

Quality

Endeavors

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Assessment, Planning, and Improvement: Getting the Most from the Web

There is a lot of information on the Web – so much that, at times, it may seem difficult to know where to start, or what to use. With this issue of *Quality Endeavors*, the Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment begins sharing with you some Web sites that we have found useful in the areas of institutional assessment, strategic planning, and innovation and improvement.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT TOOLS ON THE WEB

The first step in planning or improvement is often measuring current performance. The **National Institute of Standards and Technology**, the home of the **Baldrige National Quality Award**, provides several tools on-line for assessing and evaluating institutional effectiveness. The first provides a snapshot of your organizational environment, relationships, and the challenges you face. **E-Baldrige Self-Assessment and Action Planning: Using the Baldrige Organizational Profile for Education** can be found at http://patapsco.nist.gov/eBaldrige/Education_Profile.cfm. If you have already developed and implemented a strategic plan or improvement initiative, and would like to determine how much progress your organization has made, **Are We Making Progress?** is available at <http://www.quality.nist.gov/Progress.htm>.

PLANNING RESOURCES ON THE WEB

One of the components of an effective strategic plan is an environmental scan. The following sites provide a number of reports about what is impacting higher education.

In the **National Survey of Student Engagement**, more than 660,000 first-year and senior students at 538 four-year colleges and universities (including two Penn State campuses) have responded to questions on deep learning, civic engagement, and wellness. A summary of the

data is available at <http://www.indiana.edu/~nsse/>. The **Faculty Survey of Student Engagement**, at <http://www.indiana.edu/~nsse/fsse/index.htm>, measures faculty expectations of student engagement, and types of learning experiences faculty provide.

The **Association of American Colleges and Universities** completed a study examining the impact of the increasing number of Americans going to college during the end of the 20th and early 21st century. Public policy has focused on students attending college, but not on how they attend. Many students attend more than one institution, attend part-time, or attend from a distance. Often they are not prepared for college-level work. **Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College** at <http://www.greaterexpectations.org/> looks at ways for students to become intentional, empowered, informed, and responsible learners.

Measuring Up 2004: The National Report Card on Higher Education (<http://measuringup.highereducation.org/survey.cfm>) is the third biennial report prepared by the **National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education**. It summarizes national and state information in five areas of college opportunity and achievement: preparation, participation, completion, affordability, and benefits. It also addresses preliminary work five states are doing in the category of learning.

The **National Center for Academic Transformation** (<http://www.thencat.org/>) serves as a source of expertise and support for those in higher education who wish to take advantage of the capabilities of information technology to transform their academic practices. Their **Roadmap to Redesign** is a three-year initiative to share the ideas and practices from 30 institutions (including Penn State) for course redesign using technology to realize cost savings and quality enhancements.

Continued on next page.

The **Society for College and University Planning** provides **Trends to Watch in Higher Education** at <http://www.scup.org/knowledge/ttw.html>, updated several times during the year.

WORKING MORE EFFECTIVELY FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The **National Consortium for Continuous Improvement in Higher Education** (NCCI) provides several resources at their Web site (<http://www.ncci-cu.org>). A list of presentations at their **July 2005 Sixth Annual National Conference** sessions, with links to summaries, is available at <http://www.ncci-cu.org/Visitors/ProfessionalDevelopment/AnnualConference/index.cfm>. Some of the presentation summaries available include **Pioneering Lean Six Sigma** from the University of New Orleans (<http://www.ncci-cu.org/Visitors/Documents/LeanSixSigma070905AC.pdf>), **Financial Management Strategy Maps** from the University of Washington (<http://www.ncci-cu.org/Visitors/Documents/UW-FMStrategyMap070905AC.pdf>), and a roundtable discussion of best practices in continuous improvement (<http://www.ncci-cu.org/Visitors/Documents/BestPracticesSession071005AC.pdf>).

Additionally, links to all NCCI member institution Web sites can be found at <http://www.ncci-cu.org/Visitors/About/members.cfm>. An example of the resources that may be found at some of these member Web sites is the extensive reference posted by the University of Wisconsin-Madison on planning and leading meetings (<http://www.ohrd.wisc.edu/academicleadershipsupport/howto1.htm>); managing conflict (<http://www.ohrd.wisc.edu/onlinetraining/resolution/index.asp>); and using several facilitator tools (<http://www.wisc.edu/improve/improvement/guides.html>).

The **Juran Center for Leadership in Quality** and the **Carlson School of Management, University of Minnesota** have developed an on-line **Body of Knowledge** of quality and performance improvement (<http://www.csom.umn.edu/Page1293.aspx>). This database contains approximately 3,500 citations and abstracts for journal articles and books published over the past ten years in this field. References to both practitioner and academic articles are included. To search the database, complete the fields in the search screen at <http://apps.csom.umn.edu/bok/bodyofknowledge.cfm>.

If you are looking for tools you can use to have a more effective meeting, the **International Association of Facilitators** has created the **IAF Methods Database**. The site at <http://www.iaf-methods.org/> includes information on tools for creativity, decision making, team building, dealing with conflict, change management,

and more. You will need to register for full access to the information, but there is no charge.

Of course, we continue to post reference information at the Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment Web site at <http://www.psu.edu/president/pia/> and we encourage you to visit that site regularly.

NEW! SPOTLIGHT ON QUALITY IMPROVEMENT: Outreach Grants and Contracts Initiative

Outreach has significantly increased the number and scale of its external grants and contracts. Without clear and efficient processes, there was no way to leverage knowledge gained through each submission to improve the quality and strategy of each proposal. A cross-functional team came together to develop a more effective contracts and grants process for Outreach. Find out more at <http://qualityspotlight.psu.edu/>.

JANUARY 2006 QUALITY ADVOCATES

Improving Strategic Indicators

Friday, January 20, 2006

8:30 – 10:00 a.m.

404 Old Main

Since 1999, Penn State has gauged its performance toward the goals in the University's strategic plan using a set of strategic performance indicators. Each major organizational unit within the University is also expected to develop indicators as part of the strategic planning process. The Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment has recently completed a review of the University-wide indicators to assess whether the current set of University-wide indicators are still appropriate or whether there may be other indicators that should be included in the report.

Join us for the January 2006 meeting of the Quality Advocates' Network as we discuss:

- What makes a good indicator?
- How do indicators support decision-making?
- How do you determine indicators for new initiatives, for example, student-centeredness?

Panelists will include:

- Anna Griswold, Assistant Vice President for Undergraduate Education and Executive Director for Student Aid
- Lori J. Bechtel, Chancellor, Penn State Altoona

- Daniel Nugent, Management Information Associate, Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment

If you would like to attend this event, please call the Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment at 814-863-8721 or email psupia@psu.edu

Next Quality Advocates: *Using Data for Academic Management: Sharing Best Practices*, Friday, March 24, 8:30 -10:00 a.m.

INNOVATION EXTRACTS: The Decathlon Leader

In higher education, leaders can come from many levels of the organization. Those who serve as leaders may have traditional formal positional power and authority, or they may have informal, personal power. The key is to develop an “invitational” organizational climate and culture, through trust, respect, optimism, and intentionality, which will invite and encourage all to serve as informal leaders when the opportunities arise. The “Decathlon Leader” is one who can help develop this culture, by modeling actions in ten areas: as an activist, futurist, optimist, generalist, ethicist, pluralist, humorist, minimalist (focusing on the essential and avoiding unwarranted urgency), inspiritist (being intentionally inviting), and intentionalist.

Adapted from the writings of Betty L. Siegel, Ph. D., President of Kennesaw State University, University System of Georgia, with Kurt Daw, Ph. D., “The Decathlon Leader” at <http://www.kennesaw.edu/president/speeches/decathlon.pdf>, and with William W. Purkey, Ed. D., *Becoming an Invitational Leader*, Humanics Trade Group, Atlanta, GA, 2003.

SUPPORT FOR PLANNING, IMPROVEMENT, AND ASSESSMENT IN YOUR UNIT

The Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment is available to consult with units and facilitate the implementation of Penn State’s strategic priorities. It is the Office’s mission to support the University’s efforts to plan, assess, and improve programs and services. The Office uses organizational change tools to help units assess their needs, develop strategic plans, improve key processes, and develop collaborative team environments. There is no charge for the Office’s consultation services. If you would like to discuss the planning, quality, or assessment needs of your unit with one of our consultants, please contact the Office at 814-863-8721 or e-mail les1@psu.edu.