Introduction
In December 2003, the leadership within the Office of the Vice Provost for Student Success identified program assessment as one of eleven priorities. A working group comprised of Student Success staff members, faculty and a student was given responsibility to address this priority. Assessment Working Group members are as follows: Vince Avila, Student Housing, Jim Daugherty, School of Fine Arts, Frank DeSalvo (Co-chair), Counseling and Psychological Services, Ann Eversole, Dean of Students Office, Joann Keyton, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Bill Kummerow, Academic Technology Services, Emily Malin, Freshman Sophomore Advising Center, Karen Multon, School of Education, Jonathan Ng, Admissions and Scholarships, Diana Robertson, Department of Student Housing, and Jane Tuttle (Co-chair), Dean of Students Office. The Student Success facilitator was Richard Johnson.

The Assessment Working Group held seven meetings during the thirteen-week period from February 3, 2004 through April 27, 2004.

Charge to the Working Group
“Develop a general assessment model that can be implemented by each Student Success department and that can be used as a framework to assess the effectiveness of the various Priorities. The result should be documentable (sic) evidence that substantiates the effect of our programs and services.”

It was noted by Dr. Roney that:
- Each Student Success Department needs to assess services that are valued by students.
- Define what is needed for students to succeed
- Develop criteria that indicate when an office has accomplished its goals.
- Determine how Student success Directors can serve as resources for each other.

Dr. Roney’s desired outcomes are as follows:
- Each Student Success Department will develop an annual assessment plan.
- Each Student Success Department will implement an assessment plan.

Resources Considered
The Learning Imperative was reviewed because it provides a foundation for understanding student affairs roles within the academy.

A web search of NASPA using the key word, “Assessment” yielded a relevant article by St. Onge and Wells (2004) entitled “Assessment Strategic Planning: Getting the Most Out of Your Assessment Plan.”
Jim Henderson and Pam Shockley of the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs were consulted due to their expertise in program assessment.

The Student Affairs Research Committee’s findings that emanated from their work with student focus groups provided insight on the University of Kansas student awareness and assessment of student services.

The nine indicators of success for Student Success Departments currently being developed by the University of Kansas Vice Provost for Student Success, Dr. Marlesa Roney were reviewed and ultimately included in the Model.

**Key Issues and Concepts**

Early meetings were dominated by discussions about several important issues and concepts related to the mission of Student Success in general and the specific functions and purposes of individual Student Success Departments. The fundamental starting point for the Assessment Working Group was an agreement that a meaningful assessment process should yield understanding what and why aspects of a program work or don’t work, rather than simply coming up with a numerical score or letter grade.

**Direct and Indirect Impact on Recruitment, Retention and Time to Graduation**

It was recognized that not all offices with Student Success directly impact the three critical issues of recruitment, retention, and time to graduation. Indirect impact of factors such as quality of campus life are considered equally important in achieving the goals of increased retention and reduced time to graduation.

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**DRAFT GRAPHIC OF MODEL’S CONCEPT**

**Recruitment → Retention → Graduation**

**Success Factors (DRAFT)**

- Achieve the General Education Goals
- Area academically successful
- Feel safe
- Are healthy
- Are involved and connected
- Feel that they matter
- Have sufficient financial support
- Have goals and are achieving them
- Have a comfort zone
Evaluation Cycle
The evaluation cycle should not coincide with the budget cycle so as to emphasis that the focus of the process is on program improvement rather than acquisition increased funding or preservation of existing resources. While either outcome might be a logical outgrowth of program evaluation, it should not be paired with those goals.

Visioning Process
The evaluation model should assess effectiveness and help create a visioning process that leads to future development of goals and objects that will enhance the function of current programs or offices.

Multi-level sampling
Multi-level sampling techniques should be used to insure a broad range of respondents from the class, departmental and university level. Also survey graduating seniors through capstone courses. Make sure that students who drop out are sampled.

Multi-dimensional approach
Ask users of the service:
- What do you expect from (insert name of office)?
- How do you expect (insert name of office) to help make that happen?
- What changes would make the program better in the future?
Ask service provider:
- What information do you need to assess your program?
- What works well here?
- What does not work well here?

Normative vs. Deficiency Model
The identification of the basic purpose of program evaluation is critical. The purpose, whether to assess normative standards or determine areas and levels of deficiency, has a substantial impact on the entire evaluation process. Those conducting the assessment must be aware of the biases inherent in each model and make adjustments accordingly.

Stimulate ‘future’ Scanning
One of the outcomes of the assessment process should be the development of an interest in Student Success Offices to ask: What do students that graduate have to deal with? It is important to think beyond the immediate scope of a program and consider other related issues the student may encounter in their future and how we might address it in our present.

The Model Development Process
All members of the Assessment Working Group provided input that resulted in the identification of the key issues and concepts noted above. The Model of the proposed assessment process began to take shape during the third meeting and continued to grow and gain focus as the weeks progressed.

A draft of the complete model was tested on the Department of Student Life during the early to mid part of April, 2004. Vince Avila, Diana Robertson and Joann Keyton carried out the pilot
The results of this process indicated that the Model was viable and useful. Several revisions have occurred thus far and more are anticipated as the various offices see it for the first time.

We also anticipate that various directors may benefit from a series of brief workshops, perhaps during the summer, that address the various issues and concepts noted above as well as various methodological procedures. Several members of the Assessment Working Group indicated their willingness to provide this service and support.

**Recommendations**

- The tool is not to be used until the student success factors as defined by the Vice Provost are finalized.
- There should be 2 hour workshops offered that cover hands-on evaluation methods.
- This is a planning tool as well as an evaluation model. It is flexible, dynamic and fluid.
- Non-users of a service/program need to be included.
- Every service should be reviewed within a three year cycle.
- When to do the evaluation in the cycle is the user’s decision although we recommend it be done in preparation for budget development and planning for next academic year.
- Decisions need to be made about who completes the evaluation; however, it should be someone who can make it actionable.

**Assessment Model**

The Assessment Working Group considers the model which follows to represent a starting point rather than an ending point. We look forward to continuing to provide support for the assessment process as we proceed down this road together.

*(See document “Assessment Tool”)*