Improve Your U:
Institution-Wide Approach to Continuous Improvement

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Workshop Outline

- Introduction and Overview
- Continuous Improvement at KSU
- Small Group Exercise
- Questions and Discussion
Continuous Improvement Overview

Measure -> Change -> Measure

A pig never fattened because it was weighed.

A 5k time does not improve just because of a diet change.
Assessment should be meaningful and inform the work.

Continuous Improvement in Higher Ed
Continuous Improvement at KSU

Foundational Documents (Vision, Mission, Strategic Plan)

PLAN

REPORT

ACT

ANALYZE

MEASURE

Improve KSU
Who Participates at KSU?

- Educational Programs
- Administrative Support Services
- Academic Support Services
- Student Support Services
- Research
- Community & Public Service

All facets of the university!
Plan: Identify Outcomes & Measures

Annual Assessment Plan:

- What do we want to know?
  - What should students know and do?
  - What should our unit do?
- How can we measure it?
- Where is there the most room for improvement?
Outcomes:
What are the Expected End Results?

Specific
Measurable
Actionable
Relevant
Time-bound
Student Learning Outcome (SLO)

- KSU educational units: 3 Student Learning Outcomes
- Knowledge/skill areas with a need for improvement
- Written in clear, succinct language
- Use of action verbs (Bloom’s Taxonomy)
SLO Examples: Educational Programs

“Students will communicate effectively in writing.”

“Program graduates will be able to define and interpret methodological and statistical constructs.”

“Students will be able to explain how key values and social practices associated with American life have evolved in distinct historical periods.”
Planning SLOs for Improvement: Pitfalls

- Failing to involve faculty
- Identifying too many SLOs for improvement
- Focusing on multiple knowledge/skill areas within one outcome
- Writing SLOs in vague terms
- Failing to define *observable* behaviors
Performance Outcomes (PO)

• An area of program or unit performance with a need for improvement

• At KSU, 3 Performance Outcomes per unit
  - Educational programs
  - Operational, business, co-curricular, and services units

• Focus may be on incremental improvement or transformational change
PO Examples: Educational Units

“Increase the number of graduates of the program.”
“Decrease the average time for program completion.”
“Increase the number and percentage of students participating in high impact practices.”
“Increase scholarly productivity of faculty and graduate students (i.e., publications and presentations).”
“Increase the participation of faculty and/or students in community engagement activities.”
“Improve student satisfaction.”
PO Examples: Operational, Business, Co-Curricular, and Services Units

“Increase internal/external customer satisfaction.”

“Improve staff morale.”

“Increase the efficiency of the ______ process.”

“Decrease expenditures/costs related to ______.”

“Enhance staff skills or professional development.”

“Increase staff participation in community engagement activities.”

“Expand services offered to campus constituents.”

“Increase funding from grants and contracts.”

“Decrease department turnover.”
Planning POs for Improvement: Pitfalls

- Failing to involve staff and/or faculty
- Focusing on “easy” outcomes just to comply with a requirement
- Not using improvement language
- Focusing on one-time projects that are not measured over time
- Including strategies for improvement within the outcome
Measures: How Will We Assess It?

- Specific method used to collect evidence of the outcome
- At KSU, at least two measures per outcome
- Instruments may include multiple measures:
  - Exam items
  - Rubric items
  - Internship evaluation items
  - Survey items
  - Focus group questions
SLO Measures

- Direct measures: Tangible, visible, and compelling evidence of what students have learned
- Indirect measures: Gauge the perceptions, values, attitudes, etc. that provide insight about student performance on the direct measures
Examples: SLO Measures

DIRECT MEASURES:

• Comprehensive exam item • Capstone assignment criterion • Internship supervisor evaluation • Licensure/professional exam item • Portfolio assessed with a rubric • Pre/post-test item • Presentation or project instructor rating • Thesis/dissertation defense rubric • Standardized test item • Employer rating of student skills •

INDIRECT MEASURES:

• Student self-assessment of skills • Graduation rate • Graduate school acceptance • Honor/award • Retention rate • Student evaluation of teaching question • Student satisfaction survey question • Transfer acceptance • National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data • Focus group question •
PO Measures

- Direct measures: Tangible, visible, and compelling evidence of the outcome
- Indirect measures: Signs or perceptions of the outcome
- Quantitative: Numerical data
- Qualitative: Lists, themes, or descriptive analyses
Examples: PO Measures – Educational Units

Increase the number and percentage of students participating in high-impact practices (HIPs)
- Number and percentage of students participating in HIP
- List of courses utilizing HIPs
- Number of different HIPs used in program

Increase the number and percentage of students who complete the program
- Number and percentage of students completing each required course in program
- Number of program graduates per academic year
- List of obstacles to timely program completion
Examples: PO Measures (all other areas)

Increase classroom utilization rate across the campus
- Percent classroom utilization for 8am to 5pm, Monday - Friday
- List of classrooms currently not being utilized regularly

Decrease the average number of days for work order completion
- Average number of days for work order completion
- Analysis of work order process from request to completion: list of steps and issues that cause delays

Increase internal customer satisfaction
- Survey items related to internal customer satisfaction
- List of themes from open-ended comments on survey
- Number of complaints from internal customers
- List of common complaints from internal customers
Planning the Measures: Pitfalls

- Failing to involve faculty and staff
- Failing to use existing measures
- Using course grades and passing rates as measures of SLOs
- Attempting to measure too many things
- Creating unmanageable data collection processes
- Setting targets too high, too low, or without meaning
Act: Do It

- Implement the plan
- Work towards the outcomes
- Coordinate and communicate
Act: Pitfalls

- Failing to communicate the expected outcomes
- Letting desired outcomes “fall off the radar”
Measure: Collect the Data

- Measure student learning and/or unit performance
- Collect unit data
- Administer surveys
- Obtain institutional data
Implementing the Measures: Pitfalls

• Failing to set up organized processes for collecting the data:

  Who?  What?  
  When?  Where?  
  How?  

• Failing to collect the data at all!
Analyze: Make Sense of the Data

- Perform basic summary statistics
  - Means
  - Frequency distributions
- Use graphs to summarize results and illustrate trends
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the assessment plan
  - Outcomes
  - Measures
  - Process of collecting data
Report: Share It

Annual Improvement Report:

- Interpret results in relation to expected outcomes
- Summarize improvement(s) when measured multiple times
- Identify strategies for improvement related to outcomes
- Identify strategies for improvements related to assessment
Analyzing & Reporting: Pitfalls

• Over-complicating the analyses or written report
• Failing to share the results and how they will be used
• Failing to identify strategies for improvement
  ✓ in learning or performance
  ✓ in the assessment process
• Failing to use the results for other purposes
Cycle Begins Again: Strategies for Improvement

- Foundational Documents (Vision, Mission, Strategic Plan)
- PLAN
  - Identify and communicate strategies for improvement
- REPORT
  - Measure, analyze, and report improvements
- ACT
  - Implement strategies for improvement
- ANALYZE
- MEASURE

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Assessment Plan: Guiding Questions

What is the area of improvement/focus for each outcome?

◦ What is the expectation related to student learning or unit performance?
◦ Is this well-articulated?

Discuss each outcome and how it does or does not follow the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant, Time-Bound) mnemonic?

Are the measures appropriate for the outcomes? Why or why not?

What, if any, challenges might arise during implementation of the plan?

What are some suggestions for improving the plan?
Improve KSU Resources

Improve KSU Website
• Handbook
• Online system guide
• One-Page “Tip Sheets”
• Example Assessment Plans and Improvement Reports
• Tutorials and Videos

Written Qualitative Feedback from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness
• Assessment Plan Feedback
• Improvement Report Feedback

Individual and Team Consultations
Drop-In Help Sessions
Workshops
Other Uses of Assessment Data

- Inform the development of university strategic plan through common themes
- Measure progress for university and unit strategic plans
- University and specialized accreditation/reaffirmation
- Program review
- Other assessment initiatives
A Culture of Continuous Improvement

- Begin with a core set of institutional values
- Communicate expectations and model the process
- Involve all facets of the university
- Utilize and build on existing tools and programs
- Identify and communicate common ties among initiatives
- Communicate how assessment results have been used for improvement
- Keep continuous improvement “top of mind” and part of the institutional lexicon
- Integrate with HR systems: job descriptions, performance reviews, recognition and reward systems
Resources

Improve KSU
- http://oie.kennesaw.edu/improve-ksu/

A Simple Model for Learning Improvement: Weigh Pig, Feed Pig, Weigh Pig

Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) VALUE Rubrics
- http://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics

IDEA Paper #45: Assessing Your Program-Level Assessment Plan
Questions?

Thank you!

http://oie.kennesaw.edu/improve-ksu/

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