Writing Goals for Support Unit Assessment

2020 IE Spring Series
Agenda

I. Define goals and their importance
II. Discuss how to develop and write goals
III. Review common issues when writing goals
IV. Activity
V. Closing announcements
What is a goal?

A goal is considered an observable and measurable outcome that assesses a particular process, service, or experience.

It represents an impact or quality improvement the unit would like to see as a result of its actions (Outcome).

A goal is NOT what you do but rather the desired intended effect of what you do.
Why are goals important?

• Guide strategic planning for the unit
• Identify achievable quality improvements
• Create a framework for assessing overall effectiveness of the unit

“Assessment gives us several ways to gather, interpret, and use data to provide information we need to take appropriate action.” (Walvoord, 2010)
Developing Goals

Sources to consult:

- Unit or division mission/vision/strategic plan
- University mission/vision/strategic plan
- Professional association guidelines
- Industry practices/standards
Developing Goals

Questions to ask:

• What is the overall purpose of the unit? *(mission)*

• What does the unit do to support this purpose? *(output)*

• What additional impact or quality improvement would the unit like to see as a result of those actions? *(outcome)*
## Example #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the overall purpose of the unit? <em>(mission)</em></th>
<th>What does the unit do to support this purpose? <em>(output)</em></th>
<th>What additional impact or quality improvement would the unit like to see as a result of its actions? <em>(outcome)</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve student grades and enhance learning</td>
<td>Provide tutoring services to students</td>
<td>The number of students utilizing the tutoring center will increase</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example #2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the overall purpose of the unit? <em>(mission)</em></th>
<th>What does the unit do to support this purpose? <em>(output)</em></th>
<th>What additional impact or quality improvement would the unit like to see as a result of its actions? <em>(outcome)</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Act as a source of communication on behalf of the university</td>
<td>Respond to external news media inquiries</td>
<td>All inquiries from the news media will be answered in a timely manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areas of Action</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Sample Verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain records, processes, or facilities</td>
<td>Processes overseen or monitored by the unit</td>
<td>Maintain, monitor, collect, oversee, manage, comply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perform tasks</td>
<td>Tasks performed by the unit</td>
<td>Submit, record, track, enroll, process, complete, implement, prepare, organize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide services and resources</td>
<td>Services developed and offered by the unit to constituents</td>
<td>Develop, offer, provide, advise, train, instruct, educate, counsel, assist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolve problems</td>
<td>Efforts to resolve complaints, disputes, or problems for constituents</td>
<td>Resolve, adjudicate, improve, support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate information</td>
<td>The communication, distribution, and promotion of relevant information to constituents</td>
<td>Communicate, promote, market, publicize, share, distribute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create relationships and partnerships</td>
<td>Efforts to bring in new constituents and stakeholders to serve or to partner with in unit activities</td>
<td>Recruit, establish, partner with, network, create, build, cultivate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness Indicators</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Key Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Improvements in the quality of the process/experience/service – flaws or errors resolved and value improvements made</td>
<td>How will the process/experience/service have more value because of this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Processes are streamlined, resources are conserved, and productivity is increased</td>
<td>How will the process/experience/service operate more efficiently because of this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Time to completion is reduced and timeframes or relevant deadlines are achieved</td>
<td>How will relevant timeframes be positively impacted by this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Operating or student costs are reduced or optimized</td>
<td>How will costs be positively impacted by this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reach</td>
<td>Increases are made in the number of people reached, impacted, or served by the process/experience/service</td>
<td>How many people/processes/entities will be impacted by this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions</td>
<td>Changes are made in perceptions of or attitudes about the unit’s processes/experiences/services</td>
<td>How do constituents view the process/experience/service?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral changes</td>
<td>Services offered produce intended behaviors</td>
<td>What student/faculty/staff behaviors will change because of this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning outcomes</td>
<td>Services offered produce intended learning outcomes</td>
<td>What knowledge should students/faculty/staff be able to demonstrate because of this?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample formulas for writing goals

Formula #1:
[Description of desired impact or quality improvement]

Formula #2
[Constituents] who [description of constituents’ participation in Unit’s services] will [verb describing impact or quality improvement]

Increase the number of students who visit the Tutoring Center to receive tutoring services.

Students who attend the study skills workshop will be able to identify their learning style.
Sample formulas for writing goals

Formula #1:
[Description of desired impact or quality improvement]

Outcomes related to: Quality, Efficiency, Timeliness, Cost, Reach

Formula #2
[Constituents] who [description of constituents’ participation in Unit’s services] will [verb describing impact or quality improvement]

Outcomes related to: Perceptions, Behavioral Changes, Learning Outcomes
Activity #1

- Draft one goal which states a desired impact or quality improvement the unit would like to see as a result of its actions. (see worksheet)
Common Issues

• Measuring intervention instead of outcome

Ex. 1: Offer three workshops.

Ex. 2: Students who attend the study skills workshop will be able to identify their learning style.
## Common Issues

- Covering multiple outcomes in one statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ex. 1:</td>
<td>Increase student attendance in order to increase usage of services and promote educational achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex. 2:</td>
<td>Increase the number of students who visit the Tutoring Center to receive assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex. 3:</td>
<td>Improve test scores in Core math courses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Common Issues

• Outcomes that are difficult to observe or measure

Ex. 1: Improve the health of students.

Ex. 2: Increase the number of students who receive flu vaccinations.

Ex. 3: Students who complete the wellness survey will Agree or Strongly Agree that A&M-Commerce provides services which allow them to practice a healthy lifestyle.
Common Issues

• Outcomes that are unrealistic or unattainable given the conditions/time

Ex. 1: Enroll 69,000 students in Fall 2020.
Ex. 2: The admit-to-enroll rate will increase by 2% over the prior year.
Activity #2

• Indicate where the following goals fall in the range of weak to strong. Rewrite each goal to make it stronger, as applicable. (see worksheet)
Final Considerations

- Can the goal be used to identify areas to improve?
- Do the unit goals accurately reflect the strategic planning of the unit?
SUPPORT UNIT WORKSHOPS

Mar 26   Fundamentals of Assessment Methods
Apr 29   Using Results for Improvement

**Location:** RSC Ambition A&B   **Time:** 2:00-3:00 pm

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