enter a condensed description (title) and a complete description.
5. Select **Yes** or **No** next to designate whether this is a **Student Learning Outcome**.
6. Click **Add Associations** and add checkmarks where relevant. Leave these sections open (do not press **Cancel**) if changes were made.
7. Select the appropriate Entry Status (**Draft/In Progress** or **Final**).
8. Select the **Established in** and **Active through** cycles.
9. When done, click **Save**.

Entering a Measure

1. In the navigation bar located below the WEAVEonline logo, point to **Assessment**.
2. Select **Measures & Findings** from the dropdown menu.
3. Under Measures & Findings, click **Add**. ***Please Note:** A Measure cannot be added unless at least one Outcome/Objective exists.*
4. Select *one* Source of Evidence for the Measure (there is a generic choice at the top of each category).
5. In the appropriate text boxes, enter a condensed description (title) and a complete description.
6. Check the box next to each Outcome/Objective related to the Measure.
7. Select the **Established in** and **Active through** cycles.
8. Select the appropriate Entry Status (**Draft/In Progress** or **Final**).
9. When done, click **Save**.

Entering an Achievement Target

***Please Note:** Every Measure must have an Achievement Target in order to enter Findings.*

1. In the navigation bar located below the WEAVEonline logo, point to **Assessment**.
2. Select **Measures & Findings** from the dropdown menu.
3. Expand the Measure for which you need to add an Achievement Target, either by clicking the **expansion triangle** next to the Measure or by clicking the **Expand All** button.
4. Under the Achievement Targets and Assessment Results/Findings section, click **Add Achievement Target**.
5. Enter the Achievement Target.
6. Select the **Established in** and **Active through** cycles.
7. Select the appropriate Entry Status (**Draft/In Progress** or **Final**).
8. When done, click **Save**.

Entering Findings

1. In the navigation bar located below the WEAVEonline logo, point to **Assessment**.
2. Select **Measures & Findings** from the dropdown menu.
3. Expand the Measure for which you need to add Findings, either by clicking the **expansion triangle** next to the Measure or by clicking the **Expand All** button.
4. In the Achievement Targets and Assessment Results/Findings section, find the appropriate Achievement Target and click **Add Finding**.
5. Enter a summary of your Findings for the Measure-Outcome/Objective pair.
6. Identify if your findings indicate that your Achievement Target was **Met, Partially Met, or Not Met**.
7. Select the appropriate Entry Status (**Draft/In Progress** or **Final**).
8. When done, click **Save**.

Editing a Goal, Outcome, Measure, Achievement Target or Finding

1. In the navigation bar located below the WEAVEonline logo, point to **Assessment**.
2. Make the appropriate selection from the dropdown menu.

3. Expand the item you wish to edit, either by clicking the **expansion triangle** next to the item or by clicking the **Expand All** button. To edit an Achievement Target or Finding, expand the appropriate Measure.
4. Click **Edit**, **Edit Achievement Target** or **Edit Finding**, as appropriate.
5. Make any changes and update the Entry Status (**Draft/In Progress** or **Final**) as needed.
6. When done, click **Save**.

Action Plans

Entering an Action Plan

Please Note: Action Plans can be entered from within the Assessment > Measures & Findings section by selecting the **Add New Action Plan** button or by using the method outlined below. Existing Action Plans can be related using the **Manage Action Plan Relationships** button within the Assessment > Measures & Findings section or within Action Plan Tracking by selecting **Details for the appropriate Action Plan**.

1. In the navigation bar located below the WEAVEonline logo, point to **Assessment**.
2. Select **Action Plan Tracking** from the dropdown menu.
3. Click **Add Enhancement Action**.
4. Click **Add Relationships** to link the Action Plan to specific Measure-Outcome/Objective pairs.
5. Select the **Implementation Status** of the plan.
 7. Enter the appropriate information in the available text boxes and select a Priority from the dropdown menu.
 8. Select the **Established in** and **Active through** cycles.
 9. Select the appropriate Entry Status (**Draft/In Progress** or **Final**).
 10. When done, click **Save**.

Achievement Summary/Analysis

Please Note: Analysis Questions may or may not be utilized on your campus. If utilized, the questions are developed/maintained locally.

1. In the navigation bar located below the WEAVEonline logo, point to **Assessment**.
2. Select **Achievement Summary/Analysis** from the dropdown menu.
3. In the section at the top of the page, expand (using the **Expand All** button or the **expansion triangles**) the Achievement Target Summary for an overview of actual results versus the intended Achievement Targets.
4. In the section at the bottom of the page, expand (using the **Expand All** button or the **expansion triangles**) Analysis Questions and click **Add Answer**.
5. Enter a response for the selected Analysis Question.
6. Select the appropriate Entry Status (**Draft/In Progress** or **Final**).
7. When done, click **Save**.

Annual/Special Reporting

Please Note: Annual/Special Reporting sections may or may not be utilized on your campus. If utilized, the topics are developed/maintained locally.

1. In the navigation bar located below the WEAVEonline logo, point to **Assessment**.
2. Select **Annual/Special Reporting** from the dropdown menu.
3. Expand (using the **Expand All** button or the **expansion triangles**) Annual/Special Reporting sections and click **Add Details**.
4. Enter details for the selected section.
5. Select the appropriate Entry Status (**Draft/In Progress** or **Final**).
6. When done, click **Save**.

Document Repository


1. In the navigation bar located below the WEAVEonline logo, point to **Assessment**.
2. Select **Document Repository** from the dropdown menu and click **Upload Document** to begin.
3. **Browse** for the document you wish to upload.
4. Enter a document name (required) and a description (optional).
5. Click **Save & Continue**.
6. Expand (using the **Expand All** button or the **expansion triangles**) the assessment areas where you wish to connect this document.
7. Add checkmarks to set up connection locations for the document.
8. When done, click **Save** to both load the document and make the connections.

Reports

- 1) In the navigation bar located below the WEAVEonline logo, point to **Reports**.
- 2) Working from left to right, **Select a Cycle** for which you wish to run the report.
- 3) **Select a Report** from the second column. The following report types are most useful for the general user:
 - **Full Assessment Report:** The Detailed Assessment Report (DAR) generates a comprehensive summary of:
 - Mission/Purpose
 - Goals (if used as part of the assessment process)
 - Student Learning Outcomes, with any Associations and Related Measures, Achievement Targets, Findings, and Action Plans
 - A parallel section for any outcomes/objectives other than those primarily focused on student learning
 - Action Plan Details
 - Analysis Questions and Annual Report sections are also options, if desired
 - **Audit Reports:** Use the Audit Reports to see if there are any specific assessment areas in need of data entry (ex. Measures that Need Findings). A blank audit report is optimal.
 - **Data Entry Status (DES) Reports:** These reports are generated from the Entry Status field at the bottom of most data entry pages. You can check your progress here.
- 4) **Select Report Entities** (entities that you want included within the report) from the third column, using one of the four options:
 - **All entities to which I have access:** Selecting this option will generate a report that includes all of the entities to which you have access.
 - **All entities through [level dropdown]:** This option is most useful for those with WEAVEonline Administrator access.
 - **Only entities at [level dropdown]:** This option is most useful for those with WEAVEonline Administrator access
 - **Selected Entities:** All entities to which you have access (and their parent entities) will show in this hierarchical list. Select as many entities as you would like to include in the report.
- 5) Once cycle, report, and entity (or entities) have been chosen, click **Next**.
- 6) Select report parameters as appropriate, and then click **Run**.
- 7) ***Please Note:*** You may need to allow popups from *app.weaveonline.com* the very first time you run reports.

Help

If you need assistance while using WEAVEonline, you may choose to:

- 1) Use the WEAVEonline Integrated Help System:
 - Hover over  and choose **'Help For This Page'** or **'Help Table of Contents.'**

- The former will display 'page-specific' help for the page you are viewing, while the latter will display the Help 'home page.'
- Both options include a Table of Contents, Index, Search, Print, and Glossary capabilities.
- 2) Contact your campus WEAVEonline Administrator:
 - At the bottom of each page of the application there is an '**Email Admin**' link. Click this link and follow the directions to send an email to your campus administrator(s).

WEAVE Online ACTION PLAN TRACKING

There are two types of situations that call for the development of an **action plan**. Assessments could reveal that one area of service or of student learning needs particular attention. For example, an assessment of some written work from students found an uneven use of proper source citation. Since students should be able to understand and use professional standards for writing, program faculty decide to make proper citation of sources a grading criterion for written work in all courses.

A situation might also arise where an academic program or administrative unit should take advantage of a new opportunity. For example, a community recreation facility opens near campus, and there may be internship opportunities for students. The head of the career services office decides to establish an exploratory group of faculty and staff from relevant areas to meet with the leadership of that facility.

Once the decision has been made to address performance problems revealed by assessments or to take advantage of other opportunities in order to enhance an academic program or administrative area, development of an action plan can begin.

Before determination of a specific plan of action, it is important to review multiple sources of evidence. For example, students' problem-solving skills in a particular area are disappointing. Results of a course evaluation show that students complained about a service-learning situation that required the use of those very skills. The students reported that previous classes had focused on memorizing rather than on solving practical problems. As a result of these two pieces of information, the faculty decide to introduce more practical learning situations, building students' problem-solving skills through work in a progression of courses.

The next step includes asking these questions:

- What are the details of the action plan?
- When should the action plan be implemented?
- What kind of priority will the action plan have in relation to other activities?
- What person or group will be responsible for implementing the action plan?
- What additional resources will be needed to complete the plan?
- What budget amount should be requested?

Answers to all of these questions can reside in the WEAVEonline Action Plan **Tracking** section.

Putting an action plan on a list (or a shelf) is not how programs and services improve. Results come from action plan implementation. WEAVEonline has a place for Action Plan Notes to allow tracking of the plan as it develops. If it is like many plans, there will be adjustments along the way. Reviewing the notes over time will indicate how a program or service is progressing in terms of implementation. The real test, of course, is whether there is any improvement in performance on relevant assessments.

WEAVE Online Useful Definitions

MISSION/PURPOSE

A mission statement articulates the purpose of a unit or program. The mission statement declares what the unit or program does and what it intends to achieve. Often a mission statement carries an implicit statement of the values the program espouses, as well as the relationship the unit or program has to the institution as a whole.

The mission statement for an institution is usually the product of thoughtful collaboration, often with official governance approval before adoption. The mission/purpose statement for a single administrative unit or academic program usually does not take such a formal route. Instead it is often a simpler assertion, articulated by those most closely involved with the unit or program and accepted by those who have responsibility for oversight of that unit or program.

An academic program mission/purpose statement should identify what the program will help students and others learn and do within a particular context and state how the program contributes to its wider communities. An administrative unit mission/purpose statement should focus on the reason the unit exists within the institution, the people it serves, and the value its work brings to the institution.

A mission/purpose statement should be specific, identifying the important things a unit or program does that separates it from others. Consider how each of the following general statements defines the program or unit and gives direction to its work.

Poor: *“The CCC program provides exemplary education and service for students and the local community”*

Better: *“The CCC program designs and delivers both theoretical and practical educational experiences in [specific areas] to develop graduates with the knowledge and skills expected of professionals in the field.”*

In this academic example of a better mission/purpose statement, faculty would be led to identify both theoretical and practical educational experiences in the academic program and to write student learning outcomes/objectives for the specific knowledge and skills needed by graduates.

Poor: *“The EEE unit provides excellent services to the college.”*

Better: *“The EEE unit provides effective and efficient registration services to students and academic programs.”*

In this administrative example of a better mission/purpose statement, the unit concentrates on service standards and the value it delivers to both students and academic programs.

A well-written mission/purpose statement should lead to identification of the goals and outcomes/objectives that will guide the future work of unit or program.

GOALS

Before identifying the specific outcomes/objectives that a unit or program will work to achieve, it may be useful to identify goals. These are broad statements about the desired ends to which a unit or program aspires.

Goals are usually too general to actually guide assessment practice, but they can provide a bridge between the mission/purpose statement and the outcomes/objectives that specify the most important work of the unit or program.

Goals are less precise than clearly measurable outcomes/objectives. Goals for student learning might include such broad general education ends as *critical thinking* and *enhanced communication skills*, while administrative goals might include such broad intentions as *improve quality*, *increase efficiency*, and *establish a positive climate for student development*.

Unlike outcomes/objectives, goals are not uniformly a part of the assessment process. In one case, a college may establish institutional goals to convey the shared work of its educational community. In another instance, a university may decide to leave it up to individual areas to determine whether goals will be part of the assessment process. In a third case, a community college may prefer to skip the goals step altogether.

OUTCOMES/OBJECTIVES

An outcome or objective is a statement of intention, describing a task to be accomplished or a point to be reached. Well-formulated outcomes/objectives meet what have been called SMART criteria – they are **s**pecific, **m**easurable and verifiable, **a**greed upon, **r**ealistic and yet rigorous, and **t**ime-bound. [modified from George T. Doran, There's a S. M. A. R. T. Way to Write Management Goals and Objectives, *Management Review (AMA Forum)*, November 1981, pps. 35-36]

Outcomes or objectives may be for a single year or cycle (e.g., *establish an on-line course evaluation survey instrument that prompts students for feedback on course effectiveness by May 1, YYYY*) or may continue for more than one cycle (e.g., *increase enrollment by 10% over the next three years in order to better meet the current demand for professionals in the field*). Active verbs describe the action that is intended. Some outcomes/objectives will be ongoing (e.g., *Facilities management will design and maintain classroom areas that facilitate successful teaching and learning*).

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Student learning outcomes identify knowledge, skills, and abilities students should gain or improve through engagement in an academic program or other learning experience. Student learning outcomes are typically the most important outcomes for an academic program.

Historically, many faculty members have not been asked to identify learning outcomes, except as they applied to individual courses. The development of student learning outcomes for a program requires faculty discussion and clarifies for both the program's faculty and its students what characteristics are expected in those who finish the program. Student learning outcomes also should be SMART: **s**pecific, **m**easurable and verifiable, **a**greed upon, **r**ealistic and yet rigorous, and **t**ime-bound.

In some instances, student learning outcomes may be expressed in a manner that identifies how the knowledge and skills are expected to develop over the course of the program. Some professional accrediting bodies, for example, require the identification of skills expected of entering students and again at identified places as those students progress through a curriculum.

In **writing student learning outcomes**, it is helpful to begin by saying “*Students (or program completers) will (or will be able to)...*” You should use action verbs to describe what students will know and be able to do (e.g., *Graduating students in CCC will be able to identify complex problems during their final internships and then make appropriate referrals to existing community services*).

The key to a good outcome/objective statement is the verb. However, some verbs that are linked to learning, such as *understand* or *know*, are poor choices in an outcome/objective statement. Instead you should select verbs that focus on observable and measurable action, such as *describe* or *demonstrate*. Using an Internet search engine, you can easily find various lists of “action verbs for learning.”

Good outcome statements lead directly to identifying relevant measures for gauging the program’s success in producing program completers that display expected characteristics.

ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

One of aspect of “closing the loop” in assessment is reflecting on what has been learned during an assessment cycle and what aspects of a program or unit need to be monitored, remediated, or enhanced for the future.

Three key questions come to us from the service-learning literature:

- **What** did you find (and learn)?
- **So What** does that mean for your academic program or administrative unit?
- **Now What** will you do as a result of the first two answers?

Detailed assessment results undoubtedly help in developing an individual action plan. Analysis calls for broader reflective thinking to see how individual strands weave together. For example, two areas identified as needing continued attention may somehow be linked.

To facilitate reflective thinking, WEAVEonline has a Targeted Achievement Audit that details findings in terms of the **What** question. The audit provides reminders regarding how well an area met targets for student learning or other desirable outcomes/objectives.

That information leads to thought about the **So What** question. Is it important to try to improve the performance? Is there a larger picture behind the details? What meaning do the findings have for those contemplating them?

Making a decision to facilitate a positive change begins addressing the **Now What** question. What is the larger picture developing in this area? Perhaps a high-level SWOT analysis can show the area’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This is a good preliminary exercise for many program reviews.

Any form of reflection on results has the potential to generate new insights.

The institution also has an interest in reflection and has defined a set of questions for analysis. Responding is simple since this section of WEAVEonline has long text fields, plus a formatting bar that allows users to easily copy from Microsoft Word to this web application.

ANNUAL REPORTING

Annual reports differ among institutions, so WEAVEonline allows each institution to formulate its own sections. An institution may call for a report on such topics as:

- A program's or unit's various contributions to the institution
- Highlights of a program's or unit's activities during the past year
- Public or community service that a program has provided
- Teaching activities of faculty
- Research and scholarly activities of faculty and staff
- International activities in which the program or unit is a partner
- Challenges that a program or unit faces

An Executive Summary may also be requested. Often it is the executive summary, program or unit highlights, and contributions sections which receive the closest review from senior leadership, so it is important to spend time there telling the program's or unit's story well.

WEAVEonline makes it easy by providing long text fields that have a formatting toolbar. Copy and paste functions from Microsoft Word bring that text into the web application, or users can type original work into WEAVEonline with simple formatting options.