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Part I: Assessing Mission Fulfillment

1. Describe/explain the process of assessing mission fulfillment. Who is involved in the assessment? Is the Board of Trustees involved?

   a. Establishing a Strategic Framework

   Since Idaho State University’s 2014 Year-7 Self-Evaluation, the Institution’s leadership has focused on effectively aligning planning and assessment. A primary emphasis was the creation and evolution of the Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Council (IEAC), which is led by a Steering Committee and seven subcommittees (LINK TO ORG CHART). The IEAC Steering Committee and the four core theme subcommittees are composed of diverse groups of university stakeholders represented by academic and non-academic staff, faculty and students who are charged with overseeing the organizational framework for integrating institutional effectiveness into the fabric of the University. Between September 2015 and March 2017, the IEAC facilitated the revision of ISU’s mission, vision, four core themes, and the strategic plan. As part of that comprehensive, inclusive, and transparent process, the Steering Committee also adopted a new methodology for evaluating ISU’s mission fulfillment.

   b. Defining Mission Fulfillment

   (1) Establishing the Process

   (a) The IEAC is responsible for measuring the effectiveness of the implementation of ISU’s four core themes and their overall alignment to the University mission, as well as demonstration of mission fulfillment. To accomplish this, the IEAC evaluates multiple core theme objectives and indicators against established long-term benchmarks.

   (b) Between September 2015 and March 2016, besides revising each core theme, the core theme subcommittee identified two-to-four supporting objectives that quantified the implementation status of the core theme. Each objective has one-to-six performance measures that are clearly defined, realistic, and have verifiable data sources. Because of the changes to the core themes, some of the core theme subcommittees had to establish new indicators, and as a result, the new indicators have only one-year’s worth of data collected thus far. After establishing the baseline and as a means of fully realizing mission fulfillment, the groups set appropriate benchmarks that supports that challenges the Institution’s continual growth over a five-year period or maintaining a desired standard. The core theme subcommittees accomplished this task by working with Institutional Research (IR) to develop the appropriate indicators.

   (c) When establishing the performance measures, the subcommittees evaluated using both quantitative and qualitative indicators, but at this time, the group chose to focus on measuring only quantitative data. As the process further matures, the use of qualitative performance measures could become part of the evaluation process.
(2) Assessing and Updating the Core Themes, Objectives, and Measures 
(a) Idaho State University has created an annual, mature, and systematic process to evaluate its core themes, their objectives, and performance measures. Each January, Institutional Research coordinates with multiple units throughout the University to collect and analyze the core themes' performance measure data. The core theme subcommittees use the analyzed data to establish conclusions about organization’s quality, effectiveness, and mission fulfillment.

Figure 1. Process for Assessing and Updating Core Themes

![Flowchart](image)

Figure 1- Process for Assessing and Updating Core Themes. Core Theme Review Process is a mature comprehensive process that evaluates and updates core theme objectives and performance measures annually as required.

(b) As a means of supporting the dissemination of the analyzed data to the core theme subcommittees and university stakeholders, IR developed a website application that supports the visual illustration of each of the core themes and their associated objectives’ accomplishments. The achievements of each of the measures of effectiveness are presented using the colors Gray/Red/Yellow/Green. Each color represents a percentage of accomplishment
from one to 100 percent; gray equates to below 85%, red 85-89%, yellow 90-96%, and green 97-100%. The overall assessment of ISU’s mission fulfillment is achieved by averaging the score of all four of the core themes. The University has determined that demonstration of mission fulfillment, requires the University to make progress toward meeting or exceeding an 80% overall score, of the established benchmarks for each core theme. One of the goals of ISU’s leadership was the continual improvement of the University to support the communities within it service regions and to achieve ISU’s mission throughout the state. To accomplish that challenge, they directed the core theme subcommittees to establish the performance measures’ benchmarks at a level that requires the programs and units to stretch themselves. Therefore, when ISU began this process of evaluating its core themes, very few of the indicators had attained a green status. The indicators that scored lower demonstrated to the units a need for increased emphasis in order to achieve a higher level of accomplishment.

(c) The mission fulfillment application provides the University leadership, decision-makers, and the State Board of Education (SBOE) with a visual representation of each core theme and its associated objectives, as well as an overall demonstration of mission fulfillment. The IEAC can quickly evaluate the core themes by spotting trends then use this measuring system as a way to prioritize resources when certain indicators are underperforming. Idaho State University’s leadership can immediately reference the institution’s overall effectiveness in each of the core themes, its strategic objectives, and its mission fulfillment. Currently, the overall performance for the indicators used to assess each core theme is:

- Core Theme 1 indicators are 91.8% overall
- Core Theme 2 indicators are 90.3% overall
- Core Theme 3 indicators are 92.7% overall
- Core Theme 4 indicators are 86.5% overall

(d) Upon completion of IR’s analysis and posting of the data to the website application, each core theme subcommittee meets to review the indicators to ensure they measure the desired outcome for their respective core theme. Additionally, the subcommittees review the indicators’ benchmarks to validate that they continue to challenge ISU’s ability to achieve the goal within the specified period while remaining realistic. The subcommittees recommend adjustments to the IEAC Steering Committee who oversees and makes recommendations to the President for the overall mission fulfillment system. An example of the evaluation and adjustment process working occurred in 2017 when the Core Theme 3 Subcommittee came together three times to evaluate the effectiveness of their objectives and indicators. That series of meetings
results in the subcommittee validating the objectives, adjusted some of the indicators, and established new benchmarks.

(e) While ISU uses the same technology to manage its strategic plan, its leadership utilizes mission fulfillment and the strategic plan in different aspects of university planning. Both help align planning efforts using the mission and core themes but mission fulfillment shapes ISU’s long-term future 10-to-20 years out and the strategic plan concentrates on goals within the next five years.

Figure 2. ISU’s Mission Fulfillment Web Application
Figure 2- ISU’s Mission Fulfillment Web Application. The Mission Fulfillment web application allows decision makers to quickly visualize the status of each core theme and ISU’s overall mission fulfillment accomplishment.

(3) State Board of Education Oversight
The SBOE approved ISU’s mission and core themes in April 2016 and ISU’s strategic plan in June 2017. The SBOE’s primary concerns regarding ISU’s mission and core themes are their alignment with one another, their alignment the SBOE Strategic Plan, and meeting SBOE policy. Alignment is very important to the SBOE because each Idaho University has geographic, institutional service regions as well as each of the schools having designated missions that emphasize their areas of academic concentrations. ISU’s primary statewide mission is to provide specialized health care programs such as pharmacy, physical therapy, and other health care related programs taught in Pocatello, Idaho Falls, and Meridian.

2. Are our core themes and objectives still valid?
   a. Validity of ISU’s Core Themes/Objectives
      (1) Year Seven Evaluation Recommendation
At ISU’s Year Seven Evaluation in 2014, the evaluation’s committee did not feel that the mission and core themes aligned and recommended that the university review and revise its mission statement, core themes, as well as the supporting indicators and benchmarks. To validate ISU’s mission and core themes, in 2015-2016, the university underwent a five-month process that included faculty, staff, student, and community engagement to revise and update the mission and core themes to ensure they properly aligned as well also encompassing what ISU stands for as an institution.

(2) The Process: Aligning the Mission and Core Themes
   (a) Idaho State University’s leadership undertook an inclusive and transparent process to accomplish the revision of the mission and core themes. The first step in this process was to ensure the mission statement aligned with the SBOE’s guidance. This alignment centered on key Board policies like III.Z. “Planning and Delivery of Postsecondary Programs and Courses,” which specifies ISU’s responsibility for health care programs, career technical education, and the designation of our service regions.
(b) Once the IEAC completed this analysis, the core theme subcommittees wrote their respective core themes using the mission statement’s key elements as the basis of emphasis. By selecting the mission’s key elements, this ensured alignment at all levels.

(c) The resulting core themes individually manifest essential elements of the mission and collectively encompass the University’s mission. As described above, as a means of supporting the mission and core themes’ implementation and measure of mission fulfillment, the IEAC created a set of objectives, indicators, and benchmarks for each core theme. The objectives focus on the essential elements within each of the core themes and help maintain the University’s focus. Upon completion, the IEAC sought input from university stakeholders and incorporated their feedback into the final products.

(3) Acceptance and Adoption
For the most part, ISU’s faculty and staff have incorporated the new mission statement and core themes down to the program level and within the units. They had accepted them to the point that when the strategic plan was under development, it required an education campaign to explain how mission fulfillment and strategic objective accomplishments while aligned were different. These conversations demonstrated the keen awareness of the groups’ regard for the core themes and how widely they have been accepted.

3. **Is the institution satisfied that the core themes and indicators selected are providing sufficient evidence to assess mission fulfillment and sustainability? If not, what changes are contemplated?**

a. As stated in Part 1, ISU received approval of its revised mission and core themes 18-months ago. The University’s four-month revision process in the fall of 2016 included participation by faculty, staff, students, and community members. The outcome of that process was the alignment of ISU’s mission and core themes with the SBOE’s guidance: provide educational, research, and community engagement opportunities within ISU’s service regions and the statewide requirement to deliver health care education.

b. Section 1.b.2 describes ISU’s annual process the University undertake to review the core themes, their associated objectives, indicators, and benchmarks. Upon completion of the review, the core theme subcommittee chairs request that the IEAC Steering Committee approve the updates. This process ensures that the core themes remain valid and that the performance measures assess the proper elements of the core themes.

c. In 2017, the IEAC did not change the mission or core themes themselves and adopted the new mission fulfillment process described in 1.b. However, as part of the 2017 review, Core Theme 2 and Core Theme 3 Subcommittees made minor adjustments to their performance measures. Both of the groups reduced the number of indicators they use to measure their objectives’ accomplishments, they defined new benchmarks, and focused on their data collection responsibilities.
Part II: Representative Examples of Assessment Process from Beginning to End

1. Introduction.

(a) The College of Pharmacy and the General Education program will be used as examples of assessment processes at ISU. These two programs span the spectrum of assessment maturity, as the College of Pharmacy has a long history of comprehensive assessment as a part of its accreditation process, while the General Education program is in an earlier stage of developing and refining its processes.

(b) The College of Pharmacy is accredited by ACPE (Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education) and successfully completed its most recent accreditation review in 2016. Pharmacy was selected as an example of assessment within specialized accreditation as all of the programs in the Kasiska Division of Health Sciences are accredited. In addition, programs in the College of Business and several programs in the College of Science and Engineering, the College of Technology, the College of Education, and the College of Arts and Letters hold specialized accreditation. Over 3,700 students are estimated to be enrolled in programs holding specialized accreditation, based on the five-year average of majors in various programs.

(c) General Education in Idaho follows the Governing Policies and Procedures III.N. of the Idaho State Board of Education. SBOE policy mandates six objectives: written communication; oral communication; mathematical ways of knowing; scientific ways of knowing; humanistic and artistic ways of knowing; and social and behavioral ways of knowing. In addition, each Idaho institution must have six credits of general education in “institutionally designated credits.” ISU students take one course in cultural diversity, and one course in either critical thinking or information literacy. The nine objectives encompass 48 student learning competencies.

(d) Consistent and regular assessment of general education courses is relatively new at ISU. Prior to 2015, some general education courses were assessed by their departments as a part of program review or specialized accreditation assessment but were not part of a university-wide effort to evaluate the general education program as a whole. The General Education Requirements Committee (GERC) at ISU oversees the assessment of general education courses. GERC reviews courses that have applied for inclusion in the general education program and acts on the applications. An assessment plan is included in the application. Consequently, all general education courses submit assessment plans to GERC prior to beginning assessment activities; GERC reviews the assessment plans and either approves them or remands them back to the submitting departments with recommendations for improvement. (LINKS TO GERC WEBSITE)

(e) A plan was developed for departments to design and submit assessment plans to GERC for approval and submit reports. This plan is shown in Appendix A (Gen Ed Assessment
Flow Chart). GERC is currently on track to meet the deadlines shown in the plan; the first round of assessment reports were submitted in November 2016. Results for Year 2 of the reporting process are due on November 1, 2017; in addition, Objectives 1 (Written Communication) and 2 (Oral Communication) will be reviewed by Objective Review in Fall 2018 as part of the overall objective review process.

(f) As of April 17, 2017, assessment plans for all but one general education course (which is intended to be withdrawn) had been submitted to GERC for review, for a total of 159 courses. One hundred forty-four plans were approved by April 25.

2. Example 1: Pharmacy

1. Are our indicators, for the selected examples, proving to be meaningful? Do you have too many indicators or too few?

(a) The College of Pharmacy (COP) is accredited by ACPE, the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education. ACPE requires participating programs to follow standards for educational outcomes and requires assessment of those standards, and consequently, indicators used by COP are somewhat prescribed and include measures that allow national comparison. COP uses the number of indicators required to demonstrate compliance with accreditation standards.

(b) The multitude of indicators provides COP with a rich base of information for adjusting the curriculum, improving student learning, and assisting individual students, and as such, result in meaningful indicators. Having multiple metrics in place decreases the likelihood of an isolated assessment being misinterpreted. COP identified multiple processes that could be improved based on results of its assessments. For example, it found that molecular cell biology/genetics and medicinal chemistry were not being covered in the curriculum at the depth required for PCOA (Pharmacy Curriculum Outcomes Assessment) (page 11).

(c) The College of Pharmacy uses both formative and summative assessments. It is planning to enhance its formative evaluation methods by incorporating the ExamSoft testing platform to assist in categorizing formative assessments by discipline as well as the level of higher order thinking based on Bloom’s taxonomy.

(d) Summative assessments are administered in several ways: 1) annual knowledge base exams for first and second-year students; 2) PCOA Exam; and 3) PBL (Problem Based Learning) Case Studies Exam. COP also uses standardized and comparative assessments to provide benchmarks of curricular success. These include first-time pass rates on the NAPLEX (North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination); MPJE (Multistate Pharmacy Jurisprudence Examination); and PCOA.

2. What has the institution learned so far and what changes are contemplated? What has been your progress to date using the data? Do the data tell you what you are looking for?
(a) COP has made a number of changes based on assessment results. A few changes are discussed below.

- Poor performance on the capstone oral communication component led to a revision of the grading rubric and incorporation of it into each year of the curriculum, so students have access to a rubric that sets clear expectations early in the program.
- PCOA test results suggested that while the general curriculum was satisfactory, specific topic areas needed revision and updating. The basic science curriculum now places a greater emphasis on the application of pharmaceutics, medicinal chemistry, and pharmacogenomics.
- Review of NAPLEX results led to several changes, including change of instructor for a key course; addition of a 1-credit self-study NAPLEX board review component in the P3 Capstone Pharmacy course; the addition of two faculty development programs focusing on exam writing guidelines; and incorporation of material to improve individual drug knowledge into a pharmacotherapy module.

(b) Programmatic assessment measures that were recently implemented will require continuing evaluation and revision, and the impact on student learning outcomes is not yet known.

(c) Review of the data has led to a number of insights as to where and how to strengthen curriculum to better support student learning outcomes. The regular reporting practices of the Accreditation and Student Assessment (ASA) database and student portfolios has evolved to a point where at-risk students are quickly identified and offered remediation much earlier in their programs. Faculty advisors have complete and current student data for closer oversight of student achievement.

3. **How are data being collected, analyzed, and utilized and the findings communicated to constituents?**

(a) Pharmacy’s Office of Assessment, with support from the Pharmacy Assessment Committee, is responsible for administering, compiling, and reporting all student performance assessments. (page 165, self-study) Data trends are analyzed and summarized by these entities. An Annual Assessment Report is distributed internally to all faculty, the Administrative Council, and Curricular Affairs Committee, all of which discuss potential areas of concern and make recommendations for improvement. (page 168 self-study) The Administrative Council is generally responsible for implementation of programmatic changes.

(b) COP developed the ASA database to allow for more efficient organization and collection of assessment information, as well as greater comprehensive analysis of student performance. This enabled the college to decentralize advising away from the Associate Dean’s office to faculty advisors, each of whom provides close oversight of 6-8 students using a well-established student advising process.
3. Example 2: General Education

1. Are our indicators, for the selected examples, proving to be meaningful? Do you have too many indicators or too few?

(a) The first round of annual assessment reports for the Gen Ed courses showed that the indicators for many of the learning outcomes proved to be meaningful, and provided departments with useful information that could be used to improve quality. For example, ACAD 1111 (information literacy objective) will be redesigned to improve outcomes for students; new activities and assignments will be developed for MGT 2216 (mathematical ways of knowing objective) based on the assessment results; and the assessment rubrics for FIN 1115 (information literacy objective) will be strengthened to glean better information about student learning. Assessment committees for other courses, like GERM 2202 (cultural diversity objective), were satisfied with the alignment of their indicators and instruments with the learning outcomes. However, the indicators and/or instruments for some learning outcomes will need further refinement in order to provide useful information.

(b) It is difficult to state at this point whether too many or too few indicators are used. Clearly, some learning outcomes are being successfully evaluated with meaningful indicators. Some departments, however, will need to revisit the indicators they have chosen, and may ultimately change their current practice.

2. What has the institution learned so far and what changes are contemplated? What has been your progress to date using the data? Do the data tell you what you are looking for?

(a) The first round of assessment reports revealed several issues to be addressed. First, greater clarity is needed in regard to reporting on cross-listed courses, and on the time period for reporting. This issue will be addressed by GERC beginning Fall, 2017.

(b) Second, a substantial number of general education courses are offered in local high schools as Early College Program (ECP) courses, and these courses pose a challenge in regard to the inclusion of their instructors and the assessment instruments used. Consequently, the Director of ECP recently updated the “Faculty Liaison Responsibilities,” to include “coordinate with the department chair in guiding high school instructors on assessment of general education learning competencies.” While it was understood that Early College general education courses were included in assessment, the responsibility for doing so is now explicitly stated, and more resources will be devoted to ensuring quality assessment practices in these courses.

(c) Third, several departments reported issues with assessment instruments. It was expected that some adjustments would be needed to ensure that indicators were being appropriately captured. In Spring, 2016, Academic Affairs sponsored two “Assessing Student Learning Workshops,” presented by assessment consultants, in which faculty and assessment coordinators received training that included the selection of signature assignments and assessment instruments. Some of the assessment data was collected prior to this training, and so adjustments were expected afterward.
(d) The above-mentioned issues require several responses. Departmental assessment committees need to provide Gen Ed course instructors with more detailed guidance regarding the collection of data and identification of appropriate assessment instruments. Some instructors still want to use course grades as a metric and will need assistance in identifying appropriate rubrics to use for evaluating student work. Faculty liaisons of ECP courses will need to provide more guidance on data collection to the high school instructors and get them more involved in the process.

(e) The University Assessment Committee is discussing how best to provide support for faculty involved in assessment processes and will make a recommendation to Academic Affairs later this summer.

(f) Examples of changes that are contemplated by individual departments include:
   - POLS 1101 (social and behavioral ways of knowing) instructors need clearer expectations from the assessment committee, and the committee needs to be more proactive in requesting material from the instructors. In the future, the committee will collect direct and indirect assessment instruments at the beginning of the semester and help instructors report results in a more standardized manner.
   - TGE 1257’s (humanistic and artistic ways of knowing) Assessment Review Committee will ask instructors to adjust or amend the Final Exam prompt to better evaluate the competencies required for the cultural diversity objective.
   - CS/INFO 1181 found that the final exam questions used to evaluate the learning outcomes for objective 7 (critical thinking) did not align well with the assessment criteria. They plan to adjust the instrument to attain a more meaningful assessment of the objective.

(g) Data collected as of November 2016 have provided information that confirms the usefulness of the indicators for some outcomes, and the need to refine indicators for other outcomes.

3. How are data being collected, analyzed, and utilized and the findings communicated to constituents?

(a) Departments that house the general education courses collect and analyze the data in a variety of ways.

(b) Most departments have assessment committees or teams that coordinate assessment activities with instructors. They identify appropriate indicators and instruments for assessing learning outcomes and review student work that instructors have submitted, with student identification removed so results can be stored in an FERPA compliant manner. Finally, they summarize the results and prepare an annual report for GERC.

(c) Annual reports to GERC are required for all general education courses. The reports are submitted by departments via Bengal Web and then processed by Institutional Research, which creates an overall report for GERC. By November 2016, reports for 81 courses had been submitted. All general education courses will submit an annual report by November 2017.

(d) Departments use data from the annual reports to make changes to their courses and/or methods of collecting data and choice of assessment instruments and indicators. Objective Review Committees (ORC) will begin meeting in 2018 to review objective
courses and make recommendations regarding the overall objectives. Objectives will be analyzed every five years and reports generated at the end of the time period. A comprehensive program assessment based on the ORC reports will be completed every five years.

(e) As an example, the Chemistry department has a committee of 3 faculty members that evaluate the assessment findings at the end of the academic year. They make recommendations to the department as to how to improve student performance in the weaker areas. A template will be developed for the instructors to report their findings.

(f) Another example is that of ACAD 1111 (information literacy). Its assessment committee selected a signature capstone assignment and randomly assigned three assignments to each reviewer, who evaluated the assignments independently. The performance was strong except for “use information/data effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.” The committee plans to redesign the curriculum to allow more time for the instruction-practice-feedback-revision cycle.

(g) The University Assessment Committee is in the process of reviewing assessment software and will make a recommendation to Academic Affairs by Fall, 2017.

(h) In most departments, assessment results are communicated to faculty in meetings. The University Assessment Committee will make recommendations to departmental assessment committees as to appropriate methods and venues for communicating results.

Part III: Evaluative Overview in Light of Parts I and II

1. What will we need to do to prepare for the Year-Seven Evaluation?

   (a) Introduction: Three specific areas to concentrate on 1. Continue to integrate planning with the strategic plan and mission fulfillment, 2. University-wide program to assess student-learning outcomes, and 3. Non-academic unit assessment.

   (b) Continue the Integration of Planning Using the Strategic Plan and Mission Fulfillment.
      (1) Build and Implement operational plans throughout the University to support the strategic plan
      (2) Continue to align long-term planning using mission fulfillment

   (c) Create a University-wide Student Learning Outcomes-Based Assessment Program.
      (1) Establish an assessment program for units not participating in a mature, specialized accreditation assessment program
      (2) Identify and purchase an enterprise software package for University-wide adoption
      (3) Th
      (4) Th
      (5)

   (d) Adopt a Non-Academic Unit Assessment Program.
      (1) Select a set of standards to support evaluation
(2) Create a schedule to evaluate units
(3) Establish an evaluation team and conduct training
(4) Conduct evaluations