

# INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS MANUAL



SOUTHERN  
UNIVERSITY  
LAW CENTER

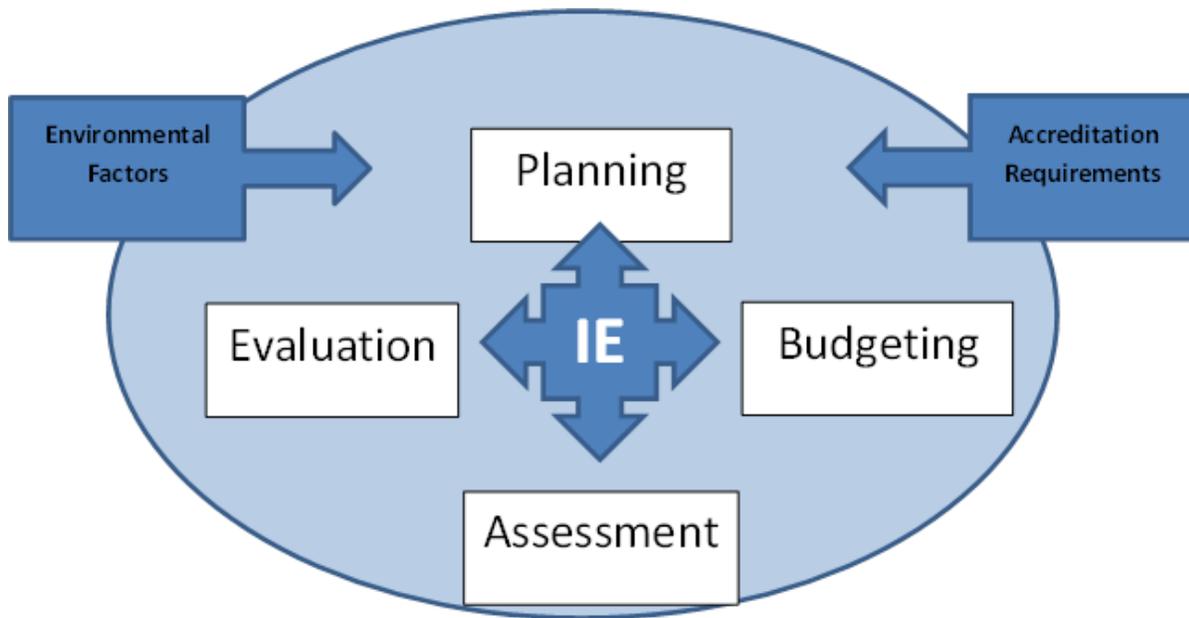
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## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of the Institutional Effectiveness process at Southern University Law Center is to facilitate a Law Center-wide comprehensive assessment, planning and evaluation process that supports well-informed decision-making and uses results for improvement. The Institutional Effectiveness process assists the Law Center in maintaining regional accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

The Law Center has an institutional effectiveness process in place that involves four core integrated dimensions: Planning, Assessment, Evaluation and Budgeting.



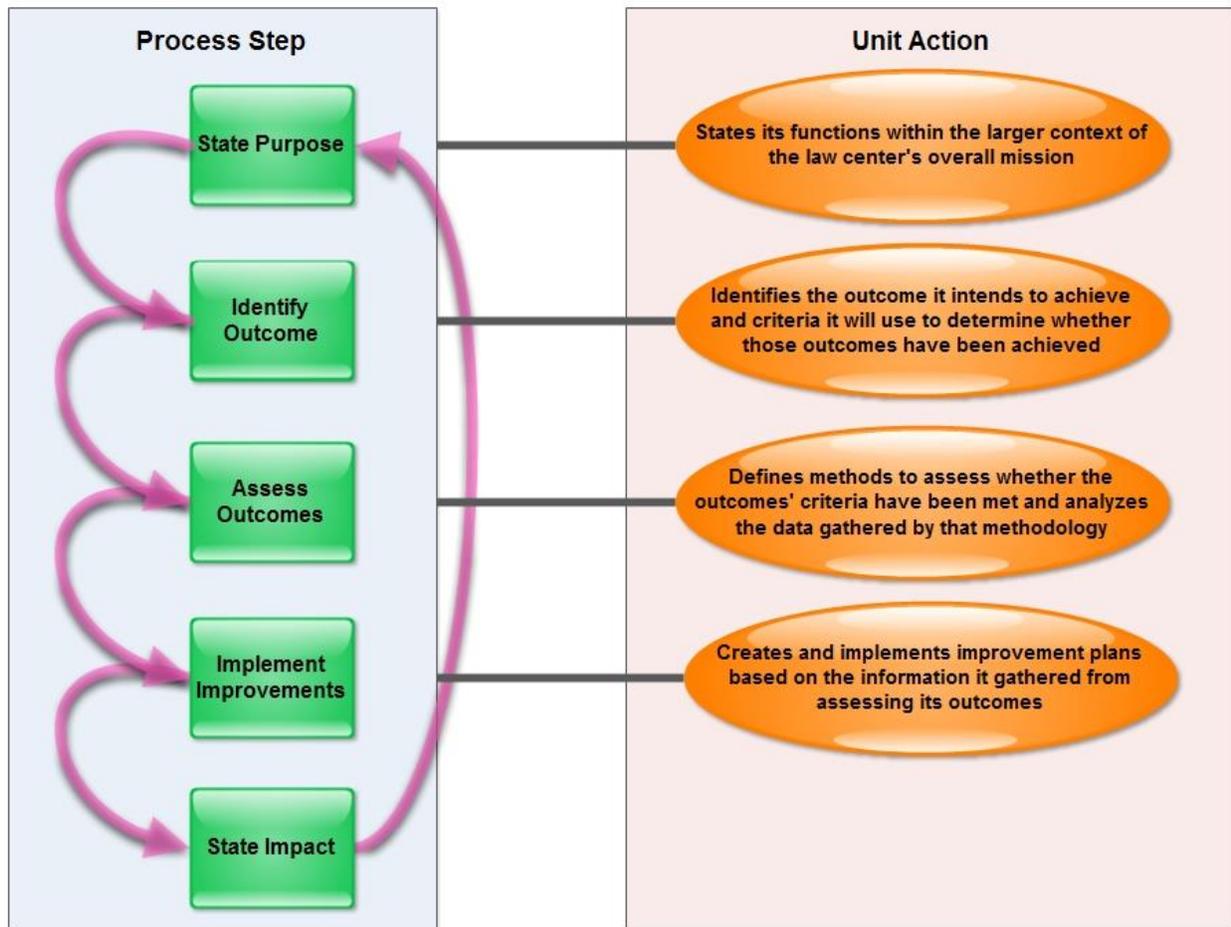
The Institutional Effectiveness process at Southern University Law Center contains a framework of analysis that complies with the Core Requirements and Comprehensive Standards of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

The Law Center's Institutional Effectiveness assessment cycle involves the following:

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<sup>1</sup> This introduction has been adopted and modified based on institutional effectiveness processes at Daytona State College, which can be found at <http://daytonastate.edu/ie/index.html>

## SULC Assessment Cycle



The Institutional Effectiveness assessment cycle embraces:

1. The Law Center Mission
2. Outcomes
3. Assessment measures
4. Levels of achievement
5. Analysis
6. Use of Results
7. Evidence of Improvement<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Beginning with the 2019-2020 fiscal year, Administrative Units will no longer report changes and impact of results for improvement. Academic Units will continue to report and evaluate changes and impact of results for improvement.

## **Mission Statement, Purpose, Goals, and Core Values**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission and tradition of the Law Center is to provide access and opportunity to a diverse group of students from underrepresented racial, ethnic, and socio-economic groups to obtain a high quality legal education with special emphasis on the Louisiana civil law. Additionally, our mission is to train a cadre of lawyers equipped with the skills necessary for the practice of law and for positions of leadership in society.

### **PURPOSE**

To retain a high-quality diverse student body and to prepare students to successfully complete the Louisiana bar examination and enter the practice of law.

### **GOALS**

#### 1. Teaching and Learning

The Law Center will improve the quality of education by expanding its curriculum and stressing disciplinary knowledge and academic skill development characterized by critical inquiry, depth of understanding, accountability, and a commitment to diversity. The Law Center will emphasize research, scholarship, and creative achievement as integral to effective teaching in all academic areas and will promote quality teaching and scholarship by providing appropriate faculty-development support.

#### 2. Scholarship and Creative Activity

Recognizing the intrinsic value of scholarship and creativity and their importance to the state and to engage teaching, the Law Center will foster scholarship and creative activity by recruiting, retaining, and supporting faculty members who are or will become recognized as highly productive contributors to their fields.

#### 3. Service Excellence

The Law Center will be actively engaged at all levels in making all of our services student-centered, customer-focused, and excellence driven. Our campus and community relationships will be sustained by adherence to our core service values – integrity, collaboration, innovation, responsiveness, accountability, and excellence. Our academic program will respond to local and state needs and promote a high overall quality of life. Law Center members will exhibit good citizenship by using professional and personal expertise to improve our communities. On our campus, every person and

system will be dedicated to fulfilling the academic aspirations of those students who choose to be members of this learning community.

#### 4. Quality of Life in the Law Center Community

The Law Center will attract the most deserving and promising students at every level, regardless of background and economic circumstance. The Law Center will integrate a strong academic program with extra-curricular experiences to foster a sense of community and quality of life that nurtures the whole person.

#### 5. Recognition, Visibility, and Community Involvement

The Law Center will strive to complement and grow the state's strengths by continuing to develop the Law Center's facilities, programs, activities, and community involvement. The Law Center will increase its visibility by highlighting the accomplishments of students, faculty, and staff. Where possible, the Law Center will attain appropriate accreditations. It will provide educational opportunities for lifelong learning and cultural enrichment, and develop and maintain partnerships with other entities to better serve the educational needs of the state.

### **CORE VALUES**

*As we work together with faculty, students, administration and our fellow staff members to support the mission of the Law Center, our interactions will be guided by the following principles:*

#### **Integrity**

Possessing and steadfastly adhering to high moral principles or professional standards. At the Law Center, we view integrity as a willingness to be transparent in our dealings and a desire to treat all members of the Law Center community with fairness and respect.

#### **Collaboration**

Working together with one or more people in order to achieve a common goal. At the Law Center, we view collaboration with individuals, departments and outside partnering agencies as a means to develop better ideas and implement them more successfully.

#### **Innovation**

Creatively inventing, introducing and implementing new ideas, approaches or tools to increase our effectiveness and efficiency. At the Law Center, we view innovation, both in our educational and research processes and in our internal operations, as an important measure of our growth as an institution.

**Responsiveness**

Reacting quickly, strongly, and positively to a constituent's need, suggestion or proposal. At the Law Center, we believe that responsive individuals show compassion and genuinely desire to assist others.

**Accountability**

Accepting one's responsibility to others in the organization and for one's own work role. Accountability at the Law Center focuses on the effectiveness of our educational and student-support functions and the business processes that underlie them.

**Excellence**

Committing to reach a level of superior and outstanding performance. At the Law Center, we aim to serve our students and the communities in our state with distinctive programs tailored to their needs and strengths.

## Importance and Value of Assessment

Ongoing systematic assessment is important for several reasons. First, it allows the Law Center to demonstrate quality and excellence and ensure the same level of quality continues. Second, assessment activities will identify areas needing attention, support and development so decisions can be made to improve those areas. And finally, assessment will allow the Law Center to plan changes that will improve policies, procedures, services, curriculum, resources, teaching, campus climate, and, ultimately, student learning.

The goals of assessment are to learn something about a unit's demand, quality, efficiency, and student learning and development. Assessing demand involves looking at the actual need of the service or skill and tracking the actual use versus the projected use of a service, class, or activity. Assessing quality involves looking at perceptions and satisfaction with the programs, services, or activities. Timeliness and adequacy can lead to increased knowledge related to efficiency. How do we know students are actually learning the knowledge, skills, and abilities we want them to leave here with? Student learning and development are key areas for academic programs to assess.

Two main items related to fulfilling accreditation requirements for SACSCOC directly relate to institutional effectiveness and assessment. They are standards 7.1, 7.2 and 8.2 found in Resource Manual for The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement

<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2018%20POA%20Resource%20Manual.pdf>

Standard 7.1 states:

The institution engages in ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and evaluation processes that (a) focus on institutional quality and effectiveness and (b) incorporate a systematic review of institutional goals and outcomes consistent with its mission [CR]

Standard 7.2 states:

The institution identifies expected outcomes of its administrative support services and demonstrates the extent to which the outcomes are achieved.

Standard 8.2 states:

The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below:

- (a) Student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs

(c) Academic and student services that support student success

Standards 7.1 and 8.2 require that the institution and its units:

- Plan and assess;
- Use the results of the assessments to improve programs and services; and
- Document the progress made through planning and assessment.

SACSCOC does not require strategic planning, but the strategic-planning process serves as an effective approach to achieving the SACSCOC's Institutional Effectiveness standards.

### **Planning and Assessment: Beyond SACSCOC Accreditation**

An institution must be engaged in planning and assessment beyond SACSCOC accreditation. The Chancellor's Report to the Southern Law Center System Board of Supervisors, the Louisiana Performance Accountability (LaPAS) statewide strategic planning requirement require extensive assessment of programs and services. LaPAS is an electronic database that tracks performance standards, interim quarterly performance targets, and actual performance information for the State of Louisiana. The expectation for each report is that the Law Center will either meet or exceed performance goals. Without planning to focus resources and measures, the Law Center would be hard pressed to meet or exceed these goals. These reports are prepared and submitted in spring/summer of each year on data primarily from the previous fall semester or fiscal year.

**Sources:** *Handbook for Institutional Effectiveness*, Louisiana State Law Center and A&M College, 3-4 (2013).

*Institutional Effectiveness Manual*, Law Center of South Carolina Beaufort, 9, *citing* Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement, Fifth Edition, Approved December 2011.

## **Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning**

1. The assessment of student learning begins with educational values. Assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle for educational improvement. Its effective practice, then, begins with and enacts a vision of the kinds of learning we most value for students and strive to help them achieve. Educational values should drive not only what we choose to assess but also how we do so. When we skip over questions about educational mission and values, assessment threatens to be an exercise in measuring what's easy, rather than a process of improving what we really care about.

2. Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time. Learning is a complex process. It entails not only what students know but what they can do with what they know; it involves not only knowledge and abilities but values, attitudes, and habits of mind that affect both academic success and performance beyond the classroom. Assessment should reflect these understandings by employing a diverse array of methods, including those that call for actual performance, using them over time so as to reveal change, growth, and increasing degrees of integration. Such an approach aims for a more complete and accurate picture of learning, and therefore firmer bases for improving our students' educational experience.

3. Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes. Assessment is a goal-oriented process. It entails comparing educational performance with educational purposes and expectations -- those derived from the institution's mission, from faculty intentions in program and course design, and from knowledge of students' own goals. Where program purposes lack specificity or agreement, assessment as a process pushes a campus toward clarity about where to aim and what standards to apply; assessment also prompts attention to where and how program goals will be taught and learned. Clear, shared, implementable goals are the cornerstone for assessment that is focused and useful.

4. Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes. Information about outcomes is of high importance; where students "end up" matters greatly. But to improve outcomes, we need to know about student experience along the way -- about the curricula, teaching, and kind of student effort that lead to particular outcomes. Assessment can help us understand which students learn best under what conditions; with such knowledge comes the capacity to improve the whole of their learning.

5. Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic. Assessment is a process whose power is cumulative. Though isolated, "one-shot" assessment can be better than

none, improvement is best fostered when assessment entails a linked series of activities undertaken over time. This may mean tracking the process of individual students, or of cohorts of students; it may mean collecting the same examples of student performance or using the same instrument semester after semester. The point is to monitor progress toward intended goals in a spirit of continuous improvement. Along the way, the assessment process itself should be evaluated and refined in light of emerging insights.

6. Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved. Student learning is a campus-wide responsibility, and assessment is a way of enacting that responsibility. Thus, while assessment efforts may start small, the aim over time is to involve people from across the educational community. Faculty play an especially important role, but assessment's questions can't be fully addressed without participation by student-affairs educators, librarians, administrators, and students. Assessment may also involve individuals from beyond the campus (alumni, trustees, employers) whose experience can enrich the sense of appropriate aims and standards for learning. Thus understood, assessment is not a task for small groups of experts but a collaborative activity; its aim is wider, better-informed attention to student learning by all parties with a stake in its improvement.

7. Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about. Assessment recognizes the value of information in the process of improvement. But to be useful, information must be connected to issues or questions that people really care about. This implies assessment approaches that produce evidence that relevant parties will find credible, suggestive, and applicable to decisions that need to be made. It means thinking in advance about how the information will be used, and by whom. The point of assessment is not to gather data and return "results"; it is a process that starts with the questions of decision-makers, that involves them in the gathering and interpreting of data, and that informs and helps guide continuous improvement.

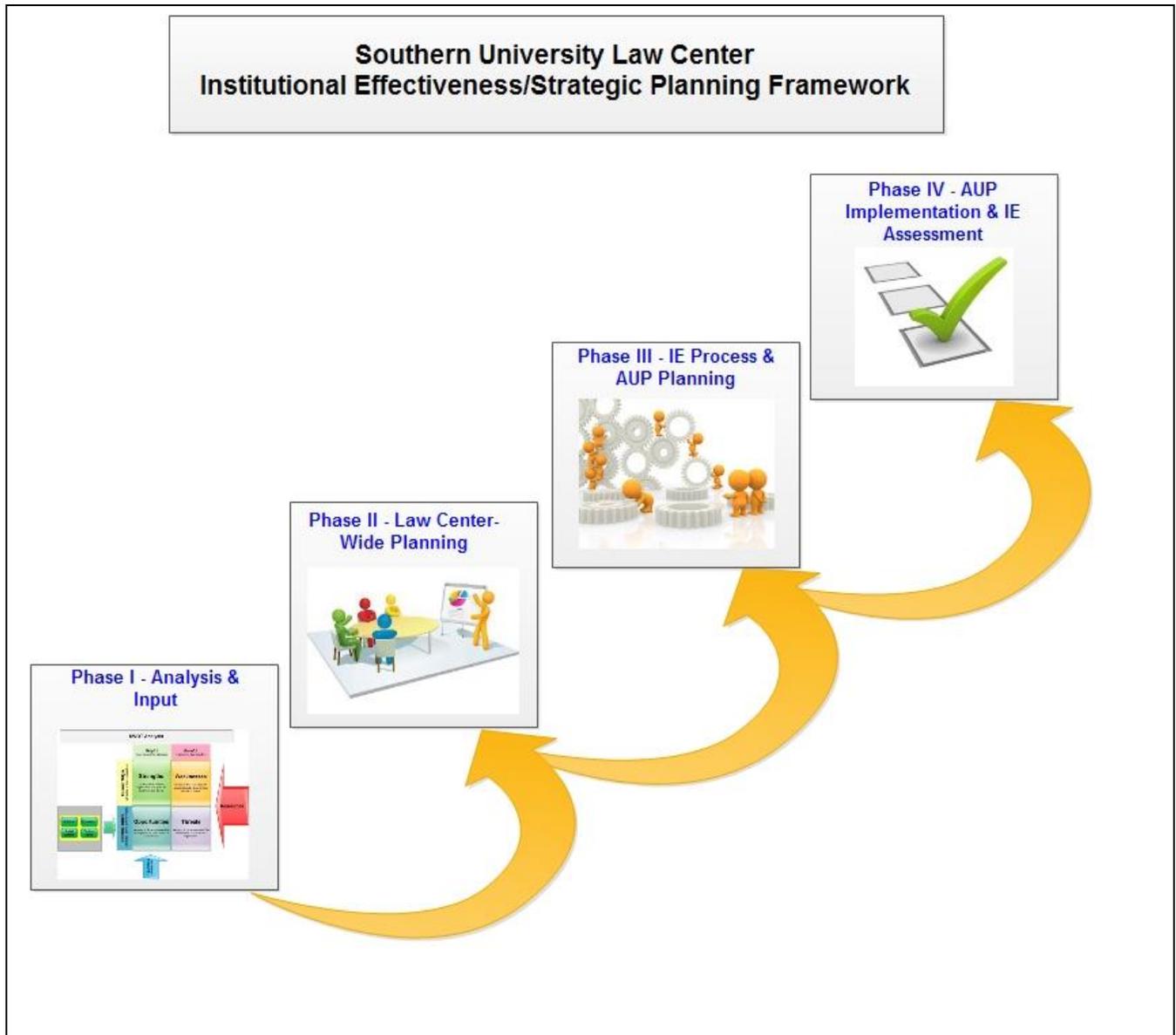
8. Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change. Assessment alone changes little. Its greatest contribution comes on campuses where the quality of teaching and learning is visibly valued and worked at. On such campuses, the push to improve educational performance is a visible and primary goal of leadership; improving the quality of [legal] education is central to the institution's planning, budgeting, and personnel decisions. On such campuses, information about learning outcomes is seen as an integral part of decision making, and avidly sought.

9. Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public. There is a compelling public stake in education. As educators, we have a responsibility

to the [people] that support or depend on us to provide information about the ways in which our students meet goals and expectations. But that responsibility goes beyond the reporting of such information; our deeper obligation -- to ourselves, our students, and society -- is to improve. Those to whom educators are accountable have a corresponding obligation to support such attempts at improvement.

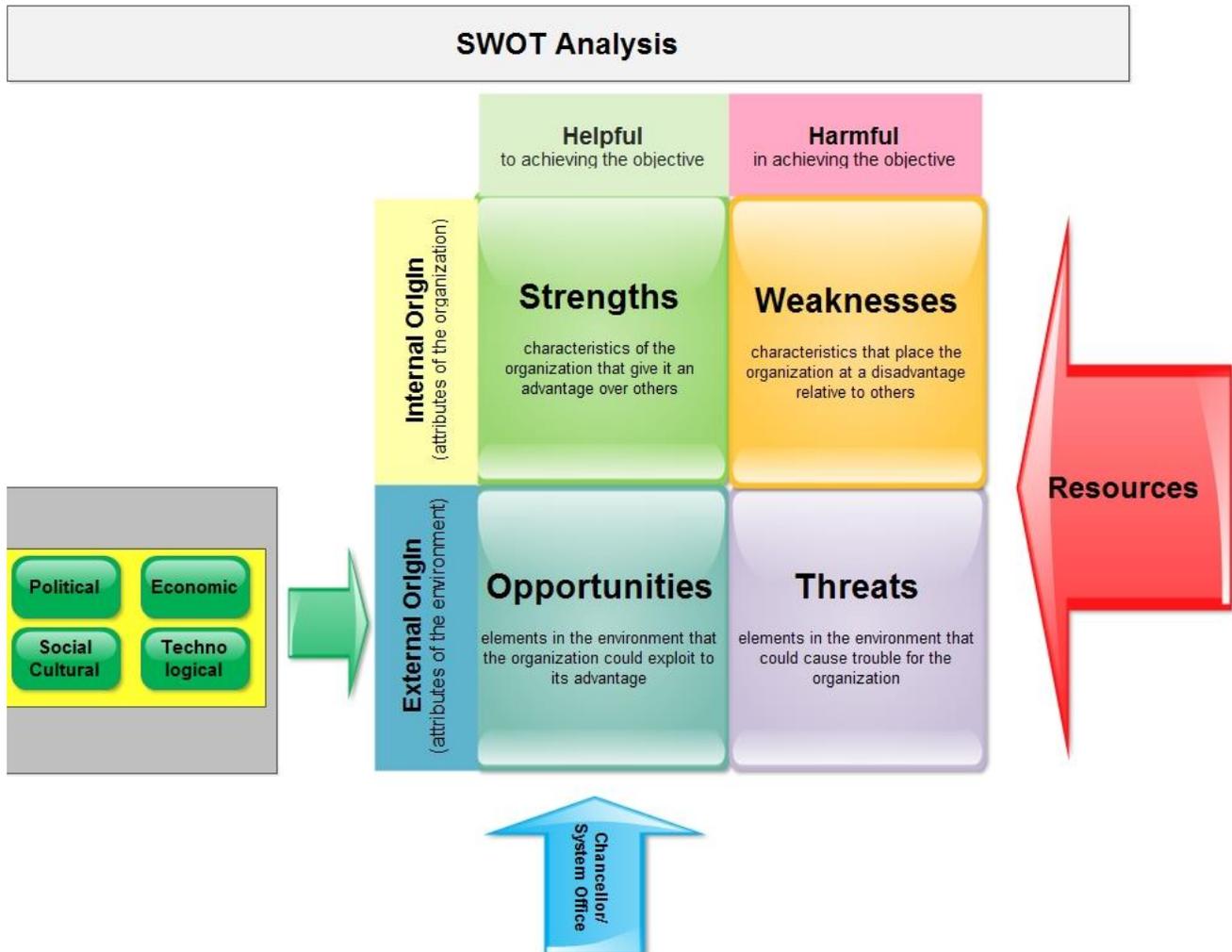
Source: *Institutional Effectiveness Manual*, Law Center of South Carolina Beaufort, 10-11, citing Alexander W. Astin et al, American Association of Higher Education Assessment Forum.

# Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning Framework (Phases I, II, III, and IV)



## Phase I: Analysis and Input

- The Law Center initiates an organization-wide analysis and gathers input from all academic and administrative areas through
  - responses to surveys, questionnaires, and interviews;
  - a SWOT Analysis to determine the state of the Law Center relative to internal and external inputs;
  - Inputs from the Chancellor and System Office
- The Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, Vice-Chancellor for Finance and Vice-Chancellor for Institutional Accountability and Accreditation compile and analyze the data from Law Center-wide input.



SWOT Dimension	Example Questions
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strengths</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What advantages does the organization have?</li> <li>– What does the organization do better than its peers or similar organizations?</li> <li>– What unique or lowest-cost resources can the organization draw upon that others cannot?</li> <li>– What do external people in the organization’s market see as the organization’s strengths?</li> <li>– What critical factors make students want to choose the organization?</li> <li>– What is the organization’s unique selling or value proposition?</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Weaknesses</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What can the organization improve upon?</li> <li>– What should the organization avoid?</li> <li>– What do external people in the organization’s market see as the organization’s weaknesses?</li> <li>– What critical factors make students choose other organizations for their continued education?</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b></p>	<p>Can the organization capitalize on relevant trends? Some examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Social</li> <li>– State/Federal education policies/statutes</li> <li>– Changes in legal practice</li> <li>– Technology</li> <li>– Population profiles</li> <li>– Local, regional, national events</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Threats</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What obstacles does the organization face?</li> <li>– What competitors doing?</li> <li>– Are there changes in quality standards, regulations/statutes/policies for the services that the organization delivers?</li> <li>– Is there a looming technology threatening the organization?</li> <li>– Are there budget or financing issues?</li> </ul>

General inputs with example questions that may affect strengths/opportunities and threats for the organization:

General Element	Description
<p><b>Political Factors</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– When is the country's next local, state, or national election? How could this change federal, regional, or state policy?</li> <li>– Who are the most likely contenders for power? What are their views on education policy, and on other policies that affect the organization?</li> <li>– Could any pending legislation, taxation, or budget changes affect the organization, either positively or negatively?</li> <li>– How will educational policies, along with any planned changes to it, affect the organization? Is there a trend towards regulation or deregulation?</li> <li>– What is the likely timescale of proposed legislative changes?</li> <li>– Are there any other political factors that are likely to change?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Economic Factors</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– How stable is the current economy? Is it growing, stagnating, or declining?</li> <li>– Are students' or families' levels of disposable income rising or falling? How is this likely to change in the next few years?</li> <li>– What is the unemployment rate? How will this affect access to the organization?</li> <li>– Do students/families have easy access to credit/financial aid? If not, how will this affect your organization?</li> <li>– Does globalization have any effects on the economic environment for the organization?</li> <li>– Are there any other economic factors that should be considered?</li> </ul>

General Element	Description
<b>Social/Cultural Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What is the population's growth rate and age profile? How is this likely to change?</li> <li>– Are generational shifts in attitude likely to affect what the organization is doing?</li> <li>– What are society's levels of health, education, and social mobility? How are these changing, and what impact does this have?</li> <li>– What employment patterns, job market trends, and attitudes toward work in the legal field or related fields can be observed? Are these different for different age groups?</li> <li>– What social attitudes could affect the organization? Have there been recent socio-cultural changes that might affect this?</li> <li>– How do religious beliefs and lifestyle choices affect the population?</li> <li>– Are any other socio-cultural factors likely to drive change for the organization?</li> </ul>
<b>Technological Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Are there any new technologies that the organization should be using?</li> <li>– Are there any new technologies on the horizon that could radically affect the legal profession or related fields?</li> <li>– Do any Law Center competitors have access to new technologies that could redefine their services or methods?</li> <li>– In which areas do governments and educational institutions focus their research? Is there anything that the organization can do to take advantage of efforts?</li> <li>– How have infrastructure changes affected work patterns (for example, levels of remote working/telecommuting)?</li> <li>– Are there any other technological factors that should be considered?</li> </ul>

## **Phase II: Law Center-Wide Planning**

- A Law Center Retreat is held at least once a year to discuss results of the data analysis. Each unit presents the state of its status in order to determine the State of the Law Center.
- The Strategic Planning and Institutional Effective Committee develops and/or revises the strategic goals and objectives for the Law Center Strategic Plan..

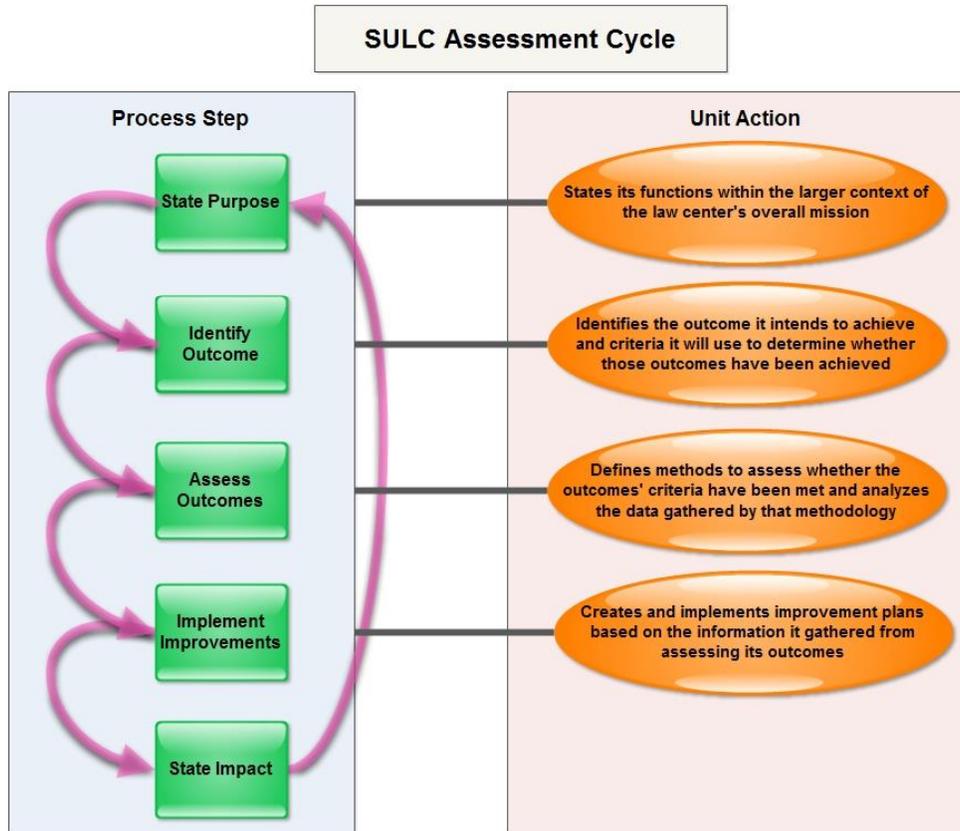
## **Phase III: Annual Institutional Effectiveness Process & Annual Unit Planning**

- Annual Unit Plans (AUP) to accomplish the Law Center Mission and Strategic Plan are written by the units and sub-units (as defined on the Law Center functional organization chart). AUPs cover a one-year span for state reporting requirements. As needed, plans covering multiple-year spans may be developed to satisfy internal planning or other external reporting or planning requirements.

*Note: for the purposes of this document all such plans shall be referred to as AUPs*

- AUPs contribute to the IE process by including assessment methods and findings to determine how well each objective in the AUP performed in delivering on expected objective results.
- Unit/sub-unit heads review the Law Center strategic plan for their areas of responsibility.
- AUPs for academic division programs should contain objectives (five to seven) for each academic program with appropriate assessment criteria and methods. In addition, AUPs or reference documents should contain objectives for each course and with appropriate assessment criteria and methods.

- Unit/sub-unit heads incorporate the following assessment cycle when developing AUPs:



Referencing the SULC Assessment Cycle framework, Unit/sub-unit heads develop AUPs using the following format;

- Unit objective/project Description;
- expected outcomes;
- assessment criteria and evaluation methods;
- assessment results (data);
- changes and impact of results for improvement<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Beginning with the 2019-2020 fiscal year, Administrative Units will no longer report changes and impact of results for improvement. Academic Units will continue to report and evaluate changes and impact of results for improvement.

- *Note: the above elements may be organized and combined to satisfy specific state or accreditation planning and reporting requirements.*
- The Vice-Chancellor for Institutional Accountability and Accreditation reviews the AUPs and provides feedback to units/sub- units. Revisions are made if necessary.

#### **Phase IV: AUP Implementation and IE Assessment**

- The AUPs are implemented and data collected throughout the year.
- Each unit/sub-unit submits a narrative to the Vice-Chancellor for Institutional Accountability and Accreditation in which the assessment results are analyzed and impact of results are used to make improvements.

Closing the Loop – Unit/sub-unit heads must answer the following questions:

- How will the results be used?
- What actions were taken or will be taken based on data collected?

If outcomes/objectives were not met, unit/sub-unit heads must determine whether objectives/outcomes must be revised or if a plan of action must be developed overcome any issues to reach the objective/outcome.

- If outcomes/objectives were met, unit/sub-unit heads must determine;
- whether to continue with the objective/outcome (if so, describe what the assessment revealed to warrant continued monitoring);
  - revise the objective/outcome, discontinue the objective/outcome;
  - or, propose a new objective/outcome;

*Note: Closeout reporting may be combined in the AUP document to conform to state or accreditation requirements.*

- The Vice Chancellor for Institutional Accountability and Accreditation in concert with unit/sub-unit heads makes recommendations regarding the results of the AUPs and narratives and submits the findings to the Chancellor.
- The Chancellor, respective unit/sub-unit heads, and the Vice-Chancellor for Financial Affairs develop budget recommendations for the next fiscal year for review and approval by the System Office and System Management Board, as needed.

- The Vice-Chancellor for Accountability and Accreditation, Vice-Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, AVC for Academic Support/Bar Prep review the results of external and internal measures for student success and present the results to the Law Center Faculty during faculty meetings and Faculty/Staff retreats. Based on data presented, the Law Center Faculty make suggestions for improvement in the Juris Doctor Program as needed.

## Annual Unit Planning and Institutional Effectiveness/Outcome Assessment Calendar of Events

Date	Event Description
April 1 – April 30	Assessment – all Units begin preparing Annual Unit Plans for upcoming year; meet with Chancellor and/or Vice Chancellor for Finance for inputs to budgets
May 1	Substantial changes to Unit budgets due to Vice Chancellor for Financial Affairs
June 1 – June 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Compilation of assessment results of previous year</li> <li>– Units evaluate assessment data and make recommendations for changes based on results</li> <li>– Units to interpret and make use of assessment data from the upcoming year</li> <li>– Identify strengths and weaknesses revealed by assessment data.</li> <li>– Determine how to best use the information from these assessments.</li> <li>– Determine whether changes in policies, procedures or other interventions are needed to address issues raised by assessment evidence.</li> <li>– Evaluate the usefulness of current assessment methods.</li> <li>– Identify any changes that may be needed in assessment methods or questions asked for next year</li> <li>– Keep documentation of any assessment-related decisions made.</li> </ul>

**Annual Unit Planning and Institutional Effectiveness/Outcome Assessment Calendar of Events (Continued)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event Description</b>
July 1	AUPs complete for upcoming year
August 31	Budget Approval by SU Management Board
September	Budget submission to Board of Regents



## Administrative and Academic Units

- Chancellor
- Vice-Chancellor Academic and Student Affairs
- Vice-Chancellor Accountability and Accreditation
- Vice-Chancellor for Financial Affairs
- Associate Vice-Chancellor Academic Support/Bar Preparation
- Associate Vice-Chancellor/CIO of Technology, Security and Telecommunication
- Associate Vice-Chancellor Evening Division and Emerging Programs
- Director of Library Services
- Director of Legal Analysis and Writing
- Director of Alumni Relations
- Director of Career Services
- Director of External Affairs
- Director of Continuing Legal Education
- Director of Financial Aid

## Annual Unit Plan

Southern University Law Center Mission Statement:

The mission and tradition of the Law Center is to provide access and opportunity to a diverse group of students from underrepresented racial, ethnic, and socio-economic groups to obtain a high quality legal education with special emphasis on the Louisiana civil law. Additionally, our mission is to train a cadre of lawyers equipped with the skills necessary for the practice of law and for positions of leadership in society.

Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit Purpose Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit Objective	Expected Outcome	Assessment Criteria and Evaluation Methods	Assessment Results/Data

## **Guidelines for Completing the Annual Institutional Effectiveness and Outcomes Assessment Plans and Reports**

The institutional effectiveness process involves every unit annually on objectives (i.e., goals), assessing progress towards its goals, and making improvements based on those findings.

The units will be expected to:

- establish statements of intended outcomes that are related to or supportive of the Law Center's mission,
- play a major role in the identification of procedures and means to assess the extent to which the unit's intended outcomes or objectives have been accomplished, and
- use the results of assessment to improve student learning or unit operations.

An assessment process should also be designed to inform faculty, unit directors, and other decision-makers about relevant issues that can impact the Law Center operations and student learning. The process delineated below serves as a template for the activities undertaken to create the specific unit assessment plans at Southern University Law Center.

*STEP 1: Define goals and objectives for the unit.*

A unit's goals and objectives serve as the foundation for assessment planning. Unit assessment provides information on how well the unit is performing relative to its established goals and objectives.

*STEP 2: Identify and describe instruments or methods for assessing achievement.*

Once goals and objectives have been identified, assessment methods for collecting data are chosen. These methods reflect the unit objectives defined in the first step.

*STEP 3: Decide how the results will be disseminated and used for improvement.*

Units use assessment results and information in a timely fashion to promote continuous programmatic improvements. The feedback process is essential to all assessment plans because it gives administrators the opportunity to use recent findings to incorporate changes necessary to create successful outcomes.

*STEP 4: Carry out assessment plans and revise as needed.*

Unit heads should implement assessment strategies. When feedback from assessment practices becomes available, units should use the results for programmatic improvement or to revise objectives or plans, if necessary.

By the beginning of each fiscal year, each unit completes an Annual Unit Plan for the academic year ahead. This is the planning stage. Narratives indicating changes and impact of results are due at the end of each fiscal year and include findings based on assessment activities.

**So, why do assessment?**

1. To demonstrate quality and excellence and ensure that the same level of quality continues;
2. To identify areas needing attention, support, and development, and to decide how to improve those areas; and
3. To plan changes that will improve policies, procedures, services, curriculum, resources, teaching, campus climate, and ultimately improve student learning

**Goals of Assessment** are to learn something about the unit's:

- Demand (needed, actual use, projected use)
- Quality (perception, satisfaction)
- Efficiency (timeliness, adequacy)
- Student Learning and Development

## Guidelines for Writing a Good Purpose Statement

The Purpose Statement is the initial point of reference for any unit. It is a concise statement of the general values and principles that guide the unit. In broad ways, it sets a tone and a philosophical position from which follow a unit's goals and objectives; therefore, the purpose statement is also a statement of the unit's vision. A good starting point for any purpose statement is to consider how the unit's purpose supports or complements the Law Center mission and strategic goals.

### A Unit Purpose Statement

- Is a broad statement of what the unit is, what it does, and for whom it does it
- Is a clear description of the purpose of the unit
- Reflects how the unit contributes to the education and careers of students
- Is aligned with the Law Center mission
- Should be distinctive for the unit

### Components of a Purpose Statement

- **Primary functions or activities** of the unit – most important functions, operations, outcomes, and/or offerings of the unit
- **Purpose of the unit** – primary reasons why you perform your major activities or operations
- **Stakeholders**- groups or individuals that participate in the program and those that will benefit from the unit.

### Checklist for a Purpose Statement

- Is the statement clear and concise?
- Is it distinctive and memorable?
- Does it clearly state the purpose of the unit?
- Does it indicate the primary functions or activities of the unit?
- Does it indicate who the stakeholders are?
- Does it support the mission of the Law Center?
- Does it reflect the unit's priorities and values?

The purpose statement can and should be short. The purpose statement should define the broad purposes the unit is aiming to achieve, describe those the unit is designed to serve, and state the values and guiding principles that define its standards. The following format will help you develop and write a good purpose statement:

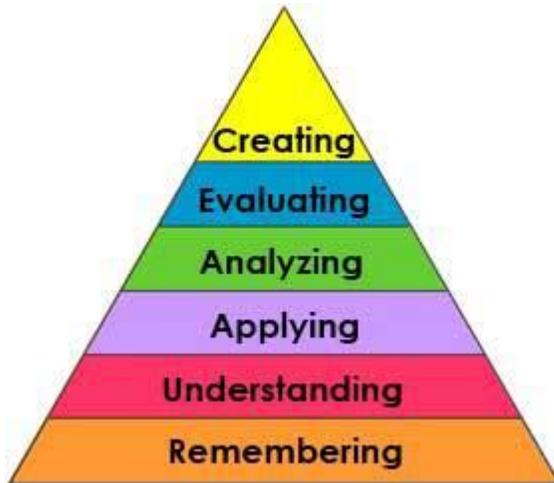
“The purpose of (your office or unit name) is to (your primary purpose) by providing (your primary functions or activities) to (your stakeholders).”

You may add additional clarifying statements and the order of the pieces may vary, but your purpose statement should have the following four components: your office or unit name; your primary purpose; your primary functions or activities; and your stakeholders. And remember, the purpose statement needs to be consistent when published:

- On the web;
- In the Catalog;
- In Institutional Effectiveness reports;
- In Unit Plans;
- Everywhere!

## Guidelines for Writing Good Student Learning Outcomes

Student learning outcomes are statements of what students will be able to do after taking a particular class or completing a particular program. Student learning outcomes can be written for individual classes, entire programs, or for the institution as a whole. Student learning outcomes should be general in scope. They should be written using active verbs (based on Bloom's Taxonomy) that describe what the student will be able to DO, and they should also indicate how the outcome will be measured or assessed.



- **Remembering:** Recalling information
- **Understanding:** Explaining a new concept
- **Applying:** Using information in a new way
- **Analyzing:** Differentiating between different parts
- **Evaluating:** Supporting a stand or decision
- **Creating:** Devising a new product or point of view

The process should begin with writing a stem. The stem sets up each objective and outlines the task and timetable. Examples are as follows:

- After completing the lesson, the student will be able to:
- By completing the assigned activities, the student will demonstrate the ability to:
- At the conclusion of the course/unit/study, the student will:

In the next step, using an action verb, list the actual product, process, or outcome. For example:

- identify the hearsay exceptions in the admission of evidence
- discuss the role of the judge in the voir dire process
- list common objections in criminal cases
- differentiate between de jure and de facto segregation

## Helpful verbs

The verbs listed below can be used to create student learning outcomes

REMEMBERING	UNDERSTANDING	APPLYING	ANALYZING	EVALUATING	CREATING
Acquire	Arrange	Apply	Analyze	Alter	Appraise
Attend	Categorize	Calculate	Appraise	Calculate	Argue
Choose	Change	Change	Break down	Categorize	Assess
Collect	Chart	Choose	Categorize	Change	Compare
Complete	Circle	Classify	Classify	Classify	Conclude
Copy	Cite	Compute	Combine	Combine	Consider
Define	Classify	Conduct	Compare	Compile	Contrast
Describe	Compile	Construct	Conclude	Compose	Critique
Detect	Comprehension	Demonstrate	Contrast	Conduct	Decide
Differentiate	Conclude	Develop	Criticize	Constitute	Describe
Distinguish	Convert	Discover	Deduce	Construct	Discriminate
Duplicate	Defend	Employ	Defend	Create	Interpret
Find	Demonstrate	Generalize	Detect	Deduce	Judge
Identify	Determine	Manipulate	Diagram	Derive	Justify
Imitate	Diagram	Modify	Differentiate	Design	Recommend
Indicate	Differentiate	Operate	Discriminate	Develop	Relate
Isolate	Distinguish	Organize	Distinguish	Devise	Standardize
Label	Document	Predict	Evaluate	Discover	Summarize
List	Draw	Prepare	Formulate	Discuss	Validate
Mark	Edit	Produce	Generate	Document	
Match	Estimate	Relate	Identify	Expand	
Name	Explain	Restructure	Illustrate	Explain	
Order	Extend	Show	Induce	Formulate	
Outline	Fill in	Solve	Infer	Generalize	
Place	Follow	Transfer	Outline	Generate	
	Formulate	Use	Paraphrase	Modify	
	Gather		Plan	Organize	
	Generalize		Point out	Originate	
	Give example		Present	Paraphrase	
	Give in own words		Question	Plan	
	Illustrate		Recognize	Predict	
	Infer		Relate	Produce	
	Interpret		Save	Propose	
	Itemize		Select	Rearrange	
	Locate		Separate	Reconstruct	
	Make		Shorten	Relate	
	Organize		Structure	Reorganize	
	Paraphrase		Subdivide	Revise	
	Predict			Rewrite	
	Prepare			Signify	
	Quote			Simplify	
	Read			Specify	
	Rearrange			Summarize	
	Recognize			Synthesize	
	Record			Systematize	
	Relate			Tell	
	Reorder			Transmit	
	Rephrase			Write	
	Represent				
	Reproduce				
	Restate				
	Rewrite				
	Select				
	State				
	Summarize				
	Translate				
	Underline				
	Update				

## Words to Avoid When Writing Student Learning Outcomes

The words and phrases listed below should be avoided when writing student learning outcomes. Most of these words or phrases represent the phases in the student learning process and do not require students to demonstrate knowledge, skills or ability.

- Acquire
- Develop an understanding of
- Have an awareness of
- Be familiar with
- Have a good sense of
- Are exposed to
- Be aware of
- Have knowledge of
- Be conversant with
- Participate in
- Be introduced to
- Understand

## How will the student learning outcome be assessed?

There are two types of assessment:

- **Direct** – the measurement of actual student learning, competency, or performance. These are clear, direct, and convincing.
  - Tests and exams
  - External judges
  - Oral exams
  - Portfolios (with rubrics)
  - Behavioral observations
  - Simulations
  - Project evaluations
  - Performance appraisals
  - Assignments
- **Indirect** – the measurement of variables that assume student learning.
  - Written surveys and questionnaires to include
    - Student perception
    - Alumni perception
    - Internship perception
    - Employer perceptions
  - Exit and other interviews
  - Focus groups
  - Retention/persistence
  - Transfer rates

- Graduation rates
- Bar passage rates

### **So, why aren't course grades a good example of an assessment measure?**

Many faculty wonder why they cannot simply use course grades as a matter of demonstrating student learning. Grades can be one of many parts of an assessment system, but student learning needs to demonstrate the skills and abilities of students. Many times grades can be affected by absences, submitting work late, participation in class, etc. These things may cause the course grade to not accurately reflect understanding. Other factors affecting grades are:

- Multiple faculty teaching different sections of the same course
- Differing grade structures
- Differing course content

### **How will the results be used?**

- How will the results be used for program and/or student learning improvement?
- What changes will be made to improve the unit, program, or student learning?
- Indicate timeframe for changes.
- Assessment can help make your case for program needs (e.g. requesting new faculty or staff).
- If results find no changes are needed, state that, then focus on another goal or objective for next cycle.

For the summary, wrap up what happened during the previous year, summarize findings, highlight surprising or important findings, and cover anything that happened within the unit that may not have fit nicely under an objective. The summary does not have to be long and should emphasize the things that are going well.

What students learn in any degree program is determined by the faculty who teach the program. To ensure that the expectations for student learning are consensual and remain current, faculty should continually work together to determine, review, and revise the student learning outcomes.

## **Guidelines for Assessment - Academic Programs**

- Assessment works best when the academic program it seeks to improve has a clear and explicitly stated purpose.
- The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.
- Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.
- Assessment requires attention to outcomes; however, the learning experiences that lead to the intended (desired) outcomes require equal attention.
- Academic programs must identify what it is that a student must know or be able to do upon graduation from the degree program (student learning outcomes). An academic program also has operational or programmatic outcomes. For example, an intended operational/program intended outcome might be to acquire accreditation within a certain period after implementation of the degree program. Some researchers write that intended outcomes are all student outcomes for an academic program.
- Supporting documentation is needed when an institution is being reviewed for accreditation (or reaffirmation of accreditation) including:
  - Documents listing expected outcomes (program and student learning outcomes) for all educational programs along with assessment procedures;
  - Evidence that (student) learning outcomes and program outcomes are evaluated and achieved.
- Assessment is most effective when it is ongoing, and not episodic or sporadic to meet accreditation requirements.
- Assessment promotes wider improvement when there is understanding and participation in the process throughout the Law Center.
- Assessment at all levels of the Law Center is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change, such as an implemented strategic plan developed in relation to the Law Center-wide goals that operationalize the mission statement of the Law Center.

- It is through assessment and using the results for improvement that educators make themselves accountable to students, to the Law Center, and to the public.
- The process of institutional effectiveness (planning and evaluating/assessing to determine the achievement of an institution's mission) is:
  1. Setting goals/objectives (intended outcomes);
  2. Developing strategies and tactics to reach the goal;
  3. Identifying at what level (criteria) the goal is to be achieved (expected results);
  4. Assessing by already identified measures and procedures that the objectives/intended outcome has been achieved;
  5. Analyzing the data; and
  6. Using the result for improvement.
- The institutional effectiveness process is most effective when assessment is undertaken in an environment that is accepting, supportive, and enabling.

## **Guidelines for Assessment - Administrative and Educational Support Units**

- Assessment works best when the unit it seeks to improve has a clear and explicitly stated mission or purpose statement.
- Assessment is ongoing, and not episodic or sporadic to meet accreditation requirements.
- Assessment at all levels of the institution is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change, such as an implemented strategic plan developed in relation to the Law Center-wide goals that “operationalize” the mission statement of the Law Center.
- It is through assessment and using the results of it for improvement that administrators and staff make themselves accountable to students, to the Law Center, and to the public.
- Assessment produces the data or evidence required to consider the current quality of what a unit is doing.
- The process of institutional effectiveness (planning and evaluating/assessing to determine the achievement of an institution’s mission) is:
  1. Setting goals/objectives (intended outcomes);
  2. Developing strategies and tactics to reach the goal;
  3. Identifying at what level (criteria) the goal is to be achieved (expected results);
  4. Assessing by already identified measures and procedures that the goal/intended outcome has been achieved;
  5. Analyzing the data; and
  6. Using the result for improvement.
- The institutional effectiveness process is most effective when assessment is undertaken in an environment that is accepting, supportive, and enabling.
- All of the individuals in a unit should be involved in the development of institutional effectiveness plans.
- Intended outcomes (goals) must be linked to the mission and goals of the Law Center and/or the strategic plan of the Law Center (which is linked to the mission and goals of the Law Center).

- Assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle for improvement.
- The modifications (improvements) an institution makes to its processes in response to data gathered about outcomes will be evaluated and validated by SACSCOC.

## **Developing Outcomes for Annual Institutional Effectiveness and Outcomes Assessment Reports**

- The identified outcomes to be assessed on an annual basis are derived from the on-going student learning and academic program outcomes.
- For the academic unit, the most important component of institutional effectiveness is an annual student learning outcomes assessment process.
- All student learning outcomes must be reported and assessed on a routine basis. If a program has fewer than five student learning outcomes, all should be assessed annually.

Additionally, other identified outcomes related to administrative goals may be included and assessed.

- Identified outcomes must be measurable or ascertainable, and at least one or two assessment methods should be done for each identified outcome. Multiple measures are ideal.
- Each assessment method for an identified outcome should specify an expectation of the desirable level of performance (criteria).
- The desirable level of performance should be realistic, and not unreasonably high or low.
- The majority of the faculty in an academic/educational program must actively participate in developing the identified outcomes (expected results).
- Assess only three to five outcomes on a yearly basis. The identified outcomes should capture the primary goals of a unit.
- Using the established Annual Unit Plan form will ensure that goals and objectives are related to the Law Center Mission, Goals and Strategic Plan.
- The intended outcomes should include at least one that refers to customer satisfaction where applicable.
- Intended outcomes must be measurable and ascertainable, and it is suggested that at least two assessment measures should be identified for each intended outcome.

- Each assessment measure or method for an intended outcome should specify an expectation of the desirable level (criteria) of performance.
- The desirable level (criteria) should be realistic and not unreasonably high or low.
- All members of a unit should play an active role in developing institutional effectiveness plans and outcomes assessment reports.

## **Inventory of Assessment Measures**

Much of the data that can be used for assessment in an institution's planning and evaluation process are already available since most institutions collect large volumes of data for routine reports and for special purposes. Such data may be dispersed throughout the institution, having been collected by diverse units at different times and for greatly varying purposes. The following are examples of assessment activities that could be conducted at the Law Center.

These examples may be helpful as you determine how to assess intended academic program outcomes, student learning outcomes in both academic programs and courses, and administrative and educational support unit intended outcomes.

### **Studies of student performance**

- In credit courses, internships, competitions, etc.
- In graduate/professional school
- In jobs related to area of study
- On admissions and/or achievement tests
- On licensure examinations
- On pre-or post-tests
- On standardized or locally constructed exams

### **Institutional surveys and studies**

- Advisement surveys
- Alumni surveys
- Community needs assessments
- Employer opinion surveys
- Exit interview/survey
- Faculty/staff surveys
- Graduate/completer surveys
- Labor market surveys
- Non-returning student surveys
- Orientation surveys
- Personnel evaluations
- Placement studies
- Program reviews
- Retention/attrition studies
- Special committee reports
- Student demographic studies
- Student evaluations of teaching (course evaluation)
- Transfer studies

### **Routine reports and publications**

- Audit report
- Course schedules
- Enrollment reports
- Financial reports
- Reports for government offices/agencies (State Accountability report, student financial aid, veterans' programs, etc.)

### **Reports or studies by other organizations**

- Advisory committee recommendations
- Census Bureau
- Chamber of Commerce
- Employment offices
- Formal hearings
- Governing board directives
- Informal hearings
- Newspaper research offices
- State education agencies
- Trade associations
- Law Center research projects
- Utility companies

### **Assessment Measures for Administrative and Educational Units (7.1, 7.2, 8.2)**

1. Satisfaction surveys
2. Number of complaints
3. Count of program participants
4. Growth in participation
5. Statistical reports
6. Staff training hours
7. Number of applications
8. Focus groups
9. Opinion surveys
10. External review
11. Number of staff trained
12. Dollars raised
13. Attendance at events

## Assessment Measures for the J.D. Program at the Law Center (8.2)

1. External measures of success of J.D. program
  - A. Louisiana State Bar Examination
  
2. Internal measures of success of J. D. program.
 

Courses in the Law Center Assessment Cycle

Fall 2014	Basic Civil Procedure Contracts	None	None
Spring 2015	Obligations Constitutional Law I	None	None
Fall 2015	Basic Civil Procedure Contracts	Evidence Constitutional Law II	None
Spring 2016	Obligations Constitutional Law I	Business Entities Professional Responsibility	None
Fall 2016	Basic Civil Procedure Contracts	Evidence Constitutional Law II	Sale & Lease Successions
Spring 2017	Basic Civil Procedure Torts II <sup>4</sup>	Business Entities Professional Responsibility	Federal Jurisdiction Security Devices

<sup>4</sup>Previously Constitutional Law I. Changed because of realignment of curriculum.

## Law Center Course Level Assessment Rubric

	<b>Excellent (5 pts)</b>	<b>Accomplished (3 pts)</b>	<b>Developing (1 pt)</b>	<b>Beginning (0 pt)</b>
<p>Issue Spotting (1.000, 20%) LA-SULC-2015.1-Issue Spotting</p>	<p>Student properly identifies the issue, and any sub-issues that are dispositive for the overall question being asked. Issue is clearly stated in a way that appropriately links it to the specific facts of the question.</p>	<p>The issue and sub-issues identified are relevant but not completely dispositive of the question being asked.</p> <p>Issue is clearly stated.</p>	<p>Student identifies the relevant issue but fails to address dispositive sub-issues. Issue is clearly stated.</p>	<p>Student fails to identify the proper issue required to address the question being asked.</p>
<p>Analysis (2.000, 40%) LA-SULC-2015.2-Analysis</p>	<p>Student thoroughly applies specific facts and makes reasonable inferences from facts to legal elements, factors, sub-issues, and policy.</p>	<p>Student applies facts and reasonable inferences from facts to legal elements, factors, sub-issues, and policy— a few minor areas are not thorough.</p>	<p>Student applies facts and reasonable inferences from facts to legal elements, factors, sub-issues, and policy – 2 or more areas are not thorough.</p>	<p>Student fails to apply specific facts to the legal elements with any consistency.</p>
<p>Quality of Writing (1.000, 20%) LA-SULC-2015.3-Quality of Writing</p>	<p>Consistently follows format requested in the call of the question. Overall essay shows a sense of proportion and balance that signifies a substantial understanding of the relative importance of the various issues discussed.</p>	<p>Generally follows format requested in the call of the question.</p> <p>Overall essay shows some sense of proportion and balance that signifies some understanding of the relative importance of the various issues discussed. Dispositive issues are treated thoroughly, most relevant issues are given some (but not</p>	<p>Significantly departs from format requested in the call of the question. All issues treated with the same degree of detail, OR significant errors made in identifying dispositive issues. Moderately</p>	<p>The answer fails to follow the call of the question; poor grammar; incomplete sentences; and answer does not address the issues.</p>

	<b>Excellent (5 pts)</b>	<b>Accomplished (3 pts)</b>	<b>Developing (1 pt)</b>	<b>Beginning (0 pt)</b>
	<p>Dispositive issues are treated thoroughly; relevant issues are given some attention; irrelevant issues are not discussed. Sentences are consistently well-crafted in a highly readable style. Traditional, moderately formal rules of English grammar are consistently followed. Appropriate legal diction employed. Jargon not used.</p>	<p>too much) attention, and very few irrelevant issues are discussed at all (and none extensively), OR some effort made to distinguish relevant importance of issues, but with some misidentification of dispositive issues. Consistent use of complete sentences with very few (or no) incomplete sentences (fragments) or run-ons. Traditional, moderately formal rules of English grammar generally followed.</p>	<p>consistent use of complete sentences. More than a few incomplete sentences (fragments) or run-ons. Informal English grammar utilized (but generally correctly), OR appropriate grammar attempted but with significant or frequent errors in application.</p>	
<p>Doctrinal Knowledge (1.000, 20%) LA-SULC-2015.4-Doctrinal Knowledge</p>	<p>Dispositive portions of relevant rule are stated fully or are rephrased in a legally equivalent way. Non-dispositive portions of rule (or relevant but non-dispositive rules) stated as succinctly as possible. Irrelevant rules are not mentioned at all. Rules relied upon are stated in a way that specifically applies to the</p>	<p>Relevant rule for stated issue is set forth fully as given in outline (or rephrased in a legally equivalent way).</p>	<p>Relevant rule for stated issue is set forth, but is either not stated fully as given in outline, or is partially incorrect, or is rephrased in a way that is not legally equivalent.</p>	<p>Does not demonstrate a knowledge of the subject matter.</p>

	<b>Excellent (5 pts)</b>	<b>Accomplished (3 pts)</b>	<b>Developing (1 pt)</b>	<b>Beginning (0 pt)</b>
	facts of the exam question.			

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## Glossary

**Accreditation:** both a process and a product that rely heavily on integrity, thoughtful and principled judgment, the rigorous application of requirements, and a context of trust. It provides an assessment of an institution's effectiveness in fulfillment of its mission, its compliance with the requirements of its accrediting association, and its continuous efforts to enhance the quality of student learning and its programs and services. Based on reasoned judgment, the process serves to stimulate evaluation and improvement, while providing a means of accountability to constituents and the public. The "product" of accreditation represents a public statement of an institution's continuing capacity to provide effective programs and services based on agreed-upon requirements.

**Accountability:** the public reporting of student, program or institutional data to justify decisions or policies; providing evidence that the organization is efficiently meeting its obligations to its constituencies.

**Action plan:** a plan developed to address immediate and specific issues or situations, often developed to implement strategies in the strategic plan. The action plan shows how you closed the loop.

**Alignment:** ensuring that the goals at one level of the university are appropriately addressed at other levels of the university.

**Administrative Measure:** a method that gauges entity effectiveness in non-learning areas.

**Administrative Outcomes:** operational and specific statements derived from a unit's core functions that describe the desired quality of key services within an administrative unit and define exactly what the services should promote.

**Alignment:** the process of assuring that learning outcomes, curriculum and instruction, and the system of assessment all support and match each other.

**Assessment:** the systematic and ongoing process of identifying, collecting, interpreting data (quantitative and qualitative), and reporting on data to determine the extent to which expected results are actually achieved. It implies both measurement and analysis. This process may take place in courses, programs, and across the institution and focuses on outcomes, especially student learning outcomes, for continuous improvement.

**Assessment Method:** a measurement tool used to measure and evaluate outcomes.

**Annual Unit Plan (AUP):** a plan that documents a unit’s expected outcome, assessment methods, targeted criteria, and; actual use made of results.

**Authentic:** a characteristic of assessments that have a high degree of similarity to tasks performed in the real world.

**Authentic Assessment:** assessment that requires students to perform a task in a real-life context or a context that simulates a real-life context, rather than take a test. Designed to judge students' abilities to use specific knowledge and skills and actively demonstrate what they know rather than recognize or recall answers to questions.

**Benchmark:** a sample of student work or a detailed description of a specific level of student performance that illustrates a category or score on a rubric; it includes a target value and is often used instead of “performance indicator.”

**Benchmarking:** the process of comparing scores from one organization to those from another on the same benchmark (performance indicator). Other organizations may be “peer” or “aspirational” entities.

**Closing the loop:** modifying strategies or implementing other changes as needed to better achieve measurable objectives.

**Cohort:** a group (of students). For example, all first year new freshmen that begin in the same fall semester are considered a cohort.

**Competency:** a combination of skills, ability and knowledge needed to perform a specific task at a specified criterion.

**Course Assessment:** assessment of student learning outcomes at the course level

**Criteria:** guidelines, rules, characteristics, or dimensions that are used to judge the quality of student performance. Criteria indicate what we value in student responses, products or performances. They may be holistic, analytic, general, or specific. Scoring rubrics are based on criteria and define what the criteria mean and how they are used.

**Criterion-Referenced Assessment:** an assessment where an individual's performance is compared to a specific learning objective or performance standard and not to the performance of other students. Criterion-referenced assessment tells us how well students are performing on specific goals or standards rather than just telling how their performance compares to a norm group of students nationally or locally. In criterion

referenced assessments, it is possible that none, or all, of the examinees will reach a particular goal or performance standard.

**Culture of Assessment:** an institutional characteristic that shows evidence of valuing and engaging in assessment for ongoing improvement.

**Cycle:** span of time for a single assessment sequence.

**Direct Assessment:** the measurement of actual student learning, competency or performance through direct examination of student work products. Examples include essays, tests, speeches, moot court performances, and portfolios.

**Direct Measures:** objective measures of the unit's accomplishments or measures of knowledge or ability the customer will receive after being provided with the unit's services.

**Embedded Assessment:** a method of sampling that allows broad assessment activities to be carried out within the course structure by "embedding" these activities within the course content, syllabus and assessment/grading practices, not separate from the course.

**Expectation:** an estimate of the percent of students who will achieve the defined standards for a learning outcome.

**Formative assessment:** the assessment of student achievement at different stages of a course or at different stages of a student's academic career.

**Goals:** broad, general statements about the mission of an institution and the desired results; the aims or purposes of a program and its curriculum. They usually are written as action-verb statements that accompany the mission statement so that they can be assessed or measured to determine the extent to which the mission of the institution is being achieved.

**Holistic Scoring:** a scoring process in which a score is based on an overall rating or judgment of a finished product compared to an agreed-upon standard for that task, as opposed to traditional test scoring, which totals specific errors and subtracts points based on them.

**Indirect Assessment:** the measurement of variables that assume student learning such as retention/persistence, transfer and graduation rates, and surveys.

**Indirect Measures:** subjective measures of beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions that indirectly examine student work or performance; assessment that deduces student achievement of learning outcomes through students' reported perception of their own learning. Examples include student surveys, focus groups, alumni surveys, and employer surveys.

**Institutional Effectiveness:** a term used by various components of the institution or the institution itself to review how effectively goals are achieved; the systematic and ongoing process of analyzing and acting on data.

**Institutional Plan:** any of several plans developed by an institution, such as its strategic plan, campus safety plan, master plan, financial plan, etc.

**Item:** an individual question or exercise in an assessment or evaluative instrument.

**Longitudinal Cohort Analysis:** a form of evaluation or assessment where a particular cohort is defined on a set of predetermined criteria and followed over time (longitudinal) on one or more variables.

**Measure:** method to gauge achievement of expected outcomes.

**Mission:** a concise statement that addresses an organization's overall purpose, identifying what the organization does and showing how it connects and contributes to the Law Center's overall work.

**Mission statement:** broad statement of purpose describing the mission and function of a given unit.

**Norm-Referenced Assessment:** an assessment where student performance or performances are compared to a larger group.

**Objectives:** (1) precise statements that specify the performance or behavior a student is to demonstrate relative to a knowledge or skill; (2) unit or department goals that describe intended outcomes for the academic department/unit in very general terms, in relation to broader goals.

**Open-Response Items:** items requiring written answers.

**Outcome:** results; what is expected to be produced after certain services or processes.

**Persistence:** the ongoing enrollment of students over multiple semesters or terms.

**Performance-Based Assessment:** *See* Authentic Assessment.

**Performance Indicators:** a set of measures selected to best represent measurable outcomes for a specific goal. Improvement on performance indications documents progress toward a goal.

**Portfolio:** a representative collection of a student's work, including some evidence that the student has evaluated the quality of his or her own work, that demonstrates a student's development or achievement.

**Process:** what the unit intends to accomplish, typically described in terms of level or volume of activity, efficiency of processes, and compliance with good practices/regulations.

**Program Assessment:** assessing the student learning outcomes or competencies of students in achieving a law degree.

**Program Review:** a process of systematic evaluation of multiple variables of effectiveness and assessment of student learning outcomes to ensure the quality and integrity of degree programs

**Purpose Statement:** declarative sentences that explain the functions or activities of a department, office, or unit and whom they serve.

**Qualitative Measures:** contain non-numerical data such as verbal or written feedback from students/faculty/staff

**QEP:** Quality Enhancement Plan

**Quantitative Measures:** contain numerical data that can be analyzed statistically

**Rater:** a person who evaluates or judges student performance on an assessment against specific criteria.

**Rater Training:** the process of educating raters to evaluate student work and produce dependable scores. Typically, this process uses anchors to acquaint raters with criteria

and scoring rubrics. Open discussions between raters and the trainer help to clarify scoring criteria and performance standards, and provide opportunities for raters to practice applying the rubric to student work. Rater training often includes an assessment of rater reliability that raters must pass in order to score actual student work.

**Reliability:** the degree to which the results of an assessment are dependable and consistently measure particular student knowledge and/or skills. Reliability is an indication of the consistency of scores across raters, over time, or across different tasks or items that measure the same thing. Thus, reliability may be expressed as (a) the relationship between test items intended to measure the same skill or knowledge (item reliability), (b) the relationship between two administrations of the same test to the same student or students (test/retest reliability), or (c) the degree of agreement between two or more raters (rater reliability). An unreliable assessment cannot be valid.

**Retention:** *see* Persistence.

**Rubric:** tool specifying the criteria for evaluation; a set of scoring guidelines for evaluating students' work. Typically a rubric will consist of a scale used to score students' work on a continuum of quality or mastery. Rubrics make explicit the standards by which a student's work is to be judged and the criteria on which that judgment is based.

**Scales:** values given to student performance. Scales may be applied to individual items or performances, for example, checklists, i.e., yes or no; numerical, i.e., 1-6; or descriptive, i.e., the student presented multiple points of view to support her essay.

**Scaled Scores:** scales created when participants' responses to any number of items are combined and used to establish and place students on a single scale of performance.

**Southern Association for Colleges and Schools – commission on Colleges (SACS-COC):** One of six regional accrediting agencies responsible for accreditation of post-secondary institutions of higher education.

**Standard:** a predetermined criterion of a level of student performance; a measure of competency set by experts representing a variety of constituents (e.g., employers/educators/ students/community members), which may be set either within institution or externally.

**Standardization:** a consistent set of procedures for designing, administering, and scoring an assessment. The purpose of standardization is to assure that all students are assessed under the same conditions so that their scores have the same meaning and are

not influenced by differing conditions. Standardized procedures are very important when scores will be used to compare individuals or groups.

**SWOT:** Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

**Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):** the competencies and skills expected of students as they complete a course, program or institution.

**Strategic Plan:** a document describing the components of planning used by the Law Center to ascertain that SULC's mission and goals are accomplished and to set its future direction.

**Strategic Planning:** cyclical process of using a strategic plan to direct an organization from planning to implementing to assessment for the purpose of improving the organization relative to its mission and vision.

**Strategy/Tactic:** illustration of a path toward achieving the unit objective, including terms and statements that describe the intended outcomes and how the objective will be achieved.

**Student learning outcomes:** statements of what students are expected to learn in a degree course or program.

**Subunits:** functional areas that operate within each unit. All units and subunits are detailed on the organizational chart.

**Summative Assessment:** the assessment of student achievement at the end-point of their education or at the end of a course. *Cf.* Summative Assessment.

**Target Values:** outcome scores that one plans to achieve at some specific point.

**Task:** an activity, exercise, or question requiring students to solve a specific problem or demonstrate knowledge of specific topics or processes; a goal-directed assessment activity or project.

**Target:** criterion for success that allows your objective/outcome to be measurable.

**Unit Strategic Plans:** plans developed by the key performance areas of the Law Center to carry out and accomplish the Law Center's strategic plan, thus to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution.

**Units:** the functional areas of the Law Center; the organizations within the institution each with a specific role and scope.

**Validity:** the extent to which an assessment measures what it is supposed to measure and the extent to which inferences and actions made on the basis of test scores are appropriate and accurate. A valid standards-based assessment is aligned with the standards intended to be measured, provides an accurate and reliable estimate of students' performance relative to the standard, and is fair. An assessment cannot be valid if it is not reliable.

**Value Added:** a comparison of knowledge, skills, and developmental traits that students bring to the educational process with the knowledge, skills and developmental traits they demonstrate upon completion of the educational process.

**Values:** non-negotiable attitudes, characteristics, and behaviors that define an organization and how it will conduct itself.

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