NON-ACADEMIC UNIT ASSESSMENT FACT SHEET

All non-academic units at ISU are expected to engage in an ongoing process of assessment of their programs and services. Assessment serves the dual role of demonstrating institutional effectiveness to internal and external constituencies and guiding continuous improvement of programs and services.

As part of the reaccreditation process for the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, it is essential that the university provides evidence of ongoing assessment by all academic and non-academic units. Assessment activities are intended to demonstrate institutional effectiveness and inform strategies for continuous improvement (from Criterion Five of The New Criteria for Accreditation, 2012). However, assessment at ISU is envisioned as an ongoing, cyclical process and is not limited to the requirements of the Higher Learning Commission or to the demonstration of compliance with external standards.

The non-academic assessment model developed by the ISU Assessment Council parallels the framework for academic programs. While this framework provides the flexibility to be adapted to the specific functions of each unit, it includes the following essential components:

- The unit’s **Mission Statement**, which should be aligned with ISU’s mission and strategic priorities;
- The unit’s **Objectives**, which are aligned with the mission statement and should reflect the essential functions or activities of the unit;
- The **Expected Outcomes**, which may be learning and/or process outcomes;
- **Measurable Performance Criteria**, which describe the desired end result;
- **Program Activities/Strategies**, the services, supports, interventions, and programs provided;
- **Assessment**, the collection and analysis of evidence;
- **Evaluation**, the interpretation of evidence; and
- **Planned Improvements**, developed in response to assessment evidence and including an implementation timeline.

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**What are the assessment deadlines?**

The Assessment Council has determined the following schedule for assessment:

- The **Assessment Plan**, including assessment methods and timelines, should be completed and entered into TaskStream by 1 September 2012
- Data collection and analyzed for at least one outcome and information entered into the **Findings** section of TaskStream by 1 August 2013
- Staff discussions of the evidence and an **Action Plan** developed and entered into TaskStream 1 August 2013

May 2010
Rev.: June 2012
A Status Report on the implementation of the Action Plan entered into TaskStream by 20 December 2013 and update every six months until implementation is complete

The assessment cycle will be completed annually.

**To whom should I send the assessment report?**
Assessment information will be entered into the Non-Academic Assessment and Action Plan area of TaskStream. Information may be entered throughout the year. Your director/supervisor and your division’s vice president will be able to review the information in TaskStream. If requested, you may print the report from TaskStream.

**Can non-academic units obtain assistance in developing assessment plans?**
Workshops and facilitation on developing and implementing the assessment plan and on using TaskStream are available. Dr. Ruth Cain, Assessment and Accreditation Coordinator, will be available to provide support throughout the process.

**Who is involved?**
All non-academic units on campus.

**What is the content of the assessment plan?**
Each unit will develop its assessment plan based upon the primary function of the unit and the information that will be useful in improving programs and services. The Assessment Council has developed the guiding principles and model for assessment plans. Because the overriding goal of assessment is to inform the process of continuous improvement, one size does not fit all. Therefore, the Council has not prescribed specific areas the assessment plan should address. The plan should be designed to assess the primary functions of the unit, to answer questions that are important in understanding what has been accomplished during the year, and to obtain information that will be useful in developing plans to improve programs and services.

**What is crucial to include in the assessment plans and reports?**
The reports are not descriptions of the activities that were completed during the year. The report will include evidence that documents the strengths of the unit as well as areas for improvement and specific recommendations for improvement. The reports entered into TaskStream will consist of summary information that provides evidence of the strengths and plans for improvement, including:
- specific objectives and outcomes assessed during the current year,
- data collection methods,
- assessment findings,
- an action plan developed in response to the findings, and
- a status report on implementation of the action plan.

**What is the difference between assessment reports and annual reports?**
A key difference is that the assessment report is focused on the collection and analysis of data that indicate progress in achieving the unit’s primary objectives and outcomes and
plans for improvement, while the annual report is much broader in its focus. It would be appropriate to include information from the assessment report in the unit’s annual report.

**Who will review the reports?**

Dr. Cain, Assessment and Accreditation Coordinator, will have access to the information in TaskStream and will be available to review draft plans and ongoing assessment efforts for the purpose of providing guidance on refining the plans. The reports will be reviewed by your director/supervisor and the division’s VP. Each director/supervisor and VP will have access to view the information in TaskStream, but he/she may ask you to submit a paper copy of the report. (TaskStream can generate printable PDFs of the reports.)

The reports will also be available for review by the Assessment Council and by other internal and external constituencies, including accrediting and compliance agencies.