

Integrated Planning and Institutional Effectiveness: Improvement and Renewal at The University of Scranton

Office of Planning & Institutional Effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

This document describes the University of Scranton's approach to integrated planning and the assessment of institutional effectiveness. Planning refers to those conscious processes used to develop goals and strategies for growth and improvement at all levels of our institution. Assessment of institutional effectiveness¹ describes the coordination of a portfolio of activities that evaluate and demonstrate the achievement of these goals, our [mission](#), and the quality of our programs and services. A process for demonstrating accountability to internal and external stakeholders, it seeks to explore and answer the questions, in the context of our mission:

- What is it we hope to achieve as a University? What are our goals?
- Are we doing the things we want to do well? Are we identifying our priorities, and effectively resourcing those areas?
- How are we using what we learn about ourselves to improve?
- How are we communicating the outcomes of these activities?

This work is facilitated largely through the activities undertaken both individually and conjointly by the [Office of Planning & Institutional Effectiveness](#) (OPIE) and the [Office of Institutional Reporting and Data Analytics](#) (OIRDA). However, as this work is coordinated institutionally but undertaken through a distributed model where a wide variety of administrative and academic departments directly engage with and conduct planning and assessment activities, success requires the commitment of leaders of administrative and academic departments and programs across campus.

Particular effort is made to connect the assessment of institutional effectiveness to assessment of student learning where such overlap is appropriate. This document outlines our common commitment and framework for the development of goals & outcomes and evaluation of how they are met at the institutional, administrative division, college, and department and program level.

CONTEXT, COMMITMENT & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Regular and sustainable processes for self-evaluation in the spirit of improvement are hallmarks of any efficient and effective organization. Within higher education,

¹ This work complements and connects with assessment of student learning and educational effectiveness practices, as described in the University's Comprehensive Guide for Student Learning Assessment.

“assessment” is the umbrella term for this type of activity, and there are two particular types – the evaluation of the institution, its mission, organizational goals, structures and processes (institutional effectiveness assessment), and the assessment of student learning goals/outcomes (educational assessment). Both types of assessment evaluate how, and how well, we are meeting our stated institutional or educational goals.

Over the past three decades, best practices have been established by professional and peer organizations in the triad of planning, assessment, and institutional research disciplines, creating a higher education community dedicated to supporting their institutions through continuous improvement. Regional and disciplinary accreditors, as well as federal legislative reporting requirements, set additional expectations for assessment and its use at the institution and program levels.² Scholarship and practice both agree: for any assessment activity to be useful for improvement, it must be incorporated into ongoing planning, resource allocation, and institutional renewal.

Assessment helps us to go beyond describing *what* we do and *how* we do things, showing *how well* we do them, and creating intentional pathways to use what we learn to improve and renew. In our case, this renewal is explored through both the foundational and aspirational attributes of our Catholic, Jesuit mission, and the ways in which we apply our resources to making them real for our students and broader campus community. Assessment identifies both opportunities to improve, but also serves as a process to identify and celebrate areas of success and impact.

In 2001, the University recommitted itself to integrated planning and assessment with the adoption of a new [Planning & Institutional Effectiveness Model](#) (the “*Model*”, attachment A), and again in 2004 with a then-new Comprehensive Assessment Plan, which described both student learning and institutional assessment activities.³ Since then, the *Model* has been reviewed and adjusted throughout the years to assure it enables the University to meet internal needs and external expectations, most particularly with Middle States accreditation standards as they evolved; its current version was reaffirmed in 2014. Also in 2014, the University embraced a new [Comprehensive Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning](#) (the “*Comprehensive Plan*”), which outlines a new structure and processes for educational assessment. Taken together, the *Comprehensive Plan*, the *Model* and this document describe the University’s holistic approach to continuous improvement.

Both the *Model* and the *Comprehensive Plan* ground student learning assessment strategies in the Ignatian Educational Paradigm, institutional planning and effectiveness assessment utilizes these same elements of the Paradigm: context (Context – gathering evidence on the current state of the University, its stakeholders, and its environment to generate knowledge about strengths and weaknesses, as well as

² Mostly, but not exclusively, through the Higher Education Opportunity Act (as amended) and related U.S. Department of Education requirements.

³ Replaced by this document and its companion, the *Comprehensive Plan for Assessment of Student Learning*.

opportunities and challenges from outside the institution, in light of our Mission); experience (moving beyond this assimilation of information to analysis and examination of how we wish to shape our future); reflection (the application of this analysis to the setting of goals for improvement), action (the pursuit of goals); and evaluation (the assessment of the success of goals and related activities). The paradigm completed leads to renewal – the use of assessment results and application of resources for the improvement of our programs and services.

Accreditation Context

The University of Scranton is accredited by the [Middle States Commission on Higher Education](#) (MSCHE). In its 2014 *Requirements for Affiliation and Standards of Accreditation*, and through a number of other policies and practices, MSCHE outlines expectations for assessment. Each standard includes a criteria related to the assessment of the core content, programs, and practices described within that standard. Holistically, two particular standards set the pace for the assessment:

- Standard 6: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement sets expectations for integrated planning and improvement. It requires institutions to have in place *“planning processes, resources, and structures [that] are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.”*
- Standard 5: Educational Effectiveness Assessment, sets expectations for assessment of student learning outcomes, requiring institutions to have processes in place to demonstrate that the *“institution’s students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their programs of study, degree level, the institution’s mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.”*

Again, other standards address the application of planning and assessment in unique contexts, and each MSCHE standard includes a requirement for the *“periodic assessment of the effectiveness”* of the activities and fundamental elements of that standard. We must also continually evaluate and reflect on our assessment practices themselves, ensuring that they meet our current needs, are structured and organized appropriately, are manageable and sustainable, and perhaps most importantly, useful and used.

As described in other Middle States documents, the Commission expects that all assessment activities – both institutional and student learning focused – are “useful, cost effective, reasonably accurate and truthful, carefully planned, and organized, systematic, and sustained”. For academic programs, a number of disciplinary accreditation standards likewise guide planning and assessment work.

Institutional Commitment

The University of Scranton’s Board of Trustees, President, Administration, and faculty and staff are dedicated to an integrated approach to planning, effectiveness and renewal that utilizes a meaningful variety and breadth of tools - direct and indirect, qualitative and quantitative, formative and summative. This approach is guided by and designed to support

the University's mission, vision, goals, and other institutional priorities, and create a shared sense of ownership and space for creativity in assessment activities at all levels of the University. The following *Guiding Principles*, which were developed conjointly by the Offices of Planning & Institutional Effectiveness, Institutional Reporting and Data Analytics, and Educational Assessment, and are also included within the *Comprehensive Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning*, guide our approach to this ever-evolving work.

Guiding principles of institutional effectiveness and assessment⁴:

- Assessment is mission-driven, in the particular context of the Ignatian educational paradigm and our Catholic, Jesuit character.
- Assessment is integrated within appropriate advisory and decision-making processes and structures.
- Assessment is iterative, adapting to changing needs and new opportunities.
- Assessment is collaborative and participatory, engaging all members of the University community in reflection.
- Assessment is transparent, its processes and outcomes communicated clearly and frequently.
- Assessment is evidence-based, supported by quality data and evidence that show how institutional and student learning goals are being met.
- Assessment is useful, designed and pursued in ways that are practical and relevant to unit and program needs, and cycles for decision making and resource allocation.
- Assessment results are used to “close the loop,” with results applied through planning, resourcing, and continuous improvement of programs and services.
- Assessment is ongoing and cumulative, reflecting our performance over time.
- Assessment is itself assessed, its processes and structures evaluated and refined through ongoing reflection and planned cycles of review

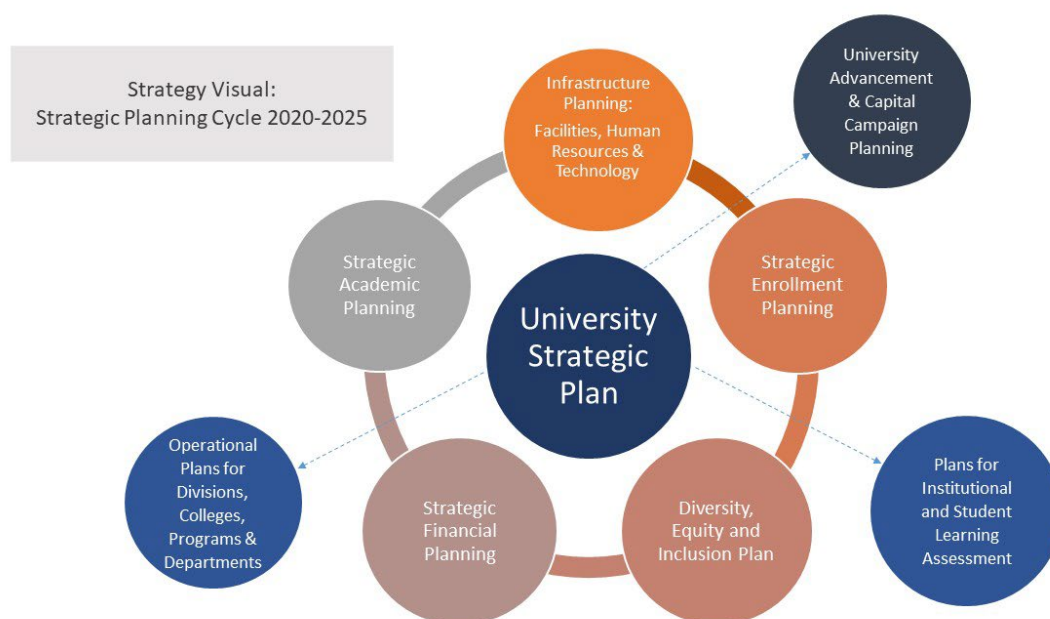
ASSESSMENT AND THE PLANNING PROCESS

As illustrated by the *Model*, continuous improvement activities occur at all levels of the institution, and are intentionally conducted in such ways as to link them to resource planning & allocation (including human resources, technology, and facilities) and other decision-making processes. Assessment and evaluation play a vital role, ensuring that appropriate practices are in place to measure achievement of those goals, and that data and information gathered from that assessment is used to (1) report progress, (2) inform decision making, including resource requests and allocations, and (3) make needed improvements or adjustments.

⁴ Updated spring 2022, under recommendation by the Institutional Assessment Committee and Educational Assessment Advisory Committee.

INSTITUTIONAL AND UNIT PLANNING

The University of Scranton engages in ongoing institutional and unit planning activities as part of a multi-level, integrated continuous improvement. This process is outlined in its [*Planning & Institutional Effectiveness Model*](#)



The Strategic Plan: The [*Strategic Plan*](#) sets broad institutional goals. The construction of each strategic plan, roughly every five years, is coordinated by the OPIE with the University Planning Committee. This committee works closely with other constituencies to draft and provide means for review and input by all constituencies, ultimately recommending a final plan to the President's Cabinet and Board of Trustees. Progress is monitored on a regular basis, reported at annual, mid-point, and final points through the OPIE. Implementation of the plan follows the cascading planning activities articulated through the Integrated Planning & Institutional Effectiveness Model (see Table 1, and Appendix A).

Strategic Support and Business Strategy Plans: The University engages in ongoing strategic financial and enrollment planning, processes that are guided by the goals of the University's strategic plan, and other institutional needs and aims. These plans, along with other institutional efforts, including philanthropic goals and activities within University Advancement, seek to ensure that the University has the necessary resources to fulfill its mission and planning goals. Like strategic planning, advisory groups and institutional assessments play an important role in shaping these plans and evaluating their progression.

Infrastructure Planning: The University engages in ongoing planning for the sustainably and growth of its infrastructure, including human resources, technology resources, and campus facilities. This work is led by the respective administrative divisions charged with this work, in supported by advisory bodies, who conduct a variety of evaluative activities, for example, space utilization studies, campus building planning, environmental sustainability planning, policy and practice audits, and employee compensation and other studies. In addition, each academic and administrative department reflects on their own resource needs, and submits formal resource requests, as part of each Annual Planning and Reporting Cycle.

College, Divisional and Departmental Planning and Assessment: To create collaborative and broad implementation for the strategic plan, the University establishes support plans across its administrative divisions and colleges. With their faculty and staff, the deans of each college and divisional vice presidents/provosts and associate vice presidents/provosts review the strategic goals, interpret how their unit may best support and help implement those goals, and connect the department plan's goals to planning, assessment⁵, and resource allocation within their units. College- and division-level planning progress is reported each year through the University's Annual Planning and Reporting process. Administrative and academic department heads (generally, any department with an assigned budget line), completes their own Annual Plan and Report each year. These documents include summary of assessment activity and its application over the prior year, and, in the case of academic departments, information related to student learning assessment activities.

Special Focus Planning:

Other institutional planning activities may also help to coordinate University efforts and activities. For instance, special topics planning that may be outlined within the Strategic Plan or other planning level.

Evaluation of Planning Progress and Outcomes:

The University's institutional accreditation cycle informs the processes for planning-related evaluations, including the choice and timing of supplemental institutional studies of administrative and academic areas as needed. Table 1 describes particular continuous improvement activities associated with each level of planning. Strategic plan metrics and outcomes are evaluated on an annual basis, with reflection on the trajectory of progress.

⁵ Note that each academic department/program submits a separate report and plan for the assessment of student learning outcomes under the *Comprehensive Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning*. See www.scranton.edu/assessment for more information.

Strategic Goals and Objectives Five institution-wide goals, each with five supporting objectives, to guide our work for the next five years.	Operational Planning and Assessment Divisions, colleges, departments outline goals and objectives to support the strategic plan. In addition to these action steps, the University administration may develop topical support plans in specific areas of need or interest. Aggregate analysis of operational planning and assessment used to develop strategic progress reporting.					
Goal 1: The Humanities	Resources Needed	Timeline of Work	Outcomes and Metrics	Assessment Measures	Progress Summary	Status
	Sample					New/Emerging
						Active/Maturing
Sample Objective 1						Investment Needed
Sample Objective 2						Completed/Operationalized
Sample Objective 3						Not Yet Started
						Review/Adjustment Needed

Key Lynchpin: Annual Planning and Reporting: Through the [Annual Planning and Reporting](#) process, department leaders submit departmental plans and goals, link those goals to strategic and college/division planning initiatives; submit evaluative and assessment information; and provide narrative summary of significant achievements and future opportunities & challenges each fiscal year. In this report, financial, technical, facilities, and staffing resource requests are also made and aligned with strategic and other goals. The report is completed each spring/summer, and from year to year serves as the departmental planning process. Departments heads (both academic and administrative), deans, and vice presidents are responsible for the preparation and submission of this material.

Following assessment of the system, a redesign of the technical planning and reporting platform was completed and launched in spring 2019. This new platform addressed needs regarding: technical programming flexibility within system structure to address needs and priorities; expanding ways to share system content and output; added features to include/attach relevant content (such as assessment plans, program reviews, accreditation reports, and other important documents); and additional options for preparers to reflect on and summarize the use of assessment in planning and budgeting, as well as their support for the University’s mission and strategic plan.

Table 1. Levels of Integrated Planning & Institutional Assessment & Associated Evaluative Activities

Level of Planning/Goals	Institutional Effectiveness Assessment & Reflection	Assessment & Continuous Improvement Activities	When
Strategic	<p>What: Mission, Strategic Plan; Strategic Financial and Enrollment Planning; other institutional special focus planning (e.g. diversity & inclusion)</p> <p>Who: Planning & Institutional Effectiveness Office; University Planning Committee; OIRDA; Cabinet Officers; SEP Council; other assigned stewards or stewardship groups</p>	<p>Strategic Plan Progress Reporting (outcomes, qualitative and qualitative reporting)</p> <p>Strategic Financial and Enrollment metrics and reporting</p> <p>Planned and ad hoc institutional assessments, including national survey cycle for students, faculty, others (E.g., NSSE)</p> <p>MSCHE accreditation assessment & analysis activities</p> <p>Strategic Plan process evaluations</p>	<p>Annual cycles and periodic activities;</p> <p>Use of results for improvement through annual strategic reporting.</p> <p>Institutional accreditation cycle serves as key point for reflection.</p>
College/Division	<p>What: Divisional and College Plans, Goals</p> <p>Who: Vice Presidents, Deans, Other Administrators</p>	<p>Divisional and college plans and associated reporting;</p> <p>Annual Report System and other annual reporting of planning and assessment;</p> <p>Academic program review;</p> <p>Other planned and ad hoc surveys, studies, benchmarking</p>	<p>Annual cycles and periodic activities; Use of results for improvement through annual divisional, college reporting. Accreditation and program review activities per program/college cycles.</p>
Department	<p>What: Departmental Goals (Academic and Administrative)</p> <p>Who: Academic Department Chairs and Program Directors; Administrative Department Heads</p>	<p>Annual Report System and other annual reporting of planning and assessment;</p> <p>Academic Program Review;</p> <p>Disciplinary accreditation studies;</p> <p>Other planned and ad hoc surveys, studies, benchmarking</p>	<p>Annual cycles and periodic activities; Use of results for improvement through annual divisional, college reporting. Accreditation and program review activities per program/college cycles.</p>

ASSESSMENT AND THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The OPIE develops and coordinates progress monitoring and reporting processes for the Strategic Plan that are reviewed by advisory groups and shared with the campus community each year. Information from annualized departmental, divisional, and college reports, together with the monitoring of strategic metrics, surveys and institutional studies, and

reporting of institutional and student outcomes associated with goals within the plan, form the basis of analysis for annual, mid-point, and final strategic reporting.

Strategic-level reporting is constructed using a holistic approach that values both quantitative and qualitative evidence, drawn from a variety of sources including strategic data dashboards, and departmental, college and divisional Annual Plans and Reports. Twice yearly review of progress presents an opportunity for recognition of both goals achieved and reflection on goals still in progress, determining they are new/emerging; active and maturing; fully operationalized or complete, or in need of investment or other intervention to move them forward. Review of these assessments, along with ongoing environmental scanning, inform need for adjustments to or reprioritization in the plan itself.

OTHER CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES

On behalf of the University, the OPIE and OIRDA coordinate a portfolio of institutional effectiveness evaluation and assessment activities. Several of these connect to the work of the Office of Educational Assessment where such overlap and connection is appropriate and helpful (noted by an *). As described above, colleges divisions, and departments also undertake a number of these evaluative activities as part of their own planning and continuous improvement and share this information as part of their Annual Reports. Common tools used include qualitative evaluations of processes and activities; benchmarking and peer reviews, including those through consultancy services; point of service and other topical surveys; and the tracking of performance indicators (quantitative metrics).

Metrics & Dashboards: At each level of planning (strategic, college/division, and department), quantitative metrics and other performance indicators are defined and monitored. Many of these are extant data, things that are routinely gathered, such as retention and graduation rates; others are new with each planning cycle to reflect the unique nature of that plan's goals. These data points, along with other sources, are reviewed to identify those which best reflect progress at the institutional level. These strategic metrics are tracked annually and included in yearly strategic plan progress reports. In addition to those developed related to the strategic plan, the OIRDA also coordinates the preparation of data reporting initiatives to assist in ongoing decision making and planning on ad hoc and routine cycles (such as that for strategic enrollment initiatives).

Institutional Surveys:^{*6} The OIRDA coordinates the administration of a variety of institutional surveys on a planned cycle. These surveys measure student, alumni, and

⁶ In addition to surveys coordinated through the OIRDA, a number of surveys and external reporting activities are conducted by other units.

faculty experiences and perceptions, providing valuable insights about the educational experience. Question items for student surveys are regularly mapped to strategic plan and related planning areas, learning outcomes, accreditation standards to assist with analysis and application in those areas. [Survey reports](#) are shared and reviewed with various audiences, in particular, the IAC EACC, and UPC. Data from selected surveys are included as part of strategic plan progress reflection and reporting. The OIRDA also periodically conducts an inventory of other survey activities across campus and serves as a consultant for those wishing to develop, administer, and/or conduct analyses of surveys on their own.

Accreditation (Institutional and Program) Activities

The OPIE coordinates institutional Middle States (MSCHE) accreditation activities. These include a variety of opportunities for institutional evaluation, reflection, and reporting, perhaps most so at the time of each University self-study. The office provides resources to assist units in understanding connections between their planning and continuous improvement activities and Middle States standards. The OPIE documents linkages between the strategic plan and other support planning activities to MSCHE standards. The OPIE also maintains documentation on progress made toward recommendations from regional accreditation activities & reports, both internal recommendations made by the University and those made by peer review teams or MSCHE. Recommendations are shared throughout the University community in order that they may be addressed as needed, and are included with other analyses in planning activities at all levels of the University (in particular, the development of our five-year strategic plans).

In addition, each of the three academic colleges - the College of Arts & Sciences, the Kania School of Management, and the Panuska College of Professional Studies - maintains various disciplinary accreditations. These accreditations demonstrate the quality and rigor of these programs, and the successes of their graduates. For these accreditation activities, departments & programs conduct extensive analysis and reporting, and reflect on the achievement of their goals and assessment of outcomes.

Program Reviews:*

Within the CAS, programs that do not hold disciplinary accreditation complete an internal program review. Completed on a six-year cycle, program reviews ask departments to reflect on current and future goals; enrollment trends; program growth opportunities; resource needs; trends in their disciplines; and use of assessment for continuous improvement, among other topics. Other administrative departments may also take part in episodic program reviews, applying what they learn to their departmental and divisional planning and improvement.

Student Outcomes Reporting: Exit and Post-Graduate Data & Surveys

The Office of Career Development gathers and reports data annually from graduating seniors, and graduate students, related to their post-graduation career and continued education plans. A number of academic departments also conduct exit and other surveys

of students to identify impact of their educational experience, and future plans. The Office of Institutional Reporting and Data Analytics publishes annual data and metrics associated with student retention, persistence, and completion.

Environmental Scanning & External Analysis: Environmental scanning is an information gathering and analysis activity used to educate those involved in planning on key external/industry issues. Scanning happens on a regular basis through literature review, examination of best practices, the production of white papers and others that study higher education trends and issues (for example, changes in demographics, trends in student support services, and internationalization), benchmarking activities, and needs analyses for new academic programs. The OPIE supports the environmental scanning process for strategic planning cycles; departments, divisions, and other areas are encouraged to regularly scan the environment to inform their own planning.

Assessment of Assessment: The Effectiveness of our Processes & Structures* As part of the assessment of institutional effectiveness, the University regularly monitors and reviews its integrated model and portfolio of planning and evaluation/assessment activities, and student learning assessment processes, making and addressing recommendations for improvement where needed. Like all other departments at the University, the OPIE, the OIRDA, and the OEA complete Annual Plans and Reports each year that detail their goals, recent evaluations of their processes, and resulting improvements made or planned. These are reviewed and discussed by the departments' leadership and with the Associate Provost and Provost to identify opportunities for improvement and synergies across these units.

In addition to ongoing feedback to the planning and institutional assessment processes provided by the President's Cabinet and University Planning Committee, and by the Institutional Assessment Committee (see below), the OPIE conducts a formal survey related to the Strategic Plan and planning process at two points in the cycle: the first during the development of each strategic plan and the second at or near its midpoint. These surveys are used to evaluate stakeholders' perspectives of the plan's development, content, and implementation, as well as the processes used to engage their participation. The OPIE also gathers indirect and direct feedback related to the planning and institutional effectiveness processes through work with individual units, and, in particular as part of the review of functions and processes during Middle States accreditation activities.

The OIRDA regularly evaluates its suite of services and products through a combination of tracking, interviews with key customers, and feedback through various advisory committees, periodically supplemented by external review. It reviews the institutional survey cycle on a regular basis in consultation with the OPIE, OEA and other stakeholders.

Student learning assessment processes and support services coordinated through the Office of Educational Assessment are reviewed through SWOT analysis conducted by the

department and surveys of participants in OEA events. The OEA also evaluates faculty and staff satisfaction with the program assessment cycle and processes, and related support services on an ongoing basis, including the input provided by the Assessment Advisory Committee.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

In addition to these core functions articulated in the Integrated Planning & Institutional Effectiveness model, the OPIE and OIRDA manage other activities that inform these processes and are used to further demonstrate institutional effectiveness and address accountability needs:

Institutional Data Reporting: [Institutional data reporting](#) is led by the OIRDA. Those data play a critical role as a foundation for many planning, institutional effectiveness, resource allocation and renewal activities. OIRDA houses the University's official, historical datasets and internal reports (such as the Fact Book), and external reports to the U.S. Department of Education (IPEDS) and state and other entities. The Office tracks key performance data such as student enrollment, graduation, and retention/completion. OIRDA partners with other units to coordinate the collection, preservation and reporting of official data from areas such as Admissions, Finance, Financial Aid, Human Resources, Advancement and Alumni Relations. Key products include annual fall census and data reporting, enrollment reports by each academic term, and annual graduation & retention rate reports. The Office also supports more advanced data analytics services and analyses as needed.

Compliance Analysis and Reporting: An important part of the work of the OPIE is the coordination of the University's compliance with a number of external regulations, including the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA). The office coordinates policy compliance [reporting & disclosures](#) as per HEOA requirements, working with other offices, programs, and committees. The office also manages the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) process, and compliance with IRB policy and regulations. In addition to other accreditation management activities, the OPIE manages compliance reporting required by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, and in its support role for institutional governance, conducts policy analysis and coordinates policy development related to a variety of university initiatives.

ADVISORY GROUPS

A number of committees and groups (such as college dean's conferences) advise and take part in the preparation of plans at the college, divisional, and departmental level, and in using results of assessments to inform decision-making. The University Planning

Committee (UPC) is chaired by and advisory to the Provost on matters related to planning and institutional effectiveness, in particular, the implementation of the University's Planning Model. The UPC reviews and advises on annual progress reporting for the Strategic Plan.

The Educational Assessment Advisory Committee (EAAC) provides guidance to the Office of Educational Assessment on matters related to the development and implementation of the University's learning assessment plan and procedures. College deans' conferences and other gatherings of faculty build connections between planning, assessment, and other learning and programmatic evaluation activities, and their application for improvement.

Other advisory groups in planning and institutional effectiveness processes. These groups, either formally or in an ad hoc manner, regularly review and engage in discussion about campus needs and opportunities to improve programs and services. Examples include the Kania School of Management's Alumni Advisory Board, students in the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Ambassador Group, the Student Government and other representative Senates and associated subcommittees, the Graduate Programs Council, and others.

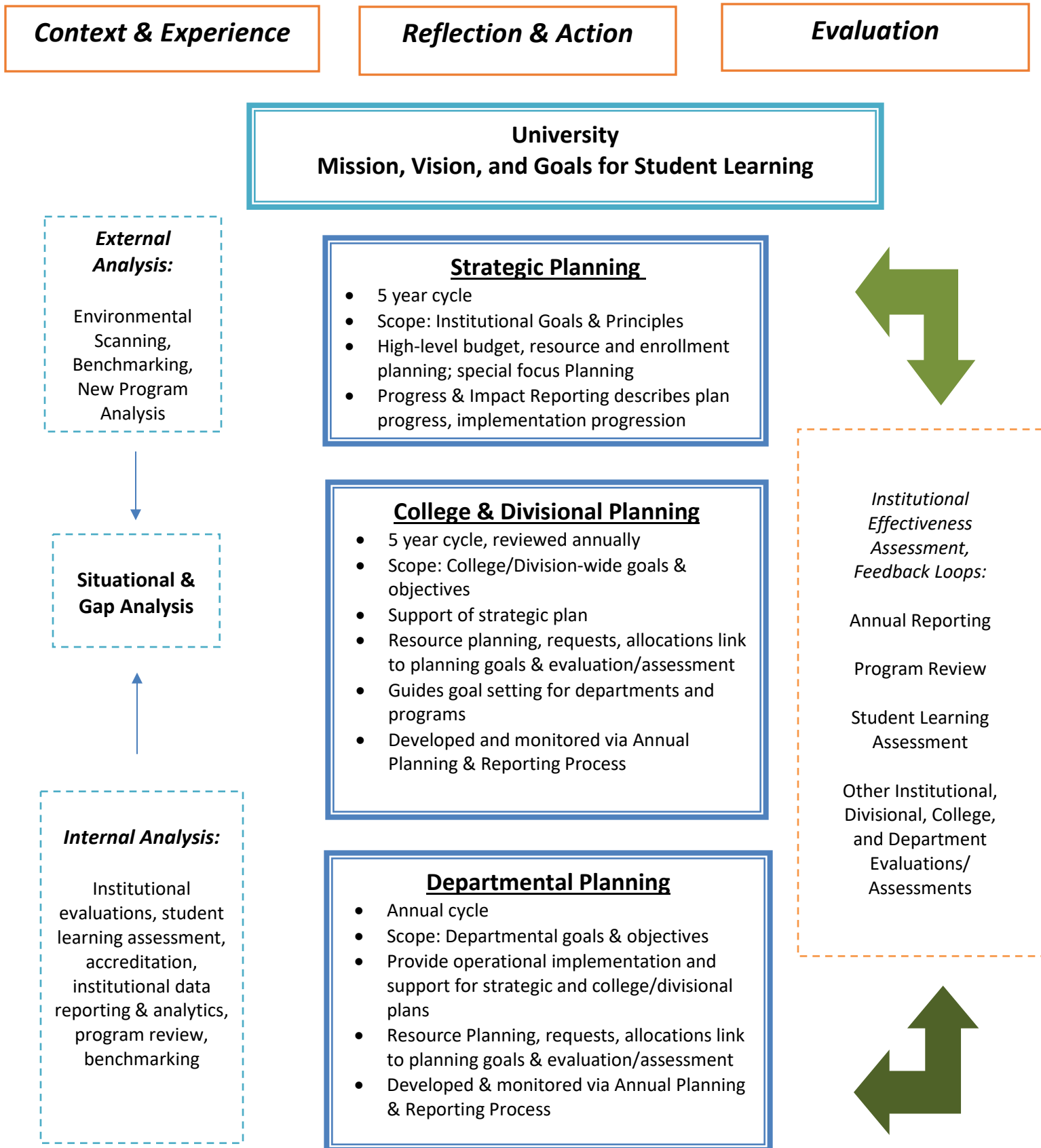
LINKS TO RESOURCE ALLOCATION

An important part of institutional renewal is the linkage of goals, assessments, and improvement strategies to resource planning and allocation processes. This is achieved in several ways:

- Annual reporting by departments, colleges, and divisions, inclusive of budget/resource planning, requests and allocations, linked to planning and improvement goals;
- Strategic financial planning and strategic enrollment planning, informed by the University's mission and goals;
- The Strategic Plan's role in the framework for University Advancement, development and fundraising goals; and
- When available, strategic initiatives funding for innovative projects that support the goals of the University's Strategic Plan

Learn more at www.scranton.edu/planning, and www.scranton.edu/strategicplan.

Appendix A: Integrated Planning & Institutional Effectiveness Model



Planning & Institutional Effectiveness Glossary:

Assessment⁷: the systematic collection, review, and use of information about attainment of learning outcomes and institutional goals undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning, and the continuous improvement of the organization.

Benchmarking: the process of comparing data, processes, or programs with those at peer, competitor, or aspirant institutions.

Closing the Loop: the intentional use of assessment data and information to inform planning, decision making, and resource allocation. At the course level, closing the loop involves purposefully using assessment results to improve the teaching and learning process.

Educational Assessment: the practices used to assess achievement of student learning outcomes, both directly through academic programs and indirectly through co-curricular and related activities.

Environmental Scanning: a process by which an institution examines its external environment to identify emerging issues, events, or trends that portend threats to and opportunities for the institution⁸.

External Analysis: a range of activities, including environmental scanning, that the institution utilizes to examine opportunities available to the institution, or which may pose a threat or present a challenge.

Ignatian Educational Paradigm: a way of proceeding that encompasses evaluation of learners' growth in heart, mind, and spirit and, thus, aligns with the goals of assessment.

Institutional Assessment: the practices used to evaluate achievement of institutional goals.

Institutional Effectiveness: a process of comparing institutional performance to its stated purpose, a way in which an institution determines if it is fulfilling its mission and goals and uses results of these findings to improve programs and services.

Institutional Goals: the targeted aims identified in the institution's strategic plan.

Internal Analysis: a range of activities that are intentionally designed and conducted to identify and examine internal strengths or weaknesses.

Learning Outcomes: specific measurable goals and results that are expected subsequent to a learning experience. Learning outcomes are clear and assessable descriptions of what a student is able to do at the completion of a course, academic program, or co-curricular activity. Learning outcomes are also in place at the institutional level.

Mission: the institution's fundamental purpose and scope.

Objectives: specific activities that are intended to help to satisfy requirements of a broader goal.

Planning: A conscious process by which an institution assesses its current state and the likely future condition of its environment, identifies possible future states for itself, and then develops organizational strategies, policies, and procedures for getting to one or more of them⁹.

Strategic Planning: a conscious process of developing institutional goals, and articulating the means by which they will be (1) achieved and (2) assessed.

Strategic Plan: a narrative map, organized around a set of themes, outlining institutional goals for a set period of time. These goals identify what the institution hopes to achieve in that timeframe.

SWOT Analysis: Analysis of an institutional function, program or other entity which identifies **Strengths**, **Weaknesses**, external **Opportunities** or challenges, and **Threats**.

Vision: a compelling statement of an institution's intended direction or desired state.

⁷ Adapted from Palomba and Banta, 1999.

⁸ Adapted from Morrison, 1985.

⁹ Adapted from Peterson, Marvin. (1999). Analyzing Alternative Approaches to Planning. *ASHE Reader on Planning and Institutional Research*.

Model first 2001. Updated 2004, 2014, 2017. Context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation are fundamental elements of the Ignatian Educational Paradigm, which broadly informs assessment activities at the University of Scranton.

