DIGITAL MEASURES FOR DEPARTMENT HEADS AND DIRECTORS
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Digital Measures is the web-based system used by WKU for faculty activity reporting, as well as unit-level action planning and program-level learning outcomes assessment. In addition, our Digital Measures package includes the Student Engagement Activities Transcript (SEAT) database, where students' participation in engagement-related activities is recorded, and through which students have the opportunity to reflect upon these activities.

As a department head/director, you will need to interact with the Digital Measures system to fulfill up to three responsibilities:

1. Annual evaluation of faculty (department heads)
2. Annual unit-level action planning and year-end progress reporting (department heads, directors)
3. Annual program-level learning outcomes assessment and closing-the-loop (department heads)

In addition, you will find Digital Measures extremely useful in generating unit-level data to support development of:

1. New program proposals and academic program review self-studies
2. External accreditation reports
3. Grant and contract proposals
4. Public relations and marketing pieces
5. Provost's Initiatives for Excellence and Unit Productivity Award applications

The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs places significant emphasis on the Digital Measures system to supply data needed for institutional reporting purposes. As such, it is essential that faculty and units enter information (particularly related to faculty scholarly productivity and professional accomplishments) into the system in a timely manner. In this way, the university can rely on having an accurate and up-to-date data record upon which to draw, and faculty and units can be assured of receiving appropriate feedback and/or recognition for their efforts.

Digital Measures can be accessed via several routes through the university web site. The most direct route is to click the **Academics** link on the university home page; a link to Digital Measures is provided under the Online Tools on the resulting page. The direct URL for Digital Measures login is:

https://www.digitalmeasures.com/login/wku/faculty/authentication/showLogin.do

Your NetID and password serve as the login information for Digital Measures. As department head/director, you will have access to all records and screens related to your department. To enter your own information, click on **Faculty Activities Database** in the main window to access the various screens.

The sections below provide a brief introduction to the use of Digital Measures to meet your administrative responsibilities in faculty evaluation, planning and assessment. There is also a short section describing how ad hoc and customized reports can be generated to extract more specific types of information you may require.

Annual evaluation of faculty

Full-time faculty are expected to enter their professional activities into Digital Measures, and to use the customized reporting capabilities to generate and submit their faculty activity report to the department head as part of the process of annual evaluation of faculty. Part-time faculty also have active accounts in Digital Measures, but generally these individuals are evaluated through a different process than is used for full-time faculty. **All faculty (full-time, part-time, adjunct) are required to maintain current CVs within Digital Measures**. This is done by uploading a current CV to the Permanent Data screen, and completing the Date of Upload fields on that screen; many departments/colleges require this annually, and ask that the file indicate the document date in the upper-right hand corner of the document itself.

Each college has developed a faculty activity report template that is tailored to the particular needs and preferences of the college. **It is important to make faculty (as well as yourself) aware of the specific Digital Measures screens and fields queried in generating a faculty activity report for your college**; in this way, you can assist faculty in determining where a particular type of activity is best recorded in the system. See below in highlight how to do this.

Colleges may have different date ranges for the faculty activity reporting cycle. Faculty are expected to have completed entry of relevant information by the established due date. At that point, you have the option of requesting faculty to generate and submit a copy of their activity report to you, or to generate the report(s) yourself.

To generate an activity report:

- Select **Run Custom Reports** from the column of red boxes on the left side of the screen
- Under Step 1, choose the report you wish to run from the pull-down list, and click on **Select Report**
    - The following are the appropriate activity report templates for the various colleges:
        - CEBS Faculty Activity Report
        - GFCB Activity and Appraisal
        - Health and Human Services Faculty Activity
        - OCSE Faculty Activity
        - PCAL Faculty Activity Report
        - UC Faculty Activity Report
        - University Libraries Faculty Activity Report
- Once you have selected the report, you can click on *See how this report is built…* to see the specific screens and fields tied to the report structure
- In Step 2, choose the date range for the information to be included in the report. Again, this depends on the cycle established by your college. With Digital Measures, any activity that has an associated start or end date that overlaps the specified date range will appear in the generated activity report
- In Step 3, choose the level of report you would like to generate. If you select **Department** level, you will generate a single file containing the individual activity reports for all faculty in your department. Selecting **Individual** level allows you to choose one or more faculty on an individual basis
- In Steps 4 and 5, select the format and layout for the report; generally, accepting the default settings will produce the best looking report
- Click on **Build Report** to generate the report

Annual unit-level action planning and year-end progress reporting

SACS Comprehensive Standard 2.5 requires that WKU employ and document best practices in institutional effectiveness by demonstrating that:

> The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission.

In addition, Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1 requires that WKU document institutional effectiveness by demonstrating that:

> The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas: (Institutional Effectiveness)
>
> 3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
> 3.3.1.2 administrative support services
> 3.3.1.3 academic and student support services
> 3.3.1.4 research within its educational mission, if appropriate
> 3.3.1.5 community/public service within its educational mission, if appropriate

To meet these standards, we have developed an annual process for unit-level action planning/progress reporting tied to institutional strategic goals and objectives. At the beginning of each academic year, department heads and directors are required to establish a set of activities intended to advance unit-level objectives and performance indicators. At year's end, you evaluate your progress on each indicator, and discuss your overall progress on addressing each objective. **All academic departments and educational support units are required to participate in this process.** Failure to comply compromises WKU's compliance with SACS standards, and will preclude your **college** from receiving Teaching/Research Equipment and Classroom Improvement Funds, and your unit's eligibility for Unit Productivity, Priority Initiative, or Exemplary Achievement Awards.

The following is a brief lexicon of planning-related terms as used at WKU:

- Goals are established by the university during the institutional strategic planning process; unit-level Objectives are linked to an appropriate Goal
- Objectives are those primary elements of your unit's mission. Generally, we think of Objectives as relatively constant from year-to-year; once established, they are unlikely to change unless the mission of the unit changes
- Activities are specific steps to be taken to address Objectives; these generally change from one year to the next, though some (such as revision of the curriculum) may well span multiple years
- Indicators are measures of your success at advancing Objectives. Although quantified/assessed each year, like Objectives, these metrics are likely not to change from year-to-year. Indicators should not simply document completion of Activities, but rather assess impact of those Activities on advancing the underlying Objective

As an example, one of the institutional strategic Goals is to "Promote a Dynamic and Diverse University Community." The institutional strategic plan, *Challenging the Spirit*, identifies a series of Objectives, Strategies and Metrics tied to this Goal. Your unit might define and link to that Goal a unit-specific Objective that contributes to addressing institutional priorities in this area, such as "Improve the success rate of students in degree programs." This Objective should clearly be an ongoing one, and you might identify as appropriate Indicators "Increased first-year retention rate of majors" and "Increased graduation rate of majors" to assess performance on that Objective on an annual basis. While the Objective and Indicators are constant, the Activities you identify to address that Objective will likely differ. For example, in one year you may commit to "Establish a process to identify and assist students not on pace to graduate within their cohort," while in a later year you may "Revamp the advising process for first-year students."

Note that action plans **are not** intended to be a list of tasks to be attended to in a given year; many of these are in fact things that are a regular part of the operation of your unit. Rather, the action plan should identify new initiatives strategically designed to improve the performance of your unit in identified, critical ways. It is about effectiveness, not activity level.

To develop an action plan or year-end progress report:

Select **Manage Data** from the column of red boxes on the left side of the screen
Under Manage **Data for Departments**, choose your department from the pull-down list and click **Continue**

To develop an action plan:
Enter unit Objectives by clicking on **Objectives**
Add a new Objective by clicking on **Add a New Item**
When creating Objectives, be sure to link each Objective to the appropriate Strategic Goal in the last field; this will ensure that the action plan and progress reports are generated correctly
Save the information by clicking **Save and Return**, or **Return (Cancel)** to discard changes
Enter unit Activities by clicking on **Unit-Level Activities and Evaluation**
Add a new Activity or Activities tied to a given Objective by clicking on **Add a New Item**
Choose the appropriate academic year from the pull-down list
Link the record to one of your identified Objectives by selecting it from the pull-down list
Briefly describe the Activity, assign responsibility and intended date of completion for that Activity
If you intend to pursue more than one Activity for a given Objective, specify the number of additional Activities in Add Another Activity and click Add
Identify one or more Indicators related to that Objective in the Indicator box (adding more as necessary). Note that the Indicator should be tied to the underlying Objective, not simply record completion of the Activities. Include a verb in your Indicator that shows your intent to improve the performance of your unit, as in '**Increased** graduation rate."
Save the information by clicking **Save and Return**, or **Return (Cancel)** to discard changes

To develop the year-end progress report:
Select the Objective to be evaluated and click **Edit**
Rate your end-end progress on each Indicator by selecting the best range of achievement from the pull-down list
Provide a brief narrative assessment of your unit's progress in advancing the Objective; for example, you might indicate the percentage increase in graduation rate seen over the course of that year, and consider what the data suggest about how to generate continued improvement
Save the information by clicking **Save and Return**, or **Return (Cancel)** to discard your changes

To update Activities tied to an Objective for a new academic year (i.e., build action plans in subsequent years):
Select the Objective and click **Copy**
Change the Academic Year field
Add or remove Activities as desired; modify Indicators if necessary
Save the information by clicking **Save and Return**, or **Return (Cancel)** to discard changes

To generate an action plan or year-end progress report for submission:
Select **Run Custom Reports** from the column of red boxes on the left side of the screen
Under Step 1, choose **Action Plan/Year-End Progress Report** from the pull-down list, and click on **Select Report**
In Step 2, choose the date range for the information to be included in the report. Accept the default months and days; specify the appropriate start and end years to generate a report for one or more academic years
In Step 3, choose **Click here** and select your department for which to build the report
In Steps 4 and 5, select the format and layout; generally, accepting default settings will produce the best looking report
Click on **Build Report** to generate the report

Annual program-level learning outcomes assessment

SACS Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1 requires that WKU document institutional effectiveness by demonstrating that:

> The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas: (Institutional Effectiveness)
>
> 3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
> 3.3.1.2 administrative support services
> 3.3.1.3 academic and student support services
> 3.3.1.4 research within its educational mission, if appropriate
> 3.3.1.5 community/public service within its educational mission, if appropriate

To meet this standard with respect to student learning (3.3.1.1), we have developed an annual process for program-level learning assessment and reporting. **Each academic year, academic department heads/program coordinators are required to assess identified learning outcomes for each academic major program.** Failure to comply compromises WKU's compliance with SACS standards, and will preclude your **college** from receiving prior-year carry-forward funds.

Most academic programs define 3-5 student learning outcomes to assess. These outcomes should reflect the fundamental knowledge, skills and perspectives expected of students graduating from the program. Externally-accredited programs are often required to assess more than this minimum number of outcomes. While they may be assessed within the context of one or more classes, program-level student learning outcomes should encompass students' learning across the entire program of study (and may extend to what your program desires students to gain from their general education experience).

The following is a brief lexicon of planning-related terms as used at WKU:

- Outcomes define the fundamental knowledge, skills or perspectives you expect your graduates to demonstrate. A well-conceived Outcome is comprehensive, quantifiable, and discrete (addressing only one thing).
- Means of Assessment identifies the particular process or instrument used to assess the Outcome
- Criterion for Success is the standard you use to judge whether a student (or cohort) has attained the Outcome
- Target is the goal set by the program for the number or proportion of students meeting the Criterion for Success during a given assessment cycle
- Follow-Up Activities (Closing-the-Loop Activities) are those action steps the program will take to address issues raised by the assessment and subsequent analysis of results. Follow-Up Activities should be strategically designed to support improvement in the performance of students on the assessment and, thereby, an increase in the number or proportion of students meeting the Criterion for Success

As an example, your program might define an Outcome such as "Students will demonstrate the ability to collect and synthesize relevant information to interpret a current issue in the field." You might identify as Means of Assessment "Evaluation of senior capstone project," with a Criterion for Success of "A score of 80 or better on the assessment rubric." Your target may be that 75% of graduating seniors attain the criterion level of success. Once you have conducted the assessment, you may determine that 60% of students actually attained the criterion level of success, and further analysis revealed that, while students generally performed well in assembling and synthesizing relevant data, they had difficulty in converting their analysis into a set of conclusions or recommendations. As a result, you might define as a Follow-Up Activity to "Put greater emphasis on analysis of case studies in upper-division courses." In future years, you would expect this Follow-Up Activity to lead to an increase in the proportion of students attaining the criterion level of success.

Note that program assessments are not intended to include a set of Outcomes and Targets that can easily be met. Rather, **the assessment plan should be focused on Outcomes that will inform and catalyze increased student learning**. It is about program improvement, not maintenance.

To develop an assessment plan or program-level assessment:

Select **Manage Data** from the column of red boxes on the left side of the screen
Under Manage **Data for Departments**, choose your department from the pull-down list and click **Continue**

To develop an assessment plan:

Enter academic programs offered by your department by clicking on **Programs**

- Add a new program by clicking on **Add a New Item**
  - Choose your program name from the pull-down list
  - Enter any additional information you wish in the other fields (this is optional)
  - Save the information by clicking **Save and Return**, or **Return (Cancel)** to discard changes

Enter learning Outcomes by clicking on **Outcomes**.

- Add a new Outcome by clicking on **Add a New Item**
- Enter the Outcome, and indicate which if any QEP outcomes it is tied to; all other information is optional
- Note that, at this point, Outcomes are not linked to particular academic programs – this occurs later, and can be changed dynamically from year-to-year. Your list of Outcomes on this screen will be those assessed by *one or more* programs within your department
- Save the information by clicking **Save and Return**, or **Return (Cancel)** to discard changes

Enter Means of Assessment and related information by clicking on **Program-Level Assessment**

- Add a new assessment for a given academic year by clicking on **Add a New Item**
  - Choose the appropriate academic year from the pull-down list
  - Choose one of your identified Outcomes by selecting it from the pull-down list
  - Link assessment of that Outcome to a Program by selecting it from the pull-down list; to link assessment of that Outcome to more than one Program, specify the number of additional Programs in **Add Another Program** and click **Add;** at this point, the Outcome is linked to a set of Programs, and will appear in the assessment report of each of those programs for that academic year
  - Briefly Identify the Means of Assessment, Criterion for Success, and Target level of attainment for that academic year; if you wish to have more than one Means of Assessment for this Outcome, specify the number under Add another Assessment Initiative for this outcome and click **Add**
- Save the information by clicking **Save and Return**, or **Return (Cancel)** to discard changes

To update Programs/Means of Assessment tied to a given Outcome for a new academic year (i.e., build assessment plans in subsequent years:

Select the Academic Year/Outcome combination and click **Copy**

Change the Academic Year field

Add or remove Programs as desired; modify Means of Assessment/Criterion for Success, and/or Target if necessary

Save the information by clicking **Save and Return**, or **Return (Cancel)** to discard changes

To develop the program assessment report:

Select the Academic Year/Outcome combination to be evaluated and click **Edit**

Enter the actual percentage of students attained the Criterion for Success

Provide a brief Analysis the assessment data and results; for example, you might find that, while that more than the target percentage of students attained the criterion level for success, students tended to struggle with one particular aspect of the assessment and that follow-up activities are warranted; on the other hand, your Analysis might indicate that, although students did not meet the target level of attainment, the program is on an upward trajectory

Note that it is possible to upload a copy of the assessment instrument, scoring rubric, and/or examples of students' work; this is optional

If your Analysis suggests a need for follow-up activities to promote improvement in student performance, choose **Click here to manage follow-up activities that will occu**r; this is also referred to as 'closing-the-loop'

Briefly describe the follow-up Activity, assign Responsibility, and identify a Date for Completion

Save the information by clicking **Save and Return**, or **Return (Cancel)** to discard your changes

To generate program-level assessment report for submission:

Select **Run Custom Reports** from the column of red boxes on the left side of the screen

Under Step 1, choose **Program Assessment** from the pull-down list, and click on **Select Report**

In Step 2, choose the date range for the information to be included in the report. Specify the appropriate start and end dates to generate a report for one or more academic years

In Step 3, choose **Click here** and select your department for which to build the report

In Steps 4 and 5, select the format and layout; generally, accepting default settings will produce the best looking report

Click on **Build Report** to generate the report; this will create a single file containing separate assessment reports for all programs in your department

Generating ad hoc and customized reports

In many instances, you will need to collect data from your faculty to support unit-level reports, proposals, or self-studies. This is relatively easily done in Digital Measures, assuming your faculty are diligent in entering professional activities into the database. Data can be extracted from the database through one of two approaches. The ad hoc report function can be used to rapidly query single screens from the database and produce a basic report of selected fields in either Word/PDF or Excel-compatible spreadsheet form; this is an excellent way of compiling data from a few fields into a simple format, and can be done from your desktop. The second approach is to design a custom report template that can be used to extract data from multiple screens and generate a more comprehensive and formatted report in Word or PDF form; this is a good way to address the needs of external accrediting agencies, for example, but requires several months of lead time to work with Digital Measures in designing, constructing and testing the template.

To generate an ad hoc report:

- Select **ad hoc Reports** from the column of red boxes on the left side of the screen
- Under Step 1, choose **Faculty Activities Database - University** from the pull-down list, and click on **Select Instrument**
- In Step 2, choose the date range for the information to be included in the report
- In Step 3, choose **Click here** to select the data to be used in building the report
  - Highlight the radio button beside **Only include items checked below**
  - Expand appropriate set of screens. Generally, you will expand **Common Items**, as these are the screens common to all colleges. In some cases, colleges have versions of screens that include additional information specific to their college needs; these are shown under the colleges as indicated
  - Expand the desired screen to show available fields
  - Check one or more fields from that screen that you wish to extract for the report
- In Step 4, choose how you want the report organized; in most cases, you will select **Department**, so as to generate a single report that combines the data for all faculty in the department
- In Step 5, choose **Click here** to select whose data to include; again, you will generally choose **Department**
- In Steps 6 and 7, select the format and layout; generally, Word or PDF format will produce the best-looking report, but a comma-delimited file can be generated if you wish to sort or count entries, and/or carry out other manipulations in Excel
- Click on **Continue** to review your request
- Click on **Build Report** to generate the report

To design a customized report:

- Contact Doug McElroy **<u>at least six months</u>** before you need the report; we will work together with Jamie Miller in the Information Technology to design the report template and submit the development request to Digital Measures