ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR NON-ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS/OFFICES

PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT
Assessment is an ongoing process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting evidence that describes the unit's effectiveness, ultimately to improve department functions, student learning, or institutional performance. (Note: A unit can be an office, department, course, program of study, or division.) Information gathered will guide decision making and the allocation of resources. Assessment plans provide a documented process of measuring performance against the college's mission

Effective Non-Academic Unit Assessment Should Answer These Questions: (*Hutchings and Marchese, 1990*)
1. What are you trying to do?
2. How well are you doing it?
3. Using the answers to the first two questions, how can you improve what you are doing?
4. What and how does the unit contribute to the development and growth of students or the institution?

Effective nonacademic unit assessment should be done:
1. **To improve**- The assessment process should provide feedback to determine how the nonacademic unit can be improved.
2. **To inform**- The assessment process should inform unit managers and other decision makers of the contributions and impact of the unit to the institutional mission.
3. **To prove**- The assessment process should summarize and demonstrate what the nonacademic unit is accomplishing.

DEPARTMENTAL MISSION STATEMENTS (Not Required)
At a time where we are pulled in so many directions, by so many stakeholders, it is important to come back to the department's mission. Many departments choose to develop a departmental mission statement, which directly supports the institution's overall mission, but helps them focus on their specific purpose.

What is a Mission?
A written declaration of a department's core purpose and focus that normally remains unchanged over time. Properly crafted mission statements (1) serve as filters to separate what is important from what is not, (2) clearly state which markets will be served and how, and (3) communicate a sense of intended direction to the department.

Template for Developing a Department Mission Statement:
The mission of (unit name) is to (unit's primary purpose) by providing (unit's primary activities) to (identify stakeholders and provide additional clarifying statements that include values and alignment with the college mission statement).

DEPARTMENTAL OUTCOMES

Outcomes are a measure of the results of a program or service-level goal (e.g., increased satisfaction); often used to include operational outcomes, which represent elements of the program's functioning (e.g., cost per student). Outcomes should be consistent with the mission and purpose of the College and/or unit, but reflect the purposes and functions of the unit. It is a best practice to identify outcomes in department meetings/brainstorming sessions and by studying best practices. One approach that works well is to ask each of the department's staff members to create a list of the most important services, processes or functions that the unit performs. From the list, establish a set of outcomes that would have the most important impact on the department. The number of outcomes is unique to each specific unit. After the department analyzes data collected from assessment, outcomes may be revised and/or new outcomes developed.

Create **SMART** Outcomes! *(Adopted from Peter Drucker)*

   Specific: Clear and definite terms describing the knowledge, skills, values, and abilities.

   Measurable: It is feasible to get the data; data are accurate and reliable; multiple methods are preferred.

   Aggressive/**A**ttainable: The outcome has the potential to move the program/unit/course forward.

   Results-oriented: Describe what standards are expected from staff/customers/students.

   Time-bound: Describe a specified time period for accomplishing the outcome.

- Begin the outcome statement with the beneficiary of the service you provide: For example, "Students are aware of…," "Buildings are…," "Administrators have the…."
- Outcomes focus on the ends, not the means -- what unit will do, what the desired "end state" should be.
- Use an action verb to describe in an observable way what the unit should be able to do.
- Outcomes need to be measurable and related directly to the work of the office/department.

WAYS TO ASSESS/MEASURE ACTIVITIY EFFECTIVENESS

The activities and tasks planned should be measured in meaningful ways. The means of measurement should be noted in the *Progress Notes* section. Below are examples of ways to measure progress:

• Customer/student satisfaction surveys	• Staff training hours
• Number of complaints	• Number of staff trained
• Number of applications	• Number of users/participants
• Percentage of compliance	• Focus group feedback
• Growth in participation	• Opinion surveys
• Attendance at events	• External review/audits
• Processing time for requests	• Internal audit findings
• Average wait time	• Dollars raised/saved
• Comparisons to professional organizations' best practices	• Percentage of compliance with various regulations/laws/mandates
• Statistical reports	• Number of incidents (increase/decrease)
• Average service time	

Example Outcomes/Measurements:
1. Advisors will develop an individualized academic plan with 100% of the certificate/degree seeking students who start in Fall 2016. Plans will help students know and understand their certificate/degree requirements and incorporate the students' placement scores, course/program prerequisites, certificate/degree requirements, transfer requirements (if applicable), and career goals.
    - Way to measure = List of currently enrollment certificate/degree students and verification of academic plan on file and communicated with student. 100% of certificate and degree seeking students develop an academic plan with a DACC Advisor and it is on file for students and advisors to use and monitor progress/completion.
2. The DACC buildings will be in 100% compliance with applicable Office of Civil Rights (OCR) building code requirements by June 30, 2017.
    - Way to measure: Internal audit will list OCR building requirements and note the status towards completion (not started, in progress, or complete) and date when completed.

CLOSING THE LOOP

Collect, Analyze, and Communicate the Assessment Data & Results
After assessment information is collected, the results should be shared in the *Progress Notes* and *Requested Support* columns and communicated in useful ways to the department who will decide whether expected levels of achievement have been met for the goal/outcome.

Questions to Consider:
1. What does the data indicate about the quality of services provided? What does the data indicate about the satisfaction of the customer/student?
2. Are there specific areas where performance is outstanding or weak?
3. Do you see specific areas where you would like or expect to see higher performance levels?
4. What was the most valuable thing learned from the assessment results?
5. Was the assessment tool sufficient or does it need revision?

Some activities may require further assessment (after changes are made) or additional tasks/activities implemented, others will be completed after progress notes are shared with the appropriate stakeholders (Division Supervisor, Board, Strategic Plan Matrix, etc.).