

## Administrative and Support Services Self-Study Process Mount Vernon Nazarene University

### Overview

The University employs an administrative and support services unit review process (e.g., program review or unit self-study) to evaluate the unit’s performance and contribution to the University’s mission. The terms “program review” or “self-study” are considered synonyms. The program review report is submitted to and reviewed by the unit’s senior level administrator and the Institutional Effectiveness Committee.

The purposes of the program review and unit self-study process are multiple:

- Demonstrating transparency and accountability of varied university constituencies (stewardship);
- Exhibiting disciplined self-reflection as an element of continuous improvement; and
- Committing to best practices and fulfilling required obligations of institutional accreditation.

For effective and responsive operations of the University, its administrative and support units must accomplish their respective tasks in a manner consistent with the University’s mission, in harmony with the University’s culture and values, and at an identified level of performance. Unit reviews constitute a method for enhancing the University’s overall performance, demonstrating the University’s commitment to continuous improvement, and incarnating its mission into action.

To that end, functional units engage in a series of interrelated planning activities:

1. Articulating in written statement form, the unit’s objectives (process outcomes and/or student learning outcomes);
2. Identifying a method or methods for assessing the unit’s performance or achievement of each objective;
3. Reporting on unit activities and unit performance through the annual reporting process;
4. Engaging in a periodic, systematic reflection of the past five (5) years, including a survey of relevant key constituencies; and
5. Committing to a forward-looking plan for continuous improvement.

It is important to note that some administrative and support services units, particularly those with co-curricular responsibilities (e.g., athletics, campus life, intercultural life, residential life, spiritual life, etc.), will have a combination of process objectives and student learning outcomes in the statement of unit objectives. Additional detail on the most effective forms of these is presented in Appendix A.

It is also critical to note that in the larger planning context, there are two types of reports: [1] annual reports that summarize the activities and achievements of the academic or fiscal year, and [2] the five year program review (self-study) report. The former should inform the latter with its reflection (looking backward) view. In both reports, it is useful for a section to be structured in a matrix format, explicitly linking objective, measurement, evidence, and action.

Unit Objective and Student Learning Outcome (if applicable)	Specific Assessment Methodology/Strategy for the Unit Objective	Summary of Major Findings Related to the Unit Objective	Action Taken Related to the Finding and Outcome of the Action
Objective 1	Method 1	Finding for objective 1	Action related to objective 1
Objective 2	Method 2	Finding for objective 2	Action related to objective 2
Etc.	Etc.	Etc.	Etc.

A form similar to this matrix will be employed in MVNU’s electronic assessment tracking system.

Calendar

The Senior Leadership Team has adopted the following calendar for functional units within the divisions to engage in the self-study review process.

Division/Unit	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
<b><i>President's Office</i></b>					
Institutional Effectiveness					<b>X</b>
<b><i>Graduate and Professional Studies and Enrollment</i></b>					
Events					<b>X</b>
GPS Academic Services				<b>X</b>	
GPS Admissions				<b>X</b>	
Student Financial Services				<b>X</b>	
Traditional Admissions	<b>X</b>				
<b><i>Student Life</i></b>					
Athletics				<b>X</b>	
Campus Life				<b>X</b>	
Counseling/Wellness			<b>X</b>		
Intercultural Life	<b>X</b>				
Residence Life/Student Accountability			<b>X</b>		
Student Health Services	<b>X</b>				
<b><i>Financial Affairs</i></b>					
Accounting	<b>X</b>				
Auxiliary Enterprises		<b>X</b>			
Campus Safety			<b>X</b>		
Facility Services		<b>X</b>			
Human Resources			<b>X</b>		
Information Technology Services					<b>X</b>
<b><i>Academic Affairs</i></b>					
Library			<b>X</b>		
Student Success and Retention					<b>X</b>
University Registrar		<b>X</b>			
<b><i>University Relations</i></b>					
Chapel	<b>X</b>				
Church Relations					<b>X</b>
Development and Alumni Relations			<b>X</b>		
GPS Chaplains			<b>X</b>		
Marketing			<b>X</b>		
Mission and Ministry Opportunities					<b>X</b>
Small Groups			<b>X</b>		

Guiding Principles for Program Review

1. The program review involves all individuals within the unit. Each member is encouraged to engage in active participation, and the final report should constitute the collective consensus of unit members, even though the director or mid-level manager may function as author and editor. The process and report are to demonstrate ownership by the unit and the individuals within the unit. Typically the unit's director or mid-level manager will lead the unit's program review.

2. The review process should provide for dialog within the unit in its evaluation, reflection, and planning.
3. The program review begins by the unit developing a self-study design that must be approved by divisional leadership. Units are encouraged to consult with the Institutional Effectiveness Committee or the Institutional Effectiveness Office for direction and counsel.
4. The unit review should be summative and formative in perspective, summarizing past performance and reporting on current developmental activities.
5. The program review is evaluative, reflective, and anticipatory in focus. The review looks backward to what has happened, what the unit achieved, and how the unit will use that information to make strategic plans for the future.
6. Assessment of unit performance is designed to answer meaningful questions for the unit under review (i.e., "How are we doing?").
7. Unit review is an ongoing and iterative process with annual elements and the periodic reflective review.
8. Compliance with confidentiality and informed consent standards is required in collecting, interpreting, and reporting key findings. The methodology of collecting data is subject to review by the Institutional Review Board.
9. Data related to unit performance should be multi-faceted, coming from within the unit, from units that participate with the unit in upstream and downstream processes, from external (to the unit) consistencies and stakeholders, and include multiple organizational performance categories.
10. When available or appropriate, units are encouraged to relate unit performance to external best practice standards and benchmarks provided by professional organizations or peer institutions.
11. Requests for funding (for the program review and for unit action initiatives) should be determined in negotiation with the appropriate senior level administrator.
12. Findings and recommendations meant to apply to specific individuals must not be included in the final unit review report. Evaluation of individuals should be addressed in the confidential, annual personnel performance reviews.

### Elements of Program Review

The self-study design, process, and final report should examine and report on each of the following elements:

1. **Roles and Responsibilities.** Each unit has a purpose (objectives) determined by its roles and responsibilities within the University. Therefore the review process and the final report should describe those roles and present systematic evidence that its roles and responsibilities advance the University.
  - a. The unit will summarize its roles and responsibilities as directed by the following questions.
    1. How do the unit's roles and responsibilities align with and contribute to the University's mission?
    2. What are the goals and objectives of the unit?

3. What outcomes (i.e., results) does the unit seek to achieve in its operation?
  4. What evidence determines if the desired outcomes are achieved?
  - b. The unit will evaluate how its goals, objectives, and desired outcomes advance the University, using assessment resources and tools that provide appropriate evidence.
2. **Resources.** Units bring resources to their roles and responsibilities. The program review will examine and evaluate how the human resources, the unit's space and facilities, and technology and tools contribute to the unit's performance. The focus here is on the unit, not on specific individuals; evaluating individual personnel is a separate and distinct process from unit appraisal. The assessment applies to the unit as a whole team.
- a. The resource review will address the following questions:
    1. Over the past five (5) years, what have been the levels and trends in staffing? How does this align with peer institutions, benchmarks, and best practice standards?
    2. Are the human resources sufficient and effective? What training and expertise is needed for continuous improvement?
    3. Are the space allotment, facilities, and technological resources appropriate to the unit's responsibilities and external regulatory requirements?
  - b. The unit will evaluate the effectiveness of resources in terms of their contributions to the University's mission and overall University performance. The final report will specify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with the unit.
3. **Process.** Units carry out tasks and work processes within the context of the macro, external environment of society and within the internal, organizational environment of the University. Most units do not operate in an isolated institutional vacuum, but contribute to ongoing institutional processes, and as such typically function both downstream and upstream from other units. Integrated and effective organizational performance requires [1] the effective processing within the unit, and [2] the effective transition of work load and processes from one unit to another.
- a. Each functional unit will address the following environmental concerns.
    1. How have demands from the external environment changed the type and amount of work required of the unit (e.g., regulatory and reporting requirements)? What are the trends across the past five (5) years?
    2. How effective, efficient, and productive is the unit? What are the trends across the past five (5) years?
    3. How have the unit's resources changed over the past five (5) years?
    4. What revenues are generated by the unit? How have these changed over the past five (5) years?
    5. What are the unit's costs? How have these changed over the past five (5) years?
    6. What would enable the unit to be more effective, efficient, and productive?
    7. How is the unit organized, administered, and led?

8. What professional organizations and best practice standards does the unit reference during its operations?
  - b. Each functional unit will assess its unit performance, including appropriate measures from several of the following organizational performance categories (effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, innovation, quality, stakeholder and constituent satisfaction, financial sustainability). See Appendix B for definitions and illustrations of these organizational performance categories.
4. **Plan.** The review of roles, responsibilities, resources, and process constitute background and feedback information for unit planning. The concern is for “closing the feedback” loop and “using evidence for improvement.” Evidence empowers the planning process at the unit and institutional levels. The statement of major findings should be specified and then prioritized to develop concrete, actionable steps.

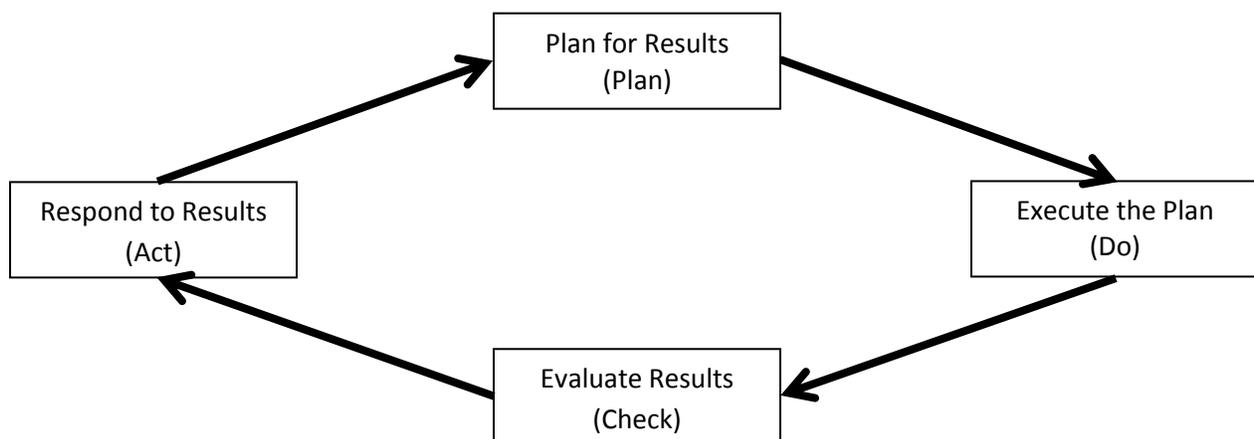
### Planning Model

Program review operates within a general data-informed planning model. While the program review report does not address explicitly the general planning model, how that iterative planning cycle works is a fundamental foundation.

The program review builds on the annual reporting process, and should summarize the annual report assessments over the review period. The planning process is designed as an annual iterative process. At least three assumptions underlie the planning model.

1. The process is founded in a commitment to continuous improvement.
2. The process reflects the value of transparency.
3. The process links to annual planning and reporting processes.

The central concept is a four (4) step, iterative cycle. Initially the “plan for results” is the starting point, but at the end of the first year, “respond to results” informs the next “plan for results” step, and that then becomes an ongoing process.



During the 5-year review, the unit steps back from the annual focus, and adopts a big picture perspective to reflect upon the time since the previous review, evaluates trends across that time frame, and uses a global picture to think strategically for the long-term (i.e., strategic planning versus tactical or operational planning).

Timeline

The self-study process is designed to be accomplished within the parameters of one (1) fiscal year; therefore the expectation is that unit self-study process will begin on or about June 1 and be completed in its entirety, including submission of the final report by May 31 of the next calendar year.

Self-Study Activity	Time frame or Deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The unit consults with the Institutional Effectiveness staff and/or members of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee about the process and self-study design.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ June through May</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The unit develops the <u>key questions</u> that will guide the self-study.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ June</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The unit develops the <u>self-study design</u> and submits the design for approval to the divisional senior-level administrator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ July</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The unit assembles and summarizes <u>evidence</u> presented in the previous five (5) annual reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ August through September</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The unit determines the <u>type and nature of key stakeholder or constituency survey</u>, and engages the Institutional Effectiveness Office to administer the survey.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ October</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The unit seeks approval from the Institutional Review Board related to <u>confidentiality and informed consent</u> with human subjects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ October</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Institutional Effectiveness Office conducts the <u>survey</u>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ November through February</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Institutional Effectiveness Office completes the <u>survey results summary report</u> and submits the report to the unit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ March 31 (deadline)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The unit completes the <u>draft report</u> and submits to unit members for review, critique, revision, and consensus adoption.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ April</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The unit submits the <u>final report</u> to the senior-level administrators and the designated peer reviewer from the Institutional Effectiveness Committee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May 31 (deadline)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The senior-level administrator and peer reviewer provide <u>feedback</u> to the unit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ June 15 (deadline)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The unit begins to <u>implement continuous action steps</u> as described in the final report.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ June</li> </ul>

Program Review Report Format

The final report should be no longer than twenty pages (20) of narrative; the reports from small or simple units may be shorter. Appendices presenting data or evidence in graphical or numerical are recommended. The report narrative should follow this template:

1. Title page;
2. An executive summary, first page of narrative;
3. Basic self-study design, including the questions the unit sought to answer and how the strategy for answering each;
4. Roles, responsibilities, resources, process, and a brief unit history (only last five [5] years, after the initial program review, i.e., recent history);
5. Unit objectives and designed outcomes;
6. Description of assessment strategies;
7. Major findings from assessment evidence;

8. Rationale for specific actions to be taken with a suggested timeline for improvement actions (i.e., planning for the future); and
9. Appendices.

In the event that the unit has not achieved consensus on findings or recommended actionable steps, this should be noted within the report and identify the areas of discrepancy.

Report Destiny and Disposition

Copies of the final report are to be filed with the following with the purposes identified:

1. Unit members (ownership and operational use);
2. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee (peer review, guidance, and counsel); and
3. Designated Senior Leadership Team administrator (reporting, institutional and budget planning).

(4/16/2015, RLT)

## Appendix A Resources for Writing Outcome Statements

All administrative and support services units contribute to the University's mission through operational processes; these ought to be captured in writing to guide the unit's operation and to facilitate an evaluative reflection on the unit's effectiveness, and impact. Those process outcomes typically have common elements when stated in ways that evidence best practice.

In terms of the content of those outcomes statements, good practice has been that they follow the SMART format (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime limited). It is useful to distinguish outputs from outcomes. The outputs are products derived from specific program activities or processes; outcomes are the changes in or for the people that activities seek to serve or benefit.

Some experts differentiate between objectives and outcomes; when this distinction is made objectives are described intended results (what one wants to happen) and outcomes note achieved results (what actually happened).

### Process Outcomes Form

- Noun (unit) – Who is responsible to take action?
- Active voice (power or operational) verb – What action is undertaken or displayed?
- Object or result (noun) – What is to be accomplished?
- Degree (typically adjectives or adverbs) – To what level or how much?
- Time frame – When it is to be completed?

Several of MVNU's administrative and support services also contribute to student learning (e.g., Athletics, Campus Life, Campus Ministries, Intercultural Life, Library, Residence Life, etc.). Those units should also include a selected set of student learning outcomes in the unit's public statement of objectives.

- The Compliance Office submits accurate enrollment reports annually to NCES prior to the given deadline filing date (output).
- The Compliance Office maintains good status relationships with external reporting agencies through the accurate and timely submission of reports (outcome).

### Student Learning Outcomes Form

- Noun (student) – Who is responsible to take action?
- Active voice (power or operational) verb – What action is undertaken or displayed?
- Object or result (noun) – What is to be accomplished?
- Degree (typically adjectives or adverbs) -- To what level or how much?
- Time frame – When it is to be completed?

- Prior to entering student teaching, the teacher education candidate will use technology effectively in the delivery of instruction, assessment of learning, and professional development.
- At the end of the *Evidence-Based Nursing Practice* course, the nursing student will apply principles of evidence-based medicine to determine clinical diagnoses and implement effective treatment.

### **Power Verbs Related to Administrative Outcomes**

While the following list is not exhaustive, many administrative and/or service delivery processes employ one of the following as core activities intended to lead to a desired output and an outcome.

Analyze	Associate	Complete	Create	Design
Apply	Classify	Compose	Critique	Detect
Appraise	Collect	Compute	Define	Document
Arrange	Combine	Construct	Demonstrate	Draw
Assess	Compare	Count	Describe	Estimate

Evaluate	Interpret	Predict	Repair	Translate
Examine	Inventory	Prepare	Report	Update
Extrapolate	Maintain	Prescribe	Schedule	Use
Formulate	Manage	Produce	Select	Validate
Generalize	Measure	Rank	Summarize	
Inspect	Name	Rate	Test	
Integrate	Operate	Recommend	Trace	
Interpolate	Organize	Record	Train	

### Power Verbs Related to Student Learning

Benjamin Bloom differentiated levels or type of learning by the underlying cognitive process; his taxonomy of learning varied on a continuum from simplicity to complexity: memorize, comprehend, apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate. The following verbs illustrate that level of learning that the student can demonstrate at each level in the taxonomy.

#### Relay Information

Cite	Identify	Quote	Relate	Tabulate
Count	Indicate	Read	Repeat	Tell
Define	List	Recite	Select	Trace
Describe	Name	Recognize	State	Update
Draw	Point	Record	Summarize	Write

#### Demonstrate Comprehension

Assess	Contrast	Distinguish	Interpolate	Restate
Associate	Demonstrate	Estimate	Interpret	Review
Classify	Describe	Explain	Locate	Translate
Compare	Differentiate	Express	Predict	
Compute	Discuss	Extrapolate	Report	

#### Apply Knowledge to Solve a Problem

Apply	Employ	Match	Relate	Sketch
Calculate	Examine	Operate	Report	Solve
Choose	Illustrate	Order	Restate	Translate
Complete	Interpolate	Practice	Review	Treat
Demonstrate	Interpret	Predict	Schedule	Use
Develop	Locate	Prescribe	Select	Utilize

#### Analyze Situations

Analyze	Criticize	Diagram	Infer	Question
Appraise	Debate	Differentiate	Inspect	Separate
Contract	Deduce	Distinguish	Inventory	Summarize
Contrast	Detect	Experiment	Measure	

#### Synthesize Solutions

Arrange	Construct	Formulate	Organize	Produce
Assemble	Create	Generalize	Plan	Propose
Collect	Design	Integrate	Prepare	Specify
Combine	Detect	Manage	Prescribe	Validate
Compose	Document			

#### Evaluate Alternatives

Appraise	Critique	Evaluate	Rank	Score
Assess	Decide	Grade	Rate	Select
Choose	Determine	Judge	Recommend	Test
Compare	Estimate	Measure	Revise	

Other verbs expand Bloom's basic taxonomy to include skills and attitudes. These may describe a process or an outcome.

Impart Skills

Demonstrate	Hold	Massage	Pass	Visualize
Diagnose	Integrate	Measure	Percuss	Write
Diagram	Internalize	Operate	Project	
Empathize	Listen	Palpate	Record	

Convey Attitudes

Acquire	Exemplify	Plan	Reflect	Transfer
Consider	Modify	Realize	Revise	

Experts recommend the following verb should be avoided, because they are open to many and imprecise interpretations. These may represent an underlying process as much as a clear behavioral outcome.

Appreciate	Have faith in	Know	Learn	Understand
Believe	Explore	Enjoy	Behave	Grasp
Be aware of				

## Appendix B Organizational Performance Measures

Barbara Miller, who studies organizational performance, has identified seven (7) basic dimensions that can be applied to determining the performance of any organization, regardless of the product or services delivered.

- Effectiveness – a measure of the extent to which the unit achieves its intended outcomes
- Productivity – a measure (ratio) of the outputs created to the inputs consumed
- Quality – a complex area of performance measured in sub-dimensions
  - Quality of upstream systems – a measure of the impact of prior contributions
  - Quality of input – a measure of “garbage in, garbage out”
  - Quality of key work processes – a measure of the design, flow, variation, and value-added by actions within the unit
  - Quality of outputs – a measure of the extent to which the outputs meet or exceed the requirements of the individual served
  - Quality of leadership systems – a measure of the quality of services that the leadership systems provide to the organization
  - Quality of work life – a measure of employees’ perceptions and attitudes about the quality of the organization, work experience, and workplace
- Customer and stakeholder satisfaction – a measure of the level of satisfaction of internal and external stakeholders
- Efficiency – a measure of resource utilization and the costs and benefits of quality management
- Innovation – a measure of creative changes put into place to improve organizational performance
- Financial durability – a measure of the organization’s financial health and well-being

How might these dimensions be applied in university administrative and service delivery units? The following illustrates the breadth of performance measures that might be usefully applied to units to determine their performance and their contributions to overall university performance, given the units’ specific roles and responsibilities within the higher education institution.

Key Assessment Dimension	Administrative/Service Domain Examples
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Network downtime as a percentage of total time</li> <li>▪ Network traffic statistics</li> <li>▪ Number of unprocessed queries</li> <li>▪ Total dollars received in advancement activities</li> </ul>
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number of alumni contacted for annual fund per FTE advancement staff</li> <li>▪ Number of dollars received per FTE advancement staff</li> <li>▪ Number of training workshops and seminars taught per FTE human resources staff</li> </ul>
Quality	(applied at specific levels)
Quality of upstream systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accuracy and timeliness of paychecks distributed by payroll</li> <li>▪ Availability and reliability of information technology in classrooms, laboratories and offices</li> <li>▪ Quality of information technology training provided to students</li> </ul>
Quality of inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Percentage of technical staff with terminal degrees by gender and ethnicity</li> <li>▪ Number of staff nominated for and receiving awards and honors</li> <li>▪ Number of equipment-related injuries</li> <li>▪ Number of parking spaces on campus</li> </ul>
Quality of key work processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time necessary to complete a business contract</li> <li>▪ Time necessary to admit a student once the application is complete</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time necessary to acknowledge a service request</li> </ul>
Quality of outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time necessary to complete a service request</li> <li>▪ Cycle time and cost to hire new staff members</li> <li>▪ Percentage of participants reporting positive evaluations on training programs</li> </ul>
Quality of leadership systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nature of comments from accreditation site visit teams and external consultants related to business and support services</li> <li>▪ Strength of partnerships between academic departments and support systems</li> <li>▪ Percentage of followers and stakeholders expressing satisfaction with the quality of leadership from service delivery units</li> </ul>
Quality of work life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number of injuries by type</li> <li>▪ Campus crime rates</li> <li>▪ Employee perceptions about adequacy of resources</li> <li>▪ Employee turnover rate</li> </ul>
Customer and stakeholder satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Percentages of alumni responding positively in alumni follow-up studies</li> <li>▪ Dollar values of donations and gifts by stakeholder groups</li> </ul>
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time and dollars spent in rework</li> <li>▪ Number of correct journal entries made per unit of time</li> <li>▪ Ratio of FTE administrators to FTE teaching faculty</li> </ul>
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New technology to increase productivity and customer satisfaction</li> <li>▪ New organizational structures to improve efficiency, productivity, customer satisfaction, and financial durability</li> <li>▪ New pricing structures to strengthen financial durability</li> </ul>
Financial durability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unit fees generated as a percentage of total unit expenses</li> <li>▪ Total unit expenses compared to total number of campus employees served</li> <li>▪ Total unit expenses compared to total number of students served</li> </ul>

(Adapted from Miller, B. A. (2007). *Assessing organizational performance in higher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.)