

IE Handbook 1998-99

An Introduction to Institutional Effectiveness

South Texas Community College is committed to critical self-study and continuous quality improvement. Through evaluation and examination of its performance, the college can assure the public it serves that it is a community college of the highest quality.

How is performance measured? How do we ensure fulfillment of the institution's purpose? Institutional Effectiveness is the answer to both these questions.

South Texas Community College defines Institutional Effectiveness (IE) as a comprehensive and participative approach to planning, research and evaluation. It provides for the systematic use of evaluation results to continuously guide institutional planning and improve institutional performance. As a process, Institutional Effectiveness is:

- the development of institutional and departmental strategic plans detailing purpose, goals and objectives, with departmental goals linked to the institutional purpose,
- the development of annual plans called [institutional effectiveness plans](#) outlining intended outcomes, assessment methodologies and performance standards,
- the conduct of self-assessment and self-evaluation as described in the institutional effectiveness plans to determine how successful the departments were at meeting their goals and objectives, leading to the documentation of met goals and the authoring of improvement strategies geared to meeting unmet goals, and
- a public accountability function that follows after the self-assessment which ensures that departments have implemented their plans and assesses the operation, efficiency and compliance of each department.

The IE process adopted by STCC brings the institution to a continuous state of systematic self-evaluation and self-improvement.

The [Institutional Effectiveness Cycle](#), through which STCC achieves effectiveness, is an annual cycle beginning each academic year. The cycle begins with all departments reviewing their mission, their goals, and the assessments from the last institutional effectiveness cycle. Based on this review, each unit writes an Effectiveness Plan for the new year. The IE Plan for each department consists of the department's intended outcomes and the methods of assessment for each outcome. During the year, all assessment data is collected as described in the department's plan from various entities within and outside the department and coordinated through the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness. Also during the year, the Office of the Assistant for Accountability conducts IE Accountability Reviews to determine how the departments are using the assessment data for continuous improvement and, if necessary, recommend management initiatives to improve performance. At the end of the year, the departments review the assessment and accountability findings and author Institutional Effectiveness & Accountability Reports. If the departments report a failure to meet the outcomes established in the effectiveness plans, the departments author action plans and improvement strategies to meet these effectiveness goals within the coming year (these action plans and improvement strategies become addendums to the unit's existing strategic plan and are monitored during the upcoming IE cycle). The cycle is concluded with the issuance of this report and the authoring of these action plans and improvement strategies. A new cycle begins.

An **Institutional Effectiveness Team** coordinates the development, implementation and "use of results" of the Institutional Effectiveness Plans. The team guides departments into identifying intended outcomes and developing methods of assessment for measuring outcome attainment. The IE Team also coordinates the activities of the Office of the Assistant for Accountability, determining the depth and frequency of the IE accountability reviews and recommending, where necessary, management initiatives for performance improvement. The IE Team is made up of representative faculty and staff from various departments and academic units within the College.