Guiding Principles of the University Assessment Steering Council

The vision of SFA’s University Assessment Steering Council (UASC) is to promote a culture of engagement in the process of evidence-informed improvement. Such a vision involves moving away from a focus on compliance and toward a focus on effectiveness. As the university satisfies requirements of various funding and accrediting bodies critical to institutional success, the UASC strongly recommends a collection of changes to university perspectives and processes governed by the four characteristics described below.

- Evidence-Informed Improvement
- Engagement
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency

**Evidence-Informed Improvement:** Leaders of all strategic initiatives strive for ongoing improvement, primarily in student learning, by planning, collecting and analyzing evidence that promotes meaningful changes in programs and processes, in part by outlining where and how to allocate resources to enhance students’ learning.

**Engagement:** Faculty and staff who are central to the work of specific initiatives drive those processes and practices (e.g., teaching faculty will guide program and core assessment). The value of engagement in this work is reflected in policies and budgets of the university and its various units as well as in recognition of outstanding assessment work that happens across campus.

**Effectiveness:** Evidence being collected is meaningful and has a targeted goal of informing actions to produce improvement. Assessment addresses questions and issues that faculty, staff, and students on campus care about and identify as central to SFA’s mission and goals.

**Efficiency:** Processes are simple, manageable and flexible. To minimize any additional burden on faculty, staff and students, assessment is embedded in the work that faculty and students do.

Thus, assessment processes at SFA have a goal of evidence-informed improvement, are strengthened by increasing levels of faculty, staff and student engagement, and are grounded in plans focused on twin characteristics of effectiveness and efficiency.