OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES

On the Planning and Evaluation Tracking (PET) forms, identify the most important or key objectives/outcomes.

(NOTE: Keep the number between 3-7 per department or office. If not, the assessment of the objectives/outcomes will be cumbersome. ALL departments and offices should have at least one outcome – preferably a learning (student) outcome in the objectives/outcomes column of the PET.)

Answer the following questions to develop or evaluate EITHER an objective or an outcome:

1. Is the objective/outcome consistent with the division’s purpose and AC’s mission?
2. Does the objective/outcome describe a reasonable or achievable result? What are your success indicators or performance standards?
3. Is the objective/outcome clear and measurable (including level or value and measurement)? How will you measure it?
4. Does the objective/outcome specify the time frame in which it will be accomplished?

For an outcome, answer the additional following questions to develop or evaluate an outcome:

1. Who are you teaching/serving or planning to teach/serve?
2. What specific changes do you expect to make in the lives of students that you teach/serve?
   - What will they know?
   - How will they behave?
   - What skills will they have?
   - What status will they acquire?
   - What level of expertise will they have with __________?
   - What level of ability will they have with __________?
3. How will you use the results

Definitions for objective and outcome:

Objective: a single statement which clarifies the desired result including department or office responsible, measurement, time frame, level of performance and any preceding conditions.
Outcome: a single statement which clarifies the desired result a student/client or a program is expected to be able to do after receiving instruction or a particular service; also includes office responsible, measurement, time frame, level of performance and any preceding conditions.
Major Categories of Outcomes:

Individual student outcomes – focused and are the most desirable
For Instructional areas – referred to as learning outcomes;
For non-instructional areas – referred to as either:
- education support outcomes
  or
- administrative outcomes

Program or Institutional Outcomes (often referred to as outputs or direct measures)
- Easier to measure and control than learning (student) outcomes but should always support student outcomes
- Should be considered strategies for accomplishing student outcomes
- Should understand how these are connected to learning (student) outcomes and keep the focus on student outcomes

Four Categories of Objectives/Outcomes with Methodology Options:

- **Outcomes** – student’s or client’s ability to accomplish whatever was taught in instruction or through a particular service

  **Methodology Options**
  - Exit Tests – given after a instruction has been provided to assess student’s/client’s ability to perform what was taught (May be post-test only or pre-test/post-test; may be locally developed or nationally normed)
  - Licensure or certifications – external tests administered by an outside agency with successful results assuring in a credential
  - External Evaluations – an expert/consultant from outside AC who assesses office or departmental practice
  - External Benchmarks – data from an outside agency that identifies benchmarks for national norms or other similar colleges
  - Performance Observations (including juried performances) – an observer watches a student/client perform whatever was taught
  - Surveys – locally developed or nationally normed surveys which ask the student/client questions which measure the level of learning based on outcomes
  - Portfolio – a compilation of a student’s work which demonstrates a satisfactory level of performance based on a review by a qualified external reviewer(s)
Capstone course – a course at the end of a degree program which requires the student to demonstrate the knowledge and skills established in the program’s objectives.

NOTE: Focus groups may precede any of the above methodologies to assess what a small but representative group of students/clients perceive. In assessing outcomes, the focus group is asked a series of questions which will allow the facilitator to observe whether the students/clients learned what was taught.

- **Outputs** – direct measures or satisfaction levels regarding instruction or a particular service
  
  **Methodology Options**
  
  - Surveys – locally developed or nationally normed surveys to evaluate the satisfaction level of students/clients or vendors
  - Direct Measure/Outputs – a count of the level of some service (i.e. the number of students who enroll in another course after completing a previous course or receiving some other intervention); also referred to as program or institutional outcomes

  NOTE: Focus groups may precede any of the above methodologies to assess how satisfied that a small but representative group of students/clients feel. In assessing satisfaction, the focus group is asked a series of questions which will allow the facilitator to determine whether the students/clients or vendors were pleased with the instruction or particular service.

- **Processes** – instructional or administrative department’s efficiencies or intended accomplishments (i.e. level of volume of that office’s activity; efficiency in conducting a process in that office; compliance with regulations or external standards of “best practices” in that field)
  
  **Methodology Options**
  
  - Surveys – locally developed or nationally normed survey to evaluate a process in an office or department
  - Observations – observe the process and make recommendations
  - Direct Measures/Outputs – a count of the number of times that a service was delivered or level of effectiveness for the desired level of service; also referred to as program or institutional outcome
  - External Evaluations – an expert/consultant from outside AC who assesses compliance with regulations or external standards of “best practices”
NOTE: Focus groups may precede any of the above methodologies to assess the efficiency or effectiveness of a process based on the views of a small but representative group of students/clients. In assessing a process, the focus group is asked a series of questions which will allow the facilitator to determine whether the students/clients or vendors believe the process for a particular service was effective and/or efficient.

- **Inputs** – amount, quality or timeliness of the resources allocated

  **Methodology Options**
  - **Direct Measures** – count of the number of the resources needed or prepared for a particular program or course (i.e. students, faculty, technology, etc.)
  - **External Evaluations** – an expert/consultant from outside AC or outside of the department/division who assesses insights regarding needs of the department

**Example for Library:**

**Goal:** Access needed information effectively & efficiently (Standard 2 of ACRL information literacy competency standards for higher education)

**Goal (stated as a sentence):** Students or library patrons will gain skills necessary to access information independently.

**Individual student - focused outcome:**

Based on a random sample of students/library patrons receiving library reference training, each student will be able to demonstrate mastery at 80% on the information literacy Test (ILT – a web-based multiple choice test).

**Program outcome (output or direct measure):**

AC requests for library reference training from those attending library orientation will increase by at least 10% over the previous year.

**Existing relevant AC Success Indicators:**

Do any of AC’s current Success Indicators provide objectives or program outcomes that are relevant and important to your department or office? If so, use one or two in your PET form

**Seek outcomes rather than outputs, processes or inputs but recognize that the Objectives/Outcomes column may have combination of these.**