

NOVA Annual Planning and Evaluation: A Guide for Administrative Units and Campuses

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OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVES

The purpose of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives is to conduct analytical studies and provide information in support of institutional planning, policy formulation, and decision making. In addition, the office provides leadership and support in research related activities to members of the NOVA community engaged in planning and evaluating the institution's success in accomplishing its mission.

When citing data from this report, the Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives must be cited as the source.

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Introduction

Benefits of Annual Planning and Evaluation

Annual planning and evaluation is the ongoing assessment of goals and expected outcomes in order to identify ways to continuously improve services, processes, and functions and is part of Northern Virginia Community College's (NOVA's) wider efforts in achieving institutional effectiveness. Annual planning and evaluation is a powerful tool because it provides evidence that offices and programs are performing effectively and sustaining the College in fulfilling its mission. This information is important to the College and to external stakeholders such as NOVA's accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC). SACSCOC underscores the importance of institutional effectiveness in a core requirement of accreditation. In *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, Core Requirement 2.5 requires that:

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.

When all areas of the College participate in institutional effectiveness, NOVA is able to provide a strong body of evidence that it is working to fulfill its mission, effectively meet its strategic goals, and continuously strive to improve its services, processes, and functions.

Unit-Level Annual Planning and Evaluation

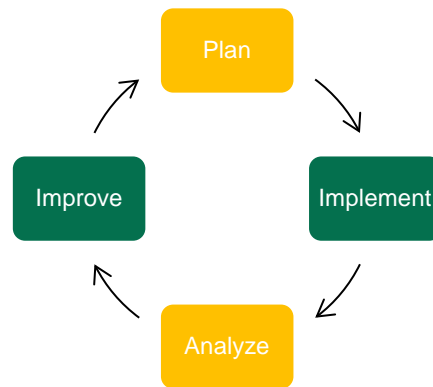
NOVA's mission forms the basis for annual planning and evaluation at the College: "With commitment to the values of access, opportunity, student success, and excellence, the mission of Northern Virginia Community College is to deliver world-class in-person and online post-secondary teaching, learning, and workforce development to ensure our region and the Commonwealth of Virginia have an educated population and globally competitive workforce." From the mission statement, the College's strategic goals are derived¹. Using this as a foundation, NOVA's campuses and administrative units and their sub-units (hereafter referred to as "units"²) begin the annual planning and evaluation process by determining their own unit goals and expected outcomes for meeting those goals³. To complete the process and conclude whether their outcomes were met, units annually measure their achievement in meeting goals using pre-determined assessment methods, report and analyze results, and decide whether improvements are needed based on the results. The cyclical nature of assessment in the annual planning and evaluation process is shown in Figure 1.

¹ NOVA's strategic goals are provided in Appendix A.

² For the list of NOVA administrative units and campuses, including their sub-units, see Appendix B.

³ For more information about how college-wide strategic planning influences unit-level planning, see Appendix C.

Figure 1: Evaluation Cycle



At various stages of the evaluation cycle depicted in Figure 1, units conduct the following important activities:

Planning Stage

- Units align their efforts with NOVA's mission and strategic goals
- Units have in place a purpose statement and unit goals
- Units identify measurable expected outcomes
- Units select assessment methods to measure their success in meeting expected outcomes and define pre-determined achievement levels

Implementation Stage

- Units implement assessment methods and collect assessment data

Analysis Stage

- Units analyze the assessment results

Improvement Stage

- Units make improvements based on their level of success toward reaching their expected outcomes

It is important to note here the distinction between assessment and evaluation. Assessment is the systematic process of gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence, known as data, in order to provide information on performance and effectiveness. Evaluation is the process of using assessment data to make decisions on how to improve performance and effectiveness. Upcraft and Schuh (1996) offer this distinction, "While assessment describes effectiveness, evaluation uses these descriptions in order to improve effectiveness" (p. 19).

As part of the documentation of the unit-level planning and evaluation process, each of NOVA's six campuses and six administrative units and their respective sub-units submit an annual report describing and summarizing their respective yearly goals, outcomes, and use of results. These reports, titled Annual Planning and Evaluation Reports, document assessment activities conducted and results obtained throughout the year for each campus and unit. The annual planning and evaluation process and reports provide information about whether or not campuses and administrative units are achieving their intended impact, and help campuses and administrative units evaluate and identify ways to improve their outcomes.

Purpose of Guide

What follows is a step-by-step guide to preparing annual planning and evaluation reports. The purpose of this guide is to provide administrative units and campuses with a framework for annual planning and evaluation that is aligned with the overall strategic planning process of NOVA. This guide includes elements of unit-level annual planning and evaluation, a template for writing an annual planning and evaluation report, definitions of terms, examples of report content, and a schedule for the annual planning and evaluation cycle at NOVA.

Note: All examples in this handbook are not taken from any NOVA annual reports. They are created only for the purpose of illustrating best practices.

Elements of Annual Planning and Evaluation

The unit-level annual planning and evaluation process which is documented in annual planning and evaluation reports provides information about whether or not campuses and administrative units are achieving their intended impact, and helps campuses and administrative units identify ways to improve their outcomes. This information is critical in assisting the College in moving toward the achievement of its strategic goals and mission.

There are seven major components encompassing unit-level annual planning and evaluation at NOVA.

- Unit Purpose Statement
- College Strategic Goal
- Unit Goals
- Expected Outcomes
- Assessment Methods with Targets
- Assessment Results
- Use of Results

The seven components, highlighted above, form the basis for the content provided by each campus and administrative unit and their sub-units in the annual planning and evaluation reports. Table 1 shows the template used by campuses and administrative units and their sub-units when completing their annual reports. To see the complete format of an annual planning and evaluation report, see Appendix D.

Table 1: Major Components of Unit-Level Annual Planning and Evaluation

UNIT PURPOSE STATEMENT:

COLLEGE STRATEGIC GOAL:

Unit Goals	Expected Outcomes	Assessment Methods with Targets	Assessment Results	Use of Results

Aligning Elements

The annual planning and evaluation process, as part of NOVA's institutional effectiveness efforts, is conducted to ultimately help determine the extent to which the College is achieving its mission and strategic goals. With this concept as a foundation, all unit-level efforts should align directly with the College's mission and goals. To achieve that, it is imperative for each unit to define appropriate and relevant goals and expected outcomes that reflect the unit's purpose which in-turn coincide with the College's mission and goals thereby achieving alignment.

In addition, each component should align with each other. Overall, proper alignment occurs when (1) unit goals and expected outcomes relate to the College mission and strategic goals;

(2) expected outcomes are derived from unit goals; (3) assessment methods appropriately measure expected outcomes; and (4) results accurately reflect assessment of a given expected outcome and are useful in determining where improvements are needed.

Alignment can be achieved through thoughtful planning and implementation throughout the annual planning and evaluation process. During the planning stage, each unit should revisit its purpose statement determining if it accurately reflects the current purpose of the unit. Each unit should also determine and/or revisit its unit goals to ensure that its goals reflect what the unit wants to achieve through its services or functions. In addition, expected outcomes, or the intended impact of a unit implementing its goals, should link smoothly to the unit's respective goals. The unit should also select assessment methods with specific targets that measure its level of success in reaching those targets. As data are collected and analyzed during the implementation and analysis stages, the unit will discuss and report what the assessment results reveal about how well the unit is accomplishing its expected outcomes and where improvements are warranted.

The following sections provide greater detail on the six major components of the unit-level annual planning and evaluation process. Each major component is presented as a step in the planning and evaluation process (steps 1-6), and is defined, discussed, and accompanied with examples. When units address and incorporate these components into their planning process and eventual documentation, the concept of alignment should be a regular consideration.

To guide units in aligning entries of their reports and providing relevant content, a rubric for writing quality annual planning and evaluation reports is in Appendix E. In general, a rubric is a guide that gives short descriptions or characteristics of different levels of quality for a specific criterion. The rubric for writing an annual planning and evaluation report has four levels of quality: "underdeveloped," "developing," "meets standards," and "best practice" for the unit purpose statement, unit goals, expected outcomes, assessment methods with targets, assessment results, and use of results. The rubric emphasizes that the "best practice" of a quality annual planning and evaluation report demonstrates alignment of the six major components of annual planning and evaluation. Units can use Appendix E to evaluate the level of quality of their past annual planning and evaluation reports to identify any improvements needed to reach the "best practice" level for future reports.

To further assist units, two examples of completed Annual Planning and Evaluation Reports that employ the characteristics of "best practice" are provided in Appendix F, and a glossary of terms is provided in Appendix G.

Step I: Defining the Unit Purpose Statement

The first step in the annual planning and evaluation process is the development of a unit purpose statement. The unit purpose statement describes the core functions of a unit, outlines its values, and identifies its constituents or recipients of service. The unit purpose statement reflects the fundamental reasons a unit exists.

When developing a unit purpose statement, the following questions should be considered:

- Why does the unit exist? What is unique about the unit's purpose?
- How does the unit's purpose connect to the overall college mission?
- What are the central services, activities, or operations?
- Why is what the unit does important?
- Who does the unit serve? Who are the constituents or recipients?

In general, unit purpose statements will not change from year to year. Some exceptions would be if a unit is restructured or reorganized and performs different functions, or if a unit takes on new functions or constituents as a result of a consolidation of offices. However, it is a good practice for a unit to revisit its purpose statement at the start of each planning cycle to ensure that it accurately reflects its functions, values, and constituents, and revise the statement as needed.

Sample Purpose Statements

The purpose of the Department of Public Safety is to promote a safe and secure learning environment that enables the faculty, staff, and students to achieve their educational goals without fear for their safety.

The primary purpose of the Living Arts Center is to support the growth and development of the performing arts at the College and in the community by providing a state-of-the-art venue that hosts amateur and professional artists from multiple genres.

The Student Activities Office exists to foster an environment for students and student organizations to engage in co-curricular opportunities. The Student Activities Office promotes educational, recreational, cultural and community service events as avenues to positively impact intellectual, personal, leadership and civic growth.

Table 2 provides the characteristics of different levels of quality of written purpose statements.

Table 2: Levels of Quality for Writing a Purpose Statement

Component	Performance Level			
	Under-developed	Developing	Meets Standards	Best Practice
Purpose Statement	No presence of a purpose statement.	The purpose statement lacks information about the following: core functions, constituents, and organizational values.	Purpose statement has some but not all of the important components of a purpose statement.	The purpose statement contains a description of the unit's core functions, values, and identifies its constituents.

When evaluated by this rubric, the three examples of purpose statements above are illustrations of "best practice" because they are purpose statements that have descriptions of core functions and values, and identify constituents.

Step 2: Developing Unit Goals

The second step in the process is to develop unit goals. Unit goals delineate a unit's purpose by providing general statements about what the unit wants to achieve through its services or functions. Unit goals are usually stated in broad terms. They represent the core of what a unit does by detailing how the unit's purpose is realized through action. Well-written unit goals use action verbs to describe services and functions.

Much like the purpose statement, unit goals of a unit rarely change from year to year. If a unit is changing most of its goals every year, then the goals do not truly reflect the essence of why the unit exists or its core functions and should be re-examined. However, there are occasions when additional unit goals are included. Usually these kinds of unit goals are a result of short-term situations, such as an allocation of one-time funds, or because a unit is offering an interim service.

When developing unit goals, the following checklist will be helpful.

- The goal clearly relates to the unit purpose statement
- The goal is about the unit's functions or services
- The goal represents the core of what the unit does
- The goal will be applicable to the unit five years from now

Linking Unit Goals with the Unit Purpose Statement

The following example shows the linkage between unit goals and the unit purpose statement for a technology office. In the example about the Office of Technology Enhancement, the bulleted list represents the unit goals. All unit goals describe how the Office of Technology Enhancement will fulfill its purpose. The unit goals of the Office of Technology Enhancement use such verbs as "procuring," "assisting," and "expanding" to convey action-oriented descriptions of its services. Unit goals use action verbs to describe services and functions. Appendix H lists other examples of well-written unit goals and Appendix F provides the full annual planning and evaluation report for the example below.

Example of a Purpose Statement with Corresponding Unit Goals

Office of Technology Enhancement

Purpose Statement: The Office of Technology Enhancement provides leadership and management of technology-based services that facilitate the College's mission of teaching, learning, and excellence. We serve faculty, students, and staff by delivering high quality service in the areas of information support and education, network security, and technology resources for on-site and virtual environments.

We achieve our purpose through the following goals:

- Offering students, faculty, and staff access to the College's teaching and learning resources regardless of time and place
- Providing a secure electronic infrastructure for college web applications
- Improving technology support services by offering timely responses and effective solutions
- Procuring and coordinating the addition of new technologies
- Assisting administrative operations by identifying technology tools to increase productivity
- Expanding training services for college employees

As a guide for writing unit goals, the table below describes the characteristics of different levels of quality of written goals (the entire rubric can be seen in Appendix E). When evaluated by this rubric, the examples of unit goals for the Office of Technology Enhancement illustrate “best practice” because they describe how a unit realizes its purpose through core services and functions.

Table 3: Levels of Quality for Writing Unit Goals

Component	Performance Level			
	Under-developed	Developing	Meets Standards	Best Practice
Unit Goals	Unit goals are not stated.	Unit goals are not broad statements of what unit wants to achieve through its services, functions, and activities.	Some but not all unit goals are broad statements of what unit wants to achieve through its services, functions, and activities.	Unit goals are described in broad statements about what the unit wants to achieve through its services, functions, and activities; they are related to the purpose statement.

Step 3: Identifying Expected Outcomes

The third step in the process is to identify expected outcomes. Expected outcomes describe how units operationalize their goals by stating specific intended accomplishments for each unit goal. It is helpful to think about expected outcomes in three categories:

- **Unit Processes and Functions** – expected outcomes about quality, efficiency and effectiveness by evaluating organizational processes, functions, and services
- **Satisfaction** – expected outcomes about constituents' or stakeholders' satisfaction with a unit's processes, functions, and services
- **Learning** – expected outcomes about whether or not students/faculty/staff are learning the desired knowledge, skills, or attitudes intended by the unit

Expected outcomes can be statements that specifically focus on improving the quality, efficiency, or effectiveness of a unit's processes, functions, or services. For example, a financial unit might identify timely payments to vendors as an expected outcome. Expected outcomes can emphasize a unit's desired impact on constituents. Constituents are defined as the intended recipients of a unit's services. Often a unit will have expected outcomes expressing the satisfaction it desires constituents to have with its services. When expected outcomes are framed in terms of intended knowledge, skills, and attitudes desired in students as a result of interacting with that unit these expected outcomes are referred to as student learning outcomes (SLOs).

Although there is no prescribed rule, a unit usually has at least two to three expected outcomes that describe how each unit goal will be accomplished. Since goals reflect the core functions of a unit, usually a unit will have unit goals that are constant over time. While expected outcomes are also stable from year to year, not all expected outcomes are permanent. That is, some expected outcomes are short-term because of special circumstances. A unit may receive one-time funds from a donor or decide to pilot an initiative. A unit can develop short-term expected outcomes that are a result of provisional circumstances. In Appendix F, the expected outcome "Laptop workstations with docking systems will be installed on Campus I, II, and, III" is an example of a one-time expected outcome. Once the workstations are installed, this expected outcome has been met and is no longer needed.

Effectively written expected outcome statements have SMART qualities. SMART is a mnemonic for desirable characteristics of an effectively formulated expected outcome. Expected outcome statements should be:

Specific
Measurable
Attainable
Results-oriented and realistic
Time-bound

Examples of ineffectively and effectively written expected outcome statements

Too Vague	Businesses will be able to offer workforce training.
Specific	Virginia businesses and employers will have an increased number of opportunities to engage employees in workforce training through the College's Continuing Studies program.
Not Measurable	The Office of Career Services hopes that students attend the Career Expo.
Measurable	After attending the Career Expo, students will know the five basic elements of constructing a resume.
Not Attainable	All students will possess civic engagement as a value while at college.
Attainable	All students will be exposed to at least one course that encourages civic engagement while at the college.
Not results-oriented and not realistic	Professional development funds will be available for all faculty and staff.
Results-oriented and Realistic	Faculty and staff will have an easier time participating in professional development opportunities as a result of a clearinghouse website for trainings and workshops.
Not Time-bound	Fairfax county residents participate more in the Humanities mentoring program.
Time-bound	Compared to the last academic year, Fairfax county residents will increase participation in the Humanities mentoring program.

When an expected outcomes is written with **SMART** characteristics it will meet the standards for "best practice" as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Levels of Quality for Writing Expected Outcomes

Component	Performance Level			
	Under-developed	Developing	Meets Standards	Best Practice
Expected Outcomes	Expected outcomes are not stated.	Expected outcomes are not measurable and lack detail and clarity.	Some but not all expected outcomes are measurable, clearly defined and detailed.	All expected outcomes are measurable, clearly defines, and detailed; they correspond with unit goals.

Difference between Unit Goals and Expected Outcomes

Unit goals support the purpose statement by describing functions and services a unit provides on an on-going basis. Unit goals are what a unit hopes to accomplish through its services and functions. Expected outcomes are measurable statements about what the person receiving the service can expect from the unit or what the unit intends to do in order to improve some aspect of the unit. Unit goals focus on the unit as the (implied) "subject" of a statement; whereas,

expected outcomes describe desired performance or state improvement, change, or effectiveness in terms of the benefit to the constituents of a service. Expected outcomes are specific, measurable, and derived from a unit goal.

While unit goals are not the same as expected outcomes they are strongly linked to each other. Expected outcomes are the intended impact of a unit implementing its goals. When expected outcomes are being achieved they are positive indicators that goals are being carried out successfully.

Appendix H has a variety of examples of well-written unit goals and their corresponding expected outcomes. For hands-on practice, Appendix I is a worksheet designed to assist units in writing their unit goals and related expected outcomes.

Step 4: Selecting Methods and Targets

The fourth step in the process is to select assessment methods and define targets for each expected outcome. An effective assessment method always begins with well-written expected outcomes that are specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented/realistic, and time-bound.

To identify useful assessment methods, administrative units and campuses should answer these questions:

- What information will help us determine if we are meeting expectations?
- What information would help us improve?
- What kind of assessment already takes place at the campus or college-level?
- What resources are necessary to implement the assessment methodology we have selected?

As stated in the previous section, there are three types of expected outcomes: 1) unit processes and functions, 2) satisfaction, and 3) learning. Often specific assessment methods are associated with assessing each type of expected outcome. For example, collecting data on error rates is a method of measuring quality and efficiency. Surveys and interviews are often associated with obtaining the opinions or perceptions of respondents. Pre- and post-tests are often used to measure student learning outcomes.

Table 5 can serve as a starting point for selecting assessment methods typically used for each type of expected outcome. The list provides some examples of assessment methods given the type of expected outcome.

Table 5: Assessment Methods Based on Type of Expected Outcome

What is Being Measured?	Assessment Method
Unit Processes or Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Error rate • Cost effectiveness analysis • Activity logs • Wait or processing time • Benchmark • External or internal audit • Checklist/Inventory • Track services provided to constituents
Satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constituent surveys • Employer questionnaire • Focus groups • Interviews
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre and post survey/tests • Checklists • Documented observations • Case Studies • Tracking behaviors or performance • Skills inventory • Rubric

It is important to note here that satisfaction surveys are commonly used assessment methods. However, they do not provide direct evidence of achieving expected outcomes, unless it is a satisfaction outcome. For processes/functions outcomes and learning outcomes, it is

acceptable to use satisfaction surveys as supporting evidence to supplement results of direct assessment methods, but they cannot be the only method used.

Targets

In order for assessment to be meaningful, a unit has to select an assessment method that matches what it is trying to measure and identify what it considers success or the satisfactory achievement level. This is known as the **target**. Every assessment method must have a defined target. Without defining the desired level of achievement it would be difficult for a unit to use assessment results to improve. For example, the Admissions and Transcripts Office reviews external transcripts for transferable college credits. The office sets the target that students will have their external transcript reviewed within 30 days. Without defining the target it would be difficult for a unit to decide whether or not it needs to improve.

One assessment tool can be designed to measure more than one expected outcome. For example, in Appendix F the Office of Technology Enhancement uses its activity logs to assess two expected outcomes: 1) Administrative units and campuses that experience printing, network, and email problems will receive immediate response and, 2) Faculty and staff will have multiple avenues to receive technical support assistance. Notice, however, that a different target is specified despite the use of the same assessment tool.

Ideally more than one assessment method is selected to measure each outcome. Since all assessment methods have limitations, selecting multiple assessment methods can help address the limitations of each method. When the assessment results of multiple assessment methods point to the same conclusion this is known as triangulation. For example, in Appendix F the Campus Office of Academic Advising and High School Outreach used three different assessment methods and specified a target for each method in order to assess the expected outcome “Students will receive information in a timely manner.” The assessment results for each assessment method corroborated that improvement in the performance of this expected outcome was necessary.

The rubric for writing quality assessment methods and targets for the Annual Planning and Evaluation Report is described below in Table 6. The key to achieving the “best practice” performance level is to select assessment methods that correctly match the expected outcomes, identify targets, and use more than one assessment method to assess each expected outcome.

Table 6: Levels of Quality for Writing Assessment Methods and Targets

Component	Performance Level			
	Under-developed	Developing	Meets Standards	Best Practice
Assessment Methods and Targets	Assessment methods are not stated.	Assessment methods are not appropriate for the expected outcomes. Assessment methods are limited to indirect methods and lack specified targets.	Assessment methods address some but not all of the following; uses at least one direct assessment method; matches with expected outcome; identifies targets.	Assessment methods employ at least one form of direct assessment. Assessment methods are appropriate given the expected outcome. Targets are specified.

Step 5: Reporting Results

The fifth step in the annual planning and evaluation process is reporting assessment results. Once data are collected, they need to be reported, analyzed, and discussed for further action. All units are required to detail their findings, also known as actual assessment results or results, in the Annual Planning and Evaluation Report. The “best practice” for writing assessment results for the Annual Planning and Evaluation Report is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Levels of Quality for Writing Assessment Results

Component	Performance Level			
	Under-developed	Developing	Meets Standards	Best Practice
Assessment Results	Assessment results are not reported.	Assessment results are not related to assessment methods implemented.	Assessment results are reported and relate to assessment methods implemented, but lack description or detail of what information was collected and what results were analyzed.	Assessment results are related to assessment methods implemented. They are reported in detail with information about what data was collected and analyzed. Actual results included such important descriptors as sample size, response rate, summary of major themes, or trends in results.

Assessment results can be categorized as quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative information is expressed numerically, such as, number of participants, percentages, averages, and response rates. Qualitative information is usually more descriptive, for example, a summary of observations, responses to open ended questions that are grouped into similar themes, or excerpts taken from individual interviews.

Consider this example: A survey is administered to recent graduates to obtain information about their employment in the first six months after graduation. The target is to administer the survey to at least 75% of all graduates and to identify reasons why unemployed graduates were not employed. The following was reported as the assessment results: 1,200 students graduated. 42% (504 graduates) were successfully contacted for the Employment of Graduates Survey. 39% responded that they were employed in an area related to their major; 8% responded they were employed but not directly related to their major, and 3% were not employed. Follow up phone calls to the 3% who were not employed resulted in these themes for non-employment: pursuing further education, unexpected life changes, applying but have not been offered/or accepted a position, and not interested in seeking employment at the time of the survey.

In this example, the target was partially met. The survey helped reveal why some graduates were unemployed; however, the target for the response rate was not achieved, only 42% of the graduates were interviewed compared to the desired level of 75%.

Discussion of the actual assessment results is critical to the annual planning and evaluation process. Additionally, it is important that a unit make clear if the pre-determined target was met. Based on the pre-determined target and assessment results, units decide what improvements need to be implemented.

Step 6: Using Results For Improvements

The sixth step in the annual planning and evaluation process is using assessment results to make improvements. “**Closing the loop**” is a common phrase used to describe use of assessment results because documenting how results are used to make improvements completes the evaluation cycle for that academic year. Actual assessment results are compared to a pre-selected target in order to determine possible areas for improvement. If assessment results meet the specified target, a unit can state in the annual report that the target was met while still determining possible areas for continued improvements. Another possibility for using results when the target has been achieved is to strive for an even higher success level for the next assessment cycle. For example, the Office of New Student Programs sets as a target that 80% of first-time college students will attend the new student orientation. In year 1, the Office of New Student Programs reaches its target. For year 2, the unit decides to raise the target from 80% to 90% with the goal that raising the target will provide more information regarding areas for improvement.

When a target is not achieved, a unit should examine the assessment results for insights into how the unit could perform at the desired target. Once areas of improvement have been identified, an action plan should be designed to help organize the implementation of improvements. The implementation of those improvements must be documented in the Annual Planning and Evaluation Report. The annual planning and evaluation cycle continues with plans for those improvements to be assessed for effectiveness in future cycles.

As demonstrated in both unit examples in Appendix F, assessment results were examined to determine if each target had been met. Even if the unit met its target, improvements were implemented and detailed in the annual report. ***When possible a unit should strive to implement improvements during the same evaluation cycle.*** This is important because without implementing improvements within the same cycle, units will not be ready to measure in the next evaluation cycle the impact those changes had.

Table 8 reflects the levels of quality for writing Use of Results in the Annual Planning and Evaluation Report with the characteristics of “best practice” being described as detailed and aligned.

Table 8: Levels of Quality for Writing Use of Results

Component	Performance Level			
	Under-developed	Developing	Meets Standards	Best Practice
Use of Results	Use of results are not discussed or used to make improvements.	Use of results are vague. Some but not all use of results address whether or not target was attained and were used to implement improvements.	Many use of results are utilized to make improvements; descriptions of use of results usually are detailed, but some lack clarity or alignment to expected outcomes.	Use of results are utilized to make improvements regardless of whether a target was met, and are described in detail; there is clarity and alignment.

When NOVA’s Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives conducted an institutional effectiveness audit in 2010 in preparation for reaffirmation of accreditation, it coded how units used assessment results to make improvements. Units frequently used results to make the changes reflected in Table 9.

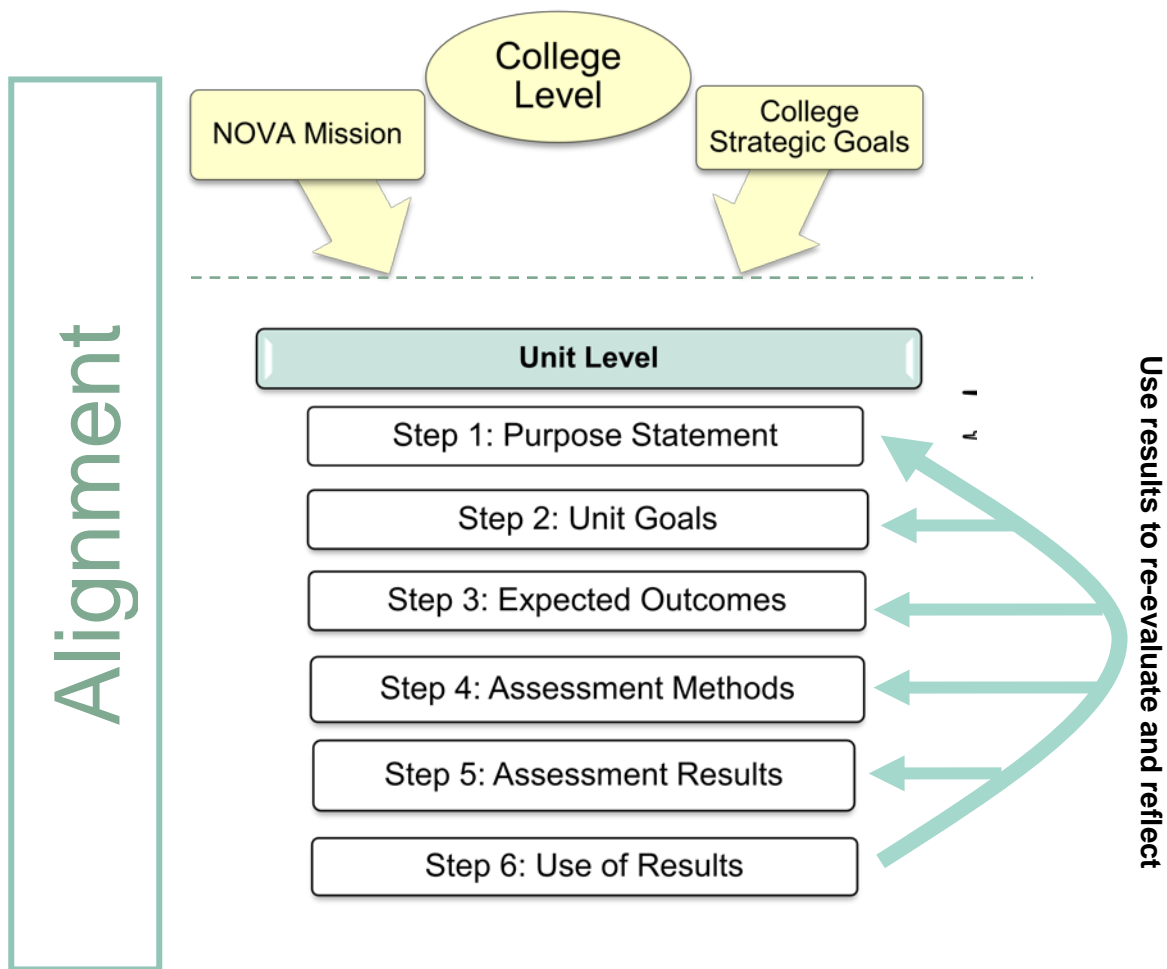
Table 9: Use of Results

Process or Procedure	Streamlined process; changed procedure; updated or modified forms; created user manual or guide; unit restructuring or reorganization
Policy	Changed, revised, or created policy (e.g. admission policy, Student Handbook, College catalog, domicile requirements); expanded or modified articulation and transfer agreements
Service	Added, reconfigured, combined, discontinued service(s); changed service hours; redefined mission or goals; change must result in direct impact on service or constituents
Assessment	Redefined target; changed or added assessment method; identified need to continue monitoring before taking action; changed data analysis method
Resources (Human, Fiscal, Facilities)	Hired or decreased faculty/staff positions; restructured position or job description; requested funding; reallocation of resources; increase in physical resources (e.g. equipment, supplies); space modification or augmentation (e.g. more classroom space, new facilities constructed)

Based on OIR’s audit, below are some examples of how assessment results have been used to make improvements. Many units conduct assessments of the availability of services to constituents. In these cases, often assessment results supported the decision to change business hours. When assessment results showed that constituents were not being helped in a timely way, a unit examined and improved its processes. Assessment results have also been used to demonstrate the need for more resources like staff, funds, and physical space. Sometimes assessment results have been known to be inconclusive. In these cases, the use of results might indicate the need to collect more data or change the assessment method in some way.

Assessment never ends. The annual planning and evaluation cycle is on-going. The continuous nature of planning and evaluation encourages re-examination and reflection of the annual planning and evaluation process. Regardless of whether or not a target was met, it is always a good idea to use the assessment results to ask the following questions: Do the purpose statement and unit goals reflect the needs of today’s constituents? Are the expected outcome statements expressing the desired results of the unit? Does the assessment method match what needs to be measured? Figure 2 represents the six steps of annual planning and evaluation with an arrow indicating that assessment results should be used to re-evaluate and reflect on every aspect of the process.

Figure 2: Use Results to Re-evaluate and Reflect



Traps to Avoid

Some common assessment traps are described here. Some have been mentioned earlier, but they are so important that they are highlighted again. These are common challenges faced by units starting to incorporate assessment into their organization. As units infuse assessment as part of their daily activities these assessment traps become easier to avoid.

Great method, wrong expected outcome

In order for assessment results to be informative, it is critical that the assessment methodology matches what the unit is trying to measure. For example, conducting focus groups with faculty to determine if students are satisfied with walk-in hours at the Advising Center is a mismatch of assessment method to expected outcome.

No target, no idea

It's very important that, along with selecting matching assessment methods, units define the target or criteria for determining success. Without a defined target, a unit does not have a guide to what they are striving for in their performance.

Beware of the labor intensive and time draining

If a unit has all the resources at its disposal and no pending deadline, then this common trap does not apply. However, for the majority of units, time and resources are always limited. Without the proper resources, selecting a labor-intensive and time-consuming assessment method have significant disadvantages. It increases the probability that data will not be collected reliably and consistently. Also, faculty or staff involved will not have a positive experience and may decline to participate in future assessments.

Data, data everywhere

A caution about collecting an overabundance of data: sometimes more data are just more data. For example, it is not necessary to survey every customer that uses the cafeteria for feedback about quality service. However, it is important to make sure that customers who are surveyed represent the diversity of the customer population. Some strategies include surveying customers at different points in the day; and, selecting a representative sample of customers.

The one assessment method to assess them all

It is a fallacy that one assessment method can completely capture it all. All assessment methods have their benefits and shortcomings. While expected outcomes should be assessed by at least one direct assessment method, using more than one assessment method offers multiple perspectives and addresses gaps in each methodology. As a best practice, units should strive to create a comprehensive body of evidence by selecting more than one direct assessment method and utilizing indirect assessment methods to supplement the results of direct assessment methods.

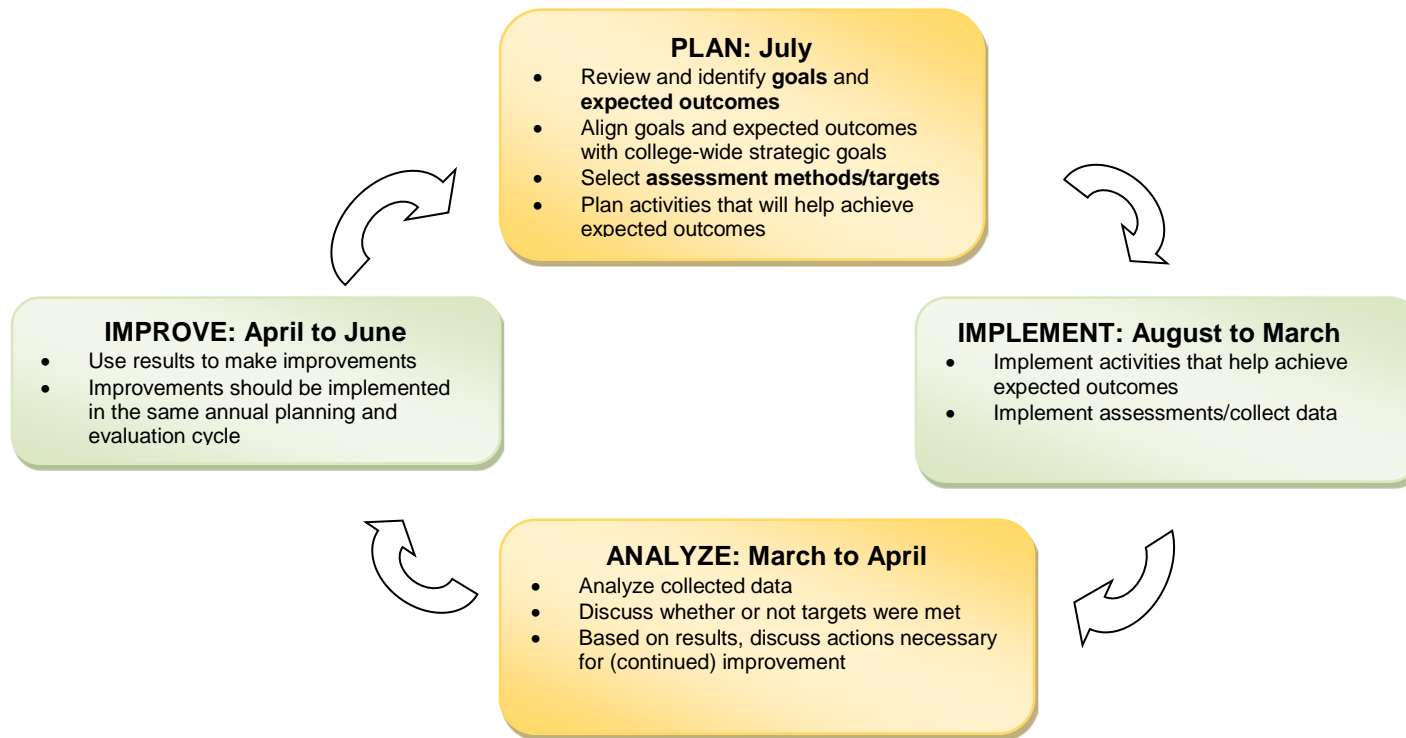
Statistically significant syndrome

Assessment is not research. All too often assessment results are dismissed because research standards are imposed on methodology. While it is important that an assessment tool is reliable, to apply the same standards as research conducted for peer review does not necessarily enhance the information collected. An appropriate assessment method should be a helpful resource for making informed decisions and improving organizational practice, it does not have to be precise, but it does need to be useful to the unit.

Schedule for the Annual Planning and Evaluation Cycle

Figure 3 represents visually the annual planning and evaluation cycle at NOVA. Notice that the planning process starts in July. Also in July, assessment methods must be selected in order to measure achievement toward expected outcomes.

Figure 3: Calendar Schedule of Annual Planning and Evaluation Cycle



Writing the Annual Planning and Evaluation Report

Figure 4 is a template every unit must use to submit their Annual Planning and Evaluation Report. Annual Planning and Evaluation Reports are posted online at the OIR website and a paper version of the reports is disseminated throughout the College. Appendix D is a version of the below template, but without descriptions of what goes into each section.

Figure 4: Annual Planning and Evaluation Template

Annual Planning and Evaluation Report for Administrative Units: 2013-2014 Unit: Unit Name Sub-unit: Sub-unit Name, if applicable				
<p>MISSION STATEMENT: With commitment to the values of access, opportunity, student success, and excellence, the mission of Northern Virginia Community College is to deliver world-class in-person and online post-secondary teaching, learning, and workforce development to ensure our region and the Commonwealth of Virginia have an educated population and globally competitive workforce.</p>				
<p>UNIT PURPOSE STATEMENT: Unit purpose statement is inserted here. All units should have a purpose statement in place. A purpose statement reflects the fundamental reasons a unit exists. It outlines the values and functions of a unit. It identifies the stakeholders or constituents.</p>				
<p>COLLEGE STRATEGIC GOAL: Map unit goal to related NOVA strategic goal, see Appendix A for the college strategic goals</p>				
Unit Goal	Expected Outcome	Assessment Methods with Targets	Assessment Results	Use of Results
<p><i>Unit goal is a general statement about what the unit wants to achieve through its services and functions.</i></p>	<p><i>Expected Outcome describes desired performance or states improvement, change, or effectiveness in terms of benefit to the constituents of a service. These statements often start with the constituent as the subject of the sentence.</i></p>	<p><i>Assessment method is the means a unit uses to measure achievement towards expected outcome.</i></p> <p><i>A target is pre-determined by the unit as the desired level of success.</i></p>	<p><i>Report results of assessment here. This is the column for listing assessment findings.</i></p>	<p><i>Was the target met? How have results been used to make or continue to make improvements? Improvements should be implemented within the same cycle and reported here.</i></p>

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Appendices

Appendix A: NOVA Mission and Strategic Goals: 2005 – 2015

Mission

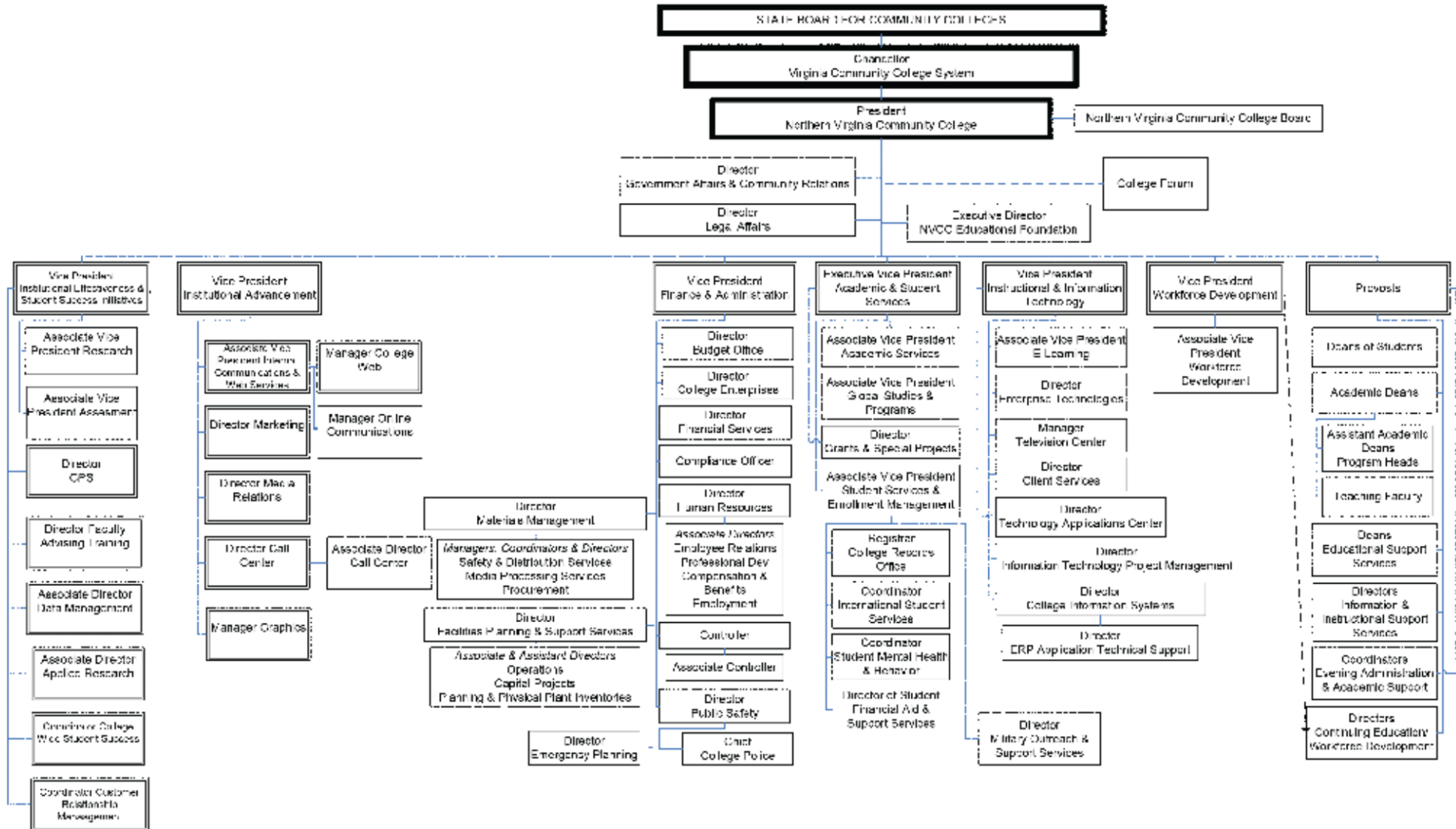
With commitment to the values of access, opportunity, student success, and excellence, the mission of Northern Virginia Community College is to deliver world-class in-person and online post-secondary teaching, learning, and workforce development to ensure our region and the Commonwealth of Virginia have an educated population and globally competitive workforce.

Strategic Goals

- I. **STUDENT SUCCESS** – Northern Virginia Community College will move into the top tier of community colleges with respect to the college readiness, developmental course completion, retention, graduation, transfer, and career placement of its students.
- II. **ACCESS** – Northern Virginia Community College will increase the number and diversity of students being served to mirror the population growth of the region.
- III. **TEACHING AND LEARNING** – Northern Virginia Community College will focus on student success by creating an environment of world-class teaching and learning.
- IV. **EXCELLENCE** – Northern Virginia Community College will develop ten focal points of excellence in its educational programs and services that will be benchmarked to the best in the nation and strategic to building the College's overall reputation for quality.
- V. **LEADERSHIP** – Northern Virginia Community College will serve as a catalyst and a leader in developing educational and economic opportunities for all Northern Virginians and in maintaining the quality of life and economic competitiveness of the region.
- VI. **PARTNERSHIPS** – Northern Virginia Community College will develop strategic partnerships to create gateways of opportunity and an integrated educational system for Northern Virginians who are pursuing the American Dream.
- VII. **RESOURCES** – Northern Virginia Community College will increase its annual funding by \$100 million and expand its physical facilities by more than one million square feet in new and renovated space. This includes the establishment of two additional campuses at epicenters of the region's population growth, as well as additional education and training facilities in or near established population centers.
- VIII. **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS** – Northern Virginia Community College will be recognized as a leader among institutions of higher education in Virginia for its development and testing of emergency response and continuity of operation plans.

Appendix B: Administrative and Campus Units and Sub-units

Northern Virginia Community College



2014-15

(Appendix B cont'd)

Administrative Units and Sub-units

Administrative units and sub-units publish their annual planning and evaluation reports in *Annual Planning and Evaluation Report: Administrative Units*.*

Academic and Student Services
Office of the Executive Vice President
Academic Services
Global Studies
Office of Financial Aid and Support
Student Services and Enrollment Services
Office of Grants Development
Financial and Administrative Services
Office of the Vice President
Budget Office
Business Services (x 6 campuses)
College Enterprises
College Police and Public Safety
Controller's Office
Emergency Planning and Preparedness
Facilities Planning and Support Services Media Processing
Human Resources
Institutional Advancement
College Marketing and Communications
Call Center
Graphic Services
Public Information and Affairs/Publications
Web Services and Digital Media
Education Foundation
Executive Director of the Educational Foundation
Alumni Federation
Governmental Affairs and Minority and Legal Affairs
Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives
Academic Assessment
College Planning
Institutional Research
Instructional and Information Technology
Office of the Vice President
College Information Systems
Extended Learning Institute
Information Technology Support Services
Television Center
Technology Applications Center
Workforce Development and Continuing Education
Office of the Vice President

* These lists are based on past reports, organization charts, and SACSCOC standards. The lists are regularly reviewed and may be revised.

(Appendix B cont'd)

Campus Units and Sub-units

Campus units and sub-units publish their annual planning and evaluation reports in
*Annual Planning and Evaluation Report: Campus Reports.**

Alexandria Campus
Provost Office
Educational Support Services
Instructional Technology
Library
Testing Center
Tutoring Center/Learning Lab
Academic Center for Excellence
Arlington Center and The Potomac Metro Region (Workforce Development and Continuing Education)
Business Services
Business Technologies Division
Campus and Community Relations
Evening Administration
Humanities and Social Sciences Division
Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center
Visual and Performing Arts and Public Services Division
Student Development Services
Admissions and Records
Counseling
Dean of Students
Student Activities

Annandale Campus
Provost Office
Dean of Operations
Learning Resource Services
Library
Information and Instructional Support Services
Testing Center
Tutoring Center/Learning Lab
Business and Public Service Division
Business Services
Evening Administration
Languages and Literature Division
Liberal Arts Division
Math, Science, and Engineering Division
Student Development Services
Admissions and Records
Counseling
Dean of Students
Student Activities
Workforce Development and Continuing Education

(Appendix B cont'd)

Loudoun Campus
Provost Office
Communications and Human Studies Division
Learning Resource Services
Library
Testing Center
Tutoring Center/Learning Lab
Business Services
Evening Administration
Natural and Applied Sciences Division
Student Development Services
Admissions and Records
Counseling
Dean of Students
Pathways to the Baccalaureate
Student Activities
Workforce Development and Continuing Education

Manassas Campus
Provost Office
Learning Resource Services
Library
Testing Center
Tutoring Center/Learning Lab
Business Services
Communication Technologies and Social Sciences Division
Evening Administration
Science and Applied Technologies Division
Student Development Services
Admissions and Records
Counseling
Dean of Students
Student Activities
Workforce Development and Continuing Education

Medical Education Campus
Provost Office
Allied Health Division
Learning Resource Services
Library
Testing Center
Tutoring Center/Learning Lab
Business Services
Evening Administration
Nursing Division
Student Development Services

(Appendix B cont'd)

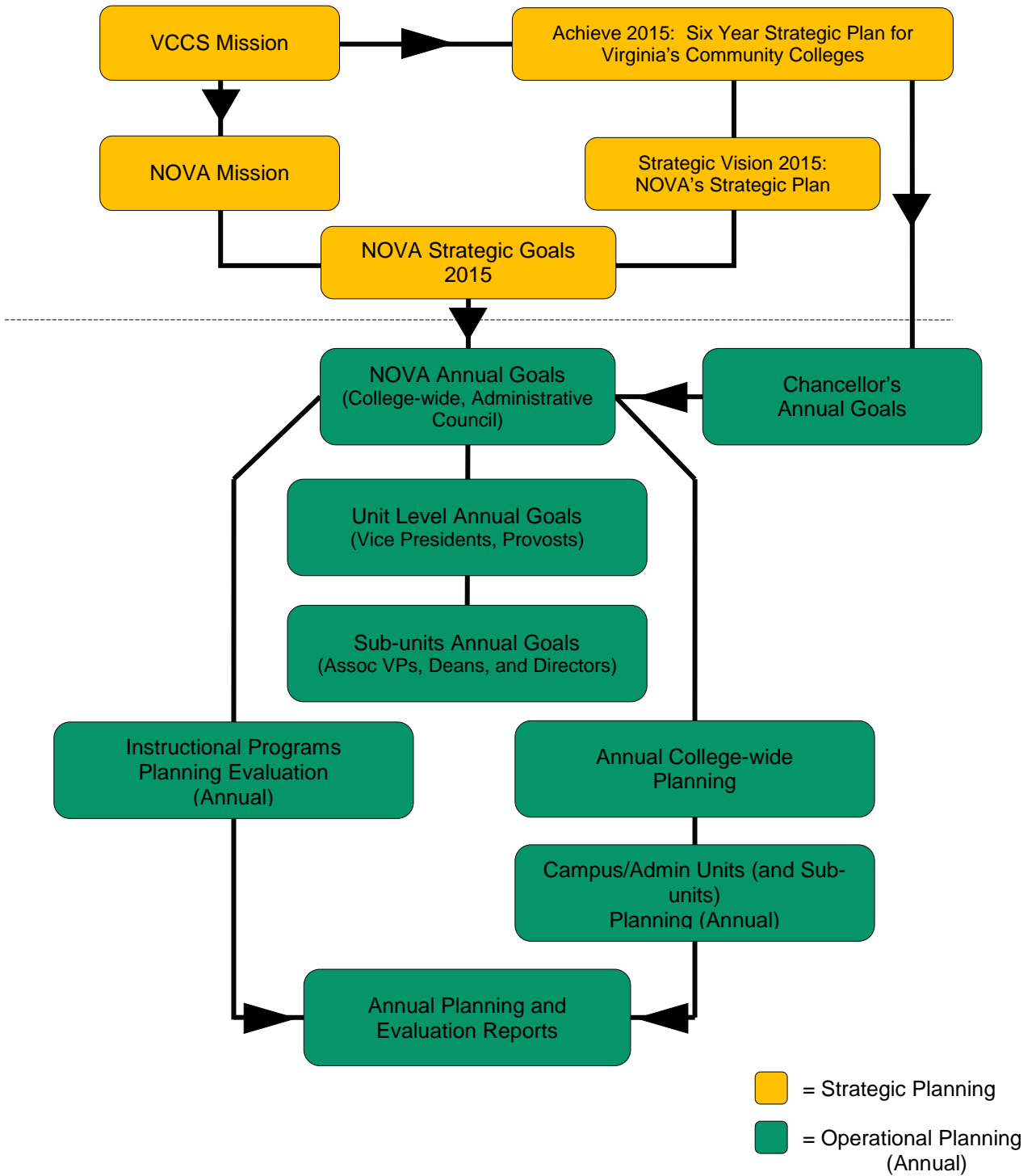
Medical Education Campus (Cont'd)
Admissions and Records
Counseling
Dean of Students
Student Activities
Workforce Development and Continuing Education

Woodbridge Campus
Provost Office
Learning Resource Services
Library
Testing Center
Tutoring Center/Learning Lab
Business and Social Sciences Division
Business Services
Communications and Humanities Division
Evening Administration
Natural Sciences and Mathematics Division
Student Development Services
Admissions and Records
Counseling
Dean of Students
Student Activities
Workforce Development and Continuing Education

* These lists are based on past reports, organization charts, and SACSCOC standards. The lists are regularly reviewed and may be revised.

Appendix C: Planning Process at NOVA

NOVA--Mission to Strategic Planning to Annual Planning



Appendix D: Template for the Annual Planning and Evaluation Report

Annual Planning and Evaluation Unit Name

MISSION STATEMENT: *With commitment to the values of access, opportunity, student success, and excellence, the mission of Northern Virginia Community College is to deliver world-class in-person and online post-secondary teaching, learning, and workforce development to ensure our region and the Commonwealth of Virginia have an educated population and globally competitive workforce.*

UNIT PURPOSE STATEMENT:

COLLEGE STRATEGIC GOAL:

Unit Goal	Expected Outcomes	Assessment Methods with Targets	Assessment Results	Use of Results

Appendix E: Rubric for Writing an Annual Planning and Evaluation Report

Component	Performance Level			
	Under-developed	Developing	Meets Standards	Best Practice
Purpose Statement	No presence of purpose statement.	Purpose statement lacks information about the following: core functions, constituents and organizational values.	Purpose statement has some but not all the important components of a purpose statement.	The purpose statement contains a description of the unit's core functions, values and identifies its constituents.
Unit Goals	Unit goals are not stated.	Unit goals are not broad statements of what unit wants to achieve through its services, functions, and activities.	Some but not all unit goals are broad statements of what unit wants to achieve through its services, functions, and activities.	Unit goals are described in broad statements about what the unit wants to achieve through its services, functions and activities; they are related to the purpose statement.
Expected Outcomes	Expected outcomes are not stated.	Expected outcomes are not measurable and lack detail and clarity	Some but not all expected outcomes are measurable, clearly defined and detailed.	All expected outcomes are measurable, clearly defined, and detailed; they correspond with unit goals.
Assessment Methods and Targets	Assessment methods are not stated. Targets are not stated.	Assessment methods are not appropriate for the expected outcomes. Assessment methods are limited to indirect methods and lack targets for all expected outcomes.	Assessment methods address some but not all of the following: uses at least one direct assessment method; matches with expected outcome; identifies targets.	Assessment methods employed at least one form of direct assessment. Assessment methods are appropriate given the expected outcome. Targets are specified.
Assessment Results	Assessment results are not reported.	Assessment results are not related to assessment methods implemented.	Assessment results are reported and relate to assessment methods implemented, but lack description or detail of what information was collected and what results were analyzed.	Assessment results are related to assessment methods implemented. They are reported in detail with information about what data was collected and analyzed. Actual results included such important descriptors as sample size, response rate, summary of major themes, or trends in results.
Use of Results	Use of results are not discussed or used to make improvements.	Use of results are vague. Some but not all use of results address whether or not target was attained or were used to implement improvements.	Many use of results are utilized to make improvements; descriptions of use of results usually are detailed, but some lack clarity or alignment to expected outcomes.	Use of results are utilized to make improvements regardless of whether a target was not met, and are described in detail; there is clarity and alignment.

Appendix F: Two Examples of Complete Annual Planning and Evaluation Reports

Annual Planning and Evaluation Report: 2013-14

Example 1: Office of Technology Enhancement⁴

MISSION STATEMENT: With commitment to the values of access, opportunity, student success, and excellence, the mission of Northern Virginia Community College is to deliver world-class in-person and online post-secondary teaching, learning, and workforce development to ensure our region and the Commonwealth of Virginia have an educated population and globally competitive workforce.

UNIT PURPOSE STATEMENT: The Office of Technology Enhancement provides leadership and management of technology-based services that facilitate the College's mission of teaching, learning and excellence. We serve faculty, students and staff by delivering high quality service in the areas of information support and education, network security, and technology resources for on-site and virtual environments.

COLLEGE STRATEGIC GOAL: Excellence, Emergency Preparedness and Continuity of Operations

Unit Goal	Expected Outcomes	Assessment Methods with Targets	Assessment Results	Use of Results
Improving technology support services by offering timely responses.	Faculty and staff will have multiple avenues to receive technical assistance.	The activity log will be used to monitor methods faculty and staff use to seek out technical support. Target: Activity log will reflect faculty and staff using multiple methods for assistance.	The activity log showed that of the 1,345 requests for assistance, 54% were through email; 40% by web ticket; 4% by phone; 2% by on-line chat.	Online chat was not utilized as often as predicted. The office used several venues to publicize the online chat option, including notices in the college newsletter, emails, and a poster campaign. The activity log will be used again to track for increased use of the on-line chat option.
	Our office will restructure the emergency response system for network outages to be more effective and efficient.	After restructuring, track number of outages and time required to resolve problem. Target: Network outages are resolved within 24 hours.	There were 4 network outages; all were resolved within 24 hours.	Low number of outages—atypical semester. This may be because of the restructuring, but difficult to determine. Office will gather data from previous years and again for the coming cycle to determine if this was a trend or an anomaly.
	Administrative units and campuses that experience printing, network, and email problems will receive immediate response.	The same activity log will be analyzed for how long units wait before their printing, network, and email problems are addressed. Target: Units should receive a response within the same business day.	All printing, network, and email issues received response within an average of 3.5 hours.	Although the target was met, the Office of Technology Enhancement decided to track the different types of problems and if the response time was different. The office will continue to gather additional data over the next cycle with this additional detailed information.

(Appendix F cont'd)

COLLEGE STRATEGIC GOAL: Resources

Unit Goal	Expected Outcomes	Assessment Methods with Targets	Assessment Results	Use of Results
<p>Procuring and coordinating the addition of new technologies.</p>	<p>The office will identify the purchase of new technologies and discontinue duplicate or unneeded technologies.</p>	<p>Review database of all license agreements; identify which agreements expire within the academic year, which are no longer needed by the College or are duplicate agreements. Target: Identify \$550,000 of savings to put toward purchase of needed new technologies.</p>	<p>Of the 20 license agreements that expired this academic year, 15 were not renewed because of the lack of use. 4 licenses were identified as redundant technologies. Of the 4, 1 license was modified to incur cost savings. Total cost savings: \$610,000. 5 technologies were identified for new licensing agreements, totaling \$700,000.</p>	<p>The office decided to postpone the purchase of 2 new license agreements which created a savings of \$250,000. The office will reexamine this purchase in the next cycle.</p>
	<p>Laptop workstations with docking system will be installed on Campus I, II, III.</p>	<p>Monitor installation of laptop work stations at all three campuses for the Office of the Provost, Deans, and Outreach advisors. Target: Laptop work stations will be installed by January 20th.</p>	<p>Campus I: all laptop/docking stations installed; Campus II: 90% installations completed; Campus III: No installations completed.</p>	<p>The office did not reach its target due to the departure of a staff member. The position was posted in Spring 2014 and should be filled in the next cycle. Our office completed installations during Spring break.</p>

(Appendix F cont'd)

COLLEGE STRATEGIC GOAL: Teaching and Learning

Unit Goal	Expected Outcomes	Assessment Methods with Targets	Assessment Results	Use of Results
Expanding training services for college employees	College employees will have an increased number of on-line tutorials related to popular applications used by students. Currently, there are only 2 on-line tutorials.	The number and variety of online tutorials related to Facebook, iTunes, YouTube, and Wikipedia Target: Basic and intermediate on-line tutorials for each topic.	25 tutorials were posted on the college web page. Each topic area had a basic, intermediate and advance level tutorial.	Target met. The office has begun to monitor how often these tutorials are being used and the frequency with which they are being used. We will track this data for daily usage during the 2014-15 cycle.
	More college employees will participate in technology trainings and workshops. Last year 74 employees participated in trainings.	The number of participants at in-person and virtual workshops Target: Increase participation by 100 employees.	Participation increased by 246 employees, from 74 to 320.	Results exceeded target. We have decided to increase targeted participation by 100 employees for the next assessment cycle (from 320 to 420 employees).
	New college employees will participate in cyber security training.	The number of new college employees participating in training. Target: 95% of new employees will have participated in training within the first 3 months of hire.	90% of new hires participated in cyber security training within the first 3 months of start date.	Notices were sent to new employees and supervisors when employees do not complete training after 60 days.

(Appendix F cont'd)

Annual Planning and Evaluation Report: 2013-14
Example 2: Campus Office of Academic Advising and High School Outreach⁴

MISSION STATEMENT: With commitment to the values of access, opportunity, student success, and excellence, the mission of Northern Virginia Community College is to deliver world-class in-person and online post-secondary teaching, learning, and workforce development to ensure our region and the Commonwealth of Virginia have an educated population and globally competitive workforce.

UNIT PURPOSE STATEMENT: The Campus Office of Academic Advising and High School Outreach serves students who have not declared a major and students who are enrolled at the College while in high school. We believe in empowering students with the skills and resources to make decisions about course choices, degree selection, and transfer opportunities. Academic advisors work with students individually and in small groups to assist with students' development of meaningful educational and career goals.

COLLEGE STRATEGIC GOAL: Access

Unit Goal	Expected Outcomes	Assessment Methods with Targets	Assessment Results	Use of Results
Offer college courses to qualifying high school students.	<p>The number of dual enrollment courses will increase compared to the number of courses provided last academic year.</p> <p>More high school students will benefit from the College's dual enrollment course offerings compared to last academic year.</p>	<p>Assessment method: PeopleSoft enrollment reports Target: Our office will increase the number of dual enrollment classes by 9% as reported by PeopleSoft enrollment reports.</p> <p>Monitor the number of high school students in dual enrollment specific courses and number of high school students in non-dual enrollment courses. Target: Increase enrollment to 250 students. Students who inquired, but did not apply for the dual enrollment program, will be interviewed. Target: Learn the reasons students did not follow through with applying to the program.</p>	<p>The number of dual enrollment courses increased by 6%, an increase of 59 courses.</p> <p>Compared to 150 dual enrolled students last year, the College enrolled 255 students this year.</p> <p>Of the 120 students who inquired but did not apply for dual enrollment, 40 students were successfully contacted by phone. A reason cited for not applying included: the application process was too complicated and voluminous; not prepared for placement tests that would qualify them to take college courses; health issues, or no longer interested.</p>	<p>To address the shortfall in dual enrollment courses, we hired a full-time education specialist to work specifically on dual enrollment contracts between NOVA and local public school districts. The numbers should increase for the 2014-15 cycle.</p> <p>The dual application process was streamlined and automated in June 2014 to make applying easier for students and family members.</p> <p>With the help of Instructional Technology Services, in May 2014 we designed on-line tutorials to prepare students for placement tests.</p>

⁴ This example is not from any NOVA annual planning and evaluation report. It was created to provide an example.

(Appendix F cont'd)

COLLEGE STRATEGIC GOAL: Excellence, Teaching and Learning

Unit Goal	Expected Outcomes	Assessment Methods with Targets	Assessment Results	Use of Results
<p>Advise on and assist with student questions concerning general education requirements, selecting a major, and transfer opportunities</p>	<p>Students will receive information in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Monitor wait time for walk in appointments. Target: During walk-in hours, students will meet with an advisor within 45 minutes.</p> <p>Monitor number of days students wait for a scheduled appointment Target: Students will have a scheduled appointment within 5 business days of requesting an appointment</p> <p>Monitor phone logs. Target: All voice messages from the front desk phone will be returned within 48 hours.</p>	<p>Average wait time for walk-in appointments = 65.7 minutes</p> <p>Average wait time for scheduled appointments = 2 days</p> <p>Phone log results over a 3 month assessment period:</p> <p>5,236 received calls</p> <p>1,100 (23%) calls left on voicemail</p> <p>700 (64%) voicemails returned successfully by staff within 48 hours</p> <p>35 complaints about no return phone calls; further investigation of those complaints revealed 10 complaints were verified as being called back within a 48 hour period based on the phone log; 30 calls were not returned because the number left on voicemail was difficult to decipher or student did not leave a phone number.</p>	<p>Based on data from recorded wait times for walk-in and scheduled appointments, our office increased the number of time slots for scheduled appointments and encouraged students who have concerns that would take over 30 minutes to make a scheduled appointment.</p> <p>We created an email address for students to use as an alternative to calling the front desk. We will monitor this additional service to see if it reduces call volumes in the next assessment cycle.</p>

(Appendix F cont'd)

COLLEGE STRATEGIC GOAL: Excellence, Teaching and Learning

Unit Goal	Expected Outcomes	Assessment Methods with Targets	Assessment Results	Use of Results
<p>(Same unit goal from previous page)</p> <p>Advise on and assist with student questions concerning general education requirements, selecting a major, and transfer opportunities</p>	<p>First time students who attend a group advising orientation session will know how to use the College Catalog to find general education requirements, credit requirements for different majors, and understand pre-requisite requirements.</p>	<p>Students will take a 30 question multiple choice evaluation at the end of the session that requires using the College Catalog. Evaluations are anonymous. Target: 66% of students will score between 20 and 30 points.</p>	<p>N= 144 students took the group advising evaluation. 72 students (50%) scored between 20 and 30 points.</p>	<p>The target was not met. Starting with the next cycle, the maximum number of students allowed to register for a session was lowered to allow for more one-on-one interaction and questions.</p>
	<p>Students who use our advising services will be "satisfied" or "highly satisfied" with our services.</p>	<p>Point-of-contact survey given to students after appointments with advisors. Target: 75% of the students will be "satisfied" or "highly satisfied" with our services.</p>	<p>Students reported 90% of the time that they were at least "satisfied" with our services.</p>	<p>Students volunteered to take the satisfaction survey. It's possible that students who were satisfied with services self-selected to take the survey. The office has implemented (April 2014) a system of randomly selecting 3 students to take the point-of-contact survey, 2014-15 will be the first complete cycle with this new system.</p>

Appendix G: Glossary of Terms

Alignment – Degree to which expected outcomes and goals are linked to the college-wide mission, assessment methods selected are appropriate measures of achieving success, and results are related to expected outcomes in a way that informs unit improvement.

Annual Planning and Evaluation –NOVA’s mission and strategic goals are carried forward through unit level planning and evaluation. Annual planning and evaluation is integrated and systematic because all programs and units participate in the process and it drives college-wide decision making and resource allocation. It is an on-going and cyclical practice in which a unit identifies goals and expected outcomes, maps them to the college mission and strategic goals, and measures achievement to that end. Information, known as assessment results, is analysed in order to improve services, functions and processes.

Assessment –An on-going, systemic process of planning, gathering and analyzing data to provide information on performance and achievement toward expected outcomes.

Assessment Method – Manner in which a unit collects data to measure achievement toward expected outcomes.

Assessment Results – Information or data collected through systemic means are reported and analyzed for further action. When reported these findings include such information as sample size, averages, response rate, summary of themes, or trends.

Evaluation – The process of using assessment information to improve performance and effectiveness. Evaluation is focused on using assessment results to make decisions about what and how to improve. Once improvements are implemented, assessment of those changes is evaluated for continuous improvement.

Expected Outcome – Statements derived from unit goals that emphasize a unit’s desired impact on constituents with specific focus on quality, efficiency or effectiveness. Expected outcomes are stated in terms of benefits to constituents. Expected Outcomes are the same as student learning outcomes when they are statements about intended behaviors, skills or attitudes a unit wants to effect in its constituents.

Institutional Effectiveness – It is a principle and practice of collecting feedback about how well an institution is achieving its mission and goals through on-going and integrated evaluation at all levels of the institution about how to continuously improve.

*The intent of the glossary is to define terms used at NOVA and provide a common language to discuss institutional effectiveness at the College. Definitions vary by institution. Other colleges may not use the same terminology or practice institutional effectiveness in the same way.

(Appendix G cont'd: Glossary of Terms)

Purpose Statement – A short narrative that describes the values and functions of a unit. It identifies the key services of a unit and the recipients of those services.

Rubric – A guide that gives short descriptions or characteristics about different levels of quality for a specific criterion.

Strategic Goal – Description of achieving the mission of the College through detailed, future oriented statement of accomplishment. NOVA's strategic goals are long term statements of commitment of how the College will serve stakeholders. They provide the basis for unit level planning and evaluation.

Student Learning Outcome – The intended knowledge, skills, or attitudes a unit desires constituents to acquire through its services (often referred to as SLOs). They are a kind of expected outcome.

Target – Performance level or success criteria selected by a unit as acceptable assessment results for an expected outcome. Targets are decided during the planning phase. Actual results are compared to the targets to determine level of success.

Triangulation – A strategy of using multiple assessment methods to address the limitations of each assessment method with the expectation that assessment results of each assessment method will point to similar conclusions.

Unit Goals – Statements about what a unit wants to achieve through its services and functions. They represent the core of what a unit does by detailing how the unit's purpose is realized through action. Unit goals are stated in broad terms. Expected outcomes are derived from unit goals.

Use of Results – Description of steps taken to make changes or improvements based on evaluation of actual assessment results.

Appendix H: Examples of Unit Goals and Corresponding Expected Outcomes

Division of Admissions and Recruitment

Unit Goal: Admit and register students

Expected Outcomes

- Students who apply to the College will receive notification of acceptance in a timely manner.
- Students registered with the Office of Disability Services will have the available accommodations to register for classes each semester.
- The Student Information and Automated Response System will allow students who were granted financial aid, but have not received financial aid payment in their college account, to register for class.

Communications and University Relations

Unit Goal: Act as a conduit for accurate and timely information to the media and public, while protecting the interests of the University

Expected Outcomes

- Media outlets will receive the University protocol for filming on campus.
- The Office will increase the number of positive news stories covered by the local papers about the University.

Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Unit Goal: Conducts research to provide information in support of institutional decision making and planning

Expected Outcomes

- Academic departments will have multiple means of accessing data relevant to their programs in order to assess program goals.
- The office will reduce the number of physically printed publications while maintaining the same level of service to stakeholders.

Budget Office

Unit Goal: Implement the budgetary processes that assist the college community in establishing, maintaining, and transferring funds

Expected Outcomes

- The office will decrease the number of payments to non-approved college vendors.
- Administrative offices will receive an accurate financial report every quarter.
- College purchase card holders will submit expense reports through the Accounting On-line System (AOS).

Alumni Relations

Unit Goal: Offer the highest quality alumni programming to enhance the image of and recruitment for the College

Expected Outcomes

- Alumni will have the opportunity to participate in regional events sponsored by local alumni chapters.
- Current students will have an increased number of ways through Career Connect to network with alumni.
- The office will reduce the number of virtual means of interacting with alumni in order to increase resources for face-to-face efforts.

(Appendix H cont'd: Unit Goal and Expected Outcomes examples)

Academic Advising Center

Unit Goal: Contribute to increasing the retention of first-time college students

Expected Outcomes

- First-time college students will participate in pre-registration orientation.
- After attending orientation, students will be able to use the College Catalog to identify pre-requisites required for taking certain courses.
- First-time college students will have an assigned advisor to meet with on a regular basis during the Fall and Spring semesters.

Career Services

Unit Goal: To assist students in developing career planning skills including, such areas as skills/attitudes assessment, occupational search, and goal setting

Expected Outcomes

- Students will have available to them walk-in advising services.
- Students will have both electronic and book-bound resources to complete a labor market analysis of their occupational interests.
- After attending the Career Expo, attendees will be able to name the major components of 3 different kinds of resumes.

Tutoring Center and Writing Lab

Unit Goal: Provide peer tutors with training and development to be effective tutors

Expected Outcomes

- Tutors will be able to use different modes of tutoring based on Kolb's Learning Styles Model.
- Tutors will have training opportunities to effectively interact with ESL students.
- Tutors will have completed the on-line college certification for group tutors before leading a group tutoring session.

Division of Computer Engineering and Sciences

Unit Goal: Coordinate courses for all computer engineering degree programs

Expected Outcomes

- 100 level computer science courses will be offered during Fall, Spring, and Summer sessions.
- The Division will have the necessary technology for students and faculty in all computer science classrooms.

Division of Liberal Arts

Unit Goal: Contribute to enhancing the retention of students program-placed in Liberal Arts majors

Expected Outcomes

- Students with Liberal Arts majors will be able to identify the course requirements of their program track that will allow them to graduate in a timely manner.
- Students will have the opportunity to be involved in the Liberal Arts Mentoring Program.

Office of Disability Services

Unit Goal: Raise awareness about the needs of and on-campus resources for students with disabilities

Expected Outcomes

- Adjunct faculty will be provided with information about on-campus resources.
- The campus community will have multiple opportunities throughout the academic year to participate in disabilities awareness programs.

Appendix I: Writing Unit Goals and Corresponding Expected Outcomes

Step 1: Identify Your Unit Goals

List all the services your unit provides	Who benefits from this service? (students, faculty, staff, alumni, local community)	Which NOVA Strategic Goal is this service helping to achieve? (e.g. student success, access, resources, excellence, leadership, emergency preparedness etc)
List all the important functions your unit performs	Who benefits from this service? (students, faculty, staff, alumni, local community)	Which NOVA Strategic Goal is this function helping to achieve?

(Appendix I cont'd)

Step 2: Write Unit Goal Statements

- Asterisk * which services and functions in step 1 are most critical to the reason why your organization exists
- Write Unit Goal Statements for the services and functions you identified as absolutely essential to your organization's purpose

Example

<Name of Office> < verb> < insert service or function here >

- The Testing Center proctors final exams taken by distance learning students in an environment that is quiet and equipped with the necessary technology.
- Often "to provide" is used to describe what an organization does. This list of verbs can help units describe more accurately its core functions and services.

Advertise	Develop	Install	Produce
Advise	Disseminate	Instruct	Partner
Analyze	Enforce	Investigate	Respond
Assess	Establish	Maintain	Review
Assist	Facilitate	Manage	Revise
Comply	Foster	Mentor	Select
Construct	Identify	Monitor	Support
Coordinate	Implement	Obtain	Teach
Design	Improve	Organize	Track

<p>Unit Goal Statements</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p> <p>5.</p> <p>6.</p>
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(Appendix I cont'd)

Step 3: Write Expected Outcomes for Unit Goals

- For each unit goal you have written, write expected outcomes.
- When writing expected outcomes keep in mind:
- Who is impacted as a result of the services or functions you provide?
- In what way do you want your constituents to be impacted as a result of interacting with your unit?

- Elements to include in your expected outcome sentences: Take the “who benefits” column in step 1 and use it as the subject of your expected outcomes sentence then, use your answers to the above questions to construct the rest of the expected outcome sentence.

- Remember that expected outcomes must be:
 Specific Measurable Attainable Results-oriented and realistic Time-bound

Unit Goal 1
Expected Outcome
Expected Outcome
Unit Goal 2
Expected Outcome
Expected Outcome
Unit Goal 3
Expected Outcome
Expected Outcome

Appendix J: About the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives

ABOUT OIR

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives (OIESS) provides leadership and support in research, planning and assessment to members of the NOVA community engaged in planning and evaluating the institution's success in accomplishing its mission.

- **Office of Institutional Research**
The Office of Institutional Research conducts analytical studies and provides information in support of institutional planning, policy formulation and decision making. In addition, the office provides leadership and support in research related activities to members of the NOVA community engaged in planning and evaluating the institution's success in accomplishing its mission.
- **Office of College Planning & Evaluation**
The Office of College Planning provides college-wide leadership and coordination for planning and institutional effectiveness to collect and report information for decision making and organizational development, and to provide responsive support for accreditation-related self-study.
- **Office of Academic Assessment**
The Office of Academic Assessment coordinates on-going evaluation for the purpose of improving the quality of the college's instructional programs and ensuring that outcomes achieved are consistent with the mission and goals of the institution. The focus of academic assessment is on student learning outcomes and includes the review of all academic programs that award a degree or certificate as well as classroom-based assessment and research.
- **Office of Student Success Initiatives**
The Office of Student Success Initiatives ensures programs and services are offered that support students with the goal of increasing rates of academic success at the College. The focus of student success is to improve learning outcomes.

NOVA Mission and Strategic Goals: 2005 – 2015

Mission

With commitment to the values of access, opportunity, student success, and excellence, the mission of Northern Virginia Community College is to deliver world-class in-person and online post-secondary teaching, learning, and workforce development to ensure our region and the Commonwealth of Virginia have an educated population and globally competitive workforce.

Strategic Goals

- I. **STUDENT SUCCESS** – Northern Virginia Community College will move into the top tier of community colleges with respect to the college readiness, developmental course completion, retention, graduation, transfer, and career placement of its students.
- II. **ACCESS** – Northern Virginia Community College will increase the number and diversity of students being served to mirror the population growth of the region.
- III. **TEACHING AND LEARNING** – Northern Virginia Community College will focus on student success by creating an environment of world-class teaching and learning.
- IV. **EXCELLENCE** – Northern Virginia Community College will develop ten focal points of excellence in its educational programs and services that will be benchmarked to the best in the nation and strategic to building the College's overall reputation for quality.
- V. **LEADERSHIP** – Northern Virginia Community College will serve as a catalyst and a leader in developing educational and economic opportunities for all Northern Virginians and in maintaining the quality of life and economic competitiveness of the region.
- VI. **PARTNERSHIPS** – Northern Virginia Community College will develop strategic partnerships to create gateways of opportunity and an integrated educational system for Northern Virginians who are pursuing the American Dream.
- VII. **RESOURCES** – Northern Virginia Community College will increase its annual funding by \$100 million and expand its physical facilities by more than one million square feet in new and renovated space. This includes the establishment of two additional campuses at epicenters of the region's population growth, as well as additional education and training facilities in or near established population centers.
- VIII. **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS** – Northern Virginia Community College will be recognized as a leader among institutions of higher education in Virginia for its development and testing of emergency response and continuity of operation plans.

NOVA

**Northern Virginia
Community College**

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