



Keep it Simple

Unit Planning and Assessment at the University of Montevallo

Keeping Your Plan Straightforward and Useful to You

Presented by Jerome Dean
Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment

Monday, October 18, 2021; 11:00 – 12:15

Fundamental Principles

- Short
- Concise
- Novel
- Necessary
- Strategic
- Forward Looking
- Investment

Why Unit Planning Is Important

- **TIED TO STRATEGIC PLAN**
 - Strategic Plan does not work if units not working toward strategic plan goals
 - Strategic plan indicates to units what University planners view as important
- **TIED TO BUDGETING PROCESS**
 - Unit priorities that are university-wide priorities get funded – 2 times a year
 - Unit priorities that may not be strategic planning priorities but are core operational priorities get funded – 2 times a year
- ***PLANNING IS JUST GOOD PRACTICE***
 - Continuous quality improvement
 - If done well, engages your unit employees in shaping your department operations
 - Provides established times where you assess how well your unit functions
- **REQUIRED BY OUR ACCREDITORS AND REGULATORS**
 - Unit level and University level

Planning and assessment asks 3 questions


- What are we trying to accomplish?
- How well are we doing it?
- How can we improve what we are doing?

IRPA AS GUINEA PIG

The screenshot shows the 'Planning' application interface. The top navigation bar includes a home icon, a calendar icon, a location pin icon, and a settings icon. The main header displays 'Planning' on the left and a user profile 'JD Jerome' on the right. The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with 'My Units' and 'Institution' tabs, a search bar, and a list of units including 'Institution', 'Academic Affairs', and 'Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment'. The main content area is titled 'FY 2022 / UNIT PLANNING & ASSESSMENT' and 'Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment'. It features tabs for 'Plan Items', 'Reports', and 'Documents'. Below the tabs is a 'FILTER' bar, a 'Sort Default' dropdown, and a '+ Plan Item' button. The main content lists four goals with their descriptions and dates:

Goal	Description	Period
Unit Mission and Description	Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment Unit Mission and Description	10/1/21 - 9/30/22
Goal 1 - Course Evaluation Process	Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment 1:Unit Goal	10/1/21 - 9/30/22
Goal 2 - Planning and Assessment Processes	Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment 2:Unit Goal	10/1/21 - 9/30/22
Goal 3 - Standard Internal Reporting Processes	Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment 3:Unit Goal	10/1/21 - 9/30/22
Goal 4 - Institutional Effectiveness	Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment 4:Unit Goal	10/1/21 - 9/30/22

Resource Areas in Initial Plan



Budget account numbers tied to this Unit Plan

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Table

↶ ↷ Paragraph **B** *I* [Text Alignment Icons] [List Icons]

11402

Additional Resources Needed

*This is for additional *financial* resources needed. If no additional financial resources are being requested for your unit, please leave this field blank.*

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Table

↶ ↷ Paragraph **B** *I* [Text Alignment Icons] [List Icons]

P

Reorganize to help pay - How much of your current budget could be reorganized to pay (in part or total) for items you've described above in the "Additional Resources Needed" block?

How much of your current budget could be reorganized to pay (in part or total) for items you've described above in the "Additional Resources Needed" block?

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Table

↶ ↷ Paragraph **B** *I* [Text Alignment Icons] [List Icons]

P

Link to University Planning Calendar

<https://www.montereybay.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/2021-2022-University-Planning-Calendar.pdf>

Mission Statement

- Should reflect to some degree the Mission of the University where practical.
- Should reflect at least one or more goals in the UM strategic plan that the Unit is uniquely positioned to affect.
- Should be periodically reviewed for relevance.
- Should be concise – maybe even, clever.

Descriptive Analysis

- Requires some amount of data collection and compilation regarding the unit's operational capacity
 - staffing levels, money resources, available space
 - service universe - who served, how many served in a specified time period
 - effectiveness (currently available data)
- Some knowledge about “problems” in the unit may be well-known and long-acknowledged
- Ought to establish the rationale for the goals and solutions to be pursued.
- Depending on the size and complexity of the unit the entry here could range from a few paragraphs to a few pages.
- If unit has multi-year plan, may be used to identify the general components of that plan and what to be acted upon in current plan year.

Goal

- A broad statement of what the unit intends to accomplish by undertaking an activity or a set of activities
 - what is to be accomplished
 - what are the actions that will be undertaken
- This statement should not be more than a few sentences, 1 sentence preferred.
- Key words are action words like
 - Increase, decrease, improve, create

Goal

- Goals should align with the unit mission and/or the University's Mission and Strategic Plan.
- 3 fundamental types of goals:
 - (1) Process goals are typically associated with intended outcomes and measures that are dichotomous in nature.
 - (2) Performance goals typically measure in terms of time (speed), quantity, accuracy, resources (money), and most often as a combination of the four - in the form of a ratio.
 - (3) Production goals relate to the quality and quantity of the product being generated by core unit activity.
- Process goals ought to lead to improvements in performance and production.
- Performance improvements ought to lead to improvement in production.
- Most units should not have more than 3 goals in any given year

Outcome

- A more specific statement of what the unit intends to accomplish than the goal
- There is no need to reference the action to be taken.
- There should typically be at least 2 intended outcomes here.
- May encompass all the specific outcomes associated with a goal or only a subset in an annual planning cycle.
- Furthermore, outcomes move us closer to discrete measures.
- Outcomes, like goals, may be process, performance or production oriented.

Outcome – Example 1

- A learning outcome
 - A goal for an elementary school English program may be “to improve reading comprehension for all students.”
 - Reading comprehension can be disaggregated into several discrete components.
 - Intended outcomes might include, “increase students’ understanding of high usage vocabulary words,” and “improve students’ understanding of the parts of speech.” These may be the two outcomes for one year.
 - In a subsequent year, the intended outcome for the same goal might read, “to improve students’ understanding the difference between introduction, proof and conclusion in the construction of a paragraph.”
- *No longer in nebulous arena of “improving reading comprehension” but have narrowed goal to specific skills.*

Outcome – Example 2

- An admissions goal
 - The goal for an admissions department may be “to increase the level of recruitment of potential students from a particular area in the state.”
 - One intended outcome might involve an increased number of recruitment trips to the target area.
 - A second intended outcome might involve an increased number of applications from prospects in that targeted area.
- *No longer in nebulous arena of “increasing the level of recruitment” but have narrowed goal to specific effects.*

Assessment Measure

- Measures are precise statements of how movement toward an outcome is to be assessed.
- The instrument should be clearly identified and the item(s) from the instrument to be used should be clearly identified, if applicable.
- Targets based on the measure used should also be clearly identified.
- The best expression of a target is a statement indicating movement on a measure from one state (baseline) to another state (end result).

Types of Assessment Measures

- **Direct measures** provide data that correlate exactly with the outcome. Direct measures explain what specific activity will be undertaken to show the extent to which an outcome has been accomplished, and to provide information that may be used to make decisions for improvements in following years.
 - If the outcome involves improving learning gain, a direct measure would be one (like a test question or set of questions) that directly indicate whether a student has indeed learned what the student was supposed to learn.
- **Indirect measures** do not necessarily correlate with the measure in question. Indirect measures often come in the form of an opinion or perception.
 - For example, using the same learning gain outcome, we might ask students whether they felt they had learned what the course told them they would learn (course evaluation question). In this case, we can expect that student responses will not align perfectly with the results of the test of learning gain.
- There may be some instances where the results of the indirect measure is the more (or at least as) important data point.
 - For example, an IT department has an outcome “improvement in turnaround time” in its help desk operations. The direct measure might be the difference in time between when a ticket was initiated and when the ticket was closed. An indirect measure may be a survey question that asks respondents the extent to which they are satisfied with turnaround time when they accessed help desk services. Satisfaction may be the better measure in this case

Assessment Measures (Targets)

- Targets should flow easily from the measures that are set
- Targets have a single purpose: to communicate clearly the level of accomplishment for a particular measure.
- Targets require that baseline data had been collected on the measure, ideally in the Initial Analysis and Problem Identification.
- Targets must have specific numbers in them which indicate the level of accomplishment for the measure.
- Targets can indicate a number or percentage of items, people, or activities, or they can indicate a designated level of proficiency, or both.

Assessment Measures (Examples)

- Target = Level + subject + action + object + modifiers
- Example #1: 80 percent (level) of students (subject) will score (action) on 4 final exam questions (object) proficient or advanced (modifiers).
- Example #2: 80 percent (level) of faculty and staff accessing help desk services (subject) will indicate either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” (action) on a survey question asking satisfaction with turnaround time (object) on a 4-point scale (modifiers).
- It is important to note that targets must be clear not just in numbers, but in words. “Satisfactory” and “successful” are positive, but they are not commonly understood. A better way to define these concepts, is to share the rating scale. Does “satisfactory” mean 3 out of 5 points? Does successful mean fewer than 5 mistakes? Define a target so that the meaning is easily understood.

Final Thoughts

- KISS – Keep it Simple
- Focus on issues that are important to you and your unit
- Develop the elements of your plan in the context of your ordinary workflow.
 - Regular staff meetings
 - Meetings with your direct superiors
 - Jot down your ideas and put them in CL when time to produce plan
- Otherwise, don't stress on this exercise.