Measures for Administrative Programs

Assessment can be defined as the systematic and ongoing method of gathering, analyzing and using information from various sources about an administrative unit, using measured outcomes, in order to improve student support services and student learning. Assessment, as it is addressed in this manual, relates to measuring critical administrative processes in order to gather data that provides information about how the institution is meeting stakeholders’ needs and expectations.

A benefit of measuring performance among administrative support services is that it provides the basis by which the institution’s employees can gain a sense of what is going wrong and what is going right within the organization. This process ultimately establishes direction for improving quality and constituent satisfaction.

Costs of Not Measuring Performance in Administrative Units

- Decisions based on assumption rather than fact
- Failure to meet customer expectations
- Failure to identify potential improvement areas
- Lack of optimum progress toward organizational vision

Characteristics of Effective Assessment

Effective administrative unit assessment should answer these questions:

1. What are you trying to do?
2. How well are you doing it?
3. Using the answers to the first two questions, how can you improve what you are doing?
4. What and how does an administrative unit contribute to the development and growth of students?
5. How can the student learning experience be improved?

Direct Methods – Any process employed to gather data which requires subjects to display their knowledge, behavior, or thought processes.

- Examples of Direct Assessment
  - Project embedded assessment
  - Observations of behavior
  - External evaluations
  - Document analysis
  - Performance on a case study

Indirect Methods – Any process employed to gather data which asks subjects to reflect upon their knowledge, behaviors, or thought processes.

- Example of Indirect Assessment
  - Alumni, student surveys
  - Focus groups
  - Exit interviews
  - Job placement stats
  - Enrollment trends
  - Diversity of student body, faculty, and staff