

Developing Departmental AQIP Assessment Plans
Concepts, Model, & Examples
Steven Bird, Taylor University

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Concepts, Model, and Examples

A presentation for the AQIP Pre-Conference Colloquium.
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Continuous Quality Improvement (including AQIP)

- More than assessment: an organizational way of operating
- Needs to be embedded in every level of organizational practice
 - Every department needs a CQI perspective and plan

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Today's Presentation

- The Critical Conceptual Shift
- A Model for Unit Level Adoption of the CQI (AQIP) Approach

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The Conceptual Shift

- Proactive (vision oriented)
- Continuous (part of everyday actions)
- Systems focused (see the entire organization)
- **Seeking Excellence**
rather than
- Avoiding Problems

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The Conceptual Shift

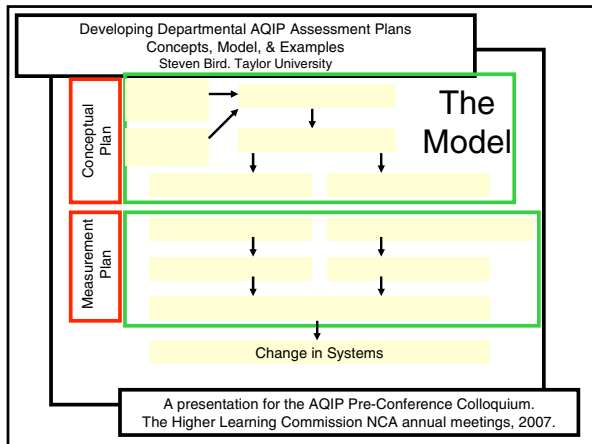
- “If it isn’t perfect, make it better”
rather than
- “If it ain’t broke don’t fix it”
- *If you don’t make the conceptual shift your efforts will yield limited results at best.*

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The Model

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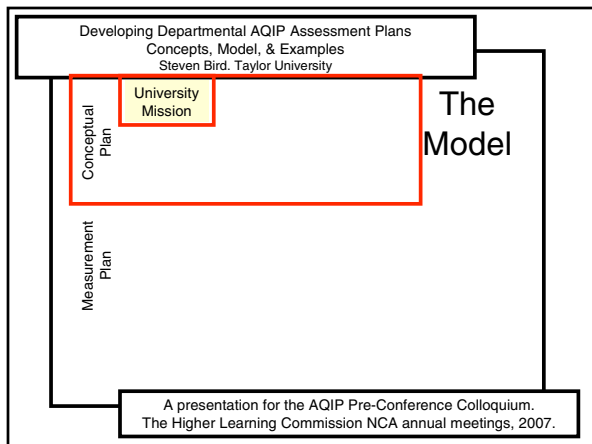


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The Model (Phase One)

The Department Conceptual Plan
Until you know the proactive vision for your department, you can't know what to measure.

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The Conceptual Plan: The University Mission

- The department is a part of a larger system that has an overall mission.
- That overall mission specifies overall outcomes.

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Example University Mission Outcomes

- Lifelong learning
- Dissemination of knowledge
- Creation of knowledge
- Development of the individual
- Etc.

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Conceptual Plan
 University Mission
 Department "Focus"

The Model

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The Conceptual Plan: The Department "Focus"

- What is your department's *unique reason for existing?* (Why not just roll your department into another one?)
 - NOT what is your subject area!
 - Stay succinct
 - Avoid overlap with other departments

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Examples of a Department's "Focus"

- Biology focuses on the science of living organisms.
- Sociology focuses on human-created (social) reality.

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Conceptual Plan

 Measurement Plan

University Mission
 Department "Focus"

Department Mission

The Model

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The Conceptual Plan: Department Mission

- How does your *unique reason for existing* help accomplish *the university's mission*?
- Every department should have a unique contribution because they have a unique reason for being.

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Example Department Missions

- Biology: ...the science of living organisms creates lifelong learners by preparing students to engage the ethical challenges of the future introduced through the biological sciences
- Sociology:...promote lifelong learning by helping students see, understand, and connect themselves more effectively to, the larger social reality they will live in and interact with so that they are open to new insights and continued intellectual growth

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The Model

University Mission → Department Mission
 Department Focus → Department Goals
 Department Mission → Department Goals

Conceptual Plan
 Measurement Plan

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The Conceptual Plan: Goals

- To pursue excellence proactively, continuously, and through systems based approaches...
- Set goals that are *virtually unattainable aspirations*—that you can always become better at.

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Example Department Goals

- University Mission: create lifelong learners.
- Biology focuses on the science of living organisms
- Mission:... ..the science of living organisms creates lifelong learners by preparing students to engage the ethical challenges of the future introduced through the biological sciences
- Goal: **Aspire to thoroughly prepare our students for future careers in the biological sciences by training them in the current knowledge, skills and processes of biological sciences**

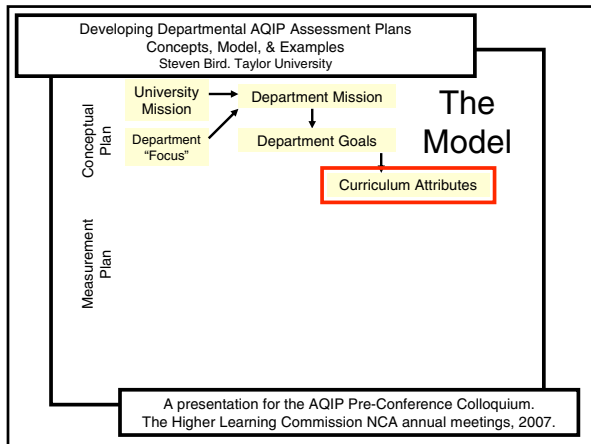
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Example Department Goals

- University Mission: create lifelong learners.
- Sociology focuses on human-created (social) reality
- Mission:... ..promote lifelong learning by helping students see, understand, and connect themselves more effectively to, the larger social reality they will live in so they are open to new insights and continued intellectual growth
- Goal: **Aspires to help students become critically aware of the social forces that affect their lives including the significance of social diversity**

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The Conceptual Plan: Curriculum Attributes

- *What kind of program (curriculum) do you need to have to accomplish this goal?*
- “Program Attributes” for non-academic departments

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Example Program Components

- **Biology Goal:** Aspire to thoroughly prepare our students for future careers in the biological sciences by training them in the current knowledge, skills and processes of biological sciences
- **BIO 393: Practicum's and internships will provide students with experience in future professions**
- **BIO 450: Directed research will provide students with undergraduate research experience**

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Example Program Components

- Sociology Goal: Aspires to help students become critically aware of the social forces that affect their lives including the significance of social diversity
- **SOC 100: Introductory course will include an intentional unit on the diverse kinds of human diversity**
- **SOC 220: Minority Issues course will have all content based in contexts of human diversity**

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    graph TD
      UM[University Mission] --> DM[Department Mission]
      DM --> DG[Department Goals]
      DG --> DA[Department Attributes]
      DG --> CA[Curriculum Attributes]
      DF[Department Focus] --> DG
  
```

The Model

Conceptual Plan

Measurement Plan

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The Conceptual Plan: Department Attributes

- What kind of department do you need to have to accomplish this goal?

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Example Department Attributes

- **Biology Goal:** Aspire to thoroughly prepare our students for future careers in the biological sciences by training them in the current knowledge, skills and processes of biological sciences
- **Faculty will continually develop professionally as scholars, scientists, educators, and role models by staying current in their profession and disciplines**
- **Graduates will attend research programs, graduate programs; obtain jobs in technical areas and in teaching**

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Example Department Attributes

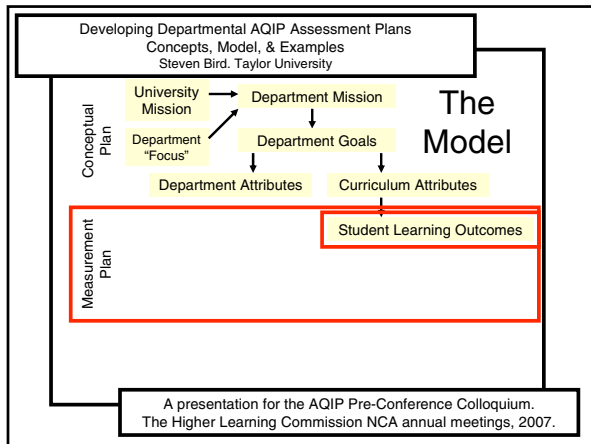
- **Sociology Goal:** Aspires to help students become critically aware of the social forces that affect their lives including the significance of social diversity
- **Faculty will represent an appropriate diversity in personal characteristics and fields of training**
- **Graduates will have a coherent perspective on their embeddedness in a diverse social context**

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The Model (Phase Two)

The Department Measurement Plan
When you know where you want to go, you can measure progress toward that vision.

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The Measurement Plan: Student Learning Outcomes

- What, specifically, is any given program component suppose to accomplish?
- “Client outcomes” for non-educational units.

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Example Student Learning Outcomes

- Biology Goal: Aspire to thoroughly prepare our students for future careers in the biological sciences by training them in the current knowledge, skills and processes of biological sciences
- BIO 393: Practicum’s and internships will provide students with experience in future professions
- **Students will be able to demonstrate the use of correct procedures in job settings**
- **Students will be able to interact with life science professional in a professional and competent manner**

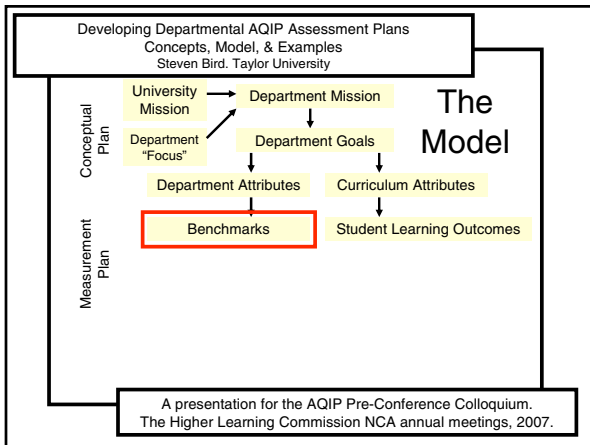
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Example Student Learning Outcomes

- Sociology Goal: Aspires to help students become critically aware of the social forces that affect their lives including the significance of social diversity
- SOC 100: Introductory course will include an intentional unit on the diverse kinds of human diversity
- **Students will be able to identify and classify human diversity in terms of ethnicity, socio-economic class, and social structural placement**
- **Students will be able to produce empirical summaries of the interaction of social institutional patterns and societally recognized diversity**

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The Measurement Plan: Benchmarks

- *What holistic indicators would demonstrate that the department is the kind of department it needs to be?*
- Ideally these can be compared to both
 - The department’s vision of excellence
 - “Benchmark institutions” elsewhere

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Example Benchmarks

- **Biology Goal:** Aspire to thoroughly prepare our students for future careers in the biological sciences by training them in the current knowledge, skills and processes of biological sciences
- **Departmental Attribute:** Faculty will continually develop professionally as scholars, scientists, educators, and role models by staying current in their profession and disciplines
- **All department members will present at field appropriate conferences within any two year period**

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Example Benchmarks

- **Sociology Goal:** Aspires to help students become critically aware of the social forces that affect their lives including the significance of social diversity
- **Departmental Attribute:** Faculty will represent an appropriate diversity in personal characteristics and fields of training
- **At least one third of the department faculty will have a clear focus on and expertise in issues of diversity**

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The Model

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  graph TD
    subgraph Conceptual_Plan [Conceptual Plan]
      UM[University Mission] --> DM[Department Mission]
      DF[Department Focus] --> DM
      DM --> DG[Department Goals]
    end
    subgraph Measurement_Plan [Measurement Plan]
      DA[Department Attributes] --> B[Benchmarks]
      CA[Curriculum Attributes] --> SLO[Student Learning Outcomes]
      B --> M1[Measurement]
      SLO --> M2[Measurement]
    end
    DG --> DA
    DG --> CA
  
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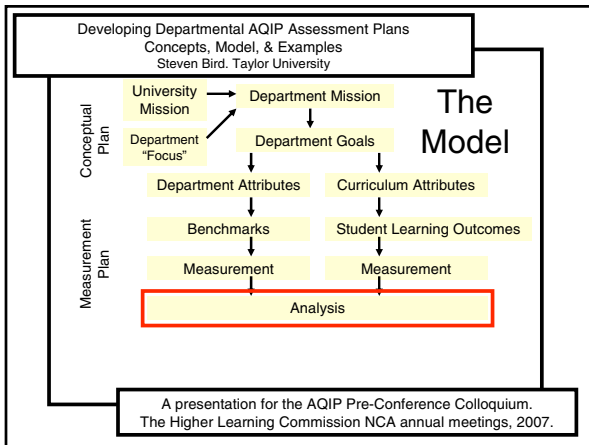
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The Measurement Plan: Measures

- How will you actually measure those benchmarks and learning outcomes?
- Formative and/or Summative
- Process and/or Outcome
- Self-report and/or Observation

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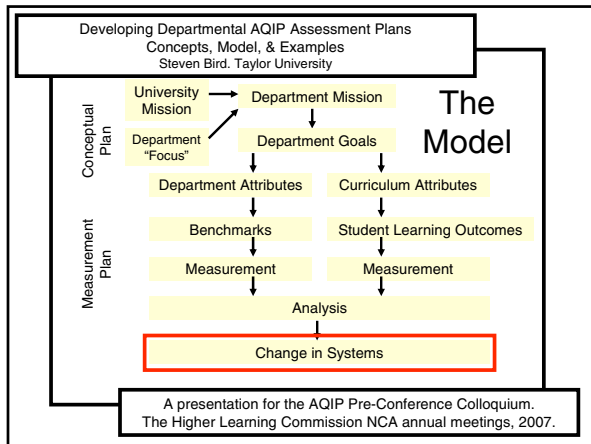


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The Measurement Plan: Analysis

- How, when, and where will the data be analyzed?

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Change in the Department's Systems

- How will the analyses' results be considered proactively and continuously as part of the regular system of operation?
- What systematic processes will be used to make sure changes are implemented?

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Additional Comments

- Rewarding successes
 - Market economics, politics, and CQI
- The other half of the story: the general education goals

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The Point of it All

- The process should create
 - Proactive (vision oriented)...
 - Continuous (part of everyday actions)...
 - Systems based (see the entire organization)...
 - Pursuit of Excellence

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