

Budget tied to assessment and planning

The Higher Learning Commission team reminded us in their site visit to BSU in 2010 that all campus budgeting needed to be tied directly to assessment and planning, indicating that we needed to provide a:

“9. Description of the relationship of assessment to planning and budgeting.”

University level plans have addressed this expectation in allocating resources to meet plan goals. For example, in the Master Academic Plan, we have added new faculty positions to support our growth plan.

We also need to demonstrate how we meet this accreditation expectation in our daily operations, including our programmatic assessment efforts. We have been doing that in a ‘soft’ way, however, as we are concluding our membership in the HLC ‘assessment academy’ and moving to the Open Pathways accreditation process with HLC, we must demonstrate a direct link between assessment and planning/budgeting, and it must be substantive. To do otherwise risks additional accreditation issues for BSU.

Therefore, we are implementing a requirement that program assessment be up-to-date before approving any expenditure of funds that would benefit from an analysis of how they would improve student learning. Similarly, updates or changes related to planning (e.g. curricular changes) would be subject to the same review. More specifically, this process would include, but not be limited to the following:

- 1) equipment requests under the RFP process
- 2) curriculum proposals (unless curriculum changes are designed to meet accreditation demands)
- 3) hiring of faculty (including refilling vacant positions)