Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Plan (IEAP)
The Institute of World Politics
updated: 07/2021

Introduction

The purpose of this updated Assessment Plan is to provide a more streamlined and workable roadmap for a systematic and ongoing process of collecting information for improving the overall effectiveness of The Institute of World Politics (IWP). The plan is grounded in the Institute's mission and is guided by the Institute's Strategic goals. IWP found a need to update the 2016 plan as it proved to be overly complicated for an institution of our size, and the press of day-to-day operations and other challenges rendered the original plan cumbersome and burdensome.

Assessment of institutional effectiveness is not new to the Institute of World Politics. It has a long tradition of using informal assessment to inform decision-making in diverse areas. This Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Plan formalizes the assessment process: providing a complete framework of assessment for all departments and academic programs with uniform standards and consistency of implementation, documentation, and dissemination of assessment activities and results.

Assessment of institutional effectiveness includes all non-instructional components of the institution that either directly or indirectly contribute to student success throughout their studies. In doing so, it acknowledges the fact that a well-rounded education goes beyond the classroom. Administrative offices are also part of assessment of institutional effectiveness since they carry out the business of education.

The focus of this document is on the assessment of administrative and academic support units of the Institute. Currently, the Educational Effectiveness Assessment Committee under the leadership of the Dean of Academics, has developed and implemented an assessment plan for student learning that satisfies Middle States' Standard V accreditation requirements. A report is produced annually on educational effectiveness, the results of which are scrutinized to determine if any curricular or academic changes should be considered in order to maintain and improve the educational achievements of IWP students. While the IEAP does not apply to the Educational Effectiveness Assessment, it does apply to the overall activities of the Academic Affairs department.

The following is a framework for assessment of areas outside of student learning. This framework was developed using models available in the assessment field, adapted to the unique characteristics and culture of IWP.

Principles for Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness at IWP:

- Derives its purpose from the institution's mission
- Takes place in all areas and levels of the institution

- Is a collaborative, participatory process involving the entire staff, led by department heads
- Is realistic, with achievable goals and measurable outcomes
- Is a multi-step process involving goal setting, implementing, evaluating, demonstrating effectiveness and improving services
- Is data oriented and expects that the information gathered from assessment process will be used for making decisions
- Uses data from the Strategic Operation Plans (SOP) for each department and follows the annual SOP review cycle.

Roles in Implementation

Under this plan, IWP is striving to implement an institution-wide process that is predictable and scaled to IWP's size and available human resources. The Board of Trustees, Executive Committee (EXCOM), administration, faculty, and staff participate in an ongoing process of evaluation and improvement.

The assessment process, led by the Executive Vice President and carried out in conjunction with ongoing oversight by the EXCOM, ensures continual self-evaluation and improvement across all academic and administrative units at The Institute of World Politics. The EVP (in collaboration with the Academic Dean and Department heads) assessment responsibilities include:

- improvement in assessment structure and implementation
- educating about assessment for all areas of the Institute
- establishment of timetables and goals
- planning assessment activities
- reviewing and critiquing assessment plans
- identifying assessment needs/deficiencies
- ensuring that assessment is done according to the standards of IWP's assessment plans and policies
- ensuring compliance with accreditation assessment standards (assessment integrity)
- Create a culture where assessment is valued and used across the institution

Links to Strategic Planning and Budgeting Process

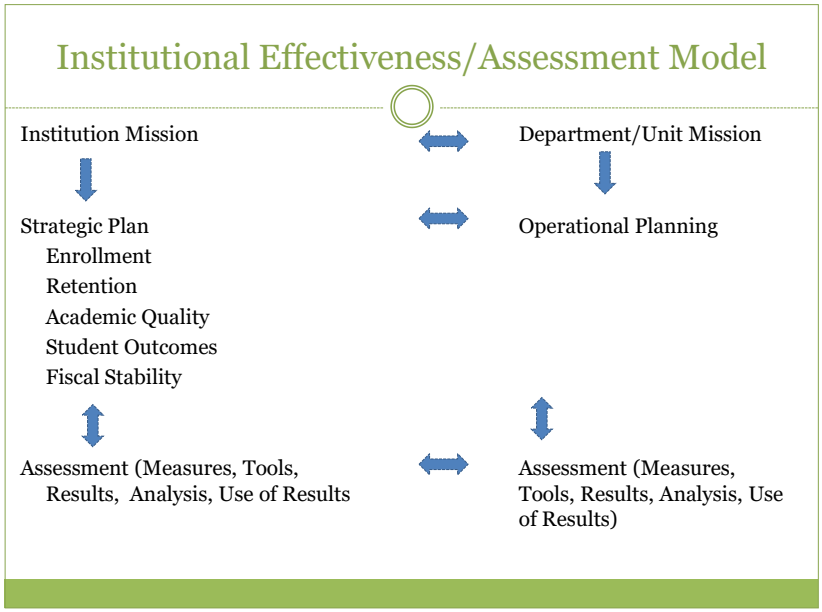
Under this plan, assessment at IWP is linked both to strategic planning and the budget process. This link is a dynamic process as strategic planning and assessment are intertwined which, in turn, informs the budgeting process. All departments and the EXCOM are involved in this process. The institutional planning priorities established at the start of the budgeting process become the priorities for funding. IWP utilizes assessment results from its departmental SOPs to formulate and modify plans that may be used to assist in the annual budgeting process. The EXCOM's role in this process is to provide oversight and monitoring on a month-by-month basis of IWP's progress in achieving the goals and objectives

outlined in the Strategic Plan, and to discuss and formulate updates to the Strategic Plan for eventual presentation to and adoption by the Board of Trustees. The EXCOM conducts regularly scheduled monthly meetings at which senior management provides updates on current activities and future plans, with discussion of resources needed to carry out these plans. The EXCOM is kept informed of the budgeting process in more-or-less real time each year, with the final proposed budget then discussed with the EXCOM prior to submission to the Board of Trustees at the May board meeting each year.

Planning and Assessment Process

Planning and assessment at IWP take place at two levels, institutional and departmental, with each complementing and informing the other (Figure 1).

Figure 1.



Institutional Assessment

The fundamental basis of all institutional planning and assessment is derived from the Institute's Mission and Institutional Objectives. These are public statements that describe the nature and character of the institution, and which clearly establish the purpose for which the Institute exists.

The components of our institutional effectiveness plan are:

- clearly defined mission
- measurable objectives and/or outcomes that are consistent with the Institute's mission
- specified performance measures for evaluating success and the extent to which the objectives have been achieved
- documentation of the results and the use of results for making improvements

The Institute of World Politics engages in a systematic planning process, incorporating all of the Institute's instructional programs and administrative departments. The Mission and Strategic Plan documents are reviewed and are approved at specified intervals.

From the IWP Mission, institutional goals are formulated, each supported by measurable objectives and available data. From those defined goals and objectives, the planning areas of the Institute derive their unit goals, which are tied directly to a strategic initiative and, therefore to the Mission. The graph below (Figure 2) illustrates the interrelationship of the elements of the planning cycle.

Figure 2.

Departmental Assessment

The departmental planning and assessment process is based on Strategic Operational Plans (SOPs) and consists of 9 steps. Departmental planning is conducted on an annual basis, with each department completing the cycle of goal setting, analysis, and reporting results. While department heads are responsible for the implementation of their SOP, the Institute recognizes the importance of getting "buy-in" from all levels of the organization. Department heads are expected to solicit, obtain, and consider the feedback of their staffs in the development of their SOPs.

Step 1: Develop Goals and Objectives
Goals and objectives should be linked to IWP's strategic goals and reflect previous assessments. Objectives should be specific, measurable, and achievable.

Step 2: State Initiatives
Identify specific activities that unit will use to achieve the objectives.

Step 3: Establish Measures of Success
Use primarily direct, and indirect (if necessary), measures (quantitative and qualitative)

Step 4: Identify the Current Status of Each Initiative
Where is the department in terms of implementing each initiative?

Step 5: Identify Associated Costs
Indicate if there are any costs (time, effort, collaboration, money, etc.) needed to carry out the initiative.

Step 6: State Target Completion Date

Step 7: Collect Data and Assess Performance

Collect data to determine whether or not identified objectives were met.

Step 8: Analyze Assessment Results

Identify key findings and budget implications; Discuss findings among other staff; Document and summarize assessment findings for reporting purposes; Identify future actions to be taken as a result of assessment data

Step 9: Effectuate Improvements—"Close the Loop"

Decide how to use the findings to improve processes; Disseminate assessment results to important stakeholders; Develop future assessment activities.

Planning, Assessment, and Budgeting Process

Planning and assessment at IWP follow a Planning, Assessment, and Budgeting (PAB) process that permits the use of assessment information in the allocation of institutional resources. Below is a brief summary of the major planning and assessment activities that occur during the fiscal year:

- Prior to the beginning of each fiscal year (typically July), departments develop SOPs to identify specific, measurable, and achievable goals, clearly linked to the overall Strategic Plan. The plans also contain specific activities to achieve these goals, establish measures of success, and identify the costs and target completion date. The departments then submit their SOPs to the designated reviewer (EVP for administrative units, the Academic Council for Academic Affairs).
- Departments track their progress, collect data to determine their effectiveness, and provide this information to their reviewer. A review of the departments' progress in implementing their SOPs occurs three times during the year: at end/beginning of the fiscal year; in the late fall (October/ November); and in the early spring (February/March).
- Following the spring meeting, departments conduct a preliminary review of their progress over the previous year to determine what changes they need to implement for the coming year. In particular, they identify any changes which have resource implications, in order to ensure that these resource requests are factored into the budget process.
- Based on the SOP reviews, departmental resource requests, and financial projections, the Business Office and the EVP develop and provide to each department a budget template for the coming fiscal year. Based on this template, departments identify and submit additional spending priorities to the EVP for consideration and incorporation into the final proposed budget.
- After reviewing departmental budget requests, the EVP and Business Office develop a proposed budget, which is presented to the Board of Trustees at its May meeting.
- Following the Board's modification and/or approval of the budget, the EVP provides departments with the final, approved budget, which the departments use to refine their proposed SOPs for the coming year.
- At the end of the fiscal year, each department drafts a Departmental Assessment Results Report as part of its proposed SOP for the coming year. In this report, each department assesses which activities were successful, which ones were not as successful as desired, and what changes it will implement to improve performance for the coming year. This report serves as the basis for the following year's SOP.

A graphical representation of this PAB process can be found in Appendix 1, below.

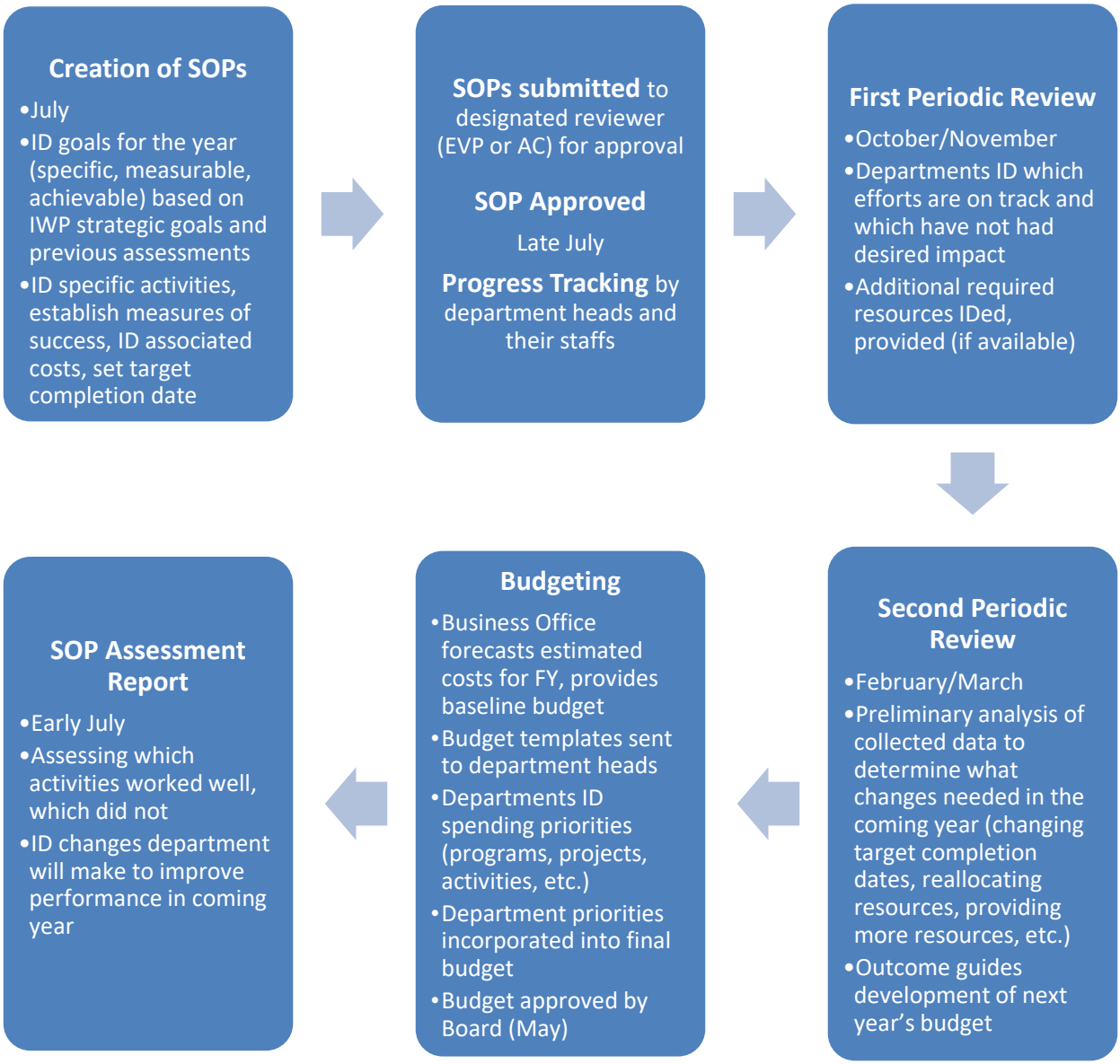
The template for the Departmental Assessment Results Report can be found in Appendix 2, below.

Other assessment activities are ongoing throughout the year and include, but are not limited to, various Institutional reports, student surveys, and Board of Trustee surveys and self-evaluations. Departments incorporate this data into their SOPs, as appropriate.

Conclusion

The Institute of World Politics has invested significant time, energy, and human resources to develop and implement a comprehensive assessment plan that serves as a catalyst for change and improvement. The Institute is committed to maintaining an assessment culture that is continually strengthened by its experiences, integrity, sincerity, and forward thinking. The current assessment plan is the roadmap for success, driving processes that are ongoing and evolving.

Appendix 1: Planning, Assessment, and Budgeting Process



Appendix 2: SOP Assessment Report Form

IWP Departmental Assessment Results Report

Department:	
Name:	
Fiscal Year:	
Date Submitted:	

Follow-Up on Last Year's Strategic Operational Plan

Please identify the key findings and budget implications from the department's SOP for the previous year by answering the following two questions (narrative or list):

1. In your judgement, which of the department's goals, objectives, and/or activities were successful?

2. In your judgement, which initiatives experienced problems or were not achieved?

Recommendations and Plans for Action for Next Year's Strategic Operational Plan

Based on the answer from Question 2, what changes does the department plan to make and/or what actions will be taken to improve processes (narrative or list)?

Signature of the Executive Vice President

X

Lawrence Cosgriff
EVP