# INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLAN AND HANDBOOK

*4th Edition, September 2021*

**Office of Institutional Effectiveness**

The institutional effectiveness process measures how well we fulfill the College's Mission and demonstrates continuous improvement in student learning, educational programs, and administrative and educational support services.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AT MERCER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## INTRODUCTION

Institutional effectiveness assessment is an iterative model for improving the programs and processes through which we carry out the College's mission and implement strategic planning. Institutional assessment at MCCC is tied to the institutional mission, is comprehensive of all college operations, uses multiple sources and types of evidence, and involves faculty and staff throughout the institution. The institutional effectiveness process demonstrates continuous improvement in student learning, educational programs, and educational support and administrative services

One of the most important components of good institutional assessment is its capacity to inform and evaluate change. Information gleaned from assessment shall be used to improve programs and processes at the college. This aspect of assessment has become more important at Mercer as the culture of assessment for improvement has become a more intrinsic part of all college operations. The goal of this plan is to support systemic and sustained assessment for improvement of all college programs and procedures.

## A REQUIREMENT FOR ACCREDITATION

The demonstration of institutional effectiveness and the assessment of student learning are required components of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) accreditation process. Elements of institutional effectiveness can be found throughout the *Standards for Accrditation and Requirements of Affiliation*,

## Current Institutional Effectiveness Process

I.  **Academic Assessment:**
    A. **Academic Program Review (degree and certificate programs)**
        i.   Course-Level Student Learning Outcomes Assessment
        ii.  Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes Assessment
        iii. Institutional Core Competencies Assessment
        iv.  Quality and Viability Measures
        v.   Curriculum Mapping (Courses to Program SLOs

    B. **General Education Assessment** (newly revised process and guidelines go into effect in AY 2014-2015)
        i.   Annual Assessment of Gen Ed SLOs
        ii.  Curriculum Mapping (Courses to Gen Ed SLOs)

II. **Service Area Assessment:**
    A. Educational Support Units/Service Areas
    B. Administrative/Operational Areas

# ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT: ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS AND TIMELINE

The goal of the academic program evaluation process at Mercer County Community College is to maintain a vital credit-bearing educational program through continuous improvement of degree and certificate programs and of course offerings within discipline/program areas.

## BACKGROUND

The self-evaluation process called for the responsible faculty and staff members to assess available data on operations and outcomes, to reach conclusions on the extent to which the program was consistent with the applicable characteristics of program excellence (Mission, Objectives, Program Outcomes, Program Logistics), and to recommend how the identified issues should be addressed and the program's strengths maintained. After an external consultant reviewed the self-evaluation, the self-study team proposed an action plan for program improvement that was approved by the Division Dean, the Curriculum Committee, and the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs.

The process has two purposes:
1. Focus more on student learning outcomes and success measures
2. Reduce the burden on program coordinators to prepare an extensive program review every five years.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW OBJECTIVES

Academic Program Review is intended to be an objective self-study of the academic program in support of the college's mission and goals. The review also serves as a historical document for the college, identifying changes made over time in relation to the program's mission and goals and the college's strategic plan. Critical to the document is an overall assessment of the program's student learning outcomes and plans to improve student success.

Objectives:
- To improve student learning outcomes
- To identify strengths, concerns, and recommendations for improvement
- To document changes since the previous review
- To serve as a plan of action for budget development, curriculum development, and departmental change
- To increase retention and graduation rates (as appropriate)
- To improve transfer and job placement rates (as appropriate)
- To improve student and employer satisfaction with MCCC

There are three major components of the APR process: student learning outcomes, viability and quality. Objective, data-driven metrics are used to determine both the quality and viability pieces of the analysis.

# THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

Annually, each program is responsible for up to seven metrics. Annual measures must include the assessment of program-level, course-level and core competency student learning outcomes, a minimum of two quality measures (selected by program faculty), and a minimum of two viability measures. The five-year review includes a discussion and analysis of the data gathered over the previous five years, as well as a comprehensive action plan.

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT (PROGRAM-LEVEL, COURSE-LEVEL):

| Program Data | Source | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| SLO1. Program-level Student learning outcomes (minimum of one per year; all Program-level SLOs must be assessed within the five year cycle) | Program faculty | Annual |
| SLO2. Course-level Student learning outcomes (minimum of one per discipline per year) | Program faculty | Annual |
| SLO3. Core Competency Student learning outcomes (minimum of one per year) | Program faculty | Annual |

## QUALITY MEASURES ASSESSMENT:

| Program Data | Source | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| Q1. Full-time to part-time faculty ratios (by course)* | IR (Institutional Research) | Annual |
| Q2. Student to faculty ratios* | IR | Annual |
| Q3. Individual course completion rates | IR | Annual |
| Q4. Transfer rates for transfer program graduates* | IR (SURE and National Student Clearinghouse data) | 1-3 years |
| Q5. Accreditation status (where applicable) | Program faculty | |
| Q6. Advisory commission input (where applicable) | Program faculty | |
| Q7. Industry and workforce connectivity | Program faculty | |
| Q8. Placement rates for career program graduates | Program faculty & IR | |
| Q9. Appropriately credentialed faculty | Program faculty | |
| Q10. Growth and strategic plans | Program faculty | |
| Q11. Advisement | Program faculty | |
| Q12. Maintenance of appropriate library resources to support the program | Program faculty in consultation with library staff | |

*Data for these categories are reported for both program totals and institutional totals.

## VIABILITY MEASURES ASSESSMENT:

| Program Data | Source | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| V1. Headcount trend for the past 3-5 years | IR | Annual |
| V2. Full-time equivalent trend for the past 3-5 years | IR | Annual |
| V3. Fall to Spring student retention rates | IR | Annual |
| V4. Fall to Fall retention rates | IR | Annual |
| V5. Graduation and completion rates for the past 3-5 years | IR | Annual |
| V6. Numbers of degrees or certificates granted | IR | Annual |
| V7. Transfer rates to four-year institutions (including program graduates and students who transfer prior to program completion) | IR (see Q4) | Annual |
| V8. Service courses that are required by other programs (e.g., English and math) | Program faculty | |
| V9. Occupational outlook at least five years out | Program faculty, IR, Advisory Commissions, EMSI, NJ DOL projections (http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/) | |
| V10. The program's relationship to the college's Strategic Plan | Program faculty | |

# THE FIVE-YEAR ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

The five-year Academic Program Review is primarily a summation and reflection on the annual data. The five-year Program Review also includes a comprehensive curriculum map and an action plan for the program. As appropriate, the five-year Program Review might also address the following questions and elements:

I.     Mission
   - What is the overall purpose/mission of this program and how does it relate to the overall objectives of the division and the college?
   - Are updates of revisions needed to program SLOs?
   - Are program goals clearly and accurately articulated in all college publications?
   - Provide evidence of how the department/program publicizes its curriculum and related services. Attach samples of brochures, advertisements, and other publications promoting the department.

II.    Faculty and Staff
   - Describe professional growth activities within the department.

III.   Interdepartmental Communications
   - Identify what other departments or disciplines support this program.
   - Discuss how the program/department communicates with departments that provide courses for your program OR programs that send students to your department.

IV.    Institutional Resources (i.e., linking programs and budgets to the Strategic Plan, College Mission, Values, Goals)
   - How does your department/program use the funding currently allocated for the department/program? What are your anticipated needs?
   - Do the current facilities, resources, and equipment meet the needs of the department/program?
   - What do you see as your limitations or opportunities for improvement of the facilities?
   - What efforts if your department/program making to contain costs while achieving effectiveness?
   - How has your department/program integrated technology into the classroom?
   - What direction do you see the department/program moving toward with regard to technology? What needs to be done to move the department/program toward this goal?

I.     Additional elements
   - Pass rates on state/national exams
   - Class size
   - Academic Support (e.g., library resources, availability of tutoring)
   - Survey data (advisory commission surveys, current student surveys, graduating student surveys, alumni surveys, employer surveys)
   - Maintenance of articulation agreements; oversight of dual admissions students
   - Effectiveness of placement tests in identifying student course placement
   - Description of how prior learning is appropriately assessed and credit awarded
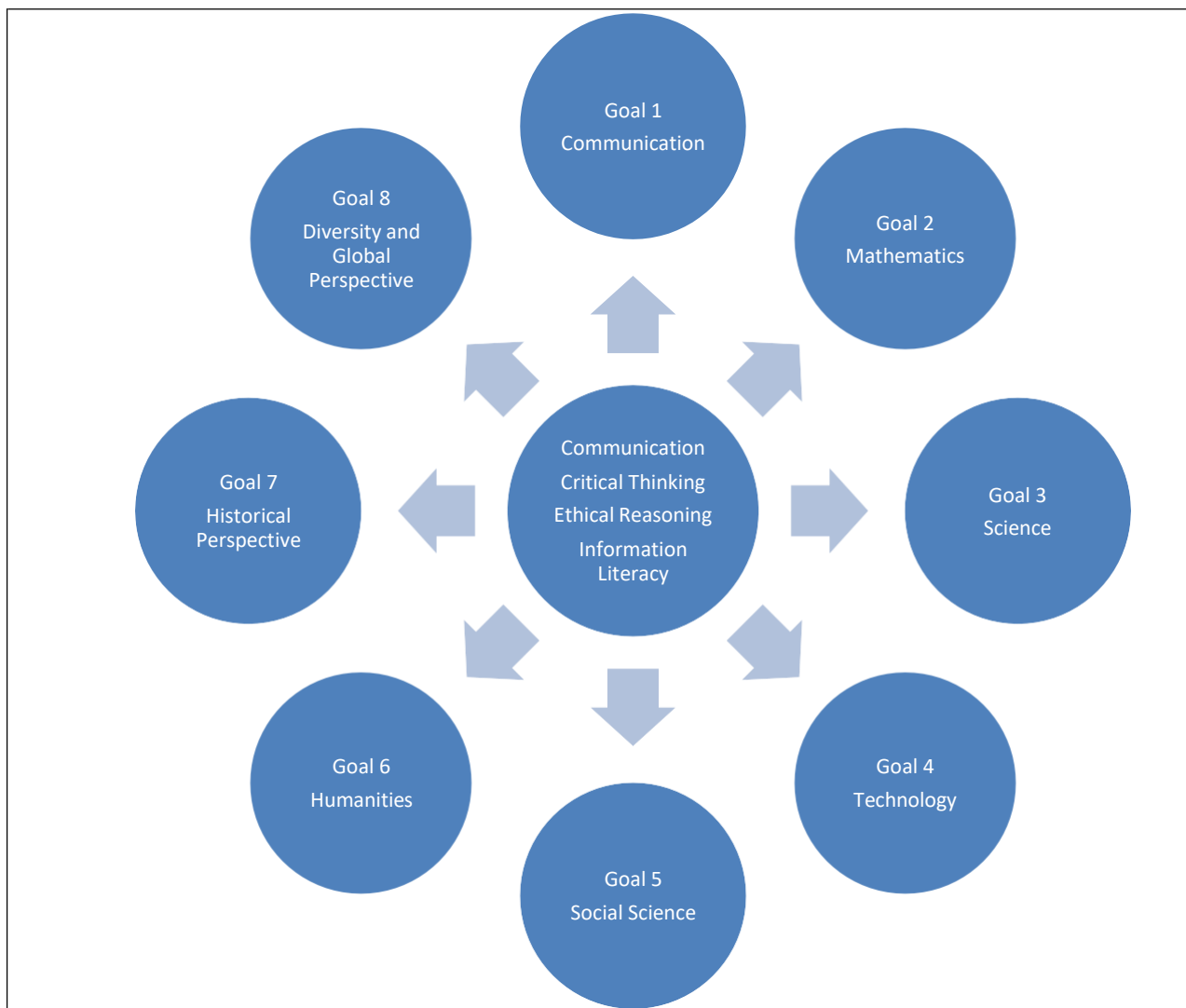
# GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

The assessment of General Education Goals and Objectives was embedded as part of the Academic Program Review process.  The process reflects a systemic approach to ensure the quality and rigor of MCCC's General Education Program. The assessment process reflects both the integral relationship between the assessment of student learning and quality educational experiences as well as the understanding that the knowledge and skills reflected in the General Education Goals are complex skills that require repeated, embedded opportunities for students to practice and demonstrate mastery.

In removing General Education assessment from the Academic Program Review process and developing a complementary process and timeline, the assessment format encourages a shared responsibility and understanding of General Education assessment throughout the college. It reflects the college-wide value that General Education is a core to all academic and career programs at the College.

# GEN ED ASSESSMENT PROCESS

1. Annually, the course coordinator for each Gen Ed course develops an assessment plan that incorporates opportunities for students to practice – and for faculty to assess – the students' mastery of the SLOs assigned for that year. The course coordinator assists in communicating the assessment plan with all full-time and part-time faculty who teach the course. If there is no recognized "course coordinator" for the Gen Ed course, the full-time faculty members who teach that course collaborate on an assessment plan.
2. General Education assessment are on-going; each semester faculty in the discipline plan to assess 1-2 Gen Ed learning outcomes (see table, below).
Assessment data is collected every semester in TracDAt and systematically analyzed every year.
3. Disciplines are expected to use assessment data to improve General Education courses by creating recommendation actions based on the data collected. Discipline Action plans are updated yearly.
4. To the extent possible, each Gen Ed discipline assess the following infused Gen Ed knowledge and skills: critical thinking, information literacy, ethical reasoning and action, [and communication – which is a Gen Ed Goal and an infused core competency].

## IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS FOR GEN ED ASSESSMENT PLAN

During the AY 2014-2015 year, the Dean for Instructional Effectiveness coordinated a team of experienced faculty to oversee the implementation of the General Education assessment plan. The Team consisted of faculty leaders in five Gen Ed areas:

1. Communication
2. Math, Science, and Technology
3. Social Science
4. Humanities and Historical Perspective
5. Diversity and Global Perspective

Team members worked one-on-one or in small groups with the faculty in their Gen Ed area to develop and hone authentic assessments that align with the Gen Ed goals and objectives. They assist in the analysis of assessment results and the development of action plans to support improved student learning of Gen Ed goal or objectives.

| | General Education Goals | | | | | | | | Infused Goals | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Goal 1: Communication | Goal 2: Mathematics | Goal 3: Science | Goal 4: Technology / Info Lit | Goal 5: Social Science | Goal 6: Humanities | Goal 7: Historical Perspective | Goal 8: Diversity & Global Perspective | Critical Thinking (formerly Core Comp. B) | Ethical Reasoning & Action (formerly Core Comp. C) | Information Literacy (formerly Core Comp. D) |
| Fall 2014 | 1.1-1.2 | 2.1 | 3.1 | 4.1-4.2 | 5.1 | 6.1-6.2 | 7.1 | 8.1-8.2 | B.1-B.2 | C.1 | D.1-D.2 |
| Spring 2015 | 1.3-1.4 | 2.2 | 3.2 | 4.3-4.4 | 5.2 | 6.3-6.4 | 7.2 | 8.3-8.4 | B.3-B.4 | C.2 | D.3-D.4 |
| Fall 2015 | 1.5-1.6 | 2.3 | 3.3 | 4.5-4.6 | 5.3 | 6.1-6.2 | 7.3 | 8.5 | B.5 | C.3 | D.5-D.6 |
| Spring 2016 | 1.1-1.2 | 2.4 | 3.1 | 4.7, 4.1-4.2 | 5.1 | 6.3-6.4 | 7.1 | 8.1-8.2 | B.1-B.2 | C.1 | D.1-D.2 |
| Fall 2016 | 1.3-1.4 | 2.1-2.2 | 3.2 | 4.3-4.4 | 5.2 | 6.1-6.2 | 7.2 | 8.3-8.4 | B.3-B.4 | C.2 | D.3-D.4 |
| Spring 2017 | 1.5-1.6 | 2.3-2.4 | 3.3 | 4.5-4.6 | 5.3 | 6.3-6.4 | 7.3 | 8.5 | B.5 | C.3 | D.5-D.6 |

# ASSESSMENT REPORT: GEN ED STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

## ACADEMIC YEAR 2014-2015

| Gen Ed Course: | Form completed by: |
|---|---|
|  |  |

| Outcome(s) | Evidence | Action | Evaluation | Reflection and Planning |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Which of the Gen Ed student learning outcomes were assessed during *this* reporting period? | Other than grades, what data/evidence were used to determine that students have achieved the stated Gen Ed outcome(s)? (e.g., embedded questions in assignments or exams, presentations, performances, capstone course, portfolio review, research paper, etc.) | What method(s) or process(es) were used to evaluate student work; who interpreted the evidence? | What were the results of the evaluation of the assessment data? Indicate patterns of weakness to address.<br><br>Provide:<br>• sample size,<br>• expected level of student achievement<br>• actual levels of student achievement. | Are there recommendations for change based on the results?<br><br>*If yes:*<br>• What recommendations for change are planned based on the assessment results?<br>• When do you plan to implement the change(s)?<br>• When do you plan to assess the effect of the change(s)? |

# SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE AREA ASSESSMENT

The goals of Service and Administrative Area assessment are to measure how well we are fulfilling the College's Mission and to demonstrate continuous improvement in and educational support and administrative services. Educational Support Areas and Administrative Areas define their missions, establish goals, and determine how to measure objectives associated with those goals so that key processes that meet the needs and expectations of students, staff, and other stakeholders can be improved on a continuous basis. Each of the Educational Support Areas and Administrative Areas listed below engages in assessment activities and data analysis that provide evidence of how well the area meets its operational goals. Educational Support Areas assess both operational goals as well as student learning/development outcomes.
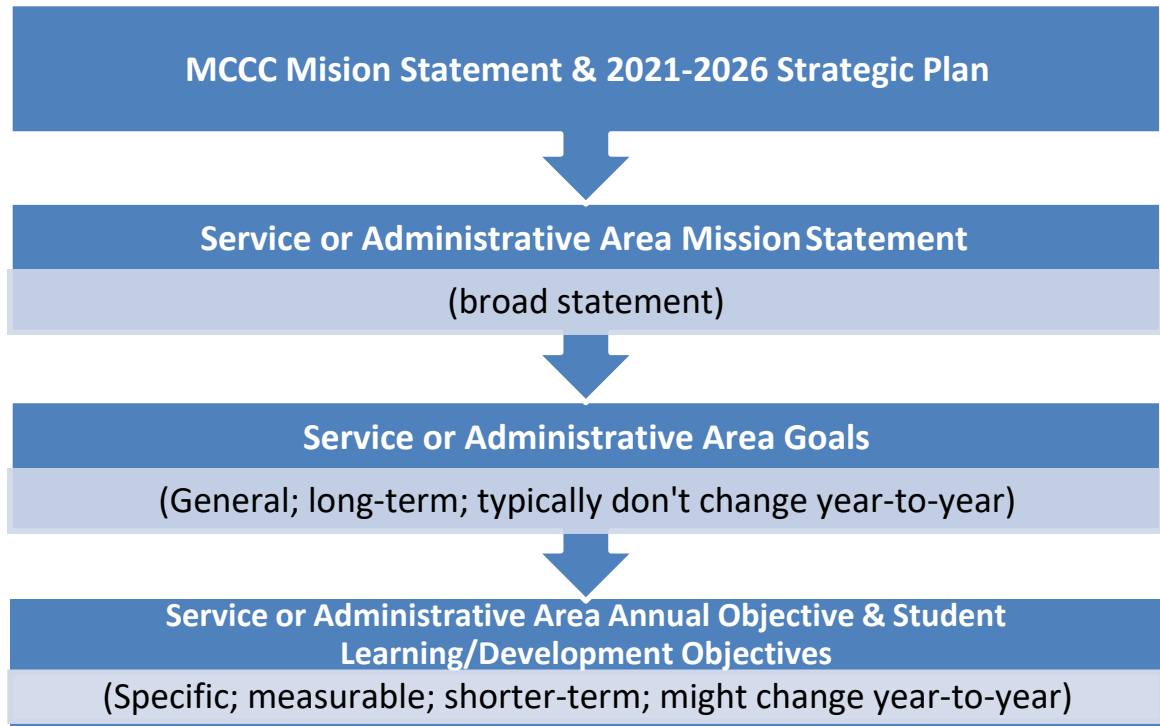
| Educational Support / Student Service Areas | Administrative /Operational Areas |
|---|---|
| <ul><li>Academic Testing Center</li><li>Admissions and Outreach</li><li>Advisement (Intake) and Enrollment Services</li><li>Alumni Relations</li><li>Athletics</li><li>Counseling</li><li>Financial Aid</li><li>Community Education and Training (ABE/GED/ESL, CTI)</li><li>Learning Center</li><li>Library Services</li><li>MercerOnline</li><li>Office of Special Services</li><li>Office of the First 30</li><li>Pre-college access programs  (JKC)</li><li>Programs for Academic Services and Success/Retention Services/EOF</li><li>Registration and Records</li><li>Student Activities/Student Life and Leadership</li><li>Transfer and Career Services</li><li>Veteran's Affairs</li></ul> | <ul><li>Board of Trustees</li><li>College Advancement (Development, Grants, Marketing & Communications, College Publications, Public Relations, Foundation)</li><li>Conference Center and Dining Services</li><li>Facilities and College Safety</li><li>Financial and Accounting Services</li><li>Fitness Center</li><li>Human Resources</li><li>Information Technology Services</li><li>Institutional Effectiveness</li><li>Kelsey Theatre</li><li>Mercer Institute & Continuing Education</li><li>Purchasing</li><li>WWFM</li></ul> |
| **Educational Support Units assess operational effectiveness and student learning/development outcomes.** | **Administrative Areas assess operational effectiveness.** |

The objectives of Service and Administrative Area Assessment are:
- **To improve** – The assessment process provides feedback to determine how the Service or Administrative Area can be improved.
- **To inform** – The assessment process informs department heads and other decision-makers of the contributions and impact of the Service or Administrative Area to the development and growth of students.
- **To prove** – The assessment process demonstrate what the Service or Administrative Area is accomplishing to students, faculty, staff, and outside constituents
- **To support** – the assessment process provides support for campus decision-making activities such as strategic planning as well as external accountability such as accreditation.

# SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE AREA ASSESSMENT REVIEW PROCESS

Annually, each Service and Administrative Area develops a plan to assess annual objectives that align with that area's mission and goals. A Service / Administrative Area Assessment Plan is developed collaboratively by the staff of the area. One person from each Service / Administrative Area is designated as the Area Assessment Coordinator and given time and support to fulfill this role.

| MCCC Mision Statement & 2021-2026 Strategic Plan |
| :---: |

| Service or Administrative Area Mission Statement |
| :---: |
| (broad statement) |

| Service or Administrative Area Goals |
| :---: |
| (General; long-term; typically don't change year-to-year) |

| Service or Administrative Area Annual Objective & Student Learning/Development Objectives |
| :---: |
| (Specific; measurable; shorter-term; might change year-to-year) |

The steps in the assessment process are as follows:

## YEAR 1 OF A CYCLE:

- **STEP 1: Revisit the Mission Statement and Goals for the Service or Administrative Area. If Area does not have a Mission Statement and Goals, develop them.**
  Verify that the Mission Statement and Goals are still current. If the unit does not have a mission statement and goals, develop them. The mission statement is a broad statement of the Area's direction. The mission statement should reflect each Service or Administrative Area's contribution to the educational paths of students who encounter the unit specifically. Goals are general statements (sometimes presented in bullet points) that clarify the mission statement.

- **Step 2: Develop annual Objectives for the Service or Administrative Area**
  The objectives align with the unit mission and goals, the institutional Mission Statement, and the current Strategic Plan. Objectives provide the basis for assessment and therefore should be stated in measurable terms. Service and Administrative Areas have objectives that can relate to process, satisfaction, or outcomes.
  - Process-oriented: what the unit intends to accomplish. (E.g., level or volume of activity, efficiency of processes, compliance with best practices or regulations)
  - Satisfaction-oriented: client satisfaction level after receiving the service.
  - Outcomes-oriented: what clients will know or be able to do after receiving the unit's services.
  Each unit should have 3-5 annual objectives. You will not need to assess every objective every year.

- **Step 3 (for Student Service Areas only): Define the student learning/development outcomes/objectives for the Service Area**
  Describe what the students will know, do, or value after receiving a service or participating in an activity. (For example, "After New Student Orientation (SOAR), students will be able to use the MyMercer Portal." The following prompts may be helpful in developing outcomes:
  Knowledge = workshops
    - Skills = opportunities to apply new learning
    - Attitudes/Values Clarification = facilitated reflection
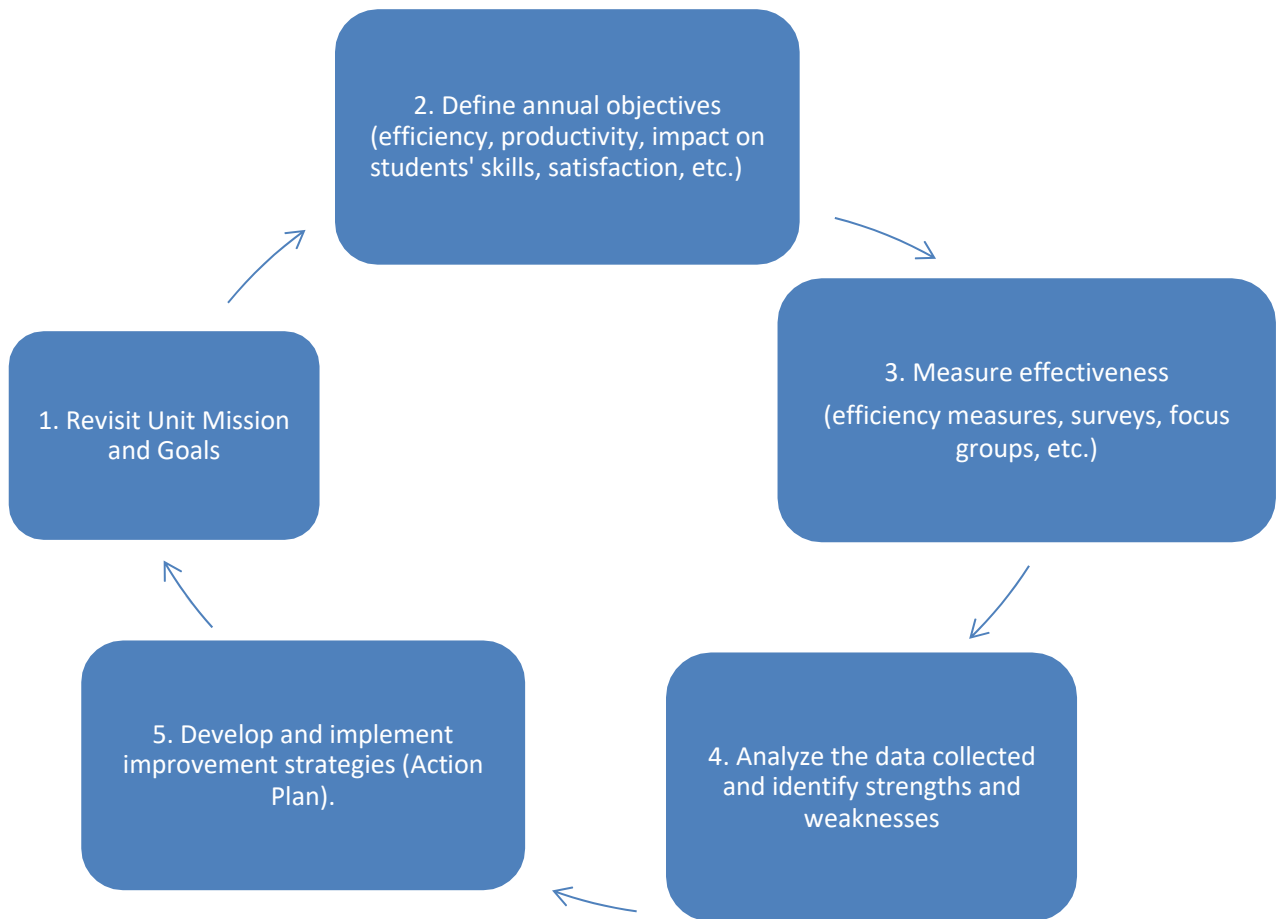    - Behavior Change = facilitated interventions)

- **Step 4: Inventory existing and needed assessment methods.**
  Identify, list, and describe available data that can be used to conduct assessment (e.g., log of student Help Desk tickets, customer satisfaction surveys). Referring back to the needs of the unit, identify what additional methods need to be used to provide the necessary information for assessing activities within the unit.

- **Step 5: Collect and analyze assessment evidence.**
  (IRA&P staff members are available to help with the collection and analysis of the evidence).

- **Step 6: Based on the analysis, celebrate success and develop an Action Plan for improvement where needed.**
  Each unit's supervisor will be involved in the development and approval of an action plan for the unit. Share assessment results and action plan with stakeholders.

- **Step 7: Submit the Annual Assessment Report to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) by May 31.**
  The Area Assessment Coordinator is responsible for submitting the Annual Assessment Report (the assessment plan, activities, results, analysis and action plan) to IRA&P and/or uploading into MShare.

## THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS: SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS

2. Define annual objectives (efficiency, productivity, impact on students' skills, satisfaction, etc.)

3. Measure effectiveness (efficiency measures, surveys, focus groups, etc.)

1. Revisit Unit Mission and Goals

5. Develop and implement improvement strategies (Action Plan).

4. Analyze the data collected and identify strengths and weaknesses

# INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS SUPPORT

While the Institutional Effectiveness Process is implemented campus-wide, it is supported primarily by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) provides support and feedback during the process and prepare a comprehensive annual report.
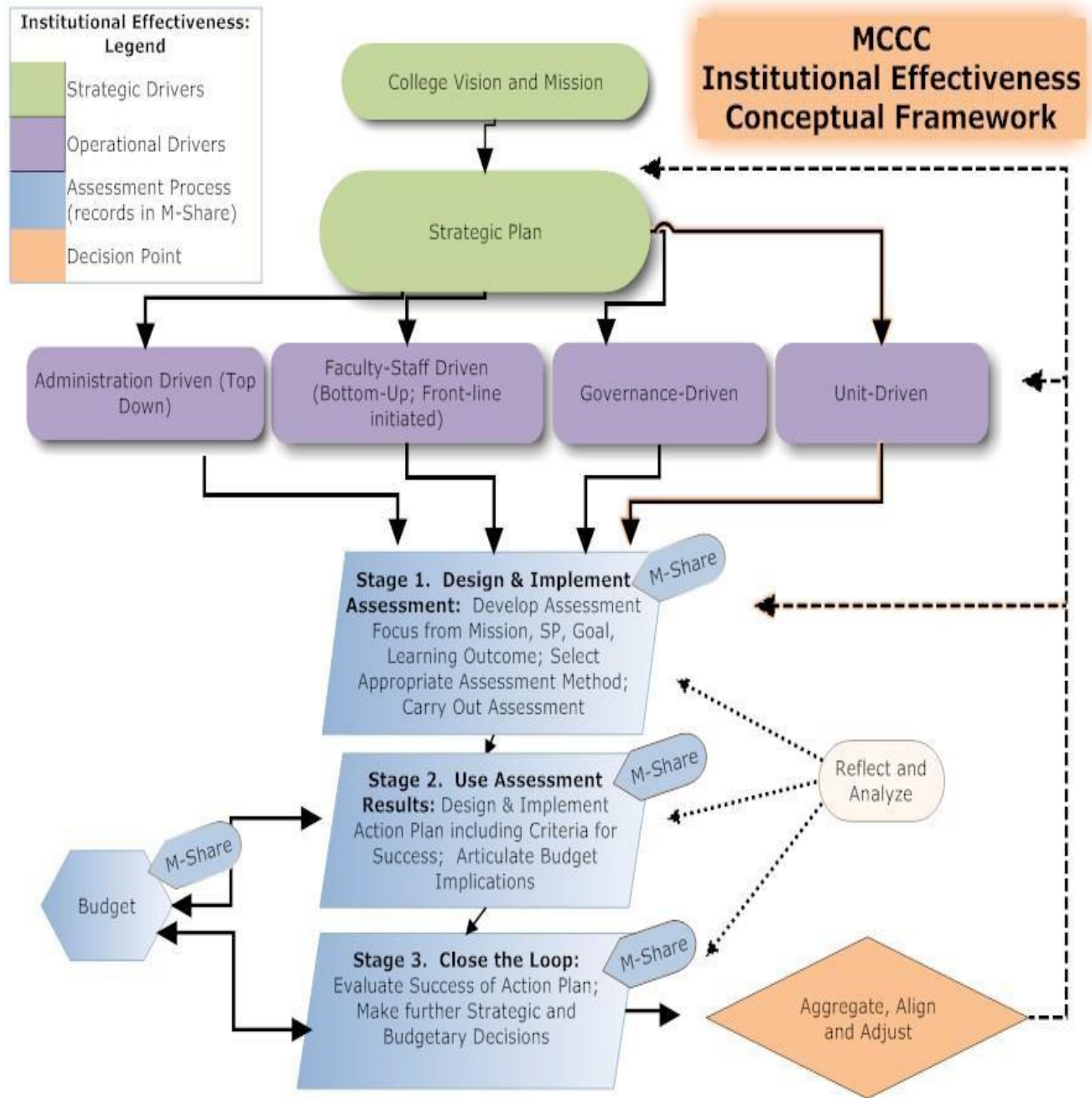
**IE responsibilities and services include the following:**

- Management of the College's institutional effectiveness and assessment programs. This includes assisting all areas of the College in developing mission statements, long-range goals and annual objectives based on the strategic plan and assessment results.
- Design, development, and implementation strategies to assess and improve the quality and effectiveness of all areas of the college. This includes assisting all members of the college community (academic and administrative) with their annual assessments and program evaluation endeavors through internal consultation.

**IR provides support in the following areas:**

1. Data collection, synthesis, and entry-level analysis
2. Institutional planning and evaluation;
3. Development of institutional research reports.
4. Assistance in designing reports using clear language, tables and charts and communicating results to internal and external audiences.
5. Implementation of the annual Graduating Student Survey, employer surveys, and other internal and external surveys
6. Collection of data for faculty and staff for program review, student outcomes assessment reporting, and unit planning and evaluation as assigned.
7. Tracking transfer data from four-year colleges and universities.

# INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AT MERCER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE:
# A FLOW CHART



**Institutional Effectiveness: Legend**
- Strategic Drivers
- Operational Drivers
- Assessment Process (records in M-Share)
- Decision Point

**MCCC Institutional Effectiveness Conceptual Framework**

College Vision and Mission

Strategic Plan

Administration Driven (Top Down)

Faculty-Staff Driven (Bottom-Up; Front-line initiated)

Governance-Driven

Unit-Driven

**Stage 1. Design & Implement Assessment:** Develop Assessment Focus from Mission, SP, Goal, Learning Outcome; Select Appropriate Assessment Method; Carry Out Assessment — M-Share

**Stage 2. Use Assessment Results:** Design & Implement Action Plan including Criteria for Success; Articulate Budget Implications — M-Share

**Stage 3. Close the Loop:** Evaluate Success of Action Plan; Make further Strategic and Budgetary Decisions — M-Share

Budget — M-Share

Reflect and Analyze

Aggregate, Align and Adjust

# APPENDIX I: MCCC GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**Goal 1. Communication. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.**
1.1.   Students will read, write, and listen actively, critically, and reflectively.
1.2.   Students will logically, informatively, persuasively, and creatively respond orally and/or in writing to what they read, hear, and see.
1.3.   Students will evaluate and revise their written communication.
1.4.   Students will identify, critically evaluate and revise their own oral communication practices as well as evaluate the delivery techniques, use of research/sources, and speaking strategies of their peers and other communicators.
1.5.   Students will write and speak clearly and effectively in formal American English.
1.6.   Students will understand, analyze, and assess nonverbal, cultural, and gender communication in both small group and public communication settings.

**Goal 2. Mathematics. Students will use appropriate mathematical and statistical concepts and operations to interpret data and to solve problems.**
*2.1.*   Students will develop graphical, numerical, analytical and verbal models to describe quantitative relationships that exist in the world and communicate these concepts effectively.
2.2.   Students will investigate and interpret these models using the mathematical and/or statistical tools and reasoning appropriate to each type of model.
2.3.   Students will draw logical conclusions by applying a variety of mathematical problem-solving strategies.
2.4.   Students will demonstrate an understanding that mathematics is a precise language that is used to solve complex problems in many disciplines.

**Goal 3. Science. Students will use the scientific method of inquiry, through the acquisition of scientific knowledge.**
3.1.   Students will apply the scientific method of inquiry to solve problems and draw conclusions based on verifiable evidence.
3.2.   Students will use scientific theories and knowledge to understand the Natural Sciences and assess the impact of scientific theories, discoveries, and technological changes on society.
3.3.   Students will integrate scientific principles and scientific discovery, and will critically investigate the impact of science and scientific discovery on our understanding of the natural universe.

**Goal 4. Technology or Information Literacy. Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals.**
4.1.   Students will demonstrate proficiency with electronic communications as appropriate to academic and professional use.
4.2.   Students will demonstrate the ability to use a particular technology or group of technologies to analyze or solve problems.
4.3.   Students will demonstrate proficiency in the accurate use of interfaces, files, basic productivity software, web browsers and search engines.
4.4.   Students will be able to describe accurately and analyze the impact computer technology has on modern society.
4.5.   Students will explain the social and ethical issues that surround a particular technology or group of technologies and articulate their opinions about such issues using written and oral communication.
4.6.   Students will gather information using a variety of appropriate resources, search tools, and strategies, evaluate and analyze that information, and then select information and use it correctly to answer a research question.
4.7.   Students will respect the privacy, security and ownership of the information they locate and use, recognizing and honoring the ethical considerations relevant to the use of information with a particular focus on eliminating plagiarism.

**Goal 5. Social Science. Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens.**

5.1.     Students will critically evaluate behavioral or societal issues using theories and concepts from a social science perspective.

5.2.     Students will analyze and appreciate how social and political institutions and organizations influence individual development and behavior.

5.3.     Students will demonstrate an understanding of the ways social scientists gather and analyze data, integrate knowledge, and draw conclusions, and will engage with these processes.

**Goal. 6. Humanities. Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.**

6.1     Students will interact with texts, performance and visual media, demonstrating an awareness of significant themes and their contexts. They will analyze these themes and contexts, articulating their connections, meanings and values to self, society, and others.

6.2     Students will draw upon the visual, literary and performing arts and/or the study of philosophical and religious systems of thought and practice in order to extend their understanding of cultural, historical, and intellectual imagination.

6.3     Students will use project-based learning to demonstrate an awareness of and critically engage with a range of historical and contemporary performances and visual and literary works and the approaches commonly used to analyze them.

6.4. Students will demonstrate communicative competence in a language other than their  own  and  an appreciation of that language's cultural and historical context.

**Goal 7. Historical Perspective. Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.**

7.1.     Students will demonstrate an understanding of the causes of major historical events and analyze the impact of those events on a nation or civilization.

7.2.     Students will critically interpret primary and secondary historical documents and critically evaluate the influence of perspective, time, and culture on the writers' point of view.

7.3.     Students will explain major ideas, movements, and technological discoveries, and their impact on western, world, and American society.

**Goal 8. Diversity and Global Perspective. Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.**

8.1.     Students will link culture, its practices and perspectives, with its geographical and/or historical conditions.

8.2.     Students will analyze how the differences in people's backgrounds are important to U.S. society and the global community.

8.3.     Students will evaluate the consequences of prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory actions.

8.4.     Students will analyze the impact of globalization on the economic and political structures of various  nations and cultures.

8.5.     Students will demonstrate an understanding of the behaviors and beliefs of different social groups within a pluralistic society.

**Integrated Goals Ethical Reasoning and Action: Students will study the ethical implications of issues and situations. (Mercer's Core Competency C).**

I.  **Information Literacy: Students will address an information need by locating, evaluating and effectively using information. (Mercer's Core Competency D).** These courses should underline the research process through the inclusion of information-based assignments that require students to:

- o  Identify and address an information need;
- o  Access information effectively and efficiently;
- o  Evaluate and think critically about information;
- o  Use information effectively for a specific purpose; and
- o  Use information ethically and legally.

A specific breakdown of information literacy skills for the above learning outcomes can be located at: Information Literacy Progression Standards for NJ Colleges & Universities (available at http://www.valenj.org/sites/default/files/Information%20Literacy%20Progression%20Standards%202010.pdf). Courses selected by individual institutions should focus on the Gateway/ Developing skills as identified in the Progression Standards.