

LANCASTER BIBLE COLLEGE & GRADUATE SCHOOL
LBC's COMPREHENSIVE OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PLAN (COAP)

What is outcomes assessment?

Lancaster Bible College understands outcomes assessment to be the gathering and evaluating of the results of everything we do on the campus of the College. Sometimes outcomes assessment is referred to as “institutional effectiveness”. This is a helpful label because it directs our attention to the effectiveness of LBC – its every department, program, and operation. We need more than our opinions about our effectiveness; we need documented facts. Thus, outcomes assessment.

What is a Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Plan (COAP)?

Foundational to our plan is the classification of terminology. We offer the following as a working definition of the key words of our plan.

Comprehensive – This notion of outcomes is institution-wide. It touches every department and every person. It has shifted from what was historically and narrowly defined as academic or student outcomes to institutional outcomes – outcomes from every department at LBC.

Outcomes – Are we as good as we think and say we are? Outcomes provides documentation for the excellence of which we claim and speak. Our publics need proof – and really, so do we.

Assessment – The idea is not just to gather and classify outcomes. They need to be evaluated, analyzed, critiqued, and examined – not to find fault or be negative – but to improve and strengthen Lancaster Bible College.

Plan – Our outcomes need organizing – to be put into some framework, a conceptualization, or model if you will, so we can find them, use them, and demonstrate we are fulfilling our objectives and mission.

In summary, our Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Plan is collecting college-wide results, analyzing them, and organizing them into a model so we can use them for planning, change, and improvement.

When a plan is created, it's very helpful, even essential, to build it around some key assumptions. The assumptions shape and provide direction and unity for the plan. The assumptions on which our COAP is built are:

1. Outcomes assessment is driven by our college mission.
2. Outcomes assessment is a campus-wide activity.
3. Outcomes assessment is a part of our campus culture.
4. Outcomes assessment is both continuous and evolving.
5. Outcomes assessment serves a variety of needs – accreditation, Pennsylvania, and U.S. Departments of Education, funding sources, and institutional improvement.
6. Outcomes assessment provides data and a base for institutional planning and new initiatives.

What will an outcomes assessment plan accomplish for LBC?

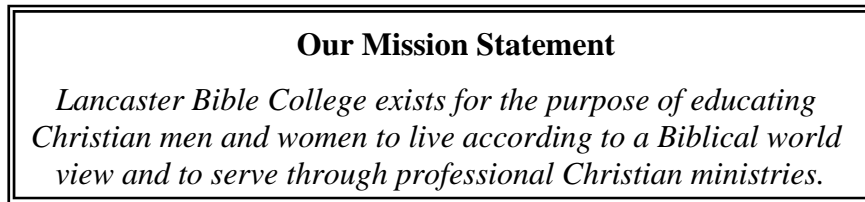
Outcomes is much more than a requirement imposed upon us by accrediting bodies. While it is a significant aspect of the self study process and report, the benefits to LBC are much broader than accreditation. In fact, the College benefits greatly from accrediting bodies insisting upon outcomes assessment and welcomes their involvement and assistance. Some specific benefits for LBC include:

1. We claim excellence in education and in all other areas of college operations; Outcomes Assessment (OA) provides documentation, proof if you will, that we do have excellence.
2. No organization is without some weaknesses which provide opportunity for growth and improvement; OA is the evaluative tool to identify these areas so corrective action can occur.
3. Institutional planning begins with an accurate picture of the current status of the institution; OA provides the data and information for an accurate and focused picture.
4. LBC needs every group (students, faculty, staff, administrators, board members, friends, donors, and alumni) to function effectively in order for LBC to fully realize its potential. A comprehensive outcomes plan promotes ownership and increased responsibility and accountability to every person and department.
5. Our many stakeholders, in addition to accrediting bodies, are increasingly questioning the quality of our education. These include parents, prospective students, churches, mission boards, state and federal departments of education, funding sources, and legislative bodies. We need to document why they should send their students and resources to LBC, why they should support and promote LBC; OA provides us and them with this data.
6. LBC has a very defined and clear mission statement. We need verification that our mission statement and what we are doing are in harmony with each other; OA supplies that evidence.

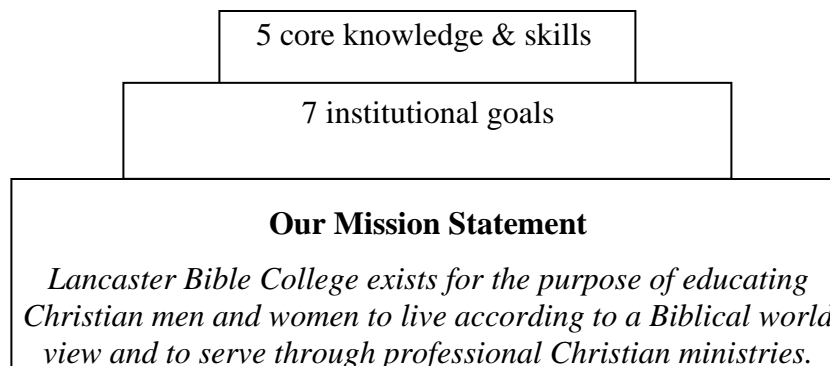
These benefits to LBC are enumerated to help motivate us to this huge but critical task and to strengthen our perseverance. Outcomes assessment is for the rest of our lives and if we are convinced of its merit, we will have more resolve to do it and do it well.

What is our outcomes model?

The first and foremost outcomes question that we need to ask ourselves is – “Is Lancaster Bible College fulfilling its mission statement?” And are we able to document that we are? Thus our mission statement provides the foundation for our COAP, upon which everything else rests.



The difficult part is that a mission statement is so big, so broad that it’s virtually impossible to collect outcomes in an attempt to document whether we are achieving it or not. We need some smaller goals and objectives to assist us in the evaluation of our mission. We have seven institutional goals and five core knowledge and skills to help us assess how well we are accomplishing our mission. These goals are contained in our undergraduate college catalog. Thus we have two more major steps of our overall COAP.



But you may still be thinking that even these institutional goals and core knowledge and skills are still too distant from me and my work to get me involved in an outcomes assessment program. And you are right – at least partially – there remains a few more steps that will bring it closer to you. What follows are two examples – one from the academic side and the other a non-academic example.

Since many people think that outcomes in an educational institution is restricted only to student outcomes, the first example will be from a non-academic area, the Stewardship Office.

The Stewardship Office has a mission statement and objectives for their department. Some of these are annual objectives; some are more permanent. Why do they have these objectives? Every one of us could provide the answer if we stopped and thought about it for a minute. Their objectives are designed so as they are obtained they partially fulfill some of the student and institutional goals and ultimately our mission statement. The result is that the stewardship staff, as they daily perform their job responsibilities, play an essential role in accomplishing the mission of LBC.

So the first two steps for Stewardship and every department is to identify and put into writing their mission statement and their objectives. Of course, their mission statement must be in concert and support of the mission statement of the College.

Stewardship Department – Mission Statement _____

The second step for the Stewardship Department is to reduce to writing their departments' objectives. These objectives assist Stewardship to fulfill their mission. As their mission is fulfilled, they contribute to the attainment of the College's mission, goals, and core knowledge and skills.

Stewardship Department – Objectives

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Some may be thinking that the core knowledge and skills aren't for me and my department to accomplish; they are for the students to achieve. Again, you are right – at least partially. Core knowledge and skills are for the students, but it is the college's responsibility to provide the climate and resources necessary for the students to realize their goals. For example, if the Stewardship Office didn't meet its annual giving goal, some of the core knowledge and skills may not be realized. So it is with every department – as we fulfill our goals we provide the services, resources, and the environment in which students can more fully realize their goals.

Thus, every one of us – regardless of our department – Christian Service, physical plant, library, admissions, food service, financial aid, etc. – as we work to fulfill our department's goals and objectives, contribute to the attainment of institutional goals and core knowledge and skills and ultimately the College's mission.

The second example comes from the academic side of our institution. The Teacher Education Department will be used to illustrate what occurs in every academic degree, division, department, program, and course. Of course, these student outcomes are of prime concern to us as an educational institution.

The Teacher Education Department has departmental objectives which relate to the various programs within the department. To achieve these departmental and program objectives, the department offers a variety of courses each with their own course objectives. Consequently, as classes meet each semester course objectives are reached, which in turn fulfill program and departmental objectives which flow into the core knowledge and skills and institutional goals to play their unique part in attaining the College's mission.

Thus, the task for the Teacher Education Department (and all academic departments) is similar to that as Stewardship's – to reaffirm and put into writing the department's mission statement and program objectives for each program within the Teacher Education Department.

The Elementary Education Program Mission Statement - _____

Elementary Education Program Objectives:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

To summarize, LBC's Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Plan is really something that we knew all along – that every single one of us, along with every LBC activity through our individual college unit, makes a specific contribution to the fulfillment of the core knowledge and skills and institutional goals and ultimately our College's mission. So in this single sentence we have capsulized our COAP. Our departments do this by attaining their individual mission statements along with their specific objectives.

The next page contains a visualization of our plan. But there remains one final piece – how do we **know** we're reaching our institutional and core knowledge and skills, along with our academic and non-academic objectives and ultimately our college mission.

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT UNITS
(Student Outcomes)**

Degrees/Certificates

1. Concentrated Bible Cert.
2. LBC Certificate
3. A.S. in Bible
4. A.S.
5. B.S. in Bible
6. B.S. in Education
7. Master of Arts in Bible
8. Master of Arts in Counseling
9. Master of Arts in Ministry
10. Master of Education
11. Grad Cert – Homiletics
12. Grad Cert – Bible
13. Grad Cert – Small Group Ldr.
14. Grad Cert – Local Church Ldr.
15. Grad Cert – Organizational Ldr.

Divisions/Departments

1. Biblical Division
2. Arts & Sciences Division
3. Professional Division
 - Biblical Counseling
 - Church & Ministry Ldrshp.
 - Health & PE
 - Intercultural Studies
 - Music
 - Office Administration
 - Teacher Education

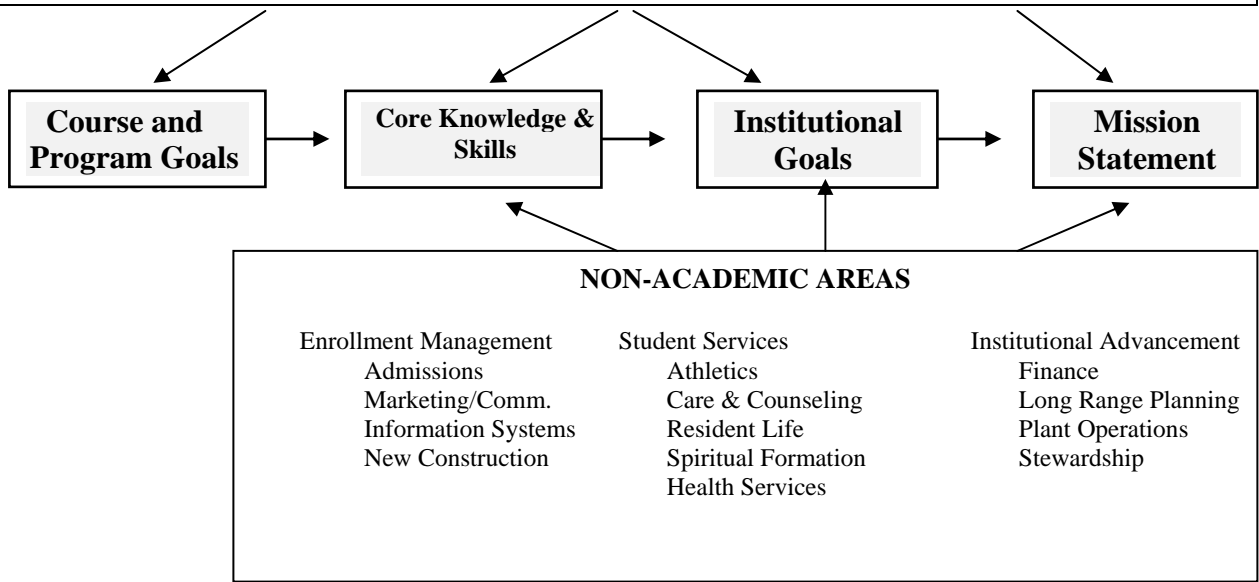
Academic Programs

1. Bible Ministries (2&4 yr)
2. Children & Fam. Min.
3. Christian Education & Discplp.
4. Church Music
5. Church Planting
6. Cross-Cultural Ministry
7. DCP – Chr. Life & Min.
8. DCP – CBC
9. Education – Elementary
10. Education – Bible
11. Education – Bible, Music
12. Education – Bible, HPE
13. Education – Bible, Guid Couns.
14. Education – Early Child.
15. M.A. – Bible
16. M.A.Min. – Leadership Studies
17. M.A.Min. – Pastoral Studies
18. M.A.Min – Small Group Ldrsp.
19. M.A. – Marriage & Fam. Couns.
20. M.A. – Mental Health
21. M.Ed. – Consulting Res. Tch.
22. M.Ed. – El. School Couns.
23. M.Ed. – Sex. School Couns.
24. Music Ministry
25. Pastoral Ministry
26. Pre-Seminary
27. Professional Counseling
28. Office Procedures & Techn.

29. Social Services
30. Sports Admin. & Coaching
31. TESOL
32. Wilderness Camping Mngmt.
33. Women in Christian. Min.
34. Youth Ministries

Academic Support Units

1. Academic Computing
2. Christian Service
3. IBE
4. Graduate Dean’s Office
5. HIS Teams
6. Information Literacy
7. Instructional Technology
8. Library
9. Placement Services
10. RAP
11. Registrar’s Office
12. Undergrad Dean’s Office
13. Vice Pres for Acad Affairs



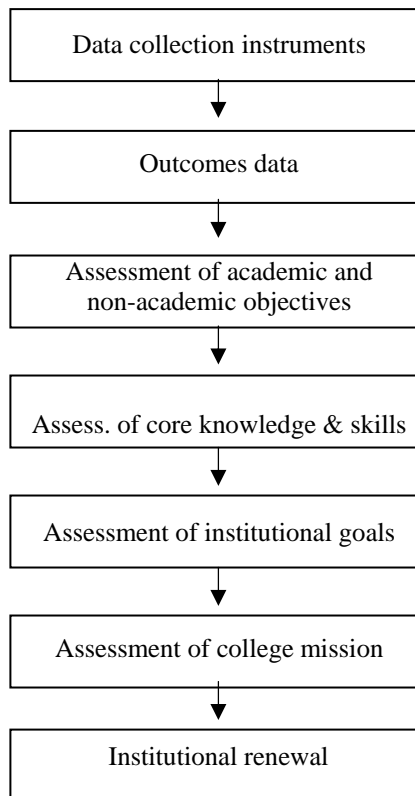
Data Collection and Usage

The final piece of our COAP is data collection instruments which need to be linked to departmental objectives allowing us to assess how well we are achieving these objectives. These instruments can be surveys, interviews, annual statistics, formalized tests, etc. In fact, we have many such instruments. Consider –

Alumni Survey	Internship Evaluations
Bible/Doctrine Testing	PA Elementary Education Testing
Christian Service Evaluations	Program Evaluations
College Outcomes Measures Program (COMP)	Retention Ratios
Course/Teacher Evaluations	Senior Interviews
Freshman Admissions Survey	Senior Survey (LBC)
Graduation Rates	Watson/Glaser Testing
Institutional Data	

The data collected assists each department in the assessment of their mission statement and objectives and ultimately in the assessment of our core knowledge and skills, institutional goals, and college mission. Additionally, each department can use the outcomes data for change and improvement in their department.

Thus, our COAP is really quite simple to both conceptualize and illustrate. It flows from data collection instruments to our College mission. It looks like this:



A Summary of Our Plan

Our COAP has six distinct steps. These are included in chart form on page 9 (academic) and page 10 (non-academic). Sheets like these are available from the VPAA's office as worksheets for you and your department. These are also available via e-mail. The six steps are explained in summary form below.

First, are there institutional goals and core knowledge and skills which connect to my department? If there are, these need to be included on the worksheet.

Second, the mission statement of my department needs to be revised, affirmed, and added to step 2.

Third are the objectives for my area. As outcomes data is collected, I will be able to assess how well my department is reaching its objectives and fulfilling its mission.

Fourth, how and when am I going to collect outcomes data to assess my objectives? Essentially this includes 1) a statement of the accepted level of performance, and 2) the instrument/method used to collect the data.

Fifth, much data will be collected. This needs to be summarized into a brief statement relating back to the accepted level of performance. Documenting our level of excellence is a key component of the outcomes process.

Sixth, how are you going to use the results? If the level of performance has been met, no action may be needed. When the desired level of performance hasn't been attained, what changes will be implemented in an effort to reach the desired level in future years?

LANCASTER BIBLE COLLEGE

OUTCOMES – ACADEMIC & ACADEMIC SUPPORT UNITS – STUDENT OUTCOMES

DEPARTMENT/DIVISION _____ PROGRAM _____

Inst. Mission: LBC exists for the purpose of educating Christian men and women to live according to a Biblical world view and to serve through professional Christian ministries.

Inst. Objective(s) as appropriate:

1 }

Core Knowledge and Skill(s) as appropriate:

2 Department, Division or Program <u>Mission</u>	3 Department, Division or Program <u>Objectives</u>	4 <u>Means of Assessment</u>	5 <u>Summary of Data Collected</u>	6 <u>Use of Results</u>
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LANCASTER BIBLE COLLEGE
OUTCOMES – NON-ACADEMIC UNITS

DEPARTMENT/UNIT _____

Inst. Mission: LBC exists for the purpose of educating Christian men and women to live according to a Biblical world view and to serve through professional Christian ministries.

Inst. Objective(s) as appropriate:

1 }

Core Knowledge and Skill(s) as appropriate:

2
Department/Unit
Mission

3
Department/
Unit Objectives

4
Means of Assessment

5
Summary of Data Collected

6
Use of Results

Putting our Plan into Action

Having created a Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Plan for LBC, what do we need to do to put our plan into action? Remember, this is an ongoing, annual process. The better we implement it, the more benefit we will realize from the process.

First, in each non-academic area we need to examine whether we have a written mission statement and sufficient written objectives to describe each department. These objectives need to be comprehensive for each department, measurable, and easily understood. Additionally, the objectives need to have threads to student and/or institutional goals, if appropriate, so they can be a part of evaluating our mission. Although it might not be possible to show a direct link between each departmental goal and an institutional goal, there should never be a conflict between the two.

Second, in the academic area we have many degree, division, department, and program objectives contained in our catalog. All these need to be reviewed to see if they are current. As noted above, they too need to be comprehensive, measurable, and in concert with our mission. If some degrees, programs, etc. are lacking objectives, these need to be established. Divisions and departments need to establish a mission statement for their area. As appropriate, these mission statements and objectives need to be connected to institutional objectives and the core knowledge and skills.

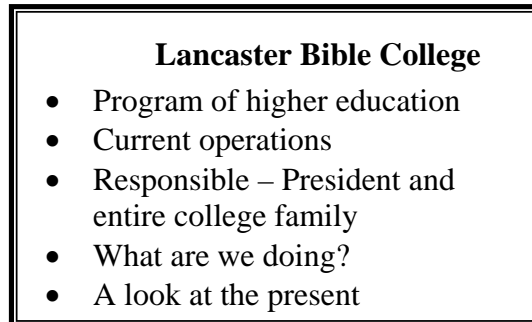
Third, there needs to be sufficient departmental and/or college data collection instruments in place for the department to gather appropriate data so their objectives can be evaluated. If not, we need to think about what instruments need to be created or found so adequate outcomes data is available for a complete assessment of the objectives. It's critical that we have the right instruments in place to collect data appropriate to evaluate each area. Having objectives is of little value unless we link testing instruments to them, which result in outcomes data. Outcomes data can be both qualitative and quantitative in nature. This third step is critical.

Fourth, now that we have the outcomes data, we need to use them to improve and strengthen what we do – whether it's teaching, maintenance, athletics, chapel, customer service, etc. Remember the goal of this activity is not only to collect outcomes. We are doing assessment to identify our strengths and continue the good work; and also to identify areas for improvement and make the necessary changes. Only by using the outcomes will we know for sure that we are fulfilling our objectives and mission statement.

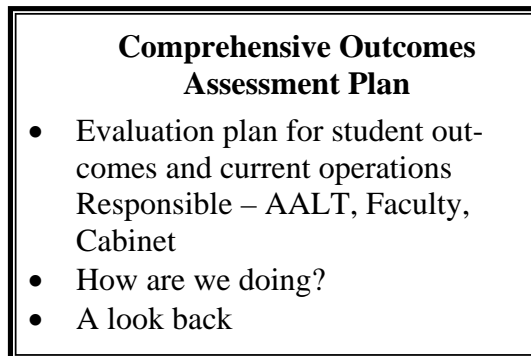
Fifth and final, we need to make sure that our outcomes data is being passed along to the Committee for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning. The Committee needs this data as they plan and budget for the future.

How does our plan fit into the broader LBC structure?

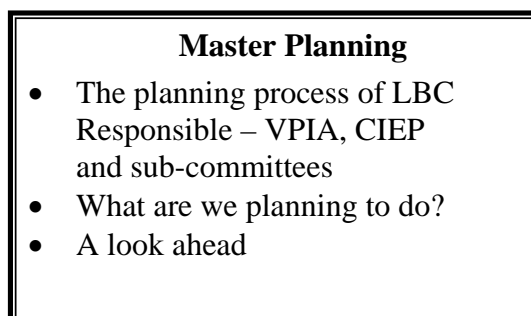
Our COAP fits into a very solid organizational structure at LBC. We believe this structure will serve and prosper LBC as we are committed to and follow it. We have a college, Lancaster Bible College, with a program of higher education and current operations which implement our programs. The operational responsibility of LBC rests with the president, administrators, faculty, staff, and students. This first aspect is descriptive and answers the question “what are we doing”. Institutional data is collected and organized to document what we are doing. It can be visualized as:



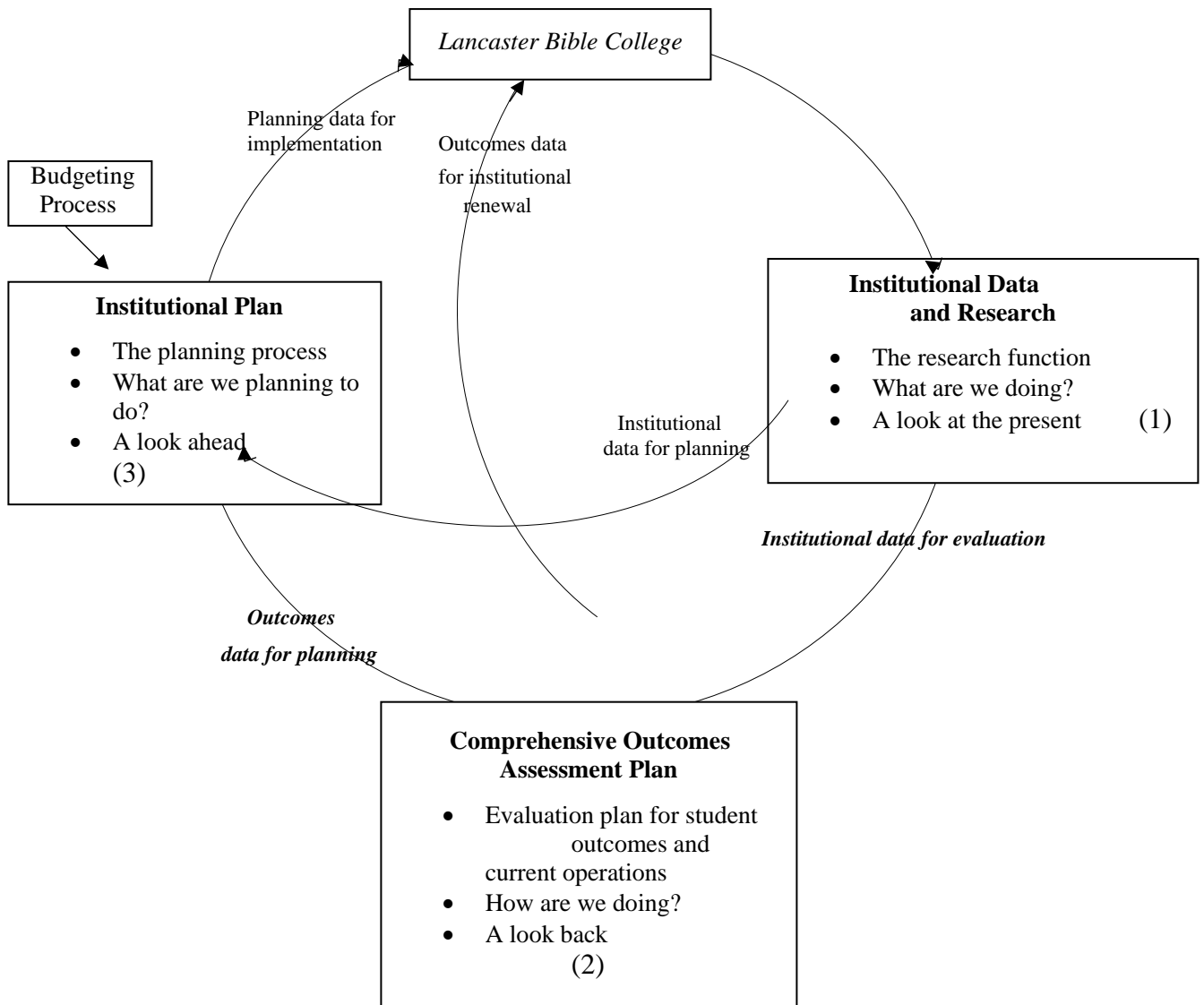
The second aspect is our Outcomes Assessment Plan. It asks and answers the question “how are we doing?” The task for this group is to evaluate LBC and all its operations. It’s a deep internal look, a look back at what we have been doing and ascertaining how well we have done it. This outcomes responsibility rests with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the entire faculty, and with the Cabinet (for non-academic outcomes). Academic degree and program review is an important piece of our outcomes plan. Visualized it looks like this:



The third and final aspect is planning. This is a look into the future and addresses the question “what are we planning to do?” The planning process is the responsibility of the Vice President for Institutional Advancement. Assisting him is the Committee for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning and planning subcommittees. In summary, it looks like this:



Putting these three aspects together forms an organization process and cycle as follows:



A note about continuous self study. As LBC engages in the process as diagramed above, we are engaged in continuous self study.

- Operations and data collection (box 1) is the descriptive part of self study.
- Outcomes assessment and institutional renewal (box 2) is the evaluative part of self study.
- Planning and budgeting (box 3) is the future part of self study.

Outcomes Resources

Copies of these resources are available in the Vice President for Academic Affairs' Office.

1. Nichols, James O. & Karen W. The Departmental Guide and Record Book for Student Outcomes Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness. Third Edition. New York: Agathon Press, 2000
2. Nichols, James O. & Karen W. The Department Head's Guide to Assessment Implementation in Administrative and Educational Support Units. New York: Agathon Press, 2000
3. Nichols, James O. Assessment Case Studies: Common Issues in Implementation With Various Campus Approaches to Resolution. New York: Agathon Press, 1995
4. Nichols, James O. A Practitioner's Handbook for Institutional Effectiveness and Student Outcomes Assessment Implementation. Third Edition. New York: Agathon Press, 1995
5. MSA Policies and Procedures. Seventh Edition.
6. ABHE Manual. Criteria and Policies Constitution and Bylaws. 2004 Edition.
7. CHEA Occasional Paper. The Competency Standards Project: Another Approach to Accreditation Review. 2000
8. CHEA Occasional Paper. Accreditation and Student Learning Outcomes: A Proposed Point of Departure. September 2001