



**DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS TO ENSURE
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES RECEIVE A
QUALITY HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Performance Measurement,
Program and Project Evaluation

April 8, 2008

Strategic Planning Staff

We need to assess long-term outcomes for all OPE programs:

◆ The Secretary's Academic Competitiveness Council reported in May 2007 that

- *"perhaps the most striking finding in undergraduate education is the lack of rigorous evaluation of federal investments due to inadequate mechanisms for the collection of data on long-term student outcomes."*

U.S. Department of Education, *Report of the Academic Competitiveness Council*, Washington, D.C., 2007.

We need to assess long-term outcomes for all OPE programs (continued):

- ◆ Without access to long-term data on student outcomes, it is impossible to assess “what works.” The measurement of student achievement and institutional performance is critical for determining effective grantee projects.

The importance of ensuring that your application includes a strong evaluation plan:

- ◆ The peer reviewers will be instructed to look closely at the potential of applicants to successfully reach their individual project goals, which are measured by the program's performance indicators.

The importance of ensuring that your application includes a strong evaluation plan (continued):

- ◆ The evaluation plan should not only include formative and summative measures, but also, address the use of appropriate controls and processes that provide for independent evaluation.

The importance of ensuring that your application includes a strong evaluation plan (continued):

- ◆ The evaluation plan should help shape the development of the project from the beginning of the grant period and provide benchmarks for the monitoring of progress and measurement of that progress throughout the grant award period.

Criteria for evaluation:

◆ (G) QUALITY OF THE PROJECT EVALUATION (Maximum 20 points)

- (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible. **(7 POINTS)**

Criteria for evaluation (continued):

- (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project. **(7 POINTS)**
- (3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress towards achieving intended outcomes. **(6 POINTS)**

What we expect to see in applications:

◆ Independent Evaluator:

- The grantee hires an evaluator who is truly 'outside' the project, whether from a different department or a different institution;
- The grantee includes the evaluator from the planning stage onward;

What we expect to see in applications (continued):

◆ Independent evaluator (continued):

- The evaluator provides a data collection and analysis plan with benchmarks for project assessment over the duration of the grant;
- The evaluator collects baseline data (for comparison purposes) at the start of the project;

What we expect to see in applications (continued):

◆ Independent evaluator (continued):

- The evaluator reports periodically on progress of the evaluation, and the evaluator's reports form part of the APR and FPR documentation;
- The grantee considers any reports and recommendations of the evaluator as the project continues, and may make changes to the project in response to the evaluator's recommendations (within the allowed parameters of the program).

What we expect to see in applications (continued):

◆ Evaluation plans:

- Be sure to describe the evaluation design, indicating:
 - ◆ (1) what types of data will be collected;
 - ◆ (2) when various types of data will be collected;
 - ◆ (3) what methods will be used;
 - ◆ (4) what instruments will be developed and when;

What we expect to see in applications (continued):

- Be sure to describe the evaluation design, indicating (continued):
 - ◆ (5) how the data will be analyzed;
 - ◆ (6) when reports and outcomes will be available; and
 - ◆ (7) how you will use the information collected through your project evaluation to monitor the progress of your funded project.

What we expect to see in applications (continued):

◆ Evaluation plans (continued):

- We are especially interested in seeing applications that include an expressed commitment to collect and report outcome data on treated (and comparison) groups to the point where there are real graduation or post-graduation outcomes, even if that is two or more years beyond the end of the grant.

What we expect to see in applications (continued):

◆ Control or comparison group:

- We need to understand student success in context. Ideally, applications would provide a comparison (it could be past history, or a similar (but untreated) group, or some larger (e.g., national) population) so that results have a reference level.

What we expect to see in annual performance reports (APRs):

- ◆ Baseline data collected
- ◆ Evidence of anything changing
- ◆ Ongoing data on the project

What we expect to see in final performance reports (FPRs):

- ◆ By the end of the study, we would like to see outcome measure results.
 - This could potentially mean data collection beyond the grant period.

Possible Evaluation Designs

- ◆ For more information about possible evaluation designs, please see the Academic Competitiveness Council's report at:

<http://www.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/competitiveness/acc-mathscience/report.pdf>

GPRA Measures

- ◆ Measure 1.1: The percentage of faculty trained through project activities who incorporate elements of their training into their classroom teaching.
- ◆ Measure 1.2: The difference between the rate at which students with documented disabilities complete courses taught by faculty trained through project activities and the rate at which other students complete the same courses.

Evaluation Hierarchy

Weaknesses and Needs

Program and Project Goal(s)

Project Objectives: What a project will accomplish to realize program goal(s) (approved in application – cannot be changed)

Activities: The steps and action plan to undertake to accomplish the program objective(s)

Performance Measures: How a project measures progress toward meeting its objectives (GPRA, Program, Project - **Modifiable**)

Project Objectives and Performance Measures

- ◆ Objective: what is the project trying to accomplish?
 - Projects should write a few clear objectives that explain what the project is doing to support the overall goal.
- ◆ High-quality project objective criteria: relevance, focus, measurability

High-Quality Project Objectives: Relevance & Focus

- ◆ **Relevance:** How relevant is the project objective to the overall goal of the program and/or the goal of the project?
- ◆ **Focus:** How focused is the project objective?

High-Quality Project Objectives: Measurability

Are there concepts in the project objective that lend themselves to measurement? If so, is measurement feasible?

- To enhance student learning. *(conceptually hard to measure)*
- To measure the impact of the project on the academic progress of students with disabilities. *(conceptually hard to measure)*

Practice Exercise 1:

How do these project objectives measure up?

◆ Identify, develop, document, and replicate the implementation of innovative educational interventions that encourage the retention of students with disabilities.

1. **Relevance**
2. **Focus**
3. **Measurability**

Practice Exercise 2:

How do these project objectives measure up?

◆ Increase the percentage of faculty members using universal design teaching techniques.

1. Relevance
2. Focus
3. Measurability

Project Performance Measure Types

What is a performance measure?

- An indicator to determine how well objectives are being met.

What to measure?

- A specific achievement/accomplishment
- Change in a level of achievement/accomplishment
- Achievement/accomplishment (or change) compared with other students or institutions

Components of Performance Measures

- ◆ **What** will change
- ◆ **How much** change is expected
- ◆ **Who** will achieve the change
- ◆ **When** the change will take place

Improving Performance Measures

Original Performance Measure:

To encourage faculty members to use universal design teaching techniques. (**who**)

What: Increase the number of faculty members using universal design teaching techniques.

When: By 2011, increase the number of faculty members using universal design teaching techniques.

How much: By 2011, increase the number of faculty members using universal design teaching techniques by 50%.

Improving Performance Measures

Original Performance Measure:

The institution will implement innovative educational interventions that encourage the retention of students with disabilities.

Institution faculty (who) will develop and implement in six undergraduate courses (what) innovative educational interventions that encourage successful course completion by students with disabilities.

Improving Performance

Measures (continued)

Institution faculty (**who**) will develop and implement in six undergraduate courses (**what**) innovative educational interventions that encourage successful course completion by students with disabilities by the end of the third year of the grant (**when**).

Students with disabilities (**who**) will have ten percent higher (**how much**) course completion rates in courses developed under the grant than in prior existing courses (**what**) by the end of the grant period (**when**) [Outcome].



Remember...

Activities are not
performance measures!