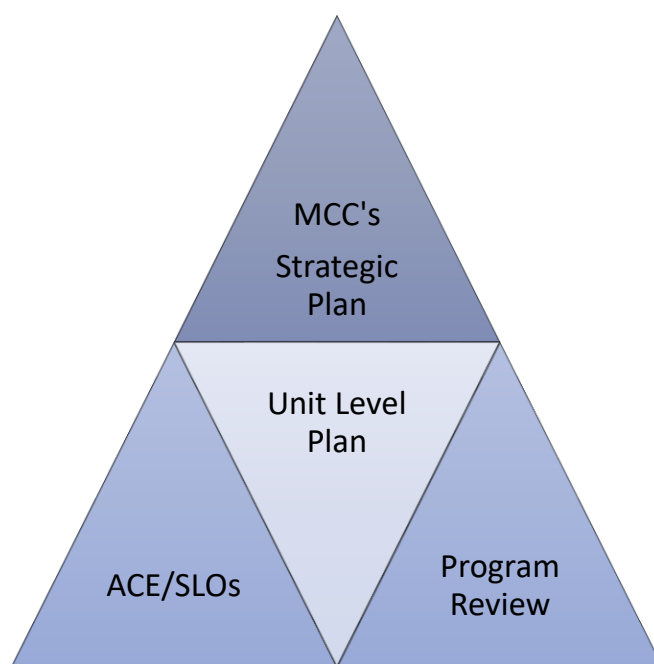


Assessment at McLennan Community College:

A Procedure/Process Guide for Unit Level Plans, ACE/SLOs, and Program Review



Institutional Research & Effectiveness

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Assessment

Why?

McLennan Community College (MCC) engages in systematic assessment in its educational programs in an effort to continuously improve student success in both its academic and technical/workforce programs.

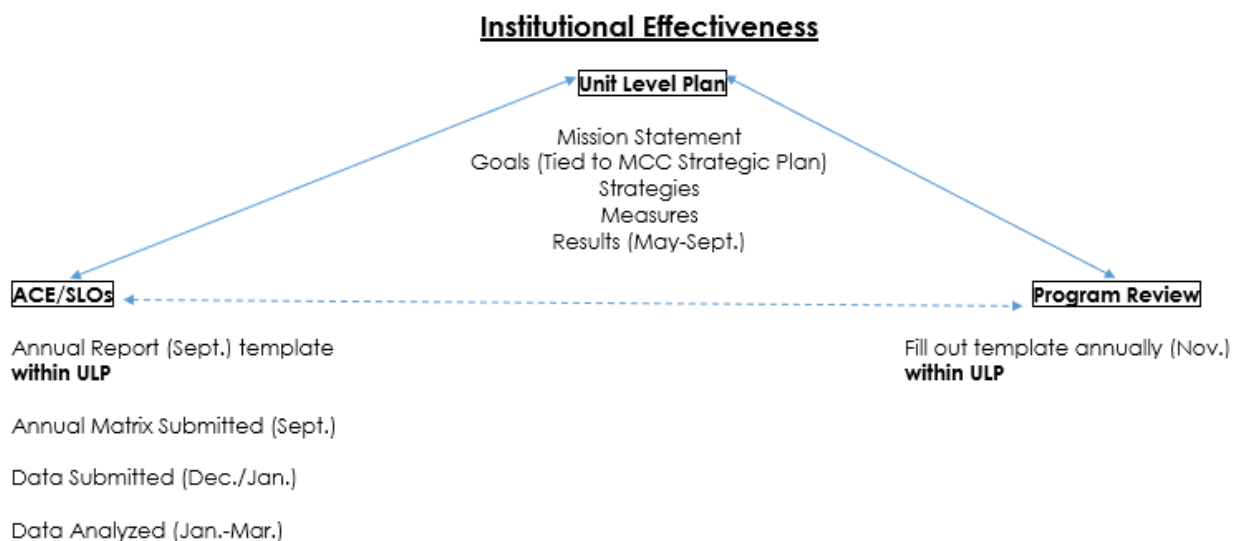
The assessment of education programs at MCC is accomplished through: (1) the Annual Unit Level Planning Process, which establishes a foundation for the planning process linked to the Annual Assessment of College Effectiveness/Student Learning Outcomes (ACE/SLO) Process; and, (2) Annual Program Reviews. Throughout this connected process, MCC identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of needing or achieving improvement based on analysis of the results.



When?

ULPs, ACE/SLO, & Program Review Calendar

Month	Assessment Activity
September	ULPs Check ULP for new academic year that Goals, Strategies, and Measures are current; and that Goals align with/are linked to MCC's strategic plan.
September	ACE/SLOs Submit Fall Matrix prior to data collection to IE (Tom Proctor) for posting to ACE/SLO library on MCC's SharePoint site. Complete Annual ACE/SLO report for academic year just completed in the drop-down template in current year's ULP.
Late October/Early November	ULPs Current academic year's ULP is rolled over as the basis on which to create the future year's ULP.
November	Program Review Complete Program Review for academic year just completed in dropdown template in current year's ULP.
December/January	ACE/SLOs Submit Fall ACE/SLO data to IE (Tom Proctor) for posting to ACE/SLO library on MCC's SharePoint site.
May-Mid September	ULPs Complete entries for all end-of-year Results for each Strategy for academic year ending in August.



Uses of Assessment Data

1. To document how Strategic Plan's vision becomes a reality;
2. To provide justification for budget allocations;
3. To document and build on achievements that support student success;
4. To identify and develop strategies for areas needing improvement;
5. To define and align with best practice;
6. To meet standards set for higher education by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board;
7. To meet standards for accreditation set by SACSCOC and for specific workforce programs; and
8. To provide transparency to our community as to our commitment in providing outstanding value for the dollars spent.

Unit Level Plans

The College implemented a unit-level planning process in August 2000 designed to formalize planning at all levels of the institution; for this process, a unit is defined as any area with an independent budget. Each instructional, administrative, and support service department is required to participate in the institutional effectiveness process identified by the College.

The core of this process is the Unit Level Plan (ULP), which has been used across campus for the past twenty years by 92 budget officers in 231 department areas (department areas classified as: 24 income and 207 expense). This annual planning document is prepared each October to December in anticipation of the annual budget process, which begins in early spring; results from the current year's ULPs are entered from August to September. An integral part of this holistic annual reporting and assessment process within the Unit Level Plan occurs at the conclusion of each academic year when division, department, and program chairs, in coordination with faculty in their areas, complete the Annual Assessment of College Effectiveness/Student Learning Outcome (ACE/SLO) Report and Program Review. Budget officers are encouraged to keep up-to-date in the process through color-coded status reports for both the ULPs and ACE/SLOs & Program Review, which are sent weekly to Vice Presidents and deans and are publicly posted in the 'Announcement' section of Compliance Assist.

The ULP process is completed in Compliance Assist, which allows users to easily recognize the interrelationships between past, current, and future years as they examine and review their unit's mission, goals, and strategies in light of their measures and outcomes (with supporting documentation) throughout the year. In Compliance Assist, expected outcomes are called "Strategies," which include a description, measure, and an end-of-year result; in addition, they include embedded Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for academic and workforce areas. All ULPs must have strategies that are tied to the goals. Each ULP requires the association of each unit-level goal to the College's strategic plan, ensuring the College's vision is achieved.

Parts of the Unit Level Plan

Mission/Purpose

The mission/purpose statement should include a concise (focused) description of the unit's general mission and core functions (your reason for being). The development of

an accurate purpose description will require a careful analysis of the current functions/activities of the unit. An effective purpose statement should contain only a few sentences and answers the question: Why does my unit exist?

Goals

Each unit should establish between 3 and 5 goals. The goals are specific methods to improve departmental performance. Therefore, the goals should be measurable and have input from everyone within the unit. Each goal should support one or more of the college's goals or objectives as found in the MCC's Strategic Plan. The institution's strategic goals and objectives should be reviewed prior to creation of unit goals. Each unit should also review the results from the previous year's unit plan as well as other supporting data. Well-written goals are time-specific and stated in results-oriented terms (e.g., using such words as: improve, increase, enhance, decrease, achieve).

Strategies

Each goal may have two or more strategies. The point is not the number of strategies, but the need for a fully expressed (complete) plan. Strategies are specific activities that lead to the accomplishment of goals (e.g., create, analyze, investigate, survey, establish, attend, conduct, implement, develop, provide).

Measures

Measures are tied to the goal through the strategies and must include some type of measurement (increase or decrease = type of measurement = findings/measures). Measures allow us to see whether and to what extent goals are met. Measures allow us to systematically and objectively track progress toward goal achievement (through: input, output, outcome, efficiency, quality) and should be understandable, outcome-oriented, useful, valid, verifiable, accurate and comparable/consistent.

Results (end-of-year)

Results will be completed at the end of the academic year and recorded in Compliance Assist. Your findings will support a conclusion that the strategies for your goals were met; partially met; or not met. Such findings are strengthened by linking relevant documents through Compliance Assist's "Sources" or "Document Directory".

The result(s) must be described in terms of the measure used to evaluate the goal. Be sure to address how these results made a difference (improved your program or service) in the current year and discuss how those results will be followed up in the

next year. The description of your findings (end-of-year results) need to be clear, complete, and concise. Test what you have written by asking yourself: Could someone unfamiliar with my area understand what I have written on the first reading and be favorably impressed?

Remember, it is not about “perfect” results. It is about clear concise language in layman’s terms that helps any reader of your ULP to understand your positive contribution to excellence at the college through your goals; objectives/outcomes; and measures/findings. It is a review of your unit’s connection to the college’s strategic plan and shows how you have given strategies to that vision.

At the conclusion of each academic year, results are analyzed and used to improve the next year’s plan. To ensure the ULP process is effective, the Director of Program Review, Planning and Assessment conducts an ongoing evaluation via solicitation of user feedback, user input during training sessions, and comprehensive review of the links between ULP goals and the College's strategic goals. This connection to the institution's strategic goals was further enhanced in 2019 by tying employees' annual reviews to their embodiment of the core values (people, inclusiveness, integrity, communication, and excellence) and support for the college's mission "to educate our students--improving their lives and enriching our community."

ULP Schedule

ULPs, ACE/SLO, & Program Review Calendar

Month	Assessment Activity
September	ULPs Check ULP for new academic year that Goals, Strategies, and Measures are current; and that Goals align with/are linked to MCC's strategic plan.
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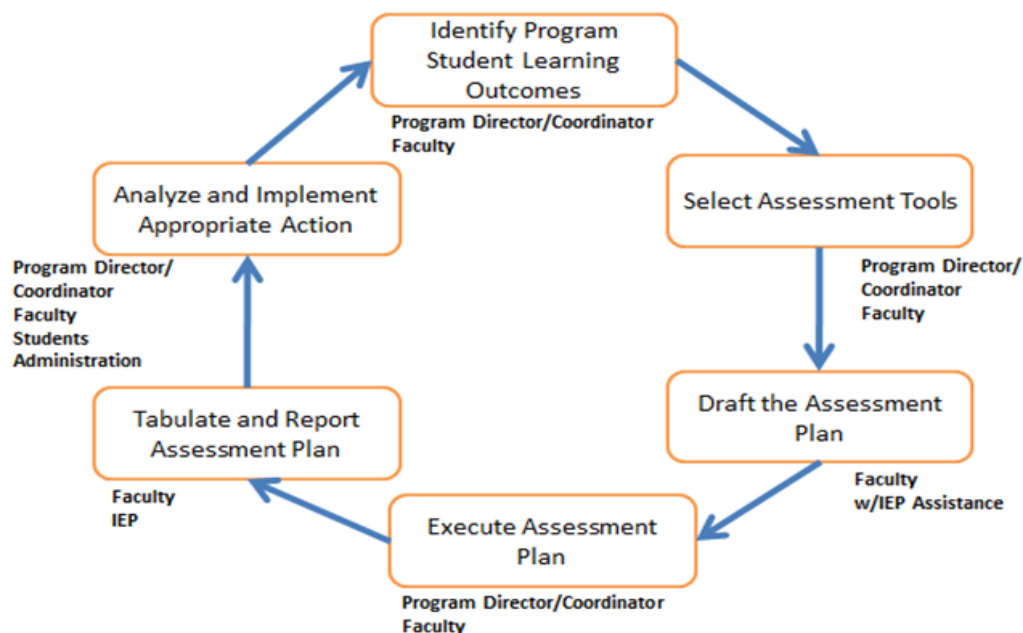
Assessment of College Effectiveness (ACE)/Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

The Assessing College Effectiveness (ACE) Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) program is a college wide, ongoing effort to improve our overall instructional practices to best meet our commitment to our students in providing a quality education. The 34-page *ACE/SLO and Program Review Process Manual* posted on MCC's SharePoint site in the ACE/SLO library lays out the ACE/SLO program and outlines the steps in building and maintaining an effective assessment program within each department/discipline to promote continuing improvement throughout Instruction.

The ACE/SLO process at MCC is designed to:

1. Assess the effectiveness of the college's instructional programs/departments and their processes for achieving student learning outcomes.
2. Identify areas for improvement within programs/departments in both instructional procedures and practices as they impact student learning outcomes.
3. Establish objective criteria in evaluating instructional practices, including comparative data across individual courses and sections.
4. Make informed decisions and/or changes to program and/or department instructional practices based on the desired outcome and the compiled data.
5. Share "best practices" for improving student learning outcomes among faculty, both within and across departments.

Assessing College Excellence: the Student Learning Outcome Assessment Process



All instructional programs that MCC defines as a two-year degree are assessed under the ACE/SLO process. In workforce programs, each program area may have a variety of degrees that address different specialties and/or skills with their own SLOs. Arts and Sciences and General Education are handled as one program to include the Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Fields of Study degrees, and each department/discipline is responsible for part of the General Education program's effectiveness.

Student Learning Outcomes for Workforce programs are derived from program review boards or similar agencies, professional organizations, or professional certification board requirements. Outcomes for transfer degrees in Arts and Science are derived from the THECB's core component area requirements and core objectives, which are:

- **Critical Thinking (CT):** "to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information."
- **Communication Skills (COM):** "to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication."
- **Empirical and Quantitative Skills (EQS):** "to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions."
- **Teamwork (TW):** "to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal."
- **Social Responsibility (SR):** "to include intercultural competency, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities."
- **Personal Responsibility (PR):** "to include the ability to connect choice, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making."

Course-level student learning outcomes have been identified either by the State in the Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM) or Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM) or developed by full-time faculty within each educational program. Beginning in 2010, the THECB began developing standardized student learning outcomes for undergraduate courses, and departments revise syllabi to incorporate new learning outcomes as they are released by the THECB. In addition to student learning outcomes, methods of assessment for those outcomes, course descriptions, pre-requisites/corequisites, methods of instruction, and other essential elements (such as the grading system) are included in course syllabi, also known as the instructor plan at MCC. Syllabi are updated every semester, posted on MCC's website, and reviewed annually.

ACE/SLO Schedule

Matrix (September)

- What are we going to measure, and how?
- What do I do with it: Email to Tom for posting on Sharepoint.

Data-In (December / Early May)

- Collect data using the matrix you created.
- What do I do with it: Email to Tom for posting on Sharepoint.

Data Analyzed (March)

- IE office analyzes submitted data.
- Where can I find it: Analyzed data is posted to Sharepoint for your access.

Annual ACE/SLO Report (September)

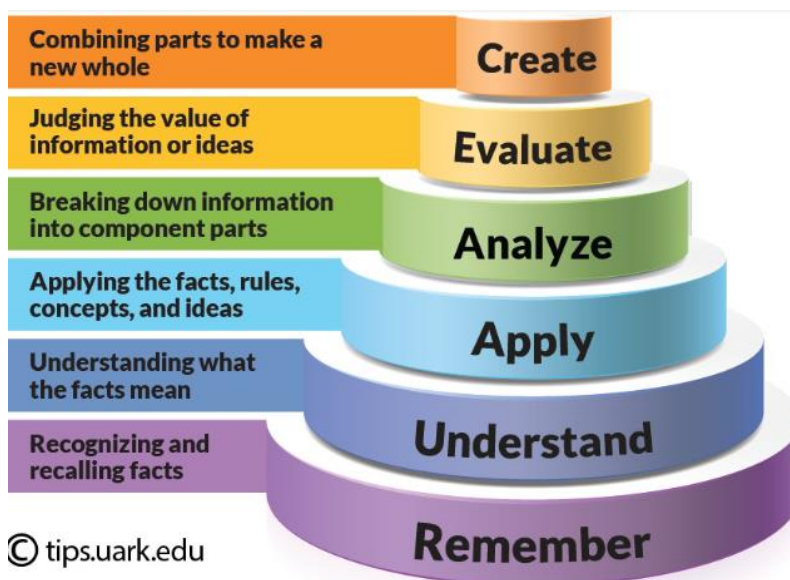
- Using analyzed data in Sharepoint, in consultation with departmental faculty, complete the Annual ACE/SLO Report in Compliance Assist.

Using Bloom's Taxonomy

Using a hierarchical system, like Bloom's Taxonomy, may help in developing appropriate level student learning outcomes for your courses and programs.

The labels provided for each level, however, SHOULD NOT be used as the actionable learning outcome.

Examples



Shabatura, J. (2020). University of Arkansas. Retrieved from <https://tips.uark.edu/using-blooms-taxonomy/>

USING BLOOM'S TAXONOMY: ACTION VERBS

Bloom's Level	Action Verbs	Example
Create	Design, formulate, build, invite, compose, generate, derive, modify, develop	<i>By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to design an original homework problem dealing with the principle of conservation of energy.</i>
Evaluate	Choose, support, relate, determine, defend, judge, grade, compare, contrast, argue, justify, support, convince	<i>By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to determine whether using conservation of energy or conservation of momentum would be more appropriate for solving a dynamics problem.</i>

Table adapted from University of Arkansas. (2020). Using bloom's taxonomy to write effective learning objectives. Retrieved from <https://tips.uark.edu/using-blooms-taxonomy/>

Using the Data

UNDERSTAND

In departmental / program meetings with faculty, share the analyzed data and discuss best instructional practices.



EVALUATE

Based on best practices, determine what needs to be addressed in student learning, success, and performance in the coming year.



CREATE

Develop your Annual ACE/SLO Report in Compliance Assist based on faculty discussion supported by data.

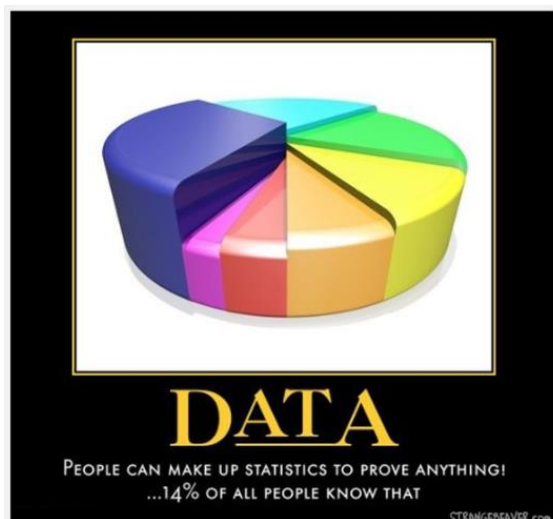
Next Steps

An important part of the ACE/SLO process is to determine departmental needs for the coming year(s) to best address student learning, success, and performance. This is documented in your Annual ACE/SLO Report.

- This may include practices or items for purchase to include in budgetary requests.
- Build these needs into your ULP, supported by the data. Your budgetary needs are, then, determined by your well-supported ULP.

Program Review

Program Review and ULPs



- The Program Review is an overall evaluation of your program.
- It is informed by multiple data points, including the ACE/SLO process.
- It is both reflective of past planning efforts AND should inform current and future ULPs.
- Be detailed and honest in your review. This is intended to improve your program for your students.
- Deficient areas highlighted in the Program Review should be addressed in the Goals and Strategies of your ULP in coming years.

Annual Program Reviews

Each educational department also participates in an annual process. Reports, historic data, and surveys are provided by the Office of Institutional Research. This process includes a systematic review of program data including headcount, course enrollment, pass rates, failure rates, attrition rates, graduation statistics, number of full-time and part-time faculty, and profit/loss statistics. Division chairs review these data each year prior to the development of their Unit-Level Plans.

Program Review Schedule

Month	Assessment Activity
September	ULPs Check ULP for new academic year that Goals, Strategies, and Measures are current; and that Goals align with/are linked to MCC's strategic plan.
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Template for Annual Program Review

Four parts in College Effectiveness/Student Learning Outcomes Annual Reports:

1. Best Practices & External Trends in your Program/Department

- a. What have been the best instructional and support practices you've identified as a program and/or department?
- b. What data do you have to support these claims?

2. Analysis of ACE/SLO Data

- a. What worked? Why did it work?
- b. What area(s) need improvement?

3. Next Steps

- a. Identify at least one of the areas requiring improvement and why your program/discipline selected it for improvement.
- b. Identify the course of action your program/discipline will take to turn it around in the coming year.
- c. Identify what assessment measures you will require to track the progress of your program/discipline's plan.

4. Resources Needed for Next Steps

- a. What assessment tools and/or help do you require to effectively measure progress on your plan?
- b. What other resources (faculty, funding, facilities, external processes) do you need to effectively tackle your plan?

3rd Year Program Review

Detailed Program Reviews—Every Three Years. All units/departments, starting in Fall 2022 will now complete a detailed Program Review every three years according to an assigned schedule. The questions to be answered in this review will include a SWOT analysis, as well as, addressing how the unit/department defines their mission and how it defines success in relation to the College’s mission and student success; metrics used to evaluate program success and source of data (federal, state, local government, non-profit, grant, professional association(s), or industry sources); impact analysis; and capacity projections.

Schedule for 3rd Year Program Review

Program Review Schedule at MCC

(Due Date = Program Review Templates are completed by November the year due; with reports completed in the following Spring.)

President

Year 1 (2022-2023)	Year 2 (2023-2024)	Year 3 (2024-2025)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diversity, Equity & Inclusion/Title IX• Institutional Research & Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Counseling Center• Employee Wellness• Health & Physical Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intercollegiate Athletics• MCC Foundation

VP, Instruction & Student Engagement

Year 1 (2022)	Year 2 (2023)	Year 3 (2024)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Biology• Philosophy• Criminal Justice• Cosmetology• Computer Info Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chemistry• Environmental Science• Geology• History• Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• English• Physics• Engineering• Math• Anthropology

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radiology Tech • Interpreter Training • Respiratory Care • Occupational Therapy Assistant • Emergency Med/Paramedicine • Veterinary Tech • Surgical Tech • Child Development Center/Teaching • Physical Ed • Medical Lab Tech • Office Tech • Music Industry Careers • Agriculture • Certified Medical Assistant • Law Enforcement Academy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Foreign Languages • INRW • Government • Theater • Music • Mental Health/Social Work • Associate Degree Nursing • Physical Therapist Assistant • Health Information Technology • Paralegal • Fire Academy • Long Term Care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geography • Sociology • Education • Licensed Vocational Nursing • Visual Arts • Accounting • Business (including Hospitality) • Marketing • Operations Management • Real Estate • Alternative Teacher Certification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional & Organizational Development • Advising Services • Completion Center • Library Services • RSVP • CE—Community Program and Ranch • Alternate Teacher Certification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Education & Literacy • Instructional Design & Innovation • Educational Partnerships • Student Life • Basic Needs/CREW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing • Academic Support & Tutoring • CE—Health and Human Services

VP, Finance & Administration

Year 1 (2022)	Year 2 (2023)	Year 3 (2024)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Human Resources• Admissions & Recruitment• Financial Aid• Purchasing & Auxiliary Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information Technology• Marketing & Communications• Physical Plant• Records & Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial Services• Emergency & Risk Management• Public Safety• Enrollment Systems

Template for 3rd Year Program Review

Program Review Template/Guide

1. SWOT Analysis:

Program Review Questions	Program Review Answers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengths	
What do we do well?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
What unique resources do we have?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
What value does your department bring to the institution?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weaknesses	
What could you improve upon?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
What factors within your control influence the ability to make the improvement(s) identified above?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
What resources are needed to accomplish your improvement(s)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•

<p>What is at least one thing you currently do that could be stopped or updated?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
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Program Review Questions • Opportunities	Program Review Answers
What opportunities exist in your department that the institution can benefit from?	•
Has there been recent changes that create an opportunity? Is the opportunity ongoing, or is there just a window for it (new technologies, changing demographics, trends)?	•
How can your department be more effective?	•
What is at least one thing you wish you could start doing in your department?	•
Program Review Questions • Threats	Program Review Answers
What challenges do you currently face?	•
What challenges do you anticipate developing in the next three years?	•
What changes or processes currently in place negatively affect your department?	•
What threats do your weaknesses expose to your department?	•

2. Additional items to include in Program Review:

I.A. – The department defines their mission and how it measures success in relation to the College’s mission and student success. This would include **metrics used to evaluate program success and source of data**, be it the federal, state, local government, non-profit, grant, professional association(s) or industry sources.

I.B.—Program Review: Review of the program’s/department’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges (see **SWOT Analysis above**). The review will include:

- **Impact Analysis:** How does this program impact the work of the College to include student success and/or community engagement.
- **Capacity Projections:** covers program current and growth capacity and resource/requirements to expand.

II.A. – Coordinator/Director/Chief Comments: Coordinator/Director/Chief will **summarize the health of their program and provide the following:**

- a. Program projections over the next 3 to 5 years
- b. Recommended changes and resource requirements for their area
- c. Any Special interest items.

What Kind of Data?

- **Student Performance**
 - SLO data
 - Enrollment & Retention
 - Student satisfaction
- **Course Data**
 - Course format
 - Capacity
 - Degree/Certificate deployment
- **Graduation & Transfer**
- **Faculty Data**
 - FT/PT
 - Faculty to Student ratio
 - Qualifications
 - Workloads
 - Retention
- **Cost/Benefit**
 - Profit/Loss
 - Increase/Decrease in costs
 - How to be more cost effective

Gen Ed Only

- **Capacity Projections**
 - Ideal grad rate
 - Wages
 - Growth capacity
 - Pathways, stackable credentials, transfer options

Workforce Only

- **Workforce Market**
 - Marketable skills
 - Job placement
 - Wages
 - Growth capacity
 - Industry growth and advancement
 - Pathways, stackable credentials, and transfer options
 - Industry comments

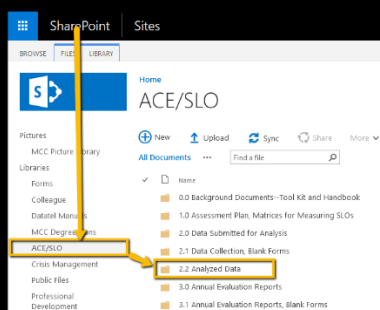
Data Sources

- On the Institutional Research & Effectiveness website (mclennan.edu/data)—scroll down to “Common Report” and click on “Program Assessment Data”

COMMON REPORTS

- [Enrollment Reports](#)
- [Section Reports](#)
- [Student Profiles](#)
- [Current Surveys](#)
- [Program Assessment Data](#)

- On MCC's SharePoint site under Libraries, ACE/SLO, “2.2 Analyzed Data”



Available on MCC's Web Advisor:

- Student Performance
- Course Data
- Major/Graduation (Degree or Certificate)
- Faculty Data
- Cost Benefit
- Workforce Projections

Available on MCC's SharePoint Assessment of College Effectiveness/Student Learning Outcomes Annual Reports:

- Best Practices & External Trends in your Program/Department
- Analysis of ACE/SLO Data
- Next Steps
- Resources Needed for Next Steps

Online Resources:

- Texas Higher Education Data — <http://www.txhighereddata.org/>
- U.S. Department of Education, Data & Research — <http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/landing.jhtml>
- Baylor Center for Business & Economic Research — http://www.baylor.edu/business/economic_research/
- Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce, Customized Reports — <http://wacochamber.com/customized-reports/>
- Office of the State Demographer — <http://osd.texas.gov/>
- U.S. Census Bureau — <http://www.census.gov/#>
- Texas Association of Community Colleges, Data & Information — <http://www.tacc.org/pages/data-and-info>
- American Association of Community Colleges, Data Points — <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Publications/datapoints/Pages/default.aspx>

MCC's Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness:

- Report request form — <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ojLdulvrdU7HoU6qTtrEUa2ihD52pwGFLHib6Q6ET4Q/viewform>

How long does it take to complete a data request?

To ensure accuracy it takes three weeks to complete and thoroughly review a data request. This timeframe can be adjusted for special circumstances, such as grant deadlines, legislative requests and other high priority requests. Note that our office has many of the most commonly requested figures available on our publications page.

What type of information can the Office of Institutional Research provide?

Official Enrollment Information
Graduation and Retention Rates
Faculty Headcount
Historical Data
Course Information
Degrees Conferred
Other Statistical Data

How does the data request process work?

After your request is submitted you will receive a confirmation page with the request number. This number will be used to track the request throughout the process. Next an email will be sent as a follow up to let you know the request has been received. The request is then assigned to an analyst who may need to follow up with you regarding the request should any questions arise.

Assessment Summary

Best & Worst Practices

Do this

- Use your ULP as the launching point to make the College's Strategic Plan a reality on annual basis.
- Set specific (realistic, but challenging) goals in your ULP Strategies and Fall ACE/SLO Matrix
- Make sure SLOs are mapped to specific identifiable course objectives.
- Use your Program Review as tool to shine the light on achievements and opportunities.
- See your ULP as your home for planning and recording achievements that are confirmed or challenged by your results, as well as, ACE/SLO and Program Review assessments.
- **Use all assessment activities as a tool to strengthen your area and ensure higher levels of student success.**

Do NOT do this

- Look at assessment work as merely a "check box" activity to be completed as quickly and with as little thought or effort as possible.
- See ULP, ACE/SLO, and Program as isolated and unrelated assessment requirements.
- Fail to collaborate with other staff or faculty—go it alone as a "lone ranger."
- Fail to ask for clarification or assistance from the IR/IE Team as you work on your assessment activities—ULPs, ACE/SLO, and Program Review.

Lessons Learned from 10-Year SACSCOC Review

Always

- **Follow** the guidelines and procedures adopted by the college as outlined in:
 - Handbooks;
 - Policies; and
 - Forms

SACSCOC Review Committees are looking for

- Your consistent application of the College's guidelines and procedures.
 - **Evidence:** Did you give clear evidence for how your SLOs are mapped to the specific general education courses to which they are assigned (in your Annual Matrix as outlined in the ACE/SLO Process Manual, found in the ACE/SLO Library on MCC's SharePoint site in folder "0.0 Background Documents—Tool Kit and Handbook")?
 - **Continuous Improvement:** In your annual results—ULP, ACE/SLO, Program Review—do you specifically detail, based on quantifiable results, plans for improvement in the upcoming year and incorporate those plans in the upcoming year?