

SACS Facts, November 2009

An update on Institutional Effectiveness

As UTC prepares for reaffirmation of SACS institutional accreditation, one of the major components of the compliance report will be confirmation the University measures institutional effectiveness (IE).



Theresa Liedtka, Dean of the Lupton Library at UTC, recently returned from a SACS Off-Site Committee Review Meeting in Atlanta where there was extensive discussion about IE.

“The institutions we reviewed seemed to have trouble understanding the difference between an operational goal and an outcome statement, as well as the fact changes and improvement to policies/procedures should be linked to data. Specifically we discussed the need to address three features of IE: the outcome statement, the assessment methodology, and the improvements based on the assessment data. We discussed the fact that all departments across universities need to participate in IE and that planning needs to be data driven as well as linked to budgets and strategic plans,” Liedtka said. UTC has implemented a new way to track individual departmental institutional effectiveness. The software application (AMS TaskStream) helps to manage and document the outcomes assessment process. April Matthews, Outcomes Management Analyst in Planning Evaluation & Institutional Research, provides essential training and support in the development of program outcomes and assessment plans, and in the use of the AMS software. The Taskstream software helps the University to institutionalize and document the institutional effectiveness process by providing a centralized and a user-friendly venue for providing the documentation necessary.

The software also allows directors, department heads and deans to review, provide feedback and recommendations (and approve) the outcomes from each area. This step is

necessary to assure that outcomes and improvement actions are consistent with department mission and college priorities.

Review of the plans should also address relevance, clarity, and “measurability” of the outcomes. Improvement actions must be documented and logically address deficiencies identified by the assessment results. Specific guidelines and training for the review process will be provided to each dean and department head. Programs should identify and assess *three to five critical outcomes* each year. Each outcome should state a significant expectation of the services performed by the support unit.

Reviewer training is ongoing the month of November as the institutional effectiveness cycle for 2008-2009 concludes and work begins on the 2009 – 2010 cycle. For more information on TaskStream and to register for training, see <http://www.utc.edu/Administration/SACS/TaskStream.php>.

Please call April Matthews (x5584) or Karen Adsit (x4026) with questions or concerns about the institutional effectiveness process or AMS TaskStream©.