

Criterion Four

The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.

Institutional Effectiveness

Commitment to providing programs and services of high quality to its students is reflected in Parkland's mission statement; the institutional effectiveness process assesses the college's support services to assure their high quality. Institutional effectiveness also advances Parkland's six values and these purposes:

- To provide counseling, advising, assessment, and guidance services to help students attain their educational goals.
- To provide support services to enhance students' learning experiences, to promote personal growth, and to supply employment information and placement assistance.
- To provide services, training, programs, and resources to the public and to business, industry, agriculture, and labor that promote the intellectual, cultural, and economic development of Illinois Community College District 505.
- To provide a nurturing, quality work environment for all college personnel and to provide professional development opportunities to help meet the challenges of changes in technology, student needs, resource-delivery systems, and District demographics.

In 1989, the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Institutions of Higher Education called on all of its affiliated institutions to develop institutional programs that assess and document student academic achievement. As a result, in 1991, Parkland faculty revised the college's mission and purposes statement to provide a foundation for the construction of an institutional effectiveness model. In the following two years an assessment advisory committee developed a model that illustrates the links between the college's mission and purposes and the components of an assessment plan. The institutional effectiveness model at Parkland comprises academic assessment, which focuses on assessing student academic achievement, and institutional effectiveness (IE), which evaluates the instructional support units to assure that they help Parkland accomplish its mission and purposes.

Purpose, Mission, and Scope

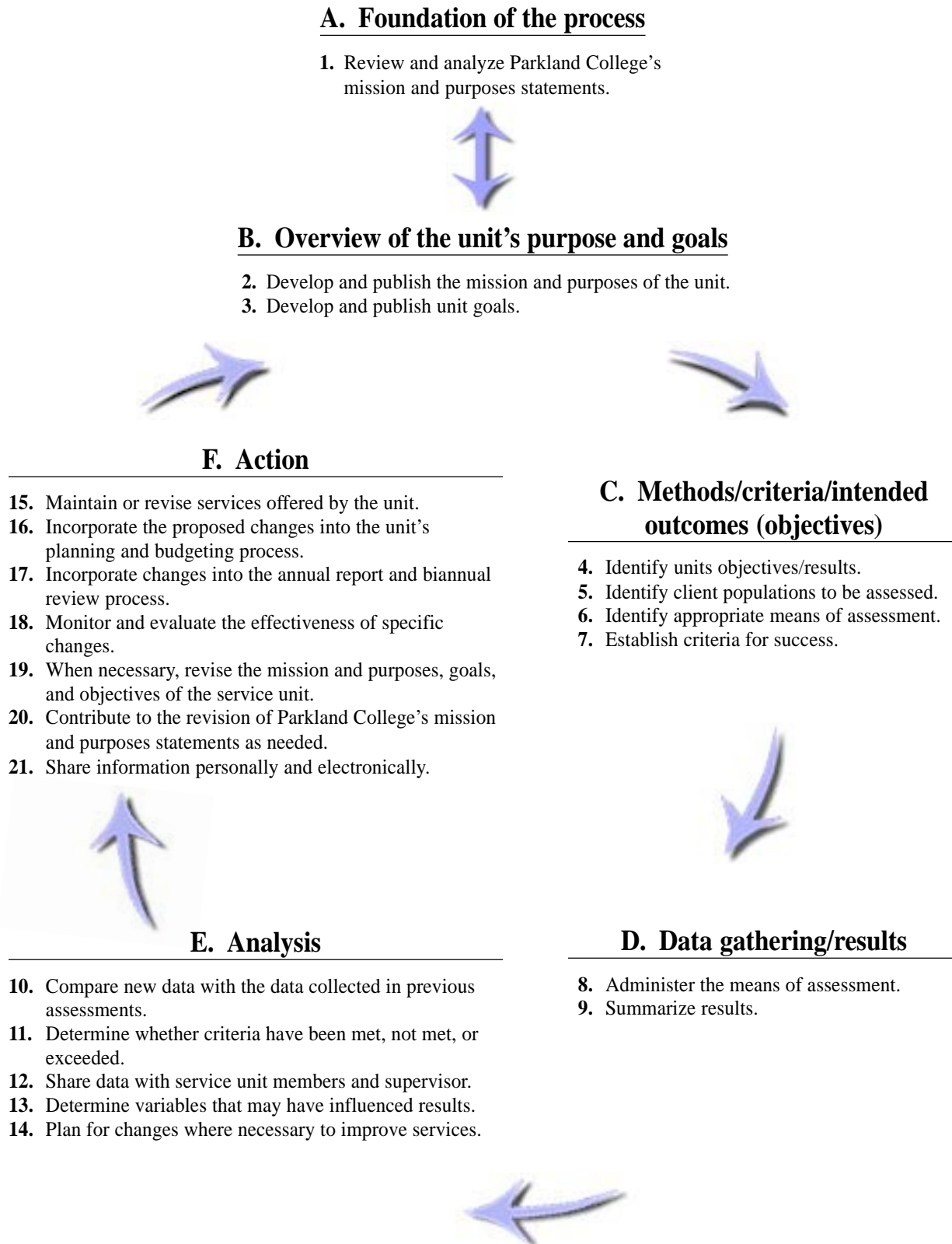
The Parkland model is based on the IE assessment format developed by James Nichols of the University of Mississippi and Harriet Calhoun of Jefferson State Community College. The IE process provides a measure of how well Parkland's instructional support units are achieving their stated goals. The IE program is circular, involving continuous definition of objectives, re-collection and analysis of data, interpretation of results, and use of the information for decision-making that results in improvement of institutional services. Besides providing information to make better-informed decisions within each instructional support unit, the process produces information to demonstrate to students, district communities, state and federal agencies, and accrediting agencies that Parkland is fulfilling the promises of its mission and purposes statement. The IE process also generates initiatives and commitment of resources to institutional improvement in areas whose assessments reveal a need. Each service area develops its own mission statement, defines measurable goals, evaluates outcomes, and uses the results for continuous improvement.

History and Role of the Committee

The Parkland College IE committee was formed in 1995 to develop an institutional effectiveness pilot program to evaluate instructional support services. The initial pilot program looked at four areas for evaluation: Parkland's bookstore, career placement and employment services (now the career center), Staerkel Planetarium, and college/community relations. After these four service units were assessed, the first IE annual report to the PCA senate was submitted. Parkland expanded the IE program to include as many instructional support areas as possible each year; 44 units are currently involved in different stages of the evaluation cycle. Figure 16.1 illustrates the IE process.

Figure 16.1: INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS PROCESS

Source: IE Committee



In 1996 the IE committee consulted with NCHEMS to develop a set of proposed performance indicators, one of its major responsibilities. *Environmental Scanning Data*, a second assignment of the committee, was also produced by OIRE for the first time in 1996. This annual report, available as a brochure and on Parkland's Web site (<http://www.parkland.edu/oire>), serves as an additional IE assessment tool. *Environmental Scanning Data* provides answers to 18 of the most frequently asked questions about the college, such as those concerning enrollment, credit students, and graduates.

In 1997 the performance indicators were modified to fit Parkland's needs. After open hearings, final recommendations were submitted to Parkland's board of trustees, who approved them in fall 1998. In April of 1999 Peter Ewell of NCHEMS recommended prioritizing the original 49 performance indicators, and after he reviewed the prioritized list and preliminary data, OIRE prepared the first formal set of performance indicators. The IE committee suggested initiating a process that incorporated data generated by the 14 key performance indicators into a rational, quantifiable decision-making process. The first document prepared by OIRE in 1999 included data about the following indicators:

- facilities
- equipment
- size of financial reserves
- enrollments
- employee satisfaction with overall work environment
- retention rates
- job placement rates for career students
- performance for transfer students
- course completion rates
- proportion of District 505 students who enroll at Parkland
- proportion of age 25-40 population enrolled at Parkland
- student satisfaction
- diversity of students and staff compared with District 505
- in-district tuition as a proportion of disposable personal income in District 505

In September 2001 *Performance Indicators*, a document divided into financial, student, and staff indicators, was updated and used by administrators and the college planning committee as the foundation for Parkland's strategic plan update.

The IE committee chair meets with the EVP and coordinates the process of assessment of the instructional service units. The committee comprises the chair, who is a faculty member jointly selected by the college president and the PCA president; the director of OIRE, who is an ex-officio non-voting member, the executive director of campus technologies, the associate vice president for student services/dean of students, the associate vice president for academic services, and four PCA members, two of whom are faculty members, elected at large. Each instructional service unit is assigned a specific member of the IE committee who is responsible for explaining the evaluation process and forms, who is available for help with questions, and who helps prepare the report on the status of the IE assessment process, which is presented to the PCA and reflected in the college operational plan. A copy of the annual report is in the resource room. The IE committee chair reports annually to the board of trustees.

The EVP works with the IE committee to direct the development and implementation of institutional effectiveness programs and policies, administers and provides adequate institutional support for the programs to assess institutional effectiveness, and links institutional effectiveness with institutional planning and budgeting.

Evaluation of the Process

The ongoing IE assessment cycle is continually reviewed and revised by the IE committee. Changes in the organization of several units and the addition of new support services to satisfy the educational, cultural, and training needs of District 505 have affected some units' readiness to participate in the institutional effectiveness process. However, as of May 2002, all instructional support services, along with some areas that are not part of the academic assessment process, are involved in Parkland's commitment to evaluate and upgrade support services. The PCA just began its first IE assessment cycle, and IE assessment of the college planning process is currently being discussed.

Each service unit completes an IE assessment record form that includes clear short- and long-range objectives to guarantee continued growth and improvement; these objectives align with the college's statement of mission and purposes. The assessment of instructional support units focuses on improvement of support processes. Units regularly conduct both formal and informal surveys of their constituents to make sure that they are meeting their objectives. For instance, a point-of-contact survey conducted by the assessment center found that examinees felt distracted by the computer printer in the testing room, so it was moved.

The IE assessment cycle has been shortened from 36 months to between 18 and 24 months. A standard assessment planning timeline has been adopted, so units can keep a record of where they are in the process. An improvement that facilitates the reporting system is the change of the assessment record forms from a horizontal to a vertical format, which promises to reduce time spent in completing the reports. Examples of the assessment planning timeline and the assessment record, as well as examples of the annual report form that instructional support units submit at the end of the academic year, are available on the IE Web site (<http://www.parkland.edu/ie>) and in Volume II, Academic Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness Examples.

According to IE committee records, there is evidence that instructional support units at Parkland are adopting the institutional effectiveness process and understand its benefits. One-third of the service units have already completed several cycles and have had the opportunity to use the results of previous evaluation cycles to define new objectives and further improve the services provided, the ultimate goal of the IE assessment process.

The William M. Staerke Planetarium has completed multiple institutional effectiveness evaluation cycles. As a result, planetarium staff actions to support their goal of contributing to the Parkland community and the district at large include:

- Increasing their advertising budget, which resulted in a 10.6% increase in total attendance over 1999-2000, with a 19% increase in the number of schoolchildren, a 20% increase in attendance at public shows, and a 51% increase in attendance at light shows;
- Analyzing area schools and surveying participants in order to meet their needs more fully;
- Designing a donor brochure to reflect individuals' commitment to the planetarium.

The planetarium continues to look for ways to increase community use and is committed to reaching its target audience. Future goals include acquiring two corporate sponsors.

The planetarium staff's decision to increase the advertising budget required resources allocated through operational planning. However, because the IE assessment process is still developing, staff in several instructional support units are unaware of how IE assessment fits into the overall planning process and how they can tie needs revealed by the evaluation to the operational planning process.

Parkland's bookstore has used IE results to improve its services. In order to support its mission to help students, faculty, and staff procure materials and resources necessary to achieve their educational goals, the bookstore defined several objectives. For example, the evaluation of the new point-of-sale computer system indicated that customer waiting time was reduced from between 45 and 60 minutes at the busiest point of the first day of classes in fall 1999 to between 15 and 20 minutes at the same time in fall 2001. Also, based on timed register receipts, the rate of processing sales increased from 1 customer per minute in the fall 1999 rush period to 3.1 customers per minute in the fall 2000 rush. Inventory-taking time was reduced from 400

hours with a team of 10 in 1998-1999 to 80 hours with a team of 5 in 2000-2001. The bookstore continues to make the use of time and human resources more efficient by further increasing the rate of processing sales, thus further reducing customer-waiting time.

One of the counseling center's IE objectives is analyzing the current system of coding, recording, and tracking students to facilitate communication among counselors and to improve the documentation of personal counseling contacts. Currently being tested is a program prototype developed by a Parkland computer information systems faculty member with input from counselors and campus technologies staff members. This new system of recording should enhance the accuracy and security of the center's documentation, as well as facilitate the preparation of reports.

An example of how the IE program has affected all types of Parkland service areas is the evaluation conducted in the physical plant's custodial/grounds area. Although the evaluation process in these units is still in the first cycle, staff have already made suggestions to improve service based on the analysis of data collected:

- The custodial staff is developing a custodial log and a training schedule to improve the training of new and current staff.
- Hotline numbers for emergency custodial help will be posted in each rest room and public area in the college. There will also be a small publication describing custodial services and how to access them.
- All groundskeepers have become certified pesticide applicators.
- Custodial and groundskeeper units have been separated in the student satisfaction survey so that each area receives client-satisfaction feedback.

The college is committed to maintaining and improving the IE assessment process to enhance the quality of services and client satisfaction. It is important that individual units use the results of the evaluation not only to revise their operational plans and procedures but also to make sure that the unit's mission and goals align with Parkland's mission and purposes. This would assure that each unit is helping Parkland fulfill its goals. The Chapter 16 committee agrees with the recommendation in chapters 4 and 13 that the PCA, the IE committee, and the academic assessment committee should review the college's mission and purposes statement every two years. The Chapter 16 committee also suggests that the review be completed before the biennial strategic plan revision.

To determine in what ways the instructional support units connect with the college's educational mission, the evaluation of the instructional support units should be considered when the academic departments and the overall mission of the college are evaluated. The improvement of client satisfaction in these areas will contribute directly to the overall success of Parkland College. The IE committee should also educate staff in the instructional support units about how the IE assessment process ties in with the overall planning process. The results of a unit's assessment should become the main source for operational and budgeting planning within the unit.

Although the IE assessment program has been welcomed by most of the units and several of them have improved their services, more work must be done. According to the faculty/staff/administrator climate survey conducted at Parkland in spring 2001, 85.9% of the 170 respondents who reported experience with the IE process were satisfied. However, 44.3% of the 305 respondents to that question had no experience with the process, and 32.9% of the 289 respondents to the importance scale considered the process not important. Furthermore, of the 135 who reported no experience with the process, 47.4% were support staff members, more than 87% of them full-time employees. These results suggest that few staff members within the instructional service units were involved in IE assessment. Efforts must be made to increase awareness of the IE assessment process, increase active participation, and increase the understanding of its importance in helping Parkland to continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its institutional effectiveness.

Summary of Institutional Effectiveness Strengths

- The college has demonstrated a continuing financial commitment to the maintenance and improvement of the IE assessment process. All faculty members of the IE committee have attended an institutional effectiveness associates summer assessment workshop conducted by James and Karen Nichols.
- The student satisfaction survey, faculty/staff/administrator climate survey, student occupational follow-up survey, and transfer program graduate follow-up surveys that OIRE prepares, administers, and analyzes are major sources of reliable information for much of the IE assessment material used by the individual units.
- Several of the service units are not only using data from institutional surveys but are regularly conducting their own formal and informal surveys of their constituents to make sure that the units are meeting their objectives.
- The IE program is an ongoing assessment process, allowing units to take advantage of the results of one cycle to improve services and to adapt subsequent evaluation methods.

Summary of Institutional Effectiveness Challenges

- The addition of new support services to satisfy the needs of District 505 and the change in organization and personnel of several service units have made 100% college-wide adoption of the IE assessment process difficult.
- Because the IE committee is convinced that participation of all personnel in the assessment process is key to a successful assessment program, more efforts must be made to educate and involve everyone in the instructional support units in the IE evaluation process.
- The college's mission and purposes statement is not reviewed regularly.
- The relationship between the IE assessment process and the overall planning process is not widely understood.

Please see Volume II, Academic Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness Examples.