



PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Richmond Community College's

Planning and Assessment Guide

Overview of RCC's Institutional Planning and Assessment System

RCC identifies expected outcomes for student learning, assesses the results of those outcomes and applies those results to improve programs and services for students as applicable in all five areas of the College: President's Office, Instruction, Student Development, Continuing Education, and Administration. Expected learning outcomes are at the core of the RCC Planning and Assessment System, which integrates annual and long-term planning with evaluation and resource allocation into a cohesive system that promotes creativity and accountability. This systemic approach is dynamic and on-going, with input sought from the College community towards its continual improvement.

The RCC Mission Statement is the cornerstone of the Planning and Assessment System:

The mission of Richmond Community College is to provide life-long educational opportunities, workforce training and retraining, cultural enrichment, and community services to support economic development and enhance the quality of people's lives.

The Mission Statement is reviewed by the President's Council, with changes approved by the RCC Board of Trustees. The Mission Statement defines the College's reason for being (why the organization exists, what it intends to accomplish, and for whom).

The Vision Statement describes the College's aspirations and defines future mission success. It is specific to RCC and includes internal and external components. The Vision Statement for RCC reads:

Richmond Community College will foster educational achievement, economic development, and personal growth in Richmond and Scotland counties by:

- *Being an institution of choice for educational opportunity.*
- *Serving as a cultural center for the community.*
- *Meeting the individual needs and aspirations of a diverse student population.*
- *Providing relevant, evolving, and accessible programs and services employing current technology in state-of-the-art facilities.*
- *Cultivating close and supportive relationships with the communities we serve.*

- *Engaging students in an educational experience that prepares them for the diverse and changing 21st century work place.*
- *Continuously improving through data-informed self-assessments and evaluations.*

The Mission Statement and the Vision Statement provide the outline for the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan consists of specific, College-wide Strategic Directives and Goals that support the Mission and Vision Statements. Following are the six Strategic Directives for RCC:

- 1. Develop and implement new programs and courses that are relevant to our region, promote current technology, and respond to economic trends.*
- 2. Use emerging technologies and platforms to enhance our public image, elevate our status as a cultural center, and connect to the community.*
- 3. Develop comprehensive, individualized approaches to learning and services that meet student needs and foster success.*
- 4. Supplement allocated funds with resources from external sources to enhance RCC's mission.*
- 5. Expand collaborations with external educational and workforce partners to help students meet their educational and career goals.*
- 6. Optimize current building usage, make targeted additions, and implement changes to meet the needs of a growing enrollment.*

(See the following link for each specific Goal associated with the six Strategic Directives: http://www.richmondcc.edu/_about_rcc/institutional_effectiveness.html.)

The Strategic Directives and Goals have been identified from a thorough assessment of the institution's needs and the needs of the communities it serves by identifying critical issues via internal and external SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) surveys, research data (including data collected for the most recent Long Range Plan), and planning assumptions. The Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Strategic Directives and Goals provide a framework for all planning and assessment processes at RCC. Student learning and program learning outcomes are driven by the Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Strategic Directives and Goals, and/or Performance Measures. Eight Performance Measures mandated by the NCCCS, which set standards for each College in student performance and satisfaction, are standing initiatives. The Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Report from the current year and the Expected Outcomes Report for the upcoming year, form the Annual Planning process for the upcoming year. Outcomes are assessed in the spring and/or fall depending on when the sources of outcome measurement are available for analysis.

Listed below is the most current set of NCCCS Performance Measures:

- Progress of Basic Skills Students
- Passing Rates on Licensure/Certification Exams for First-Time Test Takers

- Performance of College Transfer Students
- Passing Rates of Students in Developmental Courses
- Success Rate of Developmental Students in Subsequent College-Level Courses
- Students Satisfaction of Program Completers and Non-Completers
- Curriculum Student Retention, Graduation, and Transfer
- Client Satisfaction with Customized Training

(For RCC's most current Performance Measure results, see the following link:
http://www.richmondcc.edu/about_rcc/institutional_effectiveness.html.)

Note: The Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Strategic Directives and Goals were approved by the Board of Trustees April 7, 2009 to be incorporated into the new Strategic Plan for 2009-16. The 2009-10 Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Report and the 2010-11 Expected Outcomes Report incorporate those changes.

RCC Instructional Planning Model

The development of the Expected Outcomes begins with the evaluation of the current year outcomes, which forms the Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Report. **(See appendices for sample excerpt, and see the following link for the most current complete IE Report: http://www.richmondcc.edu/about_rcc/institutional_effectiveness.html.)**

With assistance from the Institutional Effectiveness Office, the program leaders (department and division chairs) measure their performance on previously identified outcomes and report improvements to their unit and the College as a result of these outcomes. Unique to this system, Unexpected Outcomes from unplanned activities are also documented in order to capture improvements born of serendipitous events. These results are submitted at the same time as the Expected Outcomes for the upcoming year, along with the associated Budget Request for the unit. **(See appendices for sample excerpt, and see the following link for the most current complete Expected Outcomes Report: http://www.richmondcc.edu/about_rcc/institutional_effectiveness.html.)**

This step "closes the loop" from the outcomes identified and directly connects the measured results to the upcoming Expected Outcomes, which are linked to the Strategic Directives and Goals and/or Performance Measures or initiatives specific to the unit.

The Budget Request is directly connected to the costs associated with fulfilling these Expected Outcomes, as well as on-going operational costs. The outcome results, Expected Outcomes, and Budget Requests are collected and collated by the Institutional Effectiveness Office and presented to the RCC Planning and Accountability Council for review and approval.

The entire Planning and Assessment System is reviewed annually by the Planning and Accountability Council and evaluated for possible improvement prior to the reissue of planning forms. The Planning and Accountability Council is given an Annual Planning Calendar for reference. The Institutional Effectiveness Office's services and the overall system are included in the Annual Services (Faculty/Staff) Satisfaction Survey for evaluation by the entire faculty and staff.

Instructional Departments and Student Learning and Program Outcomes

As mentioned above, all of RCC's instructional departments (as well as all units within the College), as well as the Dean for Instructional Services and Vice President for Instruction, identify learning outcomes on an annual basis. These outcomes include both student learning outcomes and program outcomes. Annual Planning and Assessment Training is conducted by the Institutional Effectiveness Office to help faculty (as well as staff) document their planning and assessment efforts. The results of the students' expected learning outcomes, expressed in the annual IE Report, are evaluated and applied at the program level to improve future results and the overall quality of the program. Examples of the uses of these results may include the modification of assessment methods, the purchase of new equipment and software, and/or changes in instructional delivery or technique.

Upon being hired in 2007, RCC's Vice President for Instruction presented a plan to strengthen and improve student learning at the College. Under her leadership, the faculty embarked on a three-year plan to implement a more meaningful and effective method of identifying, assessing, and evaluating student learning outcomes. Phase I of the plan involved the development of standardized course syllabi, including measurable student learning outcomes for each course. An outside consultant was hired to provide professional development to department chairs and faculty as they designed a course syllabus template and agreed on measurable learning outcomes at the course level.

Phase II involved the development of Instructor's Course Requirements (ICRs). After agreeing on a standardized template for the ICRs, faculty members identified methods of instruction, methods of evaluation, and successful performance/behavioral indicators for each student in all course sections. The ICRs are updated each semester and maintained by the Vice President for Instruction. Phases I and II were successfully completed for all courses offered at Richmond Community College by September 2009.

The faculty is currently engaged in Phase III of the student learning outcomes assessment and evaluation plan. During the 2009-2010 academic year, department chairs will revise all program-level learning outcomes and measures, including general education learning outcomes. In addition, department chairs will review and revise, as needed, methods of documenting and evaluating program-level learning outcomes. Baseline outcomes data will be collected during this academic year.

Program Reviews

Program outcomes are measured using sources such as graduation rates, retention rates, enrollment, employability, or student satisfaction. Supporting activities, such as hiring new faculty, professional development, and purchasing instructional equipment or software are identified and justified in direct support of specific learning outcomes. Implementation of supporting activities helps make the outcome a reality, improve student learning, and/or improve a program's quality or effectiveness. Department and Division Chairs are responsible for reviewing each program of study on a five-year rotating schedule for most programs and annually for most medically-related programs. Strengths, weaknesses, and trends are analyzed and used to formulate program objectives/actions that will improve the program within the next review cycle.

APPENDICES:

Annual Instructional Planning Document (sample excerpt from 2008-09 Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Report

Department or Division Name: Business Administration
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Section I: Evaluation and Assessment of 2008-09 Outcomes:

A. Learning Outcomes: These outcomes should deal only with student learning and be phrased as “Students will...”

Expected Learning Outcome	Source of Outcome Measurement	Actual Results	Application of Results	Linkage	Continue
Students will demonstrate the ability to apply principles of a core set of business disciplines in a realistic business simulation to include forming a company (filing all necessary paperwork), planning a marketing campaign, and reporting financial results.	80% of business students taking BUS 239 (capstone course) will pass the business simulation component, creating a business and all related activities through reporting financial results.	Achieved. One hundred percent (15/15) met this goal.	This capstone course is a valuable learning experience for the student about to finish the program. By the time students reach this class, they are becoming self-motivated. We will continue this valuable exercise for our students who are reaching the end of the program.	Goal #1	Yes

A major product of BUS 230, Small Business Management, is a complete business plan. Students will produce a high-quality business which will include projected financial statements.	80% of students completing the required business plan will receive a grade of C on this element of BUS 230, Small Business Management.	Achieved. Ninety-two percent (12/13) met this goal.	The development of a business plan exposes the student to all aspects business planning, from conception to financial projections. This will continue to be a valuable tool in this class and the program.	Goal #1	Yes
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B. Program Outcomes: These outcomes do not directly measure student learning, but reflect the quality or effectiveness of the program. Examples include enrollment, retention, graduation rates, employability, student satisfaction, etc.

Expected Program Outcome	Source of Outcome Measurement	Actual Results	Application of Results	Linkage	Continue
Graduates will find employment within one year of graduation or will continue their education.	90% of graduates will be employed and/or will be continuing their education after the 6 month follow-up to the Employment Survey.	Achieved. Again this year, as last, 100% of the seven graduates responding to the Individual Graduate Survey were employed and/or continuing their education. All students were employed and four of the seven were continuing their education.	Meeting this goal indicates a high success rates for graduates of the Business Administration program at RCC. The condition of the economy last year and currently made this a very difficult environment for our students. There is no reason to believe that the next few years will not be difficult as well. It is	Goal #1	Yes

			important for the faculty to continue to emphasize the importance of good preparation and planning for the post-graduate job search.		
Course learning outcomes developed in the syllabi standardization project will be evaluated.	The learning outcomes enumerated in business course syllabi will be evaluated to determine any need for change.	Achieved. In developing the Instructor Course Requirements for each course this year, the outcomes developed have been evaluated with the help of the project consultant.	These results will be used in the next phase of the course outcome development process as metrics for outcomes are developed in courses.	Goal #1	Yes

C. Unexpected Outcomes:

Unexpected Program or Learning Outcome	Source of Outcome Measurement	Actual Results	Application of Results	Linkage	Continue
<p>As a result of attending the 2008 NC Distance Learning Alliance Conference in New Bern, NC, the department chair of Business Administration and Accounting learned of online tutoring services offered by Smarthinking, Inc. It was thought that this product might be beneficial to RCC students, especially in English as the school does not have a writing lab.</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>After presenting the Smarthinking concept to relevant stakeholders on campus, a contract was negotiated and signed and the product put into service for all current students.</p>	<p>The service is available to all current students and two English instructors are making specific use of it in writing courses. This will have to be evaluated to see if the contract is to be extended (if funds are available).</p>	<p>Goal #1</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Annual **Instructional** Planning Document (sample excerpt from 2009-10 Expected Outcomes Report)

Department or Division Name: Business Administration

Section II: Expected Outcomes for 2009-10:

A. Learning Outcomes: These outcomes should deal only with student learning and be phrased as “Students will...”

Expected Learning Outcomes	Source of Outcome Measurement	Supporting Activities	Expected Improvements	Linkage	Cost
Students will demonstrate the ability to apply principles of a core set of business disciplines in a realistic business simulation to include forming a company (filing all necessary paperwork), planning a marketing campaign, and reporting financial results.	80% of business students taking BUS 239 (capstone course) will pass the business simulation component, creating a business and all related activities through reporting financial results.	BUS 239 is the course that was introduced in the Spring of 2006 to test the concept of using a capstone to measure program outcomes. It has been a successful measure and will continue.	This course takes students through several technical aspects of starting and running a business. Since students actually file the necessary paperwork, develop financial and marketing plans, and then present their plans to others, many skills needed for a successful business career are developed.	Goal #1	None
A major product of BUS 230, Small Business	80% of students completing the required business plan will receive a	Assigned to instructors teaching this course.	The preparation of a business plan allows students to develop the skills and evaluate	Goal #1	None

Management, is a complete business plan. Students will produce a high-quality business which will include projected financial statements.	grade of C on this element of BUS 230, small business management.		whether they have the desire to become entrepreneurs. This course gives students an idea of the preparation that must go into starting a business.		
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B. Program Outcomes: These outcomes do not directly measure student learning, but reflect the quality or effectiveness of the program. Examples include enrollment, retention, graduation rates, employability, student satisfaction, etc.

Expected Program Outcomes	Source of Outcome Measurement	Supporting Activities	Expected Improvements	Linkage	Cost
Graduates will find employment within one year of graduation or will continue their education.	90% of graduates will be employed and/or will be continuing their education after the 6 month follow-up to the Employment Survey.	Assigned to all department personnel. Discussion of students' career and/or education goals is being included as part of the advising process. This has allowed instructors to inform students of options after graduation, such as the UNCP business program available on RCC's campus.	A higher percentage of students will be employed and/or continuing their education. The main concern of our current students who plan to stay in this area is the outlook for availability of jobs and the quality of those jobs.	Goal #1	None
During the next school year, all pre- and co-	The department will review 100% of all pre- and co-requisites for	The department will review 100% of all	It has now been several years since the current pre- and co-requisite	Goal #1	None

requisites for business courses will be reviewed.	suitability.	pre- and co-requisites for suitability.	requirement were put into place. These need to be reviewed for suitability to make sure that they are helping students prepare for these classes rather than acting as barriers.		
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