

St. Petersburg College

SPC

Academic Effectiveness



St. Petersburg College

# An Overview of the Academic Assessment and Evaluation Processes at SPC

General Education Outcomes, Educational Program Outcomes,  
and Academic Program Viability

Department of Institutional Effectiveness  
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## An Overview of the Academic Assessment and Evaluation Processes at SPC

### Introduction

This document will provide an overview of the institutional effectiveness process at St. Petersburg College and the assessment methodology used to assess student learning outcomes at the college.

### Institutional Effectiveness

Institutional Effectiveness is the integrated, systematic, explicit, and documented process of measuring performance against the SPC mission for the purposes of continuous improvement of academic programs, administrative services, and educational support services offered by the College.

Operationally, the institutional effectiveness process ensures that the stated purposes of the College are accomplished. In other words, did the institution successfully execute its mission, goals, and objectives? At SPC Institutional Effectiveness, Budgeting, and Institutional Research work with all departments and units to establish measurable statements of intent that are used to analyze effectiveness and to guide continuous quality improvement efforts. Each of St. Petersburg College's units is required to participate in the institutional effectiveness process.

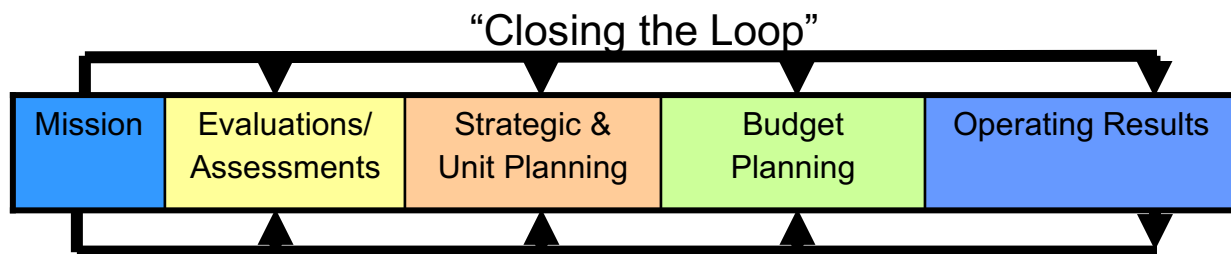


Figure 1. *The alignment between the mission and the phases of the Institutional Effectiveness process.*

The bottom-line from SPC’s institutional effectiveness process is improvement. Once SPC has identified what it is going to do then it acts through the process of teaching, researching, and managing to accomplish its desired outcomes. The level of success of SPC’s actions is then evaluated. A straightforward assessment process requires a realistic consideration of the intended outcomes that the institution has set and an explicit evaluation of the evidence that the institution is achieving that intent.

There is no single right or best way to measure success, improvement or quality. Nevertheless, objectives must be established, data related to those objectives must be collected and analyzed, and the results of those findings must be used to continuously

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improve the institution. The educational assessment is a critical component of St. Petersburg College's institutional effectiveness process.

While there are a number of SACS and state requirements related to assessment and evaluation, a well functioning educational institution goes beyond accreditation and state requirements by endorsing a philosophy of performance improvement.

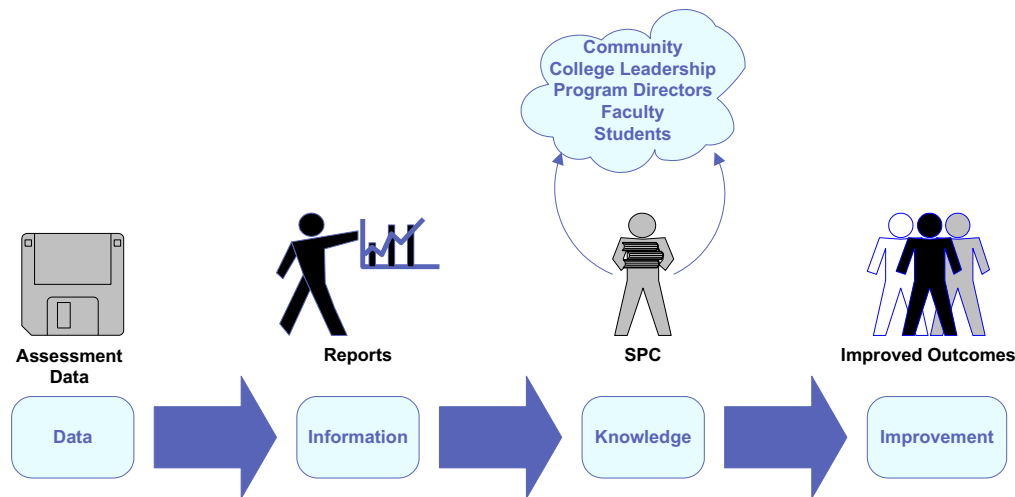


Figure 2. *From Compliance to Performance Improvement*

### Evaluation and Assessment Processes

St. Petersburg College educational programs employ a variety of evaluation/assessment methods to improve their effectiveness. Assessment and evaluation measures are used at various levels throughout the institution to provide vice presidents, provosts, deans, program administrators, and faculty vital information on how successful our efforts have been.

*SPC's Evaluation & Assessment Processes* are centered on the following mission-driven outcomes for each academic, administrative, and educational support service:

- 10 academic communities comprising 35 academic programs (lower division), and 17 baccalaureate programs (upper division)
- Key administrative and educational support services

Analysis of outcome results is on-going and captured through various assessment reports. The following are the key assessments used in the IE processes.

*Academic Program Assessments* include internally and externally developed direct measures for General Education (e.g., ETS Proficiency Profile, and AAC&U Value

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Rubrics), AS Program Assessments, BAS/BS Program Assessments, Academic Program Viability Reports, and FLDOE Baccalaureate Accountability Reports.

## Academic Program Assessment Cycle

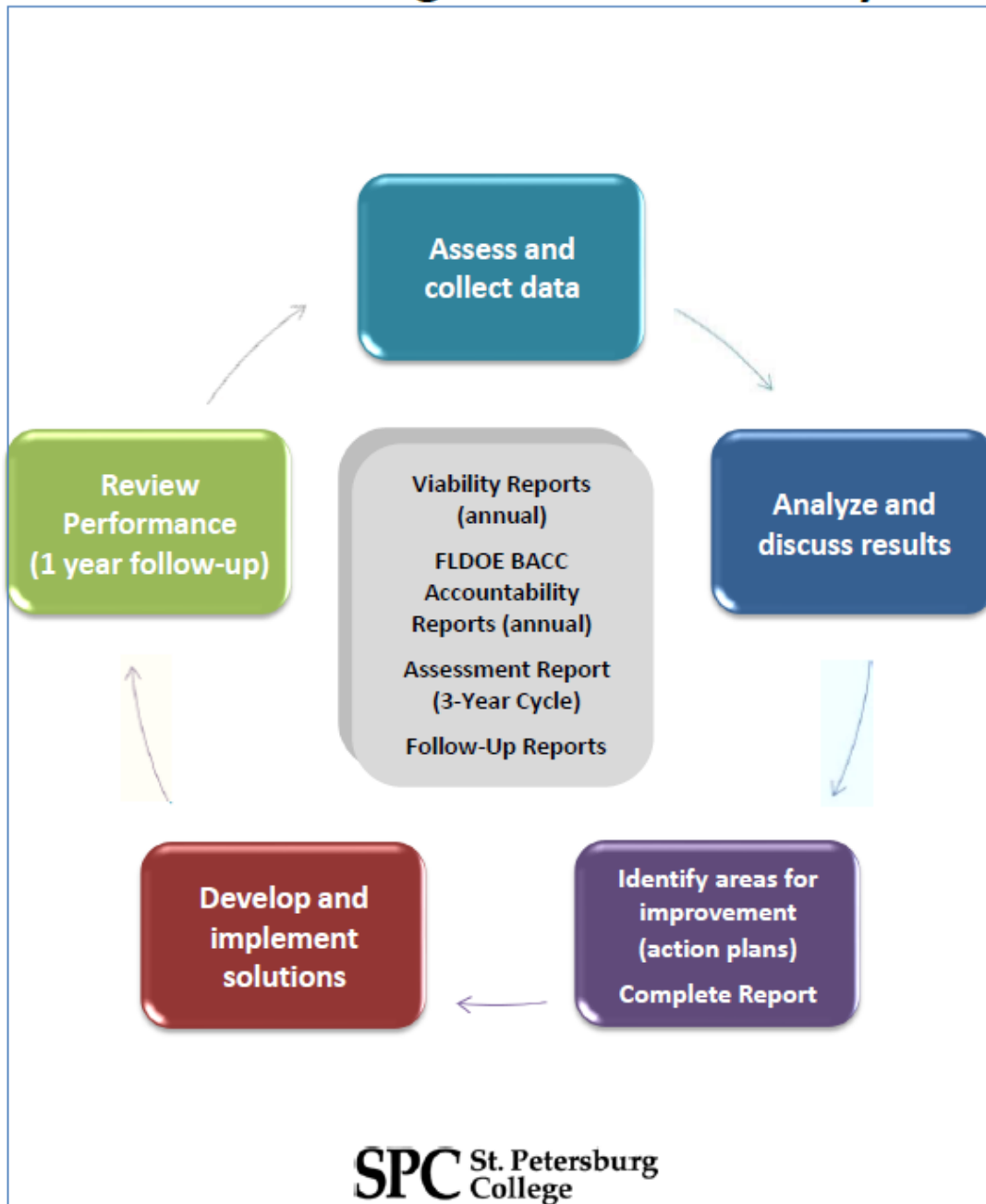


Figure 3. The relationship between the three-year academic program assessment, and academic program viability, and accountability report cycles.

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*Academic/Services Assessments* include indirect measures for Entering Students, Enrolled Students, Graduating Students, Recent Alumni, Employer surveys, and Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE).

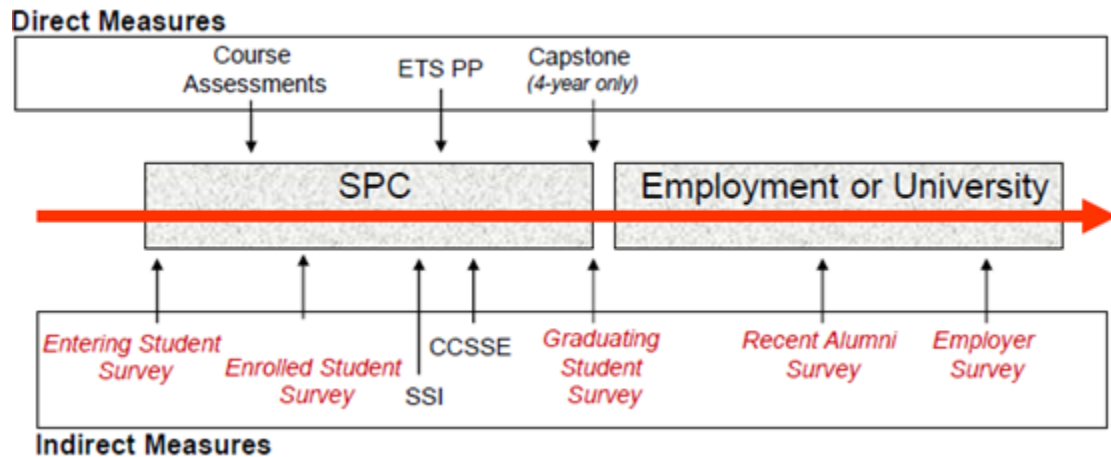


Figure 4. Student survey assessment points

*Other Assessments* include the Strategic Directions and Institutional Objectives (SD&IOs) portion of President's Annual Evaluation, State Accountability Measures, Core Effectiveness Indicators, environmental scan / trends analysis, and other department/function-specific assessments.

### Use of Results

Academic programs, administrative and educational support services are assessed on a three-year cycle. Academic programs are also evaluated annually based on performance metrics included in Viability Reports. Administrative and educational support services are also evaluated annually based on student survey results. Results of college wide student surveys are further refined and augmented through additional departmental-specific assessments. These various college-wide assessment results are then aggregated and presented to leadership, faculty, and staff, closing the loop with the planning and budgeting processes.

### Assessing Student-learning Outcomes

While the focus of a particular educational assessment area may change, the assessment strategies remain consistent and integrated to the fullest extent possible. The focus for *Associate in Arts degrees* is targeted for students continuing on to four-year degree programs as opposed to the *Associate in Science*, and *Baccalaureate programs* which are targeted towards students seeking employable skills. The *General Education* based assessments focus on the general learning outcomes from all degree

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programs, while viability reports evaluate the performance metrics for each specific program. These individual reports while unique by their specific nature are nevertheless written to address how the assessments and their associated action plans have improved learning in their program.

The Educational Outcomes Assessment Reporting process was initiated college-wide in 1999 and is centered on mission-driven outcomes. Institutional effectiveness at SPC assesses all degree programs, regardless of mode of delivery. SPC also evaluates all student services to ensure students are provided the best support possible to ensure student success. Analysis of outcome results is on-going and captured in various assessment reports. It is the intent of St. Petersburg College to incorporate continuous improvement practices in all areas. Assessment reports provide comparisons of present and past results which are used to identify topics where improvement is possible. SPC has used assessment reports as a vital tool in achieving its commitment to continuous improvement.

### Academic Program Assessment Report

The student-learning outcomes in the academic workforce programs are primarily evaluated using the Academic Program Assessment Report (APAR). The APAR contains various direct and indirect student outcome measures. It is completed on a three-year cycle and consists of the following eight sections.

- 1) Introduction w/ use of past results
- 2) Major Learning Outcomes – program specific
- 3) Assessment methodology
- 4) Criteria for success
- 5) Summary of assessment findings
- 6) Discussion & analysis
- 7) Action plan & time table
- 8) Budgetary & planning implications

The introduction section of the APAR includes use of past results in improving the program performances based on historical program action plans. This information provides the foundation for examining the current year's assessment performance. The document also includes the program's major learning outcomes and assessment specifics such as methodology, criteria for success, and the summary of assessment findings.

The discussion and analysis section includes a comparison between the current year's assessment results and the established thresholds set in the criteria of success section of the document. This information is used to drive change and improvement in the

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program, and learning outcome areas which do not meet established thresholds are highlighted and appropriate action plans are established in the action plan section.

The action plan and time table is created by the program administrator to address issues identified in the assessment findings and drive program improvement. A year after the publication of the APAR, a follow-up report is completed to document the status of the action plan items and provide a focus for future improvement. Data collection on student outcomes is an ongoing yearly process.

Assessment and follow-up reports are created by program administrators with the assistance of the Institutional Effectiveness office within a secure online environment (<https://web.spcollege.edu/edoutcomes/>). An automated email-based approval process ensures senior leadership review information submitted by the program administrator. This online environment while providing a standardization of the assessment process also permits college-wide access to completed and approved assessment reports.

### Program Review

The program review process at St. Petersburg College (SPC) is a collaborative effort to continuously measure and improve the quality of educational services provided to the community. The procedures described below go far beyond the periodic review of existing programs required by the State of Florida; and exceed the necessary guidelines within the Southern Association of Community Colleges and Schools (SACS) review procedures.

#### *Academic Program Viability Report*

The Academic Program Viability Report (APVR) provides an annual comprehensive 360-degree view of a program's viability and productivity. It offers key College stakeholders such as the President's Advisory Council members detailed and relevant program specific information in order to highlight program trends and issues.

After reviewing the data, program leadership is required to submit 1-3 goals and specific strategies that will be implemented during the subsequent 12 months, for the purpose of continuous program improvement. A follow-up report describing the status of the goals and an evaluation of the resulting impact on the program, is required the following year.

The publication of this report begins the process of making critical decisions regarding the continued sustainability of a program. Reports indicating positive program trends may be used to identify and document best practices that can be utilized by programs throughout the College.

#### *Dissemination of Information*

SPC developed an Educational Assessment Website (<https://web.spcollege.edu/edoutcomes/>) to provide a medium for completing the

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educational assessment reports as well as establishing a repository for program specific information. College administration and instructional staff are provided access to “completed” assessment reports including the viability reports. This online access further encourages the use of assessment data as well as highlighting “best practices” across the College.

### *Sections within the Viability Reports*

Since 2013 most of the metrics within the APVR utilize data that are accessible and verifiable to anyone with access to POWER BI and PULSE BI, SPC’s real-time business intelligence systems. The systems can quickly filter through “real-time,” management data to address questions and identify potential areas for improvement. Measures (such as student course-level success rates) can be rolled up and viewed at the aggregate institutional level or an end-user can “drill-down” and view the same data measures at the campus or program level. This dynamic system allows College employees the ability to quickly access information required to make decisions to improve student success.

Currently there are twelve measures focused on the College’s mission of student success:

1. SSH Enrollment  
total number of student semester hours within the greater academic org, made up of all associated degree/certificates
2. Unduplicated Headcount  
number of students enrolled in degree/certificate within an academic org and taking courses associated with that degree/certificate, includes ethnic group breakdown
3. Percent Full  
actual enrollment count of the specified Academic Organization divided by the Standard Course Load (SCL) for the selected academic terms.
4. Success Rate  
percent of students completing courses within the academic org with a grade of A, B, or C, divided by the total number of students taking courses within the academic org, and disaggregated by course
5. Program Graduates  
separated by degree/certificate, includes ethnic group breakdown
6. Total Placement  
percentage of graduates enlisted in the military, employed, and/or continuing their education within the first year of graduation
7. National, State and County Employment Trends  
average annual job openings
8. Internships  
number of students enrolled in clinical, practicum, or internship courses within the program plan during the selected academic years.



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9. Industry Certifications  
number of students in the program plan that have attained an industry certification or have passed a licensing exam
10. Retention by semester and annual Retention Trends
11. Faculty/Adjunct Ratio reports the number and percentage of program equated credit hours (ECHs) taught by faculty classifications.
12. Perkins performance metrics

### Student Surveys

One measure used for indirectly evaluating educational outcomes as well as student services is by surveying students. Student surveys are used to evaluate administrative and educational support services annually. Results of collegewide student surveys are further refined and augmented through additional departmental-specific assessments.

During their tenure at St. Petersburg College, students are surveyed multiple times, at specific points throughout their education. Academic/Student Services Assessments include indirect measures for Entering Student Survey, Enrolled Student Survey, Graduating Student Survey, Recent Alumni Survey, Employer Survey, and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE).

#### *Entering Student Survey*

The primary purpose of the Entering Student Survey is to develop a demographic profile of the students entering the College, discover what factors influence their decision to apply to the College, discern how they learned about the College, and measure their perception of the importance of various academic, student support services and tutoring areas provided to them by the College.

#### *Enrolled Student Survey*

The focus of the Enrolled Student Survey is to ascertain how our enrolled students perceive the College and determine both the importance and level of satisfaction of enrolled students with the College's academic and student support services. Subsequently, this information is to be used by the faculty and administration to establish quality improvement initiatives that benefit our students.

#### *Graduating Student Survey*

The Graduating Student Survey is part of a comprehensive college-wide assessment program developed to examine the demographic profile of the responding graduates, assess their perceptions of the educational experience at the College and to determine how the educational process at the College has changed their behavior and/or their knowledge as it relates to some specific areas of inquiry (educational outcomes).

#### *Recent Alumni Survey*

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The Recent Alumni Survey was designed to gain insight into alumni's perceptions of the quality of general education and career preparation and determine the current activities of former students such as employment information and educational status

### *Employer Survey*

The Employer Survey was designed to gain insight into an employer's perceptions of hired SPC graduates in the areas of key general education competencies and foundational skills, provide the employee's major job responsibilities and wage information, as well as employer's willingness to hire another SPC graduate, and identify employer's willingness to support various college activities.

### *Student Survey of Instruction*

The purpose of the Student Survey of Instruction is to provide stakeholders (Faculty, Program Administrators, etc.) student perception information to assist in making curriculum related decisions.

### **Strategic Direction**

In addition to program-level improvement, assessment data is also used to guide the strategic direction of the college through the college goal and yearly institutional initiative process.

### **Looking Forward/Next Steps**

SPC's assessment focus is to continue to standardizing institutional performance measures (e.g., retention and progression) while emphasizing quality improvement through best practices and encouraging data driven decision-making. The ultimate goal is to provide stakeholders 'timely', 'relevant', 'accurate', and 'interpretable' data through formatted (dashboard) style reports, and on-demand customizable reporting, with valid, reliable, and standardized measures.