

Academic TIP SHEET: Outcomes and Measures

The difference between an outcome and a measure is that an outcome is an intended result while a measure provides a basis for evaluation for one or more anticipated outcomes. The following are *hypothetical examples* to help illustrate the difference between outcomes and measures for **Academic** units. It is important to keep in mind that measures and action plans may apply to more than one Outcome/Objective.

Example 1:

Outcome/Objective Title: Increase Lab Participation

Outcome/Objective Full Description: Participation in labs will continue to increase. These labs will allow hands on experience making widgets in a controlled environment for both majors and non-majors.

Measure Title: Lab Activity Volume

Measure Source: Activity Volume

Measure Full Description: Lab Participation is tracked by sign in sheets posted in each lab. Sheets are tallied and recorded by graduate assistants around the 1st of each month.

Achievement Level: Lab participation will increase by 10% from the 2006-2007 school year.

Findings: Lab participation for widget making was as follows for the year (in number of students): Sept. = 135, Oct. = 146, Nov. = 156, Dec. = 135, Feb. = 165, Mar. = 135, Apr. = 172, May = 172, June = 125, July = 134. The average number of students for the 2006 – 2007 year was 120 per month, excluding the summer months which averaged 110 students. Using this as a baseline, we saw an increase of over 10% in each month, including the summer months, this year.

Action Plan: Increase Lab Participation

Action Full Description: We have found that participation in lab, as a supplement to the curriculum in courses 1111 and 2222 is invaluable, and allows students the opportunity to translate theory to actual practice of widget making. As our students often have very busy schedules, it has been difficult to maintain a high participation rate. However, to counter this, instructors will be offering incentives to participate in labs, and possibly incorporate sanctions as well, to increase lab participation.

Example 2:

Outcome/Objective Title: Demonstrate Mastery of Widget Making

Outcome/Objective Full Description: Students will demonstrate comprehension of the broad historical and ecological dynamics of the components of the major.

Measure Title: MFT Scores

Measure Source: Comprehensive Exam

Measure Full Description: Before graduation, students will be required to participate in the MFT. Enrollment for the exam will be required in conjunction with enrollment in the capstone course. The department will receive a comprehensive report after completion.

Achievement Level: The average MFT score for graduating students with this major will exceed the national average.

Findings: Exams were completed by 43 of the 46 graduating students. The average score for the 43 students was a 152. The national average has not been calculated for the year yet, so no comparison has been able to be conducted at this time.

Action Plan: Increase Graduating Student Participation in MFT

Action Full Description: As of last year, the MFT was not required, so only roughly 15% of the graduating students were participating in the exam. This has been making it difficult to obtain a true comparison of our program to those of other universities. To combat this, it is now going to be a requirement to enroll in the major field test as a co-requisite with capstone. E-mail will also be used to send reminders for students to enroll in the MFT in a timely manner.

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Example 3:

Outcome/Objective Title: Increase Number of Faculty

Outcome/Objective Full Description: Increase department to include new tenure track professors to provide instruction to both undergraduate and graduate level students to meet the demand for new courses and course availability.

Measure Title: Number of Faculty

Measure Source: Other Admin

Measure Full Description: To meet increasing demand for both undergraduate and graduate courses within the department, new faculty needs to be added. The department head will monitor the hiring process on tracking documentation provided by the human resources staff.

Achievement Level: There will an increase of two new tenure track professors by January 2008.

Findings: The department brought in Dr. Smith in January 2008. Another professor, Dr. Jones, will begin in June of 2008, due to prior commitments in her current position.

Action Plan: Formation of Hiring Committee

Action Full Description: With the departure of Dr. Rice and the growing demand for courses from the department, we have received approval to add two additional faculty members by early 2008. To assist in hiring process, a committee needs to be formed by June 2007 to begin processing applications and commence the interview process.

Example 4:

Outcome/Objective Title: Excellence in Teaching

Outcome/Objective Full Description: Faculty will demonstrate excellence in teaching, and provide a wide range of learning opportunities within the discipline.

Measure Title: Student Evaluations

Measure Source: Student Evaluations

Measure Full Description: Faculty effectiveness in the classroom will be measured by evaluations distributed to students before completion of each course.

Achievement Level: All tenure track faculty will average a 4.0 or better on student evaluations.

Findings: Student evaluations for the period range from 3.4 through 5.8 for all faculty members. 7 out of 8 faculty members achieved the 4.0 target cumulative average.

Action Plan: Faculty Participation in Staff Development

Action Full Description: Annual faculty evaluations for the previous year showed that, though staff development activities were available, there was very low staff participation in these opportunities. To continue to expand skills in instruction of adult students, it will now be a requirement for faculty to increase participation in staff development. The department will attend two events, as a group, during the school year (one in the fall, one in the spring). These events should help increase staff effectiveness and excellence in teaching.

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Example 5:

Outcome/Objective Title: Develop a Masters Level Program

Outcome/Objective Full Description: Develop a Masters level course in Widget making to allow further study for current students, as well as to attract new students to study Widget making at TAMU-CC.

Measure Title: Development of Masters Level Curriculum

Measure Source: Other Admin

Measure Full Description: For the process of developing a Masters Level Program, the department must develop a curriculum. Other programs will be used as baselines, and all faculty members will be involved. A professional checklist is being used to weigh the curriculum.

Achievement Level: Completion of curriculum checklist by March 2008.

Findings: The curriculum was completed in January 2008. All faculty members in the department, including Dr. Williams who began in November 2007, contributed to the process.

Action Plan: Begin a Masters Level Program

Action Full Description: In response to a large demand for a Masters Level Program in the department, a survey of student interest was conducted in February 2007. There was a large positive response to the proposal. A curriculum will be complete by March 2008, and a further evaluation of program requirements will commence.

Example 6:

Outcome/Objective Title: Increase Internship Opportunities

Outcome/Objective Full Description: Internship opportunities will be coordinated with local organizations to allow students the opportunity to see how theory of XYZ translates to actual practice.

Measure Title: Availability of Internship Opportunities

Measure Source: Activity Volume

Measure Full Description: Internships are valuable learning opportunities, as well as providing course credit to students. The department head will track all available internships on a spreadsheet, in addition to the number of students who are vying for internship positions.

Achievement Level: All students who are in need or want of an internship opportunity will have the chance to be placed. Because the internships involve the student to interview for the position, there still may not be 100% placement, but the goal is that all students who would like to will have at least the opportunity to interview for an internship.

Findings: We had 25 students who sought an internship opportunity, and there were 31 opportunities available. All students interviewed and obtained positions, however, two students had to drop the internships during the semester due to extenuating circumstances.

Action Plan: Strengthen Community Ties

Action Full Description: Organizations within the community provide support to the program, and in turn, the department provides them interns, assistance at community events, and expertise in the area, as required. The internship option is a track that many students have been interested in, but we have not had enough internships offered to meet the demand. Faculty will increase interactions with several key community partners in order to increase visibility of the program

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Example 7:

Outcome/Objective Title: Proficiency in Subject Matter

Outcome/Objective Full Description: Students will be able to articulate principles of widget making in a third world economy, and apply these theories to the practice.

Measure Title: Capstone Completion

Measure Source: Capstone

Measure Full Description: Capstone is a degree plan requirement that seniors must complete before graduation. Course is facilitated by one faculty member, and students must present a final project at the close of the course. Rating will be conducted by three professors, and the average of the three scores will be the final grade awarded.

Achievement Level: 90% of students who participate in the capstone course will successfully design and execute a capstone project based on the principles and practice of widget making with a grade of B or higher.

Findings: Out of 32 students who began the capstone course within the program year, 29 successfully passed capstone with a B or higher. There was one C, and the other two students dropped the course with intent to complete capstone the next semester.

Action Plan: Increase Completion of Capstone

Action Full Description: The capstone project requires an extensive amount of work by the students, and to increase completion rates, the project will be broken into two larger deadlines, instead of one at the end. Additionally, all faculty members in the department have volunteered to assist the primary instructor of the capstone by offering guidance and one on one time with enrolled students.

Example 8:

Outcome/Objective Title: Students will have Advanced Skills

Outcome/Objective Full Description: Students will display a firm grasp of reading comprehension and technical writing for the field.

Measure Title: Advanced Skills

Measure Source: Written Exam

Measure Full Description: Course 4444 involves a higher grasp of reading and technical writing that students will need to have prior to graduation. The final course exam involves three reading exercises, and two writing assignments, in the format of an in-class written exam administered the last week of the course.

Achievement Level: 95% of students in course 4444 will achieve a score of 80 or higher on the comprehensive final course exam.

Findings: There were 45 students enrolled in course 4444 throughout the year. 44 of those enrolled completed the course, and 35 of those students completed with an 80 or higher (79%). The students all scored very high on the reading exercises, but scored much more poorly on the writing assignments.

Action Plan: Increase Students Reading and Writing Skills

Action Full Description: Faculty will improve the reading and writing skills of students in the program by including reading comprehension and technical writing in all upper division courses.

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Example 9:

Outcome/Objective Title: Increase Faculty Involvement

Outcome/Objective Full Description: Faculty will be involved in community events, bringing visibility and focus to the program as well as the University.

Measure Title: Faculty Involvement

Measure Source: Document Analysis

Measure Full Description: Annual Faculty Evaluation Portfolios will be reviewed by the head of the department to ensure that there is continued faculty involvement in the local community, as well as the academic community.

Achievement Level: Faculty will (a) publish at least two scholarly articles in peer reviewed journals, (b) attend at least one community event as a representative of the program, (c) present at no less than one conference during the year.

Findings: All six faculty members published at least two scholarly articles, with a range of two to seven articles within the department. All faculty members attended at least one community event as a representative of the program, with a range from one to four events. Five of the six faculty members presented at a regional or national conference, with a range of zero to three conferences.

Action Plan: Increase Program Visibility

Action Full Description: Faculty members will become more involved in community events to help with retention and recruitment, as well as to garner support for the program.

Example 10:

Outcome/Objective Title: High Quality Instruction

Outcome/Objective Full Description: Students will complete the program with skills that allow them to enter the workforce and perform as high quality employees with expertise in the field of study. They will report that the program provided them quality instruction in their major.

Measure Title: Graduate Satisfaction

Measure Source: Satisfaction

Measure Full Description: Graduating students will feel that they received quality education in their major field of study, as documented by the responses to item "Quality of instruction in your major field of study" on the Graduating Student Survey. This is a Likert-style format, and responses for "Very Satisfied" and "Satisfied" will be added for a combined satisfaction score.

Achievement Level: 75% of students who are "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied"

Findings: 82% of graduating students indicated that they are "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied" with the quality of instruction within the major.

Action Plan: Increase Student/Faculty Communication

Action Full Description: Faculty will strive to achieve and maintain quality instruction by staying responsive to the needs of the students, as well as providing lectures that are engaging and informative. Office hours will be clearly posted and discussed at the beginning of each course. Students will be encouraged to seek assistance from faculty if they need further clarification on assignments or subject matter.