

Institutional Effectiveness Plan

Revised: January 2024

Frostburg State University Mission

Frostburg State University is a student-centered teaching and learning institution featuring experiential opportunities. The University offers students a distinctive and distinguished baccalaureate education along with a select set of applied graduate and doctoral programs. Frostburg serves regional and statewide economic and workforce development; promotes cultural enrichment, civic responsibility, and sustainability; and prepares future leaders to meet the challenges of a complex and changing global society.

University Goals

To fulfill its mission, the University established the following strategic goals:

1. Increase enrollment.
2. To improve the campus environment, sense of community, and to convey what the university offers to students and the broader community (external authentic branding).

Definitions

Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness Council (AIEC) – Serves as an advisory council to the President. The Council works with and provides information to the Executive Cabinet and the University Advisory Council. The Council generates a report to be delivered in May for the Summer Meeting. This report contains information and assessment on action priorities and becomes the basis for the yearly USM Managing for Results (MFR) report. The Council makes recommendations for planning, but it is not a decision-making body. Committee membership includes designees for each Vice President, the Director of Assessment and Institutional Research, and Faculty representatives from Faculty Senate.

Student Learning Assessment Advisory Group (SLAAG) monitors student learning assessment practices at the undergraduate level. SLAAG advises and makes recommendations to the Provost, deans, faculty and AIEC on issues affecting the assessment of student learning for

undergraduate programs and the General Education program. Committee membership includes four (4) faculty appointed by the Provost, Director of Assessment and Institutional Research, one Academic Affairs Administrator appointed by the Provost, and one Student Affairs Administrator appointed by the Vice President

Graduate Learning Assessment Advisory Group (GLAAG) is a complement to SLAAG for student learning assessment practices at the graduate level. GLAAG advises and makes recommendations to the Provost, the appropriate dean, program faculty and AIEC on issues affecting the assessment of student learning for individual graduate programs. Committee membership includes representatives from the colleges, One Academic Affairs Administrator appointed by the Provost, designee from the offices of Graduate Services and Assessment and Institutional Research.

Executive Cabinet– the President and Vice Presidents are responsible for the operations of the University at the highest level.

University Advisory Council – The University Advisory Council serves to enhance shared governance at Frostburg State University. It focuses on campus-wide planning and implementation of those plans and facilitates real-time understanding and discussion of pressing matters affecting the mission and operations of the university. The council includes the Executive Cabinet, three faculty members, three student leaders, and three staff members.

Campus Labs' Planning/Compliance Assist – The electronic platform that serves as a working repository for planning information and assessment activities and allows planning units to link to the University's Strategic Plan.

Strategic Plan – The Strategic plan is the document defining Frostburg State University's strategic themes and directions and serves to guide the allocation of resources to pursue these themes across a defined period.

Action Priorities/Items/Goals –Activities that measure the success of goal attainment that are linked to the Frostburg State University's mission and strategic plan.

Assessment – A process by which all Frostburg State University academic and administrative departments/units gather, analyze and use data to determine the achievement of their mission and goals and demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement.

Commitment to Institutional Effectiveness

Frostburg State University's (FSU) Institutional Effectiveness Plan codifies the commitment to a culture of continuous quality improvement across the institution in achieving its mission. The University demonstrates accountability internally through its planning and assessment process and external agencies, including the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the Maryland Higher Education Commission, the University System of Maryland, as well as other federal and state entities and outside accrediting bodies.

Frostburg State University's Institutional Effectiveness Plan outlines the process by which the institution gathers, analyzes and uses data to determine the achievement of the University's mission and goals and demonstrates its commitment to continuous improvement. The objective of the Institutional Effectiveness Plan is to:

- Guide the University in developing institutional assessment activities to best measure effectiveness in meeting the mission, goals, and priorities;
- Assist the University in identifying priorities for improvement; and,

- Serve as a guide for analysis, decision-making, and allocation of resources.

The Institutional Effectiveness Plan provides academic departments and administrative units with the procedures and guidelines for assessing and reporting progress toward goals and using reported data for improving and enhancing the institution's programs and services.

This plan improves the systematic gathering and analysis of data to guide resource allocation, support decision-making and facilitates the improvement of programs, services, and student learning. Each division engages in assessment activities for the purpose of continuous improvement.

Institutional Effectiveness Plan

The Institutional Effectiveness Plan outlines and guides the University's planning, assessment and resource allocation activities. The cycle ensures that the activities below are implemented:

- Clearly defined mission, goals, and priorities
- Measurable administrative goals and/or student learning outcomes that align with the University's mission, goals, and priorities
- Effective assessment to determine if goals and/ or student learning outcomes have been achieved
- Benchmarks established to determine the extent to which the goals/ student learning outcomes have been achieved
- Documentation and use of the results for the improvement of academic programs and administrative and support services through a transparent process of review, planning, and resource allocation.

Academic departmental and administrative unit goals and objectives are aligned with the institution's mission, goals and priorities. The extent to which performance and levels of success are demonstrated across the institution occur through assessment initiatives. The analysis and interpretation of results guide the institution's improvement efforts. Additionally, the allocations of the institution's resources follow from the planning and assessment activities. Communication is essential to facilitate the campus community's understanding of the process.

An annual Institutional Effectiveness Cycle has been established. On an annual basis, academic and administrative departments report on their progress towards achieving their goals and objectives through defined performance measures. Direct reports to the Vice Presidents also provide annual departmental reports. These departmental and divisional reports are reviewed annually by the Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness Council (AIEC). AIEC meets with University Advisory Council during the summer to discuss progress and achievement of benchmarks at the institutional level. The institution's performance is discussed and disseminated university-wide in the fall. AIEC also provides specific feedback to departments and division leaders in the fall.

Progress in Assessment

The University has made significant progress in establishing a data-informed culture where decisions are dependent upon the analysis of information. Assessment initiatives across the

institution's academic and administrative areas have led to the review of goals, objectives and learning outcomes. Compliance Assist serves as a working repository for planning information and assessment activities.

As a result of the process of engaging the campus community through the Middle States Decennial Self-Study process in 2014-16, the University has increased efforts to educate and involve the campus in the development of the revised Institutional Effectiveness Plan. Faculty, staff, and students have participated in discussions of data and performance measures. Assembly presentations provided a way to share institutional effectiveness planning updates as well as to gather feedback.

Instituting a more focused set of action priorities and a transparent process of resource allocation to achieve those priorities are among the goals of the Institutional Effectiveness Plan. This plan was reviewed and recommended by the University Advisory Council and approved by the President.

Common Performance Measures

Frostburg State University measures of effectiveness align with the University's goals and priorities. Measures from various institution-wide reporting sources, including the data warehouse (HelioCampus), Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), and National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) inform the planning process. These data including trend analyses are reviewed and are often compared and benchmarked to other similar USM institutions and the USM-defined comparison and aspirational institutions. FSU is committed to continual assessment of many data points and sources to ensure focused efforts are attributed to initiatives that warrant resources.

The University's Division Plans

Each of the University's (Vice Presidential) Division plans aligns to the institution's mission and strategic plan. The division plans articulate a more comprehensive or inter-departmental view than the Department/Unit plans. AIEC reviews these plans annually.

The University's Department/Planning Unit Plans

Each of the University's Department/Unit plans aligns to the division and institution's strategic plan. The departments or administrative units of the University are accountable for implementing their plans, assessing the achievement of their goals and determining what revisions and adjustments are necessary for improvement. AIEC reviews these activities annually. Departments/planning units utilize the Assessment Cycle in order to keep organized and compliant with the assessment cycle to ensure planning and assessment activities can inform future programming and budget cycles.

Institutional Assessment at Frostburg State University

Assessment of Student Learning

Frostburg State University has an institutionalized process of assessing student-learning outcomes in the majors which include disciplinary accrediting bodies and college assessment committees at the college level for the Colleges of Business, Engineering, and Computational & Mathematical Sciences, College of Education and Health & Natural Sciences, and College of Arts, Humanities, and Social & Behavioral Sciences.

The Student Learning Assessment Advisory Group (SLAAG) and Graduate Learning Assessment

Advisory Group (GLAAG) operate at the institutional level and focus of student learning outcomes following the timelines for the Institutional Effectiveness Cycle.

Academic Program Review

The University System of Maryland Board of Regents require academic program reviews which are intended to improve the resources and quality of the academic offerings, ensure the utilization of resources, and determine a program's effectiveness. The Program Review process advances opportunities for academic planning and budgeting and assesses whether the program satisfies state-level review requirements. This requirement is outlined in SB682, Sec.12-106IV of the Code of Maryland. Halfway through the cycle (i.e., at 3.5 years), an updated report is submitted that reflects the status of assessment activities. The University has opted for a 3.5-year reporting cycle, reflecting the belief of the faculty designing the programs that those 3.5 years provides an optimum period to design, implement, and evaluate assessments and then use the results for continuous improvement.

The program review schedule serves as the foundation for assessment initiatives. It identifies priorities for the upcoming cycle. Every seven years, academic program reviews are conducted, including an assessment of student learning outcomes. Academic programs define their student learning outcomes, evaluate learning progress and make appropriate improvements when necessary.

An external review of each program is a required component of the assessment initiative. External reviewers provide an independent and objective evaluation of a program's strengths and weaknesses as well as recommendations for improvement. Academic programs with external accreditation responsibilities meet FSU's assessment requirements.

Academic Programs use a recommended "Guidelines for Department Discussions in Preparation for Program Review" checklist. Components of the comprehensive program review include mission and purpose, plan of curriculum, student learning goals, student learning assessment, student technology and information literacy and fluency, enrollment and student profile, alumni perceptions, faculty profile, library holdings, response to the external reviewer, and an action plan for the next seven years.

As part of the assessment process, programs are required to review previous assessment findings and document what changes were made based on those results. The annual reports submitted to the Academic Deans document assessment activities, findings, and improvement efforts.

General Education

The General Education Review Committee coordinates the assessment of the General Education Program, and, based on that assessment, facilitate any revision to the General Education Program. SLAAG supports and reviews the progress of the General Education Review Committee with regard to effective assessment.

Student Engagement, University Support, and Services

The Divisions of Administration and Finance, Student Affairs, Human Resources, University Advancement, and support areas in Academic Affairs continuously engage in assessment activities to measure progress in achieving their unit level goals as well as support the achievement of University goals and priorities. These activities generally include methods to monitor and measure productivity, adherence to timelines and processes, responsiveness to requests, accomplishments of unit goals as well as satisfaction with services and programs.

Assessment of student services, support, and engagement occurs regularly through the administration of the [National Survey of Student Engagement](#) (NSSE). Also, Frostburg State University utilizes two new tools that will offer particular support in the intersecting areas of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. [Helio Campus](#), our data warehouse uses institutional data to provide powerful dashboards for admissions, financial aid, enrollment, course completion, persistence, retention, and graduation.

Strategic Enrollment Management Plan

Frostburg State University's Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan was developed following extensive and collaborative discussions with academic department chairs, academic affairs leadership and staff, admissions, and marketing, is based on achieving the key performance indicator (KPI) of the enrollment headcount targets submitted to USM. The plan describes the initiatives that have been developed to increase headcount, which focus on undergraduate (UG) recruitment and retention (moving 1st to 2nd year retention from mid-70 % to 80%).

The SEM team includes the President, Provost, VP of Administration and Finance, Director of Admissions, Associated Provost and Associate VP for External Affairs and Budget Management, and other key enrollment management positions. This group reports to USM as well as updates are provided to the Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness Council.

“Closing the Loop” Activities – Annual Report

Academic departments and administrative units submit an Annual Report to their respective Deans or Vice Presidents and upload it to [Compliance Assist](#) by **February 15th for the previous year (Academic Year, Calendar Year, and Fiscal Year)**.

Accomplishments, as well as progress in meeting the goals of the department/unit, are documented. Based on this reflection and analysis, departments and units are to outline the goals for the next calendar year. Department/Unit annual reports are reviewed by their respective vice president.

AIEC reviews these reports and meets in the summer with the University Advisory Council to provide a summary [report](#) of the previous year's annual reports by department in order to prepare and plan for the upcoming calendar year. At this meeting, priorities are discussed, and plans are reviewed and updated, if necessary.

- The University Advisory Council is responsible for recommending any policy changes or resource reallocations based on the discussion.
- AIEC is responsible for supporting and ensuring effective assessment of any revisions. AIEC will also map any changes in planning or priorities to the University strategic plan.
- The Executive Cabinet, a subset of the University Advisory Council, considers these recommendations and approves any policy or priority changes and resource allocations. In

some instances, resource allocations may be implemented in the subsequent fiscal year for budgeting purposes.

The President will provide a report to the University community in the State of the University address early in the fall semester outlining the discussion and actions from the summer meeting. AIEC will work with appropriate entities, including the Deans, VPs, Faculty Senate, Student Government Association and Staff Senate, to support the assessment processes for the upcoming year.

Reporting Template

The following elements should serve as guidelines for the calendar year Division/Department reporting structure:

- Specify your Division/Department Goals Priorities.
- Specify how your Division/Department Goals align to FSU strategic planning goals.
- Specify your Division/Department Actions Priorities/Plans.
- What are the Measures/Metrics used to assess effectiveness?
 - The process of assessment per Action Plan: How were the results assessed?
 - What were the results?
- How have the results impacted operations (if at all) including 1)? What is the focus for the upcoming year's plan; and 2) Were resources allocated or redistributed based upon the results?

How was this plan and results conveyed to your Division/Department?

Appendix: Assessment Cycle

