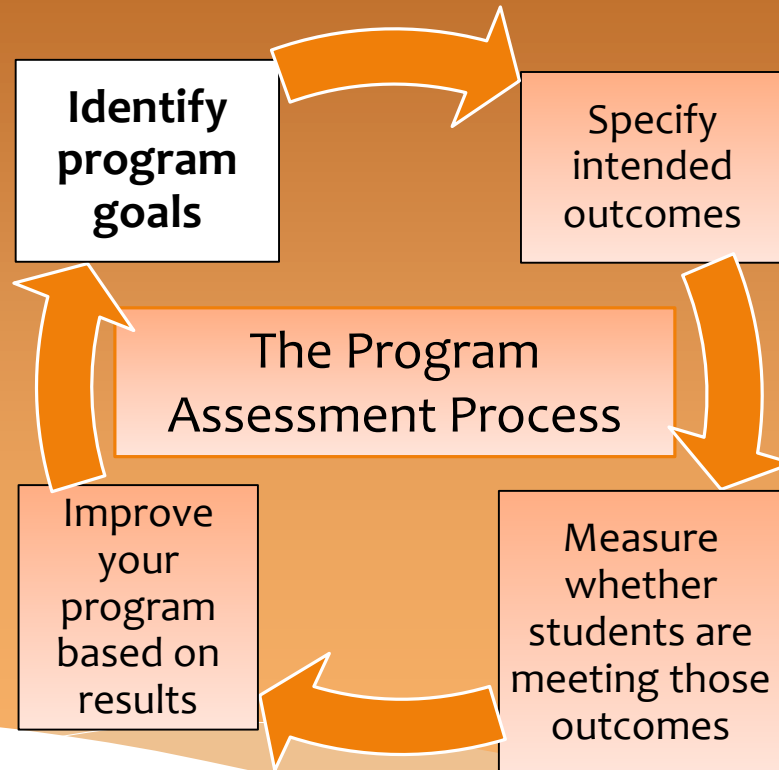


Program Assessment: Writing a Mission Statement



**Cathy Barrette, Director of Assessment
Wayne State University**

Presentation Overview

To help you write a mission statement, this presentation provides:

- * an explanation of what a mission statement is
- * examples from Wayne State's academic and student services programs
- * guiding questions to help your program develop a mission statement
- * pitfalls to avoid when developing a mission statement

Mission Statement

- * A brief description of the program's:
 - * **Purpose** - Why the program exists, including its broad *goals* and *unique or signature features*
 - * **Offerings**– What kinds of opportunities students or clients will have for achieving the program's goals (e.g., coursework, internships, service learning)
 - * **Target audience/Stakeholders** – Who benefits from the program
- * Aligned with university and division missions
- * Realistic and achievable

Usefulness

- * A mission statement is like a guiding principle: explicitly articulating it helps guide programmatic decisions.
- * For example, you can use your mission statement to
 - * Prioritize your use of and requests for funding, faculty lines, course offerings, extra curricular programs
 - * Decide which courses should be required or elective
 - * Identify new areas of expansion

Example: BFA in Dance

The mission of the BFA Program in the Maggie Allesee Department of Theatre and Dance is to [prepare] [students] [for professional careers in dance.] The Program provides preparation for pursuits in [performance, choreography and production through practical study of dance techniques, theoretical and historical studies, exploration of current trends in the art and frequent engagement with professional dance artists.] The program provides [abundant performance experiences] for [BFA students as it serves the urban metropolitan community] in which Wayne State University resides.

Example: MS in Taxation

Our mission is to [prepare] [students] [for careers requiring a high degree of specialized tax knowledge] [in public accounting, private industry, and government by emphasizing a thorough grounding in the principles of tax research, corporate taxation, and flow-through entities as well as ethics and professional communications.]

Example: PhD in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

The mission of the PhD program in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology is to train [graduate students] through [advanced course work, critical analysis of the primary literature and apprenticeship to a practicing scientist] to [develop an understanding of the theoretical and practical aspects of biomedical research. Special emphasis is placed upon critical thinking and written and oral communication skills to further prepare graduating students to pursue a variety of different career options] where a thorough understanding of research is essential.

Example: UG Certificate in Nanoengineering

The nanoengineering certificate program offers students [multidisciplinary, in-depth training in the emerging technological area of nanotechnology] by offering new [lecture, laboratory, and seminar courses that cross traditional departmental and disciplinary boundaries. Students gain hands-on experience with advanced instrumentation and cleanroom operation. Students conduct research with faculty and industrial partners.] The certificate program [fulfills the educational needs of working engineers and technical professionals], targeting especially those in the Metro Detroit area and Windsor, Canada.

Example: Academic Success Center

- * The mission of the Academic Success Center is to ensure that [all Wayne State University students] become [self-determined, motivated and independent learners.] We accomplish this through [tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, individual instruction and workshops] that support students' development of skills to achieve academic excellence.

Example: Learning Communities

[To support Wayne State University's commitment to student learning and retention], the Learning Community Initiative seeks to [enhance] our [undergraduates'] [experience] by providing all [interested students] [dynamic, focused communities in which students, staff, and faculty learn and grow together].

Mission Statement: Guiding Questions

To help you get started on your mission statement, you might discuss the following questions with your colleagues:

- * What need(s) does the program fulfill?
- * What kinds of learning opportunities does the program provide?
- * What does this program uniquely offer that differentiates it from other programs?

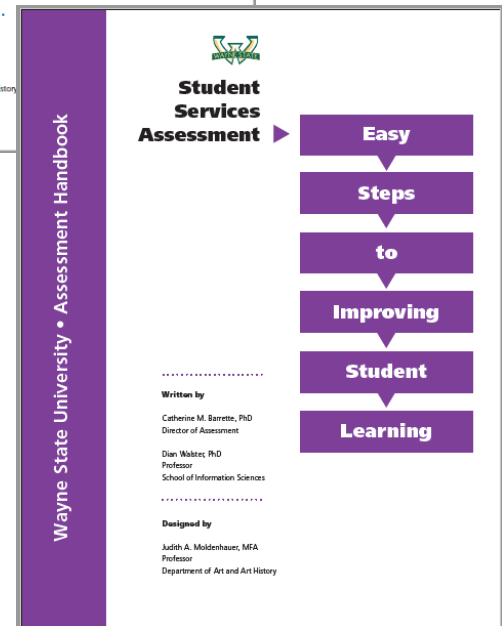
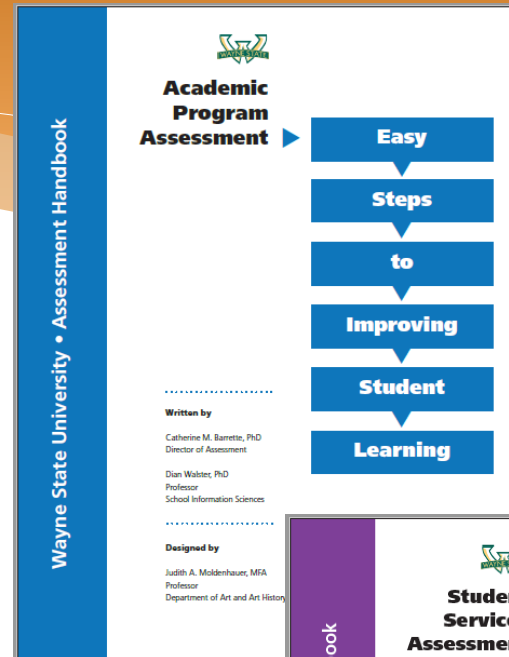
Mission Statement: Pitfalls to Avoid

Wording that is:

- * Too general, applicable to any program
- * Descriptive of a department or unit rather than one specific program
- * Focused on teaching or research rather than student learning
- * Written for a specialist/expert audience rather than a general audience

Want More Information?

- * Additional presentations and the assessment handbooks explain how to:
 - * Write mission statements
 - * Write learning outcomes and curriculum maps
 - * Choose assessments
 - * Understand and use results
 - * Use Planning to record your work
- * Each part has examples and pitfalls to avoid as well!



Local Resources for Program Assessment

- * Cathy Barrette, WSU Director of Assessment
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- * [WSU Assessment website](#)
- * [Office for Teaching and Learning](#) staff, workshops and website