**Assessment and Planning Terms**

**Mission:** It is the central purpose that provides focus, direction and destination for our work. It describes the purpose of our organization, who we serve, and our hopes. A clearly written, purposeful mission statement can serve as an excellent starting point for curriculum development, instruction and assessment. “Big picture of what we currently do” and why we exist.

**Vision:** Central themes that best describe the future direction of our work. Visionary Themes are broader vision categories. It can be the case that a visionary theme might encompass more than one vision.

**Values:** Those qualities and behaviors that are most highly regarded by members. It is your value/belief system.

**Goals** are very broad statements of what students should know or be able to do and/or what a program/service will accomplish. Unlike an objective, a goal is often not written in language that is amenable to assessment. Rather, the purpose for crafting a set of goals typically is to give a brief and broad picture of what we expect our students to know and do, and what our program/services will accomplish.

These are general statements about what we need to accomplish to meet our mission or to serve our purpose. We typically set goals for 1-year in advance but we can set them for a much longer term. For example, in our annual reports we report on our progress in meeting our prior year's goals. While in strategic planning, we set goals for up to five-years out. Within any year, we may elect to re-prioritize our goals and/or to re-prioritize our activities towards meeting a goal. **Priorities are** essentially a reordering of goals and/or a reordering of activities to reach a goal.

**Objectives** are concrete ways that we will meet our goals though our program processes and student learning and development. They may at times be very similar to goals or be more specific. They will describe what the program will do or what the student is to do.

Examples of student learning objectives:

- Engage students in learning
- Promote students’ academic success

Examples of program objectives:

- Increase volunteerism
- Increase diversity
- Increase accessibility of volunteer opportunities

**Outcomes** essentially take an objective and bound it to a place, time, group of participants, and a level for performance. Outcomes are specifically about what you want the **end result of your efforts** to be, the changes you want to occur. Learning outcomes are changes in students’ knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind that result from involvement in a program or activity. It describes what you want the student to know and do. Program outcomes, on the other hand, are the changes you want to see in programs and services. Outcomes are statements of what you will assess.
Outcomes contain three parts: 1) the person or program doing the activity/behavior; 2) what the person will do or what will occur; and 3) the condition for success or for knowing that you met your objective.

Examples of learning outcomes:

- (Students) (will be able to recall) at least (5 of the 7 elements of the Social Change Model).
- (Students) (will demonstrate increased leadership skills) by (successfully completing a leadership skills inventory, as indicated by a score of at least 80% correct).

Examples of program outcomes:

- (The Peer Tutoring Center) will (increase awareness of its programs/services) (by 20%).
- (The Sustainability Program) will (increase the diversity of its volunteers) (to reflect the diversity of the PSU).

Relationship of Mission> Goals> Objectives> Outcomes