



# **Life University Planning and Assessment Handbook**

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## **I. Accomplishing the Mission**

The vision, values, mission, and strategic initiatives provide oversight and guidance to the institution as well as for the academic programs and administrative support units of the university. Mission statements for the colleges and support units are reviewed to determine congruency with the university mission and strategic initiatives. Goals are developed for each of the colleges and administrative support units to help accomplish their particular mission and achieve intended outcomes for the programs and services provided.

The purpose of Life University is to provide students with the vision to fulfill their innate potential, the inspiration to engage in a quest for self-discovery, and the ability to apply a principled approach to their future roles as leaders in humanitarian service and as citizens in their communities.

### **LIFE'S VISION STATEMENT**

Our goal is to maximize the expression of the perfection within.

#### *WE RECOGNIZE*

that all organic systems in the universe are conscious, self-developing, self-maintaining and self-healing.

#### *WE BELIEVE*

that these systems work best when they are free of interference.

#### *WE UNDERSTAND*

that the nervous system is primarily responsible for orchestrating the internal and external dialogue of the body necessary for life.

#### *WE ACKNOWLEDGE*

that there are three interferences to the nervous system: physical trauma, environmental toxins and emotional stress.

### **LIFE'S MISSION**

*The Mission of Life University is to empower each student with the education, skills and values needed for career success and life fulfillment based on a vitalistic philosophy. The University's undergraduate, graduate and professional programs – each one committed to excellence in teaching, learning, research and the overall student experience – offer a vision and the promise for a meaningful life, the proficiencies necessary to achieve optimum personal performance and the wisdom to become transformational leaders in an increasingly diverse, global and dynamic world.*

### **LIFE'S VALUES**

#### **1. LASTING PURPOSE**

The University was founded on the ethos, "to give, do, love, and serve, out of a sense of abundance."

## 2. VITALISM

The University degree programs are carefully vetted through a philosophical filter that recognizes all living organisms as conscious, self-developing, self-adapting, and self-healing.

## 3. WELLNESS LIFESYCLE

The University's definition of wellness that acknowledges the holistic relationship of a person to the environment and overall health including Physical, Emotional, Social, Intellectual, Environmental, and Spiritual.

- **Physical:** the biomechanics of movement and optimum function of all systems in the human body
- **Emotional:** the lens with which one views the world, our interactions with others, and one's self image
- **Social:** the relationships with friends, family, significant others, co-workers, acquaintances and strangers
- **Intellectual:** the never-ending quest for knowledge and learning throughout our lives
- **Environmental:** the understanding and respect for the relationship between humans and the environment
- **Spiritual:** the quest for understanding our purpose in life and the universal intelligence that guides our existence

## 4. EIGHT CORE PROFICIENCIES

### INTEGRITY & CITIZENSHIP

Integrity provides the underpinning for the responsible exercise of our rights and responsibilities as human beings. Integrity leads to empowerment and excellence, while a lack of integrity results in mediocrity. Life University teaches students how to manage personal integrity and function as valued citizens within the academic, healthcare and larger communities.

### LEADERSHIP & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Extensive research outlines the hallmarks of effective leadership. Life University draws on this body of knowledge and teaches students in all our degree programs how to apply it in an entrepreneurial setting to build a successful business or organization.

### LEARNING THEORY & CRITICAL THINKING

Life University engages students in critical thinking by teaching them how to gather meaningful data, synthesize new information with existing knowledge, think independently and search for practical application of their knowledge in professional practice and daily life. We exhort our students to not only learn skills, but to also become innovators who contribute positively to their communities.

### CONTEMPORARY SCIENTIFIC PARADIGMS

For thousands of years, and especially since Sir Isaac Newton, humankind's scientific

understanding of the functioning of the universe has been based largely on a mechanistic model. Contemporary quantum physics opens the door to a much more vitalistic understanding of human dynamics. Life University exposes our students to the implications of these models, especially as they apply to research in our health science programs.

### **PHILOSOPHY OF HUMAN EXISTENCE & HEALTHCARE POLICY**

Healthcare systems evolve from healthcare philosophies. Although our most institutionalized systems today revolve around a mechanistic view of health, Life University sees the value in a vitalistic view of human function. With a growing body of evidence to support vitalistic concepts in the healthcare milieu, Life University is spearheading change that will revolutionize our nation's approach to health care and healthcare education. Our faculty clearly identify these key issues for students and teach them how to evaluate new information and direct professional dialogue that will lead to new healthcare policy.

### **COMMUNICATION & RELATIONSHIP THEORY/SKILLS**

An ability to communicate effectively and the capacity for building relationships with others are critical factors in personal, business and life success. These skills can be developed. Life University challenges its students to develop and utilize the skills of effective listening, empathy, interpersonal skills and public speaking to create clear communications and foster meaningful professional relationships with members of the public, patients, colleagues and key opinion leaders.

### **BELIEF SYSTEMS & PERFORMANCE**

Life University exposes its students to a range of contemporary intellectual approaches and technologies that will help them reach higher levels of performance and professional success. Students will learn criteria by which to judge the usefulness of certain technologies and their applicability to their learning styles.

### **INTEGRATIVE CHANGE**

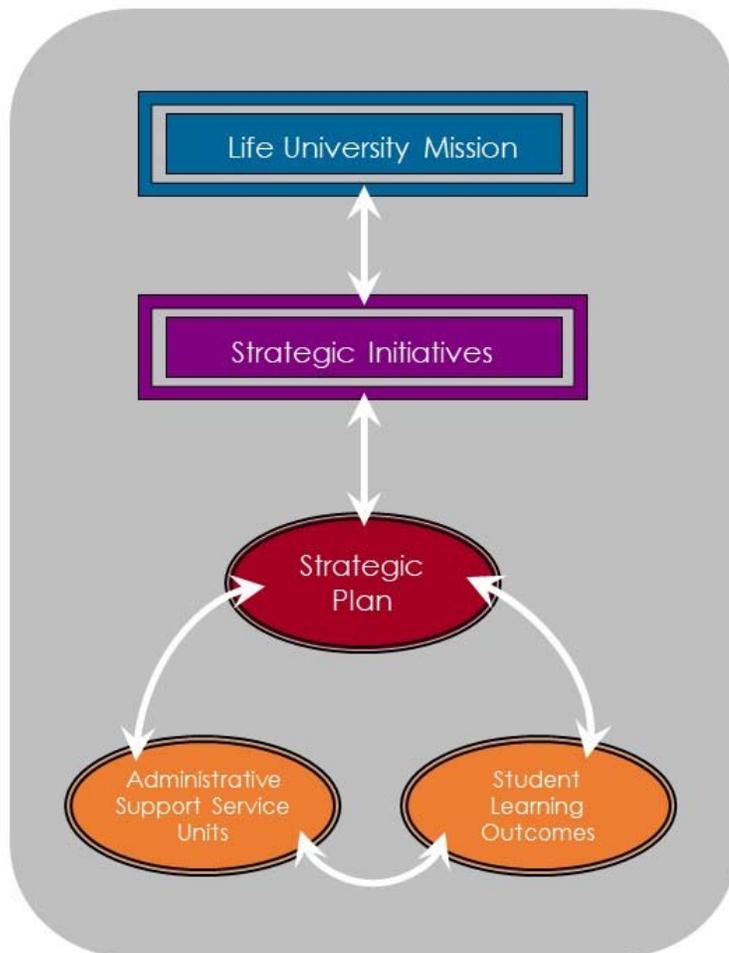
Because change is one of the few constants in today's professional environments, an educated person must learn how to evaluate, plan for and effectively use the element of change to impact controlled differences in the world. Life University exposes students to tested theories and concepts to help them evaluate their usefulness. Students also learn how people integrate and accept new philosophies and skills for communicating new concepts of health care.

## **STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

1. Become the preeminent performance-centered vitalistic health care institution in the world.
2. Become the unchallenged leader in providing practical applications for success in business and in life.
3. Break into the *U.S. News & World Report* annual rankings.
4. Establish continuity in stewardship and ensure our lasting legacy in leadership, strategic planning, stability, robust constituencies and delivery on our brand promise.

## II. Introduction

Life University has an ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation Institutional Effectiveness (IE) process. The IE process includes annual planning and assessment that occurs at the programmatic and administrative support services levels through the Institutional Planning and Evaluation Committee (IPEC) with the Continuous Improvement Cycle (CIC) process. Additionally, directed by the Board of Trustees, Chancellor, and President, a multi-year strategic planning process includes a President's Advisory Group (PAG) that provides leadership and management for the overall review and accomplishment of the university's strategic plan elements. All planning and assessment activities ultimately serve to support the institution's four strategic initiatives and fulfill the university's mission and vision.



### III. Institutional Effectiveness

In 2003, Life University introduced annual planning in the form of the Continuous Improvement Cycle (CIC). Over time it has become a more formalized, assertive assessment process that documents the procedure of continuous institutional improvement and improvement in student learning outcomes. The institution expects each area to engage in an ongoing program of improvement, to demonstrate how well it fulfills its stated mission, and to document quality and effectiveness.

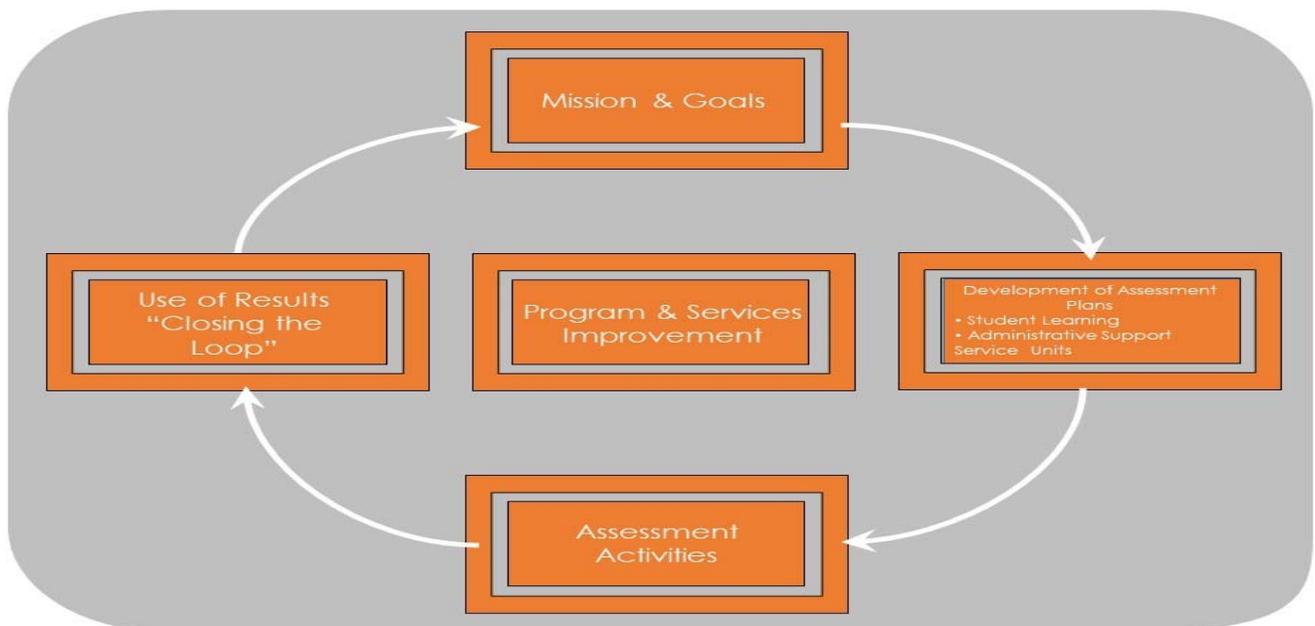
To realize these vital expectations, Life University has operationalized an ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation Institutional Effectiveness (IE) process. The IE process includes strategic planning along with annual planning and assessment that occurs at the operational and departmental levels and is assessed by the Institutional Planning and Evaluation Committee (IPEC) utilizing the Continuous Improvement Cycle (CIC) process.

#### What is Institutional Effectiveness?

Institutional Effectiveness is most notable when achievements and outcomes indicate how well the university and each college's mission is being fulfilled. The purpose of the annual institutional effectiveness process at Life University is to demonstrate continuous improvement in student learning, educational programs, and administrative support services.

#### Institutional Effectiveness Model

Life University has adopted the Nichol's Institutional Effectiveness Model (*see illustration below*).



Adapted from *The Department Head's Guide to Assessment Implementation in Administrative and Educational Support Units*, by James O. Nichols and Karen W. Nichols, Agathon Press, New York 2000.

## What is assessment?

Assessment is simply a practice used to determine the degree of institutional effectiveness. A program or unit must assess in order to demonstrate how effective it is. Assessment attempts to answer the following question: Are your efforts bringing forth the desired results?

As defined by the American Association for Higher Education, assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving performance. It involves:

1. Making expectations explicit;
2. Setting appropriate criteria and high standards for quality;
3. Systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and,
4. Using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance.

A good assessment process can answer three related questions:

1. What are we trying to do?
2. How well are we doing it?
3. How are we using what is discovered to improve what will be done in the future?

That is, assessment is not just about measuring results, but about continuous improvement over the long term.

Most importantly, a successful assessment program must have dedication from faculty, staff, and administration. In addition, assessment is a formal process that allows a program or unit to document continuous improvements and be accountable to constituents of the university and accrediting bodies.

## Requirement for Accreditation

The concept of assessment, or quality enhancement, is at the heart of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) philosophy and is reflective of a national trend. SACSCOC expects each institution to engage in an ongoing program of improvement, to demonstrate how well it fulfills its stated mission, and to document quality and effectiveness.

SACSCOC organizes the elements of institutional planning and effectiveness in Sections 7 and 8 of *The 2018 Principles of Accreditation* which are as follows:

*7.1 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.** (Institutional Planning) [CR]*

*7.2 The institution has a QEP that (a) has a topic identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning*

*and evaluation processes; (b) has broad-based support of institutional constituencies; (c) focuses on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success; (d) commits resources to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP; and (e) includes a plan to assess achievement. (Quality Enhancement Plan)*

*7.3 The institution identifies expected outcomes of its administrative support services and demonstrates the extent to which the outcomes are achieved. (Administrative effectiveness)*

*8.1 The institution identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and **outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution's mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The institution uses multiple measures to document student success.** (Student achievement) [CR]*

*8.2 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. (Student outcomes: educational programs)*

*b. Student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs. (Student outcomes: general education)*

*c. Academic and student services that support student success. (Student outcomes: academic and student services)*

The SACSCOC 2018 Principles of Accreditation clearly outlines the expectations of the above statements and the entire document can be found at the following URL:

<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2018PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf>

To both demonstrate compliance with SACSCOC expectations and to ensure that Life University does have in place processes for substantive institutional improvement over time, it is expected that educational programs, and administrative support service units develop and document an appropriate annual planning and assessment process.

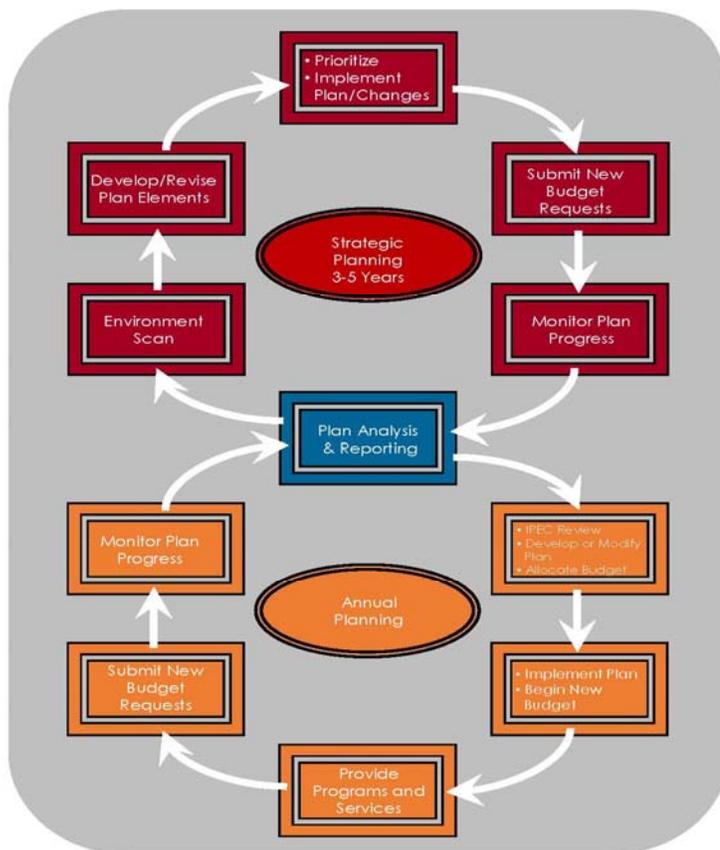
#### **IV. Planning and Assessment**

What is the difference between Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Planning?

Strategic planning focuses on the actions that are taken to implement the institutional Mission, while institutional effectiveness planning focuses on the end result to determine how well the institutional Mission is being fulfilled.

Strategic planning is means/process oriented, meaning it focuses on actions to improve processes or make a unit operate more efficiently. Institutional effectiveness planning (sometimes referred to as outcomes assessment) is outcomes oriented, meaning it focuses on measuring how well students are learning in the programs and measuring how well administrative support service units are operating.

Life University has two distinct cycles of planning and assessment, university level strategic planning and assessment and program/unit level planning and outcomes assessment. These two cycles fall under the umbrella of Life University’s mission, vision, and goals.



**STEPS FOR EACH CYCLE: ANNUAL PLANNING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING**

**ANNUAL:** Administrative support service units engage in annual planning each year by developing and executing outcome assessment plans.

After the plan has been developed and gone through the first assessment cycle, the plan is analyzed and a CIC report is completed, followed by:

- IPEC Review
- Development or modification of the plan
  - Assignment of responsibility
- Allocation of resources from current year’s approved budget
- Implement plan
  - Begin new year budget
- Provide program and services
- Submit new budget request(s)
- Monitor progress
- Plan analysis and reporting

- Review and assess outcomes
- Adjust policies/procedures
- Complete Continuous Improvement Cycle (CIC)

**STRATEGIC:** The university engages in strategic planning efforts using a 3-5-year cycle. Projects and tactics are updated on an annual basis, as needed.

- Environment Scan
  - Institutional strengths and weaknesses (SWOT)
- Develop or revise strategic plan elements
  - Review Strategic Plan Projects and Tactics outcomes/achievements
  - Review annual planning and assessment executive summary report(s) and budgets:
    - Administrative support service areas
    - Student Learning outcomes
- Prioritize
  - Implement Plan/Changes
- Submit new two-year placeholder budget request(s)
- Monitor progress
- Plan Analysis and Reporting

### **Annual Planning: Institutional Effectiveness Process**

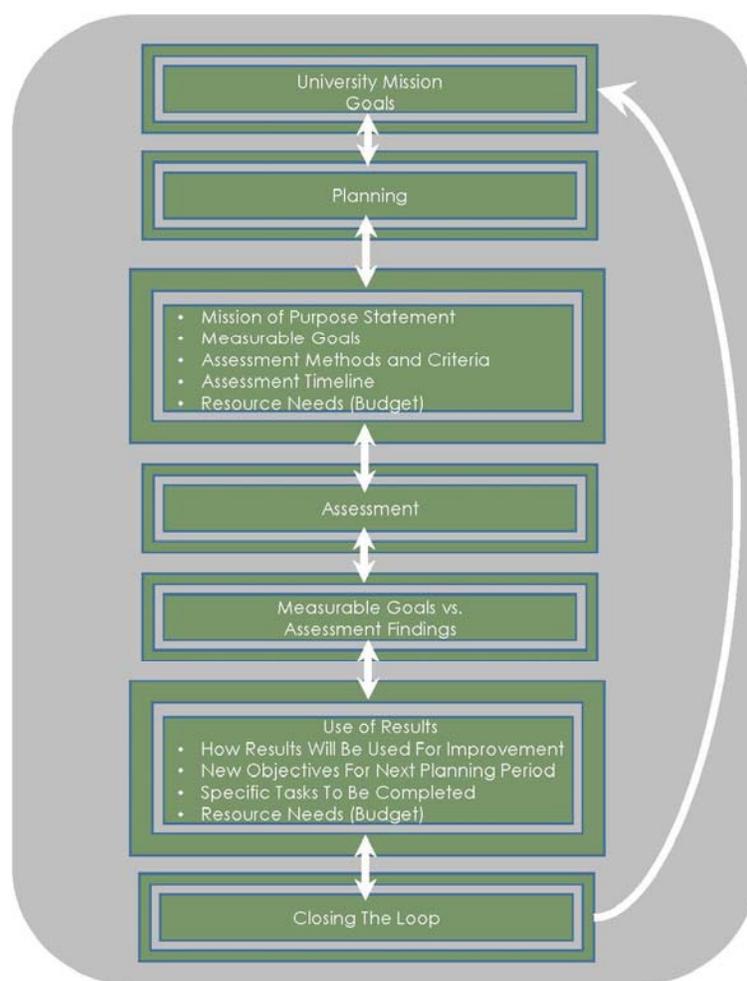
The Institutional Effectiveness (IE) process at Life University is centered on the use of the Continuous Improvement Cycle (CIC) model and the Annual Continuous Improvement Cycle reporting in Weave®. Weave® is an online assessment system designed to aide academic institutions through the process of self-assessment. This system is a web-based solution to capture, manage, archive and track academic and administrative support service assessment information for regional and disciplinary accreditation, program reviews, annual reporting, and program improvement.

The CIC process utilized by Life University is a comprehensive and integrative planning and assessment process that incorporates feedback and input from both academic programs, as well as administrative support services areas of the institution. The annual CIC process is cyclic whereby support for goals are identified, plans are developed and implemented, outcomes are assessed, and findings from the assessment are used to guide unit and programmatic improvements. The university's organizational chart provides the primary basis for determining the academic programs and administrative support service units that participate in the annual CIC process.

As a component of the IE process, CIC reports are completed by faculty, staff, and administrators of the university involved in academic programs and administrative support service areas. The CIC reports are submitted to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE), OIE coordinates the CIC process, in part, by dividing the Institutional Planning and Evaluation Committee (IPEC) into review groups by area of expertise. Reports are submitted to each group of the IPEC for review and analysis.

IPEC reviews the CIC reports and using a rubric determines the extent of the unit’s or program’s linkage to accreditation standards, the institution’s initiatives and strategic plan, unit goal completion, assessment, analysis, use of results, and the overall extent to which the mission has been accomplished. Improvement strategies for the coming year are reviewed and budgetary impact prioritized in relation to completion of the university mission, goals, and/or unit or programmatic goals. Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) reviews IPEC assessment reports and provides feedback to units on quality of data, data interpretation and use of assessment results for program/service improvement, and planning for the next cycle. To close the loop and integrate the annual CIC process with budget and strategic planning, an Executive IPEC summary with budgetary and any strategic planning recommendations is submitted to the President’s Advisory Group (PAG) for consideration.

The Continuous Improvement Cycle model below outlines the process and how closing the loop occurs.



Primary responsibility for coordination of the Institutional Effectiveness process resides in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The timeline for annual planning and assessment of the Continuous Improvement Cycle is developed and implemented with guidance from the Director of the OIE.

## Strategic Planning

The Chancellor is responsible for strategic planning and the Life University Strategic Plan (2020 Vision) is the principal planning document of the institution. It is used generally to guide project and tactic development and it facilitates outcome assessment for measurement of overall institutional effectiveness. The strategic plan is the product of input from constituencies of the institution. The Life University planning model is outlined below.

Step 1: Define the Vision

Step 2: Define the Values

Step 3: From the Vision and Values, create the Mission

Step 4: Identify the broad Strategic Initiatives around which projects are developed and budgeted

Step 5: Design a Strategic Plan of Projects toward fulfillment of the Strategic Initiatives

Step 6: Develop/complete Tactics for implementing projects; report updates to the Board of Trustees

### Vision

A vision statement is an aspirational description of what an organization would like to accomplish or achieve.

### Values

The values guide the perspective of the organization as well as its actions.

### Mission

A mission is a written declaration of an organization's core purpose and focus that normally remains unchanged over time. The mission is a what, versus a how, and is very similar to a vision statement in that it has a future orientation.

### Strategy/Domain = Goal

- Are one or more goals that will be used to achieve the Vision/Mission.
- Or, ends toward which effort and action are directed or coordinated.
  - Strategy is how to achieve a goal. It is a thoughtfully constructed plan or method or action that will be employed to achieve the result. What will be the course of action to achieve the result?
  - Is one or more plans that will be used to achieve the Strategy/Domain/Goal?

### Projects = Objective/Outcome

There are four basic elements of a project: resources, time, money, and most importantly, scope. All these elements are interrelated. Each must be managed effectively. All must be managed together if the project is to be a success.

- **Resources**  
People, equipment, material.
- **Time**  
Task durations, dependencies, critical path.

- **Money**  
Costs, contingencies, profit.
- **Scope**  
Project size, goals, requirements.

### **Tactics**

- Your tactics are the specific actions, sequences of actions, timelines with targets and measures you will use to complete projects and complete Strategies/Domains/Goals.
- They are the ends toward which effort and action are directed or coordinated. Although it is the aim or an end, it is not necessarily the final achievement. That's the mission.
- Objectives and goals are also what's, not how's, but they are smaller than a mission. There can be a number of objectives and goals to be achieved in order to achieve a mission, but there is usually only one mission.
- Tactics are actions taken to achieve a larger purpose. They are also a "what", not a "how", but they are on a smaller scale than an execution.

### **Success Indicator = Measures**

Appropriate measures with criteria provide the methods, instruments, or tools to determine how you know when you achieved your stated objective/outcome.

Assessment measures should:

- Be directly related to the objective/outcome,
- Address all aspects of the objective/outcome (over time), and
- Provide adequate data for analysis; provide actionable data.

### **Target**

- Targets allow you to establish a specific criterion for success. This will allow your objective/outcome to be measurable.
- The target is the date, the amount, the actual piece of information you need to have to know that you met your Tactic/Objective

### **Findings**

- Lists the results based on the measure (methods & tools) used. This does not need to be overly complicated. The purpose of this section is to determine if your objectives/outcomes were met. One finding per Target is preferred.
- A summary statement as to the status towards completion of the Tactic/Objective during the current reporting cycle based on the selected measure.

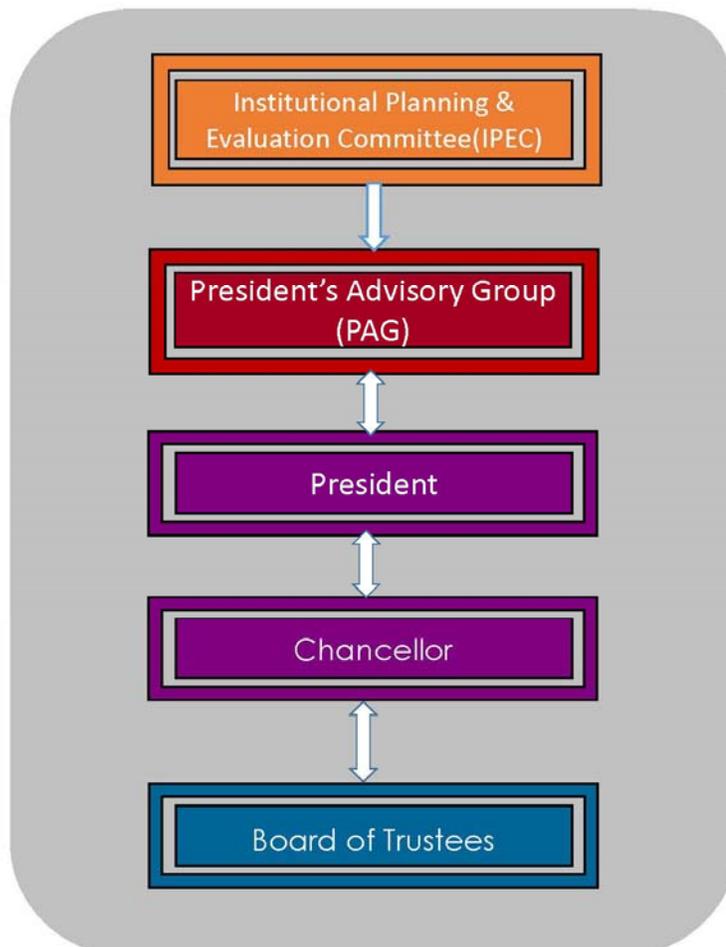
### **Analysis**

- This section allows for reflection of whether Findings met Targets. In order to fully "close the loop" on the assessment cycle, a program/unit ultimately must answer the following questions:
- What specifically did the assessments show regarding any Tactic/objectives that will require continued attention?

- How will findings be used to make future improvements?
- Done annually to document success and limitations of current action

### Strategic Plan Cycle

Completion of the yearly assessment cycle initiates the strategic planning component of the Institutional Effectiveness process. Along with a summary of recommendations from the Institutional Planning and Evaluation Committee (IPEC), the President's Advisory Group is able to review and prioritize projects, tactics, and budget requests to submit to the President and Chancellor for Board of Trustee approval.



At the end of the yearly cycle, the Institutional Planning Evaluation Committee creates an executive summary report outlining outcomes achieved along with budgetary needs and may also make recommendations for additional projects or modifications to projects needed for the university strategic plan. Upon review and approval by the President, the budget and any approved modifications to the strategic plan projects will be presented to the Chancellor and Board of Trustees for review and final approval.

Life University’s institutional effectiveness process integrates the institutional mission with planning and assessment, and with planning and budgeting cycles.

<i>Annual Planning, Budgeting, and Assessment Schedule</i>	
July	New budget is implemented by Finance. All areas modify current approved budget
September	Continuous Improvement Cycle (CIC) reports due
September-December	All areas modified current approved budget and begin development of next year’s placeholders for Operating Baseline Budget, Personnel, and Capital request preparation for following Fiscal Year(s)
	Begin formulating plans for next year and include budgetary impact.
October-December	IPEC and Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) review CIC reports, planning, and assessment methodologies.
December	Enrollment projections established for next year.
January	All areas submit placeholders for Operating, Personnel, and Capital budgets
January-February	Finance prepares Operating Baseline Budget for all areas. IPEC submits Executive Summary and recommendations for budgeting and planning purposes to PAG.
April/May Board Meeting	Strategic Plan updates and Budget presented to the Chancellor and Board of Trustees for final approval.

**Structure**

The Life University Institutional Effectiveness (IE) and Continuous Improvement Cycle (CIC) models, along with the strategic planning development process, demonstrate the interactions required to facilitate the planning and evaluation process. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) has a direct relationship with the two operative committees: Institutional Planning and Evaluation Committee (IPEC) and the President’s Advisory Group (PAG), both of which are at the core of the planning model. In consideration of each committee’s charge and composition of membership, the broad-based participation is apparent in the structuring of this process as intended. A brief description of each committee’s membership and charge in relation to the IE process is as follows:

## President's Advisory Group (PAG)

### Charge, in relation to planning:

- Provide support and feedback in the development, administration, and execution of the strategic plan;
- Develop, administer, and execute strategic plan elements;
- Function as a project administrator with oversight and accountability to develop and ensure completion of approved projects and tactics that support university strategies;
- Review recommendations from the Institutional Planning and Evaluation Committee (IPEC) in relation to accomplishing the mission, including achievement of projects and tactics, and setting priorities and establishing budgets.

### Membership:

- Senior leadership

## Institutional Planning and Evaluation Committee (IPEC)

### Charge:

- Review Continuous Improvement Cycle reports from academic and administrative support service units;
- Provide recommendations to the President's Advisory Group (PAG); and,
- Develop an annual summary analysis based on the IPEC annual summary report and provide recommendations to PAG for change/improvement of the Strategic Plan.

**Membership:** Chair: Director, Institutional Effectiveness

#### College of Chiropractic (CoC)

- CoC Assessment Council

#### College of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies (CGUS)

- CGUS Assessment Council

#### Administrative Support Services

- Stakeholders from each area

## Assessment Council(s)

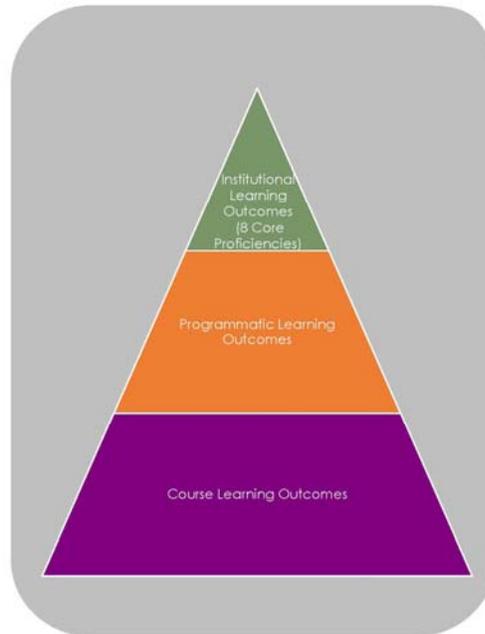
### Charge:

Each College will have an Assessment Council. The purpose of the Assessment Council is to develop, map, and assess student-learning outcomes as they relate to their respective college/educational program.

Each council is responsible for demonstrating, within their program, how student-learning outcomes are achieved and also serve as the recommending body for improvement and/or maintenance of quality educational outcomes.

Each council receives direction from and reports to their respective dean and supports departmental faculty members to develop Continuous Improvement Cycle goals. In conjunction with the Institutional Evaluation and Planning Committee (IPEC), each council works to demonstrate institutional effectiveness and continued quality improvement of academic programs.

### Life University Student Learning Outcomes Model



### V. Outcomes Assessment

The university’s educational programs and administrative support services units complete annual outcomes assessment planning, which is sometimes referred to as institutional effectiveness planning. This process is submitted and maintained in Weave®.

Weave® is an online assessment tool designed to aide academic institutions through the process of self-assessment. It enables academic and administrative support service units to formulate and manage the respective assessment plans and reports.

With Weave® Assessment, the user is “walked” through an easy five-step process (see details below) that will simplify and facilitate the process of documentation by providing a roadmap to guide units through the assessment cycle. It also includes an extensive report-generating feature that ties in internal and external standards to each assessment report.

In the pages that follow, the user will begin to see how Weave® can be used to facilitate meaningful assessment. It is expected that this management system will become an integral part of the campus' climate and will promote a culture of assessment. Keep in mind that, in addition to the management tools of Weave®, a successful assessment process also requires creative input and engagement. Both will be required to articulate each unit's outcomes, to monitor the unit's progress with respect to those outcomes over time, and to formulate improvements where the need for such appears.

The Institutional Effectiveness (IE) process at Life University is centered on the use of the Continuous Improvement Cycle (CIC) model and the Annual Continuous Improvement Cycle reporting inside of Weave®. This system is a web-based solution to capture, manage, archive and track academic and administrative support services assessment information for regional and disciplinary accreditation, program reviews, annual reporting, and program improvement.

## ***Assessment of Student Achievement Using Weave®***

Log into Weave®: <https://app.weaveeducation.com/login/life>

The program will ask for your user name and password, which is the same as all LIFE cloud programs i.e. web advisor and black board. Once the program opens, you will land at the opening page where you will select from the menu the app marked “Assessment” where you will be able to choose or create a template to base your project on.

**PROGAM MISSION/PURPOSE STATEMENT** - Broad Statement of Institutional Philosophy, role, scope, etc. (Nichols, 1995).

The Mission Statement is the initial point of reference for any program or course. It is a concise statement of the general values and principles, which guide the curriculum and should be aligned with relevant accreditation organizations (as applicable).

In broad strokes it sets a tone and a philosophical position from which follow a program's goals and objectives; therefore, the mission statement is also a statement of program vision. The mission statement can and should be brief. However, it is not an isolated document. Rather, it is the cornerstone of the curricular structure, defining the very broadest curricular principles and the larger context in which more specific curricular goals will fit. The program mission statement should define the broad purposes the program is aiming to achieve, describe the community the program is designed to serve, and state the values and guiding principles which define its standards (Center for Instructional Innovation, 2003).

### Checklist for Mission Statement

- ✓ Is the statement brief and memorable?
- ✓ Is it distinctive?
- ✓ Does it clearly state the purpose of the program?
- ✓ Does it indicate the primary function or activities of the program?
- ✓ Does it indicate who the stakeholders are?
- ✓ Does it clearly support the department's, college's and university's missions?
- ✓ Does it support LIFE's Vision and Goal to maximize the expression of the perfection within?

### **PROGAM GOALS**

Program goals are developed and placed in this section. You can both Academic and Administrative Program Goals.

- *Administrative Program Goals* include graduation rates, enrollment and/or transfer rates. Administrative Program Goals are the drivers for **Program Objectives**.
- *Academic Program Goals* are general expectations for student intended outcomes (by the time they graduate the program). (Center for Assessment and Research Studies, 2004) Academic Program Goals are the drivers for **Programmatic Learning Outcomes**.

The main function of the goals statement is to form a bridge between the lofty language of the Mission Statement and the concrete-specific nuts and bolts of program learning outcomes. In the

goals statement, the broad principles of the Mission are narrowed and focused into the specific categories of skills, knowledge, and abilities which will characterize graduates of your program including those that are specific to your discipline as well as those which represent the broader general competencies (Center for Instructional Innovation, 2003).

- ✓ Goals convey a clear picture of meaningful expectations; establish the focus of the program and provide direction for achievement of the mission.
- ✓ Goals forge connections between the University Mission Statement, the College Mission Statement, the program mission statement, and educational/process outcomes.
- ✓ At least one Goal should be linked to each theme in the Mission. Multiple goals are recommended/expected.
- ✓ What are the core, individual functions of your academic program?
- ✓ Describe the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values expected in graduates
- ✓ Each goal can be linked within **Weave**<sup>®</sup> to the appropriate Accreditation Standards, General Education outcomes, Institutional Priorities or to the Strategic Initiatives where applicable. Programmatic Learning Outcome (PLO's) are more likely to be linked to the Accreditation and General Education components.

#### Example of Program Goals:

- Students know basic biological principles and concepts
- Students can use appropriate technology tools
- Students value the scientific approach to understanding natural phenomena

#### Program Goals vs. Program Learning Outcomes

The difference between program goals and program learning outcomes is important.

For example, a department may have as one of its program goals "preparing students for graduate school," while the programmatic learning outcomes related to it would speak to what a student would know, be able to do, and value when she has completed the department's program.

Programmatic goals can be about faculty, students, curriculum, resources, facilities, publications, prestige, or whatever, while student learning outcomes must be behaviorally oriented observable/measurable items about what students know, can do and value.

#### Program Objectives:

Program objectives should focus on an end product and should specify what the program intends to accomplish.

- Program Objectives differ from Program Learning Outcomes
  - Program Objectives are used to assess program viability, efficiency and success.
  - Program Objectives may also target graduation, enrollment, effective instruction and/or transfer rates.

## **Programmatic Learning Outcomes**

A PLO - Refers to the specific knowledge, skill, or attitudes that students are expected to achieve through their college experience; expected or intended outcomes (Center for Assessment and Research Studies, 2004).

SACS standards section 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. (*Student outcomes: educational programs*)
- b. Student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs. (*Student outcomes: general education*)
- c. Academic and student services that support student success. (*Student outcomes: academic and student services*)

This means educational programs must assess both student learning outcomes, as well as operational outcomes, such as retention/graduation rates, employment, or faculty professional development. The latter are put in the unit's administrative report.

- **Educational programs** are expected to have programmatic learning outcomes (PLO's). PLO's are brief, clear, precise, measurable and descriptive statements that describe outcomes in relation to the broader goals and relate to what students should know (cognitive), think (attitudinal) or do (behavioral) in their progression through the degree program.
  - They should be under the control or responsibility of the program;
  - Be succinctly stated (not bundled);
  - Be ascertainable/measurable;
  - Be actionable (lead to improvements) and
  - Be at the program (not course) level.
- If possible, avoid directionality (e.g. increase or decrease) in wording your objectives. You should also try to avoid specifying a quantifiable target. This is more appropriate for Targets that can be added after you enter a Measure.
- Each outcome should be linked within *AcademicEffect*<sup>®</sup> to the appropriate accreditation standards, general education outcomes, the LIFE strategic initiatives and/or strategic plan that are applicable
- Each unit should have three (3) to five (5) Program Learning Outcomes
- It is recommended to have no more than five (5) outcomes (unless required by Accrediting Agency), so as to ensure that the assessment of the program does not become cumbersome, but manageable and sustainable.

### **Examples of a Program Learning Outcome:**

**Needs improvement:** Students will learn effective interpersonal communications skills (How do you know that they have learned these skills?)

**Better:** Students will be able to demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills in the exchange of information and collaboration with patients, their families, and other healthcare professionals.

### Checklist for Program Learning Outcomes

- Does it clearly describe expected knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors of the graduates of the program?
- Does it indicate the level and type of competence that is required of graduates of a program?
- Does it focus on the learning results and not the learning process?

### **MEASURES**

Measures are the sources of evidence you will use to determine the extent you are achieving your outcomes. Appropriate measures and criteria determine how you know when you achieved your stated outcome/objective.

Assessment measures should:

- Be directly related to the outcome
- Address all aspects of the outcome (over time)
- Be measurable / ascertainable; provide adequate data for analysis; provide actionable data and if applicable
- Use appropriate multiple direct and indirect methods of measurement
  - Direct Measures are “tangible, visible, self-explanatory, and compelling evidence of exactly what students have and have not learned.”
    - Direct Measure Examples: Published Tests, Embedded Assignments and Course Activities, Portfolios, Interviews, Rubrics
  - Indirect Measures are “less clear and less convincing”
- Focus on student work at or near graduation

This is where you define and identify the sources of evidence that you will use to determine whether you are achieving the expected results. Outline in detail a systematic way to assess the outcome.

Assessment measures should incorporate:

- **What** data will be collected?
- **When** will the data be collected?
- **What** assessment tool(s) will be used? and,
- **How** will the data be analyzed?

Remember:

- At least one measure for every outcome is recommended. However, it is definitely possible to have multiple measures per objective/outcome OR have one measure aligned with multiple objectives/outcomes.
- Assessment should include multiple measures and data gathering techniques (Triangulation of Data).
- Measures should have an appropriate balance between types: direct and indirect. Measures that target a cognitive domain may utilize Bloom’s Taxonomy.

- Often **educational programs** will attempt to use *course or exam grades* as their assessment method. This is not appropriate because grades they generally do not provide enough details about student performance on specific outcomes to allow program faculty to plan improvements. For instance, knowing that the average grade in a particular course is a B- does not in and of itself provide any information that could be analyzed to plan changes for the improvement of student learning. And making changes intended to improve the class average in the next offering of the course would not necessarily mean that student learning would be enhanced.

Overall grades cannot provide information that is sufficiently granular to allow the department to see where improvements can be made. So the question to ask about grades-as-measures is whether the grades provide enough information for program faculties to plan changes to enhance student achievement of the learning outcomes. If the answer is no, the most common answer to this question, then grades-as-measures are suspect.

- Remember not to use individual student grades as a method for measuring success but instead you may use aggregate or group performance.

***Some examples of appropriate academic assessment methods*** that could be used: use of tests and exams locally or commercially produced to collect group performance; comparison of student performance against criteria established by accreditation, certification or licensing boards or agencies; student portfolios of work sampled and collected over time; pre-test and post-test comparisons of group performance; clinical evaluations; products such as papers or oral presentations judged by peers, experts; observations of student in case studies or problem solving situations; use of standardized exams for comparison of norms, licensure and certification exam group results; use of surveys or interviews of graduates, current students and early leavers, use of survey or interviews of employers about learning demonstrated on the job; graduate employment data.

**Surveys** are indirect measures of student learning for educational programs, but they can be considered a direct measure for non-academic units. Care should be taken to analyze each survey question across all respondents, because that kind of item analysis will reveal areas that score the highest and lowest, and thus can lead to improvements (the purpose of assessment). Do not use mean scores when analyzing survey results.

### **TARGETS**

Targets allow you to establish a specific criterion for success. This will allow your Outcome to be measurable. You must ask yourself what level is acceptable and then seek to sustain or enhance that performance.

The faculty should collectively decide the achievement target (success criteria). In doing this, you should think about the level at which students ought to perform or the “ideal state” rather than a modest target that you know can be achieved and is “safe” to assess. Using assessment data to improve a program is greatly diminished when the criteria for success is not set at the level students ought to be achieving. Targets should include a numeric value.

Some academic examples: (also included within these statements are the measures of assessment on which the targets are based)

- 80 percent of psychology program graduates, as judged by a group of faculty from the department, will successfully complete a major psychology project utilizing a personality profile application during one of several classes their last semester.
- 80 percent of writing samples selected at the end of English 111 will pass the faculty written standards rubrics. No single rubric will show that more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the ratings fell into the categories of needs improvement or unsatisfactory.

## **FINDINGS**

List the results based on the measure (methods & tools) used. This does not need to be overly complicated. The purpose of this section is to determine if the Outcome / Objectives were met. One finding per Target is preferred.

- If good outcomes were developed and good measures were used, the results should be granular enough to provide actionable information.
- You can summarize your findings here and refer to more detailed explanations in a document you stored in the “Files” application.
- Be careful not to do your analysis here; that is done in the analysis section.

### Red Flags

- Lack of results- the assessment plan has not been implemented if there are no results listed, particularly over multiple cycles. This is a critical red flag!
- Little of no analysis of the results: the all too common “data dump”. Results that are not analyzed are not typically very useful for improvement. Be sure to make sense of the results and identify issues which can be addressed to improve student learning or unit outcomes.

## **ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

This section allows for reflection of whether Findings met Targets. In order to fully “close the loop” on the assessment cycle, a program/unit ultimately must answer the following questions:

- What specifically did your assessments show regarding any learning objectives that will require continued attention?
- How will you use these findings to make future improvements in your program or unit?

Responses to analysis questions must adequately demonstrate that improvement in programming and/or student learning is being made based on assessment results/findings.

## **ACTION PLANS**

Action Plans are tied to the Student Learning Outcomes and in this program, sub-items for the action plan can be created. The Action Plan allows you to “close the loop” by taking action to improve on previous findings or by being pro-active as the program changes.

Action Plans are usually created as a result of the findings after the assessment cycle has concluded or can be created during the planning portion of the cycle. A full description of the plan along with a due date is required. State if the Action Plan is “planned” or “completed”. Add additional Action Items as needed. \*\*If you did not meet your Learning Outcomes you **MUST** have an Action Plan for each target that *was not met or partially met* during the reporting period.

### **Project Attachments**

All pertinent files that support assessment activities and findings should be added at the end of the project. This action will create a permanent archive of the assessment data in Weave©.

### **ANNUAL REPORTING**

Microsoft Word can be used to create your annual report and when complete, add to the project attachments. Using the data collected in your Assessment Project for the program, you will create an annual summary document that will touch on the following:

- A program’s or unit’s various contributions to the institution
- Highlights of a program’s or unit’s activities during the past year
- Public or community service that a program has provided
- Teaching activities of faculty
- Research and scholarly activities of faculty and staff
- Challenges that a program or unit faces

This section is your opportunity to close the assessment loop and address “so what?” questions. Context and elaboration should be provided regarding your assessment results, which make a case for the merit and value of your programs and activities and provide rationale for future directions in serving institutional priorities.

## ***Assessment of Administrative Support Services Using Weave®***

Log into Weave®: <https://app.weaveeducation.com/login/life>

The program will ask for your user name and password, which is the same as all LIFE cloud programs i.e. web advisor and black board. Once the program opens, you will land at the opening page where you will select from the menu the app marked “Assessment” where you will be able to choose or create a template to base your project on.

### **UNIT MISSION / PURPOSE STATEMENT**

The Mission is a guiding statement that is aligned and consistent with the university /college / department mission (s), and aligned with relevant accreditation organizations (as applicable)

- Your mission is a brief statement that communicates the overall purpose of the unit, distinguishes it from similar areas, and aligns clearly with the university or college’s mission.

#### **Checklist for Mission Statement**

- ✓ Is the statement brief and memorable?
- ✓ Is it distinctive?
- ✓ Does it clearly state the purpose of the unit?
- ✓ Does it indicate the primary function or activities of the program or unit?
- ✓ Does it indicate who the stakeholders are?
- ✓ Does it clearly support the department’s, college’s and university’s missions?
- ✓ Does it support LIFE’s Vision and Goal to maximize the expression of the perfection within?

### **GOALS**

Unit goals are developed and placed in this section. Goals should be broad-based and visionary. Something your area strives to attain over a long-term time frame.

- At least one Goal should be linked to each theme in the Mission. More than one goal is recommended/ expected.
- Goals forge connections between the University Mission Statement, the College Mission Statement, the program/unit mission statement, and outcomes. Goals convey a clear picture of meaningful expectations; establish the focus of the unit and provide direction for achievement of the mission.
- Each goal can be linked within **Weave®** to the appropriate Accreditation Standards, General Education outcomes, Institutional Priorities or to the Strategic Initiatives where applicable.

### **OBJECTIVES**

Objectives are brief, clear statements that describe objectives in relation to broader goals. Each unit is expected to have at least three objectives for your unit. You can have one or more Objective per goal (3-5 in an assessment cycle is manageable)

- The objectives can focus on a number of different areas such as: level or volume of activity, efficiency, compliance with external standards or regulations, benchmarking performance, gains made by those who are served, client satisfaction. Operational objectives should:
  - Focus on a current service, process, or instruction (SLO)
  - Be under the control of or responsibility of the unit
  - Be measurable/ascertainable
  - Lend itself to improvements
  - Be singular, not “bundled”, each objective leads to one measureable result
  - Be meaningful and not trivial
  - Not lead to a yes/no answer
- If possible, avoid directionality (e.g. increase or decrease) in wording your objectives. You should also try to avoid specifying a quantifiable target. This is more appropriate for achievement target section.

#### Examples of Objectives for administrative support service units:

- The Registrar’s Office process transcript requests in a timely manner
- Purchasing accurately processes purchase orders
- The HR office provides effective new employee orientation services
- Financial Aid provides comprehensive customer service

#### Examples of Learning Outcomes for administrative support service units:

- **CETL:** Faculty will be able to use classroom technology effectively to enhance student learning experiences.
- **Library:** Students will have basic information literacy skills
- **Career Services:** Students will be able to create an effective resume
- **Human Resources:** New employees will be familiar with the benefit package

#### Think SMART when Defining Objectives

- Specific
  - Clear and definite terms describing abilities, knowledge, values, attitudes, and performance
- Measurable
  - It is feasible to get the data: data are accurate and reliable; it can be assessed in more than one way
- Aggressive but Attainable
  - Has potential to move the unit forward
- Results-oriented
  - Describe what standards are expected from students or the program/service
- Time-bound
  - Describe where you would like to be within a specified time period

### Checklist for Objectives

- ✓ Is it aligned with the goal and mission statement of the unit?
- ✓ Is it important to management and reflect key results of unit?
- ✓ Is it possible to collect accurate and reliable data for each outcome with existing resources?
- ✓ Is it stated so that it is possible to use a single measurement method?
- ✓ Is it stated so that more than one measurement method can be used
- ✓ Can it be used to identify areas to improve?
- ✓ Is it SMART?

### **MEASURES**

Measures are the sources of evidence you will use to determine the extent you are achieving your objectives. Appropriate measures and criteria determine how you know when you achieved your stated objective.

Assessment measures should:

- Be directly related to the objective
- Address all aspects of the objective (over time)
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This is where you define and identify the sources of evidence that you will use to determine whether you are achieving the expected results. Outline in detail a systematic way to assess the outcome.

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- **What** data will be collected
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Remember:

- At least one measure for every objective is recommended. However, it is definitely possible to have multiple measures per objective OR have one measure aligned with multiple objectives.
- Assessment should include multiple measures and data gathering techniques (Triangulation of Data).
- Measures should have an appropriate balance between types: direct, indirect, and/or administrative (i.e. not all indirect measures). Measures that target a cognitive domain may utilize Bloom's Taxonomy.

Some sample measures would include measures of satisfaction from those you serve, counts of unit services, validation by a neutral party, auditor, professional standards, etc.

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### **TARGETS**

Targets allow you to establish a specific criterion for success. This will allow your Objective to be measurable. You must ask yourself what level is acceptable and then seek to sustain or enhance that performance. It should answer this question in administrative support units: If our unit is functioning the way we think it ought to function, what will our target or score be? Always aim for a success level that stretches the unit's performance.

Some administrative support unit target examples:

- At least 80% of eligible employees will participate in departmental training.
- 90% of transcripts will be processed and mailed to students within three days.
- 90% of the forms processed will be free of errors
- 99% of clients will be satisfied or very satisfied with the time it takes to receive print jobs

### **FINDINGS**

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## VI. Program Review

Under development

## VII. References

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Nichols, James O. & Karen W. (2000). *The Department Head's Guide to Assessment Implementation in Administrative and Educational Support units*. Agathon Press, New York.

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## Quick Start Guide

### Appendix A:

#### Weave® – Logging In

1. Login by accessing the link from the Life webpage by going to MENU, select Faculty and Staff and under Administrative Resources, select Weave®
2. Or type the following into the address line of your browser: <https://app.weaveeducation.com/login/>
3. Your username and password is the same as you use for all LIFE accounts such as Web Advisor.
4. Please do not use “I forgot my username or password” options as you cannot change your Life University credentials here. Your username does not contain @life.edu.

#### Opening Screen

1. You will see your name in the upper right-hand corner, the LIFE logo and a message that says Welcome and your name
2. The menu to the left of your name is where you access the various Apps, which make up Weave®

#### Credentials

Some information has been pre-populated by HR. Click “Edit) to add your credentials and also upload your picture and biography. Please contact Marketing to acquire these items if you are a faculty member, otherwise feel free to upload your own data. Your basic information, picture and biography will be visible to all users. Your academic credentials will be visible to the Weave® Credentials Manager (HR Business Partner) who will accept your self-entered data for it to become official.

#### Projects: Weave® Assessment

Weave® Assessment is a collaborative workspace where colleagues document assessment of student achievement, assessment of administrative support services, evaluate and measure performance of strategic initiatives and document the effect of key decisions.

#### Program Review: Weave® Review

Weave® Review – is a collaborative workspace where colleagues reflect on activities such as program or unit annual reviews, program design, curriculum and use of facilities. Reflect provides valuable insight and helps inform future initiatives.

#### Help

There is a robust Help System built into Weave®. Help is located in the menu bar to the left of your name after you sign in. You can also request support directly from this location.