

## DEFINITIONS OF KEY ELEMENTS IN PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

(Adapted from *College Assessment Planning* by ACT, 1990; and Robert A. Sevier, *Strategic Planning in Higher Education*, 2000)

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**Criteria** Things to look at in judging the effectiveness, success, or value of a particular thing.

**Evaluation** A process of describing and determining the worth of something.

**Formative Evaluation** Concerned with program improvement.

**Indicators** Statistics that reflect something about the performance or status of some aspects of the educational program.

**Key Performance Indicator** A measure of a current state and a measure of progress toward a specific goal. Indicators might include enrollment, discount rate, faculty productivity, endowment, and other measures.

**Mission Statement** A declaration of organizational purpose (why it exists) and values; its *raison d'être*.

**Outcomes Assessment** A process of describing the effects of curriculum and instruction in order to improve performance (of students, faculty, programs, and institutions).

**Outcomes Statements** Central expectations toward which all curriculum and instruction should be directed. They do not attempt to specify all learning.

**Performance Measure** A means of quantitatively and/or objectively assessing the results of programs, products, projects, or services. See metrics.

**Planning** A process of selecting a rational course of collective action to achieve a future state of affairs. It includes assessing the present state, setting goals, gathering and analyzing information, evaluating information, making decisions, and acting.

**Program** The rationale, major premises and assumptions, objectives, experiences, and educational practices that define the pedagogy and content of instruction.

**Standards** The value others have placed on your criteria - the basis for judging level of quality of performance.

**Strategic Goal** What the organization wants to accomplish or become over the next several years. Goals enable the organization to fulfill its strategic vision. Goals are sometimes called “objectives,” “initiatives,” and “directions.”

**Strategic Planning** A disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it. It is a process through which the leaders of an organization envision its future and develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future.

**Student Learning Outcomes** Outcome statements should answer the questions, “Why these goals, these objectives?” with the answer, “So that the student can...” They should specify what students should be able to do at various stages of their development.

**Summative Evaluation** Concerned with final judgment of success.

**Vision** An expression of what an organization wants to be and do in the coming years. A picture of the organization’s desired future.