



# Institutional Effectiveness Framework

A Description of Piedmont Virginia Community College's Framework for Institutional Effectiveness: Integrating Assessment, Planning, and Budgeting

2018 Edition

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## Introduction

Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC) must demonstrate to students, employers, transfer institutions, legislators, accrediting bodies, and many other stakeholders that it is fulfilling its mission to promote student success through excellent educational programs and services that are accessible and affordable. PVCC's Institutional Effectiveness Framework integrates strategic and annual planning and budgeting, assessment and evaluation, and utilization of resulting institutional knowledge. This allows PVCC's leadership to make informed decisions and continuously improve programs and services.

In this framework, *indicators* of effectiveness and associated *target outcomes* are established at multiple levels: institution, department, and program. At regular intervals, through planned assessment and program evaluation, data is collected and analyzed to determine the extent to which the college (department or program) has met, exceeded, or fallen short of the target for each indicator. Results are used to identify strengths, areas in need of improvement, and opportunities for change. Assessment informs strategic and annual planning, planning informs budgeting decisions, and budgeting allows for the implementation of new and continuing programs and services. Outcomes are again assessed and reviewed, and plans are revised or developed in response to findings.

PVCC's Institutional Effectiveness Framework is based on the ideas and recommendations contained in several books, articles, and other publications and materials including:

A Practitioner's Handbook for Institutional Effectiveness and Student Outcomes Assessment Implementation. (1995). J.O. Nichols, Agathon Press, NY.

Core Indicators of Effectiveness for Community Colleges. (1999). R. Alfred, P. Ewell, J. Hudgins, K. McClenney, Community College Press, Washington, D.C.

Grand Rapids Community College Dashboard. (2004). Poster presented at the 2004 meeting of the Association for Institutional Research, Boston, MA.

Impact and Outcomes. Brochure published by Northern Virginia Community College.

Jefferson Community College Institutional Effectiveness Manual (2002).

Resource Manual on Institutional Effectiveness. (1996). The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Strategic Indicators for Higher Education: Vital Benchmarks and Information to Help You Evaluate and Improve Your Institution's Performance. (1996). B.E. Taylor and W.F. Massy, Peterson's Guide: Princeton, NJ.

Using Key Indicators to Guide Curriculum Review at a Community College. (1989). M.A. Heverly, Delaware County Community College.

## Institutional Level Indicators and Targets

In Core Indicators of Effectiveness for Community Colleges, authors Alfred, Ewell, Hudgins, and McClenney (1999, p. 8) state that:

“*outcomes* serve as benchmarks for the college mission by comparing results with purpose, within the limits of costs and available resources. The effective community college creates successful outcomes for multiple stakeholders, internal and external. When outcomes are compared with an institution’s mission and goals, the result is a composite picture of an institution’s *effectiveness*.”

The authors define an *indicator* as a “condition or result that the community college can produce regularly, report publicly, and use systematically in decision making.” Further, they define a *core indicator* as “a measure that describes a critical, widely recognized outcome of mission – one that is clearly responsive to key constituent groups and is produced regularly.”

Several criteria were used to establish core indicators at the institution level:

- Indicators are consistent with the college’s mission and purpose. Enrollment, graduation, transfer, and employment rates; success in developmental education; general education outcomes; lifelong learning; service to the community, and goal attainment from the students’ perspective are important aspects of PVCC’s Mission and Purpose.
- Indicators address common questions about the institution. For example How many students graduate each year? How many graduates and non-graduates transfer to four-year colleges and universities each year? How many students meet their educational goals?
- Indicators incorporate outcomes that are important to accrediting bodies and state agencies. The Resource Manual on Institutional Effectiveness (SACSCOC, 1996, p. 9) identifies the following frequently employed indicators of student outcomes: retention and completion rates, student achievement in general education, student perceptions of development toward educational objectives, student affective development, opinions of program quality (by students, alumni, employers, and drop-outs), job placement rates, performance after transfer, and external recognition of achievement of students and graduates.

Outcome-oriented **Institution Level** indicators are presented in a performance dashboard for the following areas:

- Student Progress
  - Student Enrollment
  - Retention
  - Developmental Education Success
  - Dual Enrollment Education Success
  - Student Goal Attainment
- General Education
  - Academic Preparation
  - Writing Success

- Information Literacy
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Scientific Reasoning
- Critical Thinking
- Oral Communication
- Cultural and Social Understanding
- Personal Development
- Distance Learning
  - Student Learning
  - Distance Learning Percentage of PVCC Enrollment
  - Distance Learning Only Students
- Transfer Success
  - Enrollment from PVCC to a Four-Year Institution
  - Subsequent Success at a Four-Year Institution
- Graduation Success
  - Number of Awards Earned Annually from PVCC
  - Degree Completion by Cohort
- Job Placement
- Licensure
- Enrollment and Productivity
  - Annual Headcount Comparison
  - Annual FTE Comparison
  - Ratio of Full-Time Faculty to FTE Curricular Students
  - Ratio of Full-Time Faculty to Headcount Curricular Students
  - Full-Time Faculty: Percent of Faculty who are Full-Time
- Community Impact
  - Participation Rate in Service Area
  - Perception of PVCC's Effectiveness in Achieving its Mission

For each indicator, the measure(s), data source(s), frequency of assessment, performance target and threshold of acceptability are identified. Initial targets for institutional level indicators of effectiveness were established by a representative Institutional Effectiveness Task Force in 2006 and approved by the President's staff. Targets and thresholds of acceptability are based on *baseline/trend data* and *professional judgment* regarding the level of performance and satisfaction that indicates true effectiveness and success. Indicators, measures, and targets have been revised by the President's Staff, as needed, to improve the overall quality and efficiency of the dashboard as a tool for assessing institutional effectiveness. Results highlighted in **green** on the dashboard indicates performance which meets or exceeds a target at an acceptable level. Items highlighted in **yellow** on the dashboard indicates performance to be monitored closely because trend data is incomplete, fluctuates, or is not yet at the target. Issues highlighted in **red** indicates performance which does not meet the target at the expected or acceptable level. The dashboard is maintained by the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness. The dashboard is updated and reviewed regularly by the President's Staff and by the Instruction and Student Services team, as needed. Based on the findings, reviewers determine whether action is required. If action is required, leadership is identified and the action/comments of the dashboard is updated in subsequent reviews.

# Administrative Effectiveness

## Planning Overview

**PVCC plans for the future.** Leadership for planning is provided by the college's Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC). PBC is one of six standing committees at the college which oversees development and periodic reviews of the strategic plan. The committee also ensures a linkage between strategic planning and budgeting by recommending annual funding levels for strategic priorities. Strategic and annual planning processes are coordinated by the Director of Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness (D-IRPIE), who also serves as Chair of the PBC.

The college's strategic plan reflects priorities of the college and the Virginia Community College System. Annual unit plans reflect the shorter-term work at the division and unit levels necessary to achieve institutional goals. PVCC also utilizes a working calendar for managing important yearly administrative tasks.

## Strategic Planning

Every three years, the college develops and implements a new strategic plan. In developing the plan, members of the Planning and Budgeting Committee utilize input from internal and external stakeholders, complete environmental scans to assess the college's strengths and weaknesses and identifies challenges and opportunities for growth and change. The strategic plan contains institutional priorities, along with associated rational, actions, and the College leader(s) responsible for each action. The strategic planning process begins 15-17 months before the strategic plan is due to the Board for approval. The approved plan is then implemented over the next three subsequent academic years. The table below shows the general timeline for strategic plan development and implementation.

**Timeline for Production of 2018 PVCC Strategic Plan**

Date	Activity	Responsibility
Spring 2017-Summer 2017	Community Leaders Survey administration and report	Jolene Hamm
Fall Convocation Week 2017	Results of Community Leaders Survey presented at All College	President
Fall 2017	Review of PVCC Mission, Vision, Values	PBC
Fall 2017	Environmental Scanning Environmental Scanning workshop and assignments for PBC members	PBC
Fall 2017	Gather and Compile stakeholder input from faculty, staff, and students.	PBC
Spring Convocation Week 2018	Announce the planning cycle and Spring 2018 planning-related activities	Chair, PBC
February 2018-March 2018	Gather and Compile stakeholder input from faculty, staff, and students.	Committee Members
April 2018	PBC Drafts priorities and actions for Strategic Plan	PBC members
May 2018-June 2018	2018/19 Strategic Plan finalized, reviewed by PBC	PBC Subcommittee
July 2018	President's Staff reviews and approves	President's Staff
August 2018 September 2018	<b>Board Receives a draft of the strategic plan PVCC Board reviews &amp; approves 2018 Strategic Plan</b>	PVCC Board
October 2018	Annual Unit Plans developed and linked to the 2018 Strategic Plan	PVCC Department / Division Admin.

## Annual Unit Planning

Administrative and Service units of the college develop annual plans which contain a statement of the unit's mission, objectives/outcomes for the year, and measures of objectives/outcomes. The annual activities of units are consistent with the college mission and support the priorities of the college. Unit directors are responsible for measuring/documenting and reporting results.

In 2006, PVCC began using the WEAVEonline Assessment Management System for annual unit plans. While unit planning in its current form had been in place at PVCC for nearly a decade prior, use of WEAVEonline improves the management of planning and assessment processes by keeping all plans in a web-based system that is searchable and archivable and facilitating development and tracking of actions taken in response to unmet objectives.

## Budgeting Overview

In developing the annual budget, President's staff considers input from three primary sources: requests from unit directors for increases in operating budgets, recommendations of the Planning and Budgeting Committee regarding requests for funding of strategic initiatives, and recommendations of the Information Technology Committee regarding funding for technology and technology-related initiatives. Budget decisions are informed by assessment/results of units in the previous year and are evaluated against the institutional priorities and goals in the PVCC strategic plan.

### Operating Budget Requests

Before developing the budget each year, the Office of the Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services issues a call for requests for adjustments to operating budgets. Administrators requesting increases in funds for their unit(s) must justify the increase. The Vice President compiles the requests, as well as information about mandatory increases (e.g., utilities), for the President's staff to consider in budgetary decision-making.

### Strategic Initiative Requests

Prior to developing the budget each year, the Planning and Budgeting Committee issues a call for requests for funding of strategic initiatives. Anyone in any area of the college can submit a proposal for a strategic initiative. Administrators, faculty, and staff are encouraged to present their innovative ideas for how the college can use any additional allocated funds to address strategic priorities and goals and respond to emerging needs or opportunities. Proposals can include but are not limited to, requests for funding new initiatives, pilot programs, innovative student services, professional development, equipment, and new positions. All proposals must be reviewed by a supervisor and a member of President's staff before being forwarded to the Planning and Budgeting Committee. Reviewers may comment on proposals. The Planning and Budgeting Committee evaluates all proposals and makes recommendations for funding priorities. Recommendations of the committee are forwarded to the President's staff for consideration in the budget development process.

### Technology Requests

The college also produces an Information Technology Strategic Plan and annual plans for technology based on strategic priorities. The Chief Information Officer, with assistance from the Information Technology Committee, develops the Technology Plan and prioritizes requests for funding of technology and technology-related initiatives. The President's staff also considers these requests during the budget development process.

## The Effectiveness of Academic Programs

The effectiveness of PVCC's credit academic programs are assessed through five-year program reviews, annual tracking of effectiveness data, assessment of student learning outcomes, assessment of general education outcomes, and discipline-specific assessments of knowledge and skills.

### Five-Year Academic Program Review

Comprehensive reviews of academic degree and certificate programs are conducted every five years by program faculty and deans. Each program review is a two-semester process, beginning in the fall and concluding in the spring. In reviewing programs, faculty examine indicators of program viability and effectiveness such as enrollment, persistence, and graduation rates; measures of student learning; transfer and employment rates; and student satisfaction. Where applicable, input from curriculum advisory committees and external experts from the field are also considered.

Faculty and deans responsible for program reviews attend a program review session during the fall semester. At the meeting, IRPIE provides program review templates pre-populated with data on enrollment, retention, completion, satisfaction, transfer, and employment. Also provided are copies of annual assessment plans and curriculum maps. The templates are structured to reflect the content and requirements that were initially established by the academic deans in the Guidelines for Review ([Transfer](#) and [Non-Transfer Programs](#)). Program reviews include:

- Statement of program goals and student learning outcomes
- Data on program effectiveness (enrollment, retention, graduates, transfer and employment outcomes, student satisfaction)
- Description of how assessment findings have been or will be used to improve instruction
- Review of curriculum
- Identification of program strengths and weaknesses
- An action plan to maintain advantages and address weaknesses

Deans follow up on the status of each action plan, and annual division goals reflect action plans for programs within each division.

### Academic Program Effectiveness and Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

While comprehensive reviews and assessments are essential, some data on program effectiveness is also tracked and reviewed on a shorter cycle (e.g., annually) to ensure programs are "on track" regarding specific goals and to immediately flag and address any problems. To facilitate both five-year and annual program review, the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness maintains a [website](#) where faculty and deans can access the last five years of program data including program enrollment (headcount), FTE, service enrollment, retention, enrollment and headcount by academic subject, grade distributions and high risk courses, success rates in gatekeeper courses, program satisfaction, awards, graduate and non-graduate transfer data, and employment data. Also, the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness provides annual program key metrics reports for annual reporting purposes. Program coordinators develop and maintain annual academic program assessment plans in the WEAVEonline Assessment Management System. In these plans, faculty members identify the student learning outcomes for each academic program, assess these outcomes, and report



on results. This system encourages annual review of program objectives, student outcomes, and student learning outcomes and related data, making the program review process more rigorous. It also enhances the College's ability to record and track program history (e.g., faculty accomplishments, grants, the addition of faculty, changes in facilities or equipment) which is essential to the interpretation of program-related data over time.

## Curriculum Maps

In addition to annual reporting and program reviews, program coordinators maintain curriculum maps. [Curriculum Maps](#) are a tool for examining current academic programs to verify that all identified student learning outcomes (program and general education) are adequately addressed by the program of study; identifying where and how student learning is, or can be, assessed; and structuring curricula for new programs. Each map is a matrix of program courses (down the left side) and student learning outcomes (across the top). Maps contain all *required* courses for each program as well as examples of electives from the program of study.

## General Education

PVCC's General Education Competencies include communication (oral and written), critical thinking, cultural and social understanding, information literacy, personal development, quantitative reasoning, and scientific reasoning. Since 2003, PVCC has administered VCCS-mandated core competency assessments and is using the results to assess general education outcomes for PVCC students. PVCC has supplemented the VCCS core competency testing timetable with other assessments and test administrations to ensure a timely cycle of general education outcomes assessment. In 2007, the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia announced new requirements for value-added assessment of general education outcomes. In 2008-09, the VCCS implemented a plan for value-added evaluation of quantitative reasoning, writing, scientific reasoning, information literacy, oral communication, and critical thinking. This value-added requirement was replaced in 2010 with a requirement that colleges continue to assess general education and report on curricular changes made in response to assessment results. PVCC has incorporated these requirements into its timetable for general education assessment. Results are used to assess general education at the college and are disaggregated by the academic program for use in the program review processes described above. The general education areas not evaluated by the core competency assessments (i.e., cultural and social understanding, and personal development) are assessed by the Graduate Exit Survey. Also, general education (and program) outcomes are mapped to courses in programs of study to ensure that all student learning outcomes are addressed.

## Knowledge and Skills Assessments

Graduates of some academic programs (i.e. nursing, EMS, radiography) take licensure or certification exams. The percentage of students passing these exams on the first try is an indication of academic program effectiveness in preparing students to obtain the necessary credentials for employment.

## The Effectiveness of Student Services

Effective student services promote student retention and success. The college aims to provide services that will help students succeed – services that students *need*, will *utilize*, and meet their *satisfaction*. Like administrative units, units that provide services to students develop annual plans which contain a statement of the unit's mission, objectives/outcomes for the year, and measures objectives/outcomes. It is expected that the annual activities of

units are consistent with the college mission and support the priorities of the college. Unit directors are responsible for measuring/documenting and reporting results. Units rely on a number of different assessments/measures of student utilization, satisfaction, and outcomes. Most are assessed with the PVCC Student Survey (SS) and the Graduate Exit Survey. PVCC also conducts a Survey of Non-Returning Students and utilizes the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) in the assessment of Student Services.

## Summary

PVCC's framework for Institutional Effectiveness incorporates planning, assessment, and decision-making at the institutional, program, and service/support levels. Assessment is used to identify those programs, processes, and services that are working well and pinpoint where improvements are needed. Through these assessments, PVCC is able to develop strategies and allocate resources to address growth areas to ensure that the college continues to achieve its mission to promote student success through excellent educational programs and services that are accessible and affordable.