ASSESSMENT, ACCREDITATION, AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

2019-2024 Strategic Plan

Promoting effectiveness through continuous improvement and data-informed decision making

Mission

Our mission is to promote a culture of data-informed decision making at Bellarmine University by providing analytics and insights that support every functional area in delivering exceptional student learning, opportunities, and services.

Values

We hold that the work of effectiveness and continuous improvement does not happen absent institutional and societal context and is not inherently objective. We strive to achieve our mission and strategic goals guided by our professional values. We value:

1. Equity, inclusion, and full participation in our work.
2. Recognizing that humans, not data, make decisions and therefore decision making should be data-informed, not data-driven.
3. Centering students, and in particular their holistic learning and development, in everything we do.
4. Democratizing data to create a comprehensive, systematic, and shared understanding of our institution to inform decision-making.
5. Continuous improvement, which recognizes that our work will remain inherently ongoing and that an immediate solution may not be the most effective.
6. Promoting productive dialogue and effective communication as integral to generating knowledge, insights, and solutions from our data.

Purpose of the Plan

Centralizing university efforts around assessment, accreditation, and institutional effectiveness presents a strategic opportunity. We have a responsibility to reimagine our own work and to collaborate with stakeholders and partners to advance efforts across the institution. This plan is designed to support the university's strategic plan, to align with core initiatives across the institution, and to frame how we can employ an innovative and entrepreneurial approach to the work. Specifically, this plan may be used to:

1. Define the scope of our work now and set ambitious, achievable goals for the future in order to scale support for planned university growth.
2. Align our work clearly and intentionally with Tradition and Transformation: The Bellarmine Strategic Plan (pillars in this document note alignment with the six strategic priorities).
3. Communicate our value, capacity, and capabilities to the campus community in order to broaden our work and inspire creative collaboration.
4. Provide focus for our efforts so that our growth in knowledge, skills, and abilities aligns closely with anticipated institutional needs.
5. Ensure that early initiatives and future requests for our area reflect good stewardship of university resources.

2019-2024 Strategic Goals

1. Intentionally promote a culture of institutional effectiveness through continuous improvement
2. Partner with campus constituents to deliver leading-edge tools that effectively and equitably inform decision-making
3. Create infrastructure for high-functioning support to streamline and embed accreditation practices within schools, colleges, and the university
4. Establish structures to prioritize workflow, create constructive timelines, and allocate work effectively across our area
5. Build and maintain organizational capacity and develop our people

1. Intentionally promote a culture of institutional effectiveness through continuous improvement

1.1. Develop policies and procedures that democratize data and build in effectiveness

1.1.1. Policies and processes for periodic academic and service department reviews
1.1.2. Systematized, consistent annual reporting processes
1.1.3. Comprehensive, aligned, and cyclical assessment planning for colleges/divisions, departments/programs, and other units as appropriate

1.2. Create structures across the institution to increase access to data and utilize evidence-based decision making

1.2.1. Identify, train, and support level 1 report and data visualization editors/authors in key areas
1.2.2. Provide online, on-demand training for faculty and staff who want to enhance their own abilities to generate insights from data

1.3. Convene and sustain campus-wide groups that establish shared responsibility for assessment and effectiveness

1.3.1. Constitute and charge an Institutional Effectiveness Steering Committee (IESC)
1.3.2. Establish a University Assessment Committee to systematize and inform assessment in all areas

1.4. Deliver relevant and impactful education and development for university personnel that reframes understanding of this work

1.4.1. Create a "data fellows" program (possibly internal certificate) to shift the cultural understanding of data and relevant uses
1.4.2. Create an "effective assessment" program (possibly internal certificate) for the campus that includes effective student learning outcomes assessment practices and consideration for process delivery outcomes in service units to help people connect most of their decisions/actions to institutional effectiveness
1.4.3. Provide methodological consulting to units that are undertaking self-studies, periodic reviews, or other effectiveness-related efforts
1.4.4. Produce user-friendly resources (e.g., online videos, reports, flow charts, diagrams, or infographics) that help the campus community develop a clear and comprehensive understanding about data structures and related tools

2. Partner with campus constituents to deliver leading-edge tools that effectively and equitably inform decision-making

2.1. Identify opportunities to deliver high-level dashboards/overviews for key end users

2.1.1. Presidential/Cabinet dashboard with relevant institutional KPIs
2.1.2. Dashboards for each VP with relevant KPIs
2.1.3. Dashboards for faculty administrators/leaders that inform decision-making

2.1.4. Dashboards for staff leaders (director level and above) that inform program/service design and delivery

2.1.5. Explore the development of department/program score cards utilizing both BU data/trends and benchmark information

2.2. Curate a repository of resources that promote best practices in data design and reporting

2.2.1. Further deploy business intelligence and analytics to inform continuous improvement practices

2.2.2. Partner with campus stakeholders to implement policies and processes for evaluating programs, initiatives, and interventions

2.3. Strive to provide information equitably to all areas so they may generate and leverage analytics

2.3.1. Systematically evaluate our own work to ensure alignment with emerging practices around equity, inclusion, and full participation

2.3.2. Link our efforts to change agents with the authority to promote organizational and cultural change

3. Create infrastructure for high-functioning support to streamline and embed accreditation practices within schools, colleges, and the university

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3.1. Create a cultural understanding of accreditation as a minimal bar for effectiveness

3.1.1. Share information about the purpose and role of accreditation and its relationship to institutional effectiveness

3.1.2. Provide ongoing training and development for IESC members that positions accreditation as integral to their work as a component of continuous improvement and quality assurance

3.1.3. Nominate/apply for awards and recognition for exemplary programs that highlight the value of continuous improvement

3.2. Implement inclusive structures for university accreditation

3.2.1. Designate IESC as the central body responsible for managing SACSCOC accreditation report writing, making related policy recommendations, and acting as the conduit for information to all areas of campus

3.2.2. Charge the IESC with developing university-wide engagement strategies to ensure that most staff and faculty are engaged in preparing major accreditation efforts, including the decennial compliance certificate and fifth-year interim report

3.2.3. Provide campus-wide forums around accreditation milestones that help all stakeholders develop a more comprehensive understanding of the role, purpose, and process of accreditation

3.3. Expand visibility and support for college/school/department/program accreditations

   3.3.1. Develop a comprehensive, public warehouse of accreditation needs including related timelines, projected resource needs, and anticipated required levels of support

   3.3.2. Conduct a needs assessment to determine what resources might be required for adequate accreditation support across all areas

4. Establish structures to prioritize workflow, create constructive timelines, and allocate work effectively across our area

4.1. Increase consistency and transparency around unit operations

   4.1.1. Implement a transparent decision-making filter to determine whether a project is accepted, what priority a project is assigned, and who is included in the decision and project completion

   4.1.2. Consider creating an accessible pipeline for requestors/partners to view current status of their project

   4.1.3. Publish online organizational charts, personnel bios, and other relevant information

   4.1.4. Revise/update project request forms, tracking processes, and staff/project assignments

4.2. Enhance data visualization across campus to better support use of information for effectiveness

   4.2.1. Explore implementing an enterprise data visualization tool

   4.2.2. Provide campus training on how to construct and make sense of data visualizations

   4.2.3. Publish highly relevant data visualizations online in keeping with principles of good governance

5. Build and maintain organizational capacity and develop our people

5.1. Modernize operations with an eye toward the future

   5.1.1. Consider organizational structures and right-size operations to meet current and anticipated needs

   5.1.2. Collaborate with public affairs to (re)brand our area and better tell our story

   5.1.3. Expand staff support for assessment and accreditation

   5.1.4. Expand staff support around data science

5.2. Increase scholarly productivity and professional development for team members

   5.2.1. Develop and implement annual professional development plans

   5.2.2. Intentionally collaborate with campus partners on conference presentations and publications

5.2.3. Give personnel opportunities to teach and advise when appropriate and in alignment with academic departments' needs

5.2.4. Consider partnerships with community nonprofits to help them address identified issues and grow in success while reinforcing the real world value of data-informed decision-making and fufilling our civic responsibility to the community

5.3. Professional staff will apply current research and emerging practice to decision-making processes

5.3.1. Professional staff will stay abreast of current trends and issues across higher education and in subfields relevant to their roles

5.3.2. Proposals, requests for additional resources, and other formal documents will refer to current and/or relevant theory and research