Effective Use of Graduating Senior Survey As Part of Program Assessment

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Overview

- Infrastructure for CQI
- Building measures of objectives
- Case Study: University of Central Florida
  - Needs analysis
  - Organizational restructuring
  - Implementation of ongoing sources of information
    - Graduating Seniors Survey
    - Integrated with assessment process
    - Provides university and program level information
  - Challenges and future direction

Continuous Quality Improvement

- Concept significant part of culture of higher education [Astin,1991; Ewell,1984]
- Internal and external driving forces behind concern for quality improvement in administration and services [Seymour, 1993]
  - Competition for tuition and state dollars
  - Rising costs
  - Increased state accountability reporting
  - Rise of customer service orientation
  - Accreditation agencies emphasis on implementation of continuous improvement processes

Process and Infrastructure

- Process to support quality improvement developed over fifty years ago Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle (Shewhart, Bell Lab)

- Creating infrastructure in higher education is essential to success of process [Seymour,1994, Sims & Sims,1995]

Process and Infrastructure

- Key elements
  - Cultural change
  - Commitment from upper administration
  - Use of existing organizational structures to implement planning and assessment
  - Participation from all levels
  - Long term commitment

Ongoing Reliable Sources of Information

- Critical component of quality improvement process in higher education is capability to measure objectives
- Ongoing sources rather than periodic or one-shot
- Reliable, valid and accessible

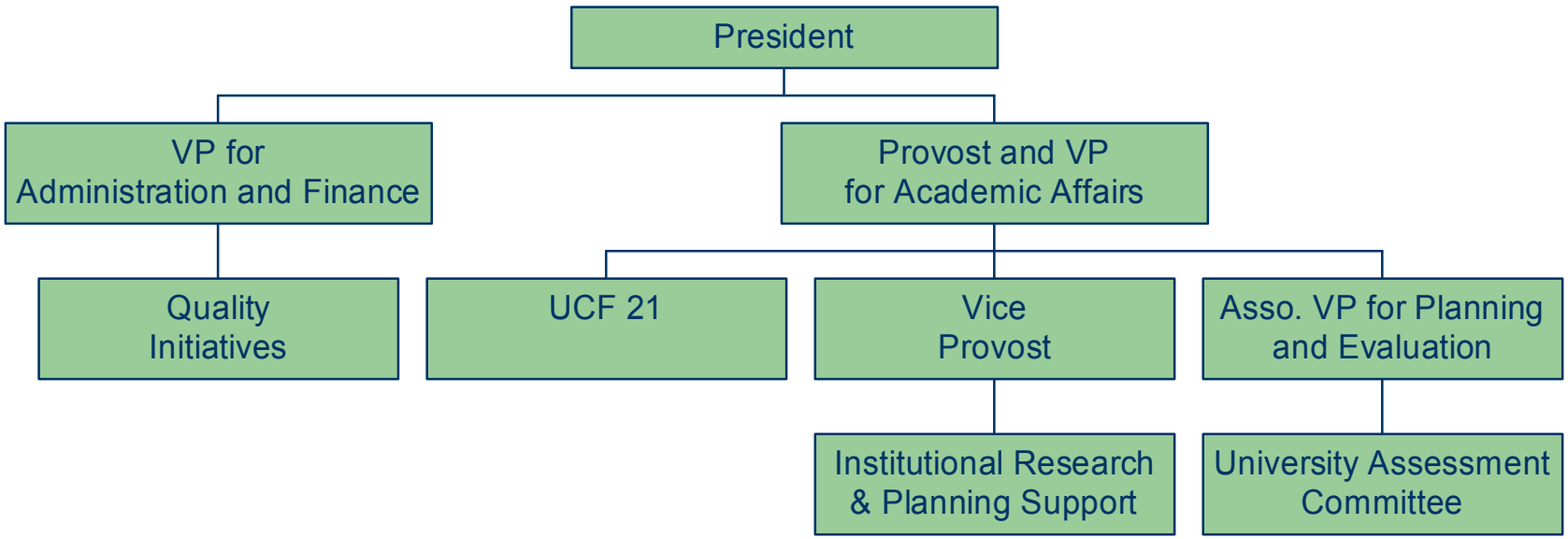
Ongoing Reliable Sources of Information

- Assess how students, alumni, employers, faculty and staff perceive quality and effectiveness of programs and services
- Allow measurement at the university and program/unit level
- Integrate data sources – survey & data bases

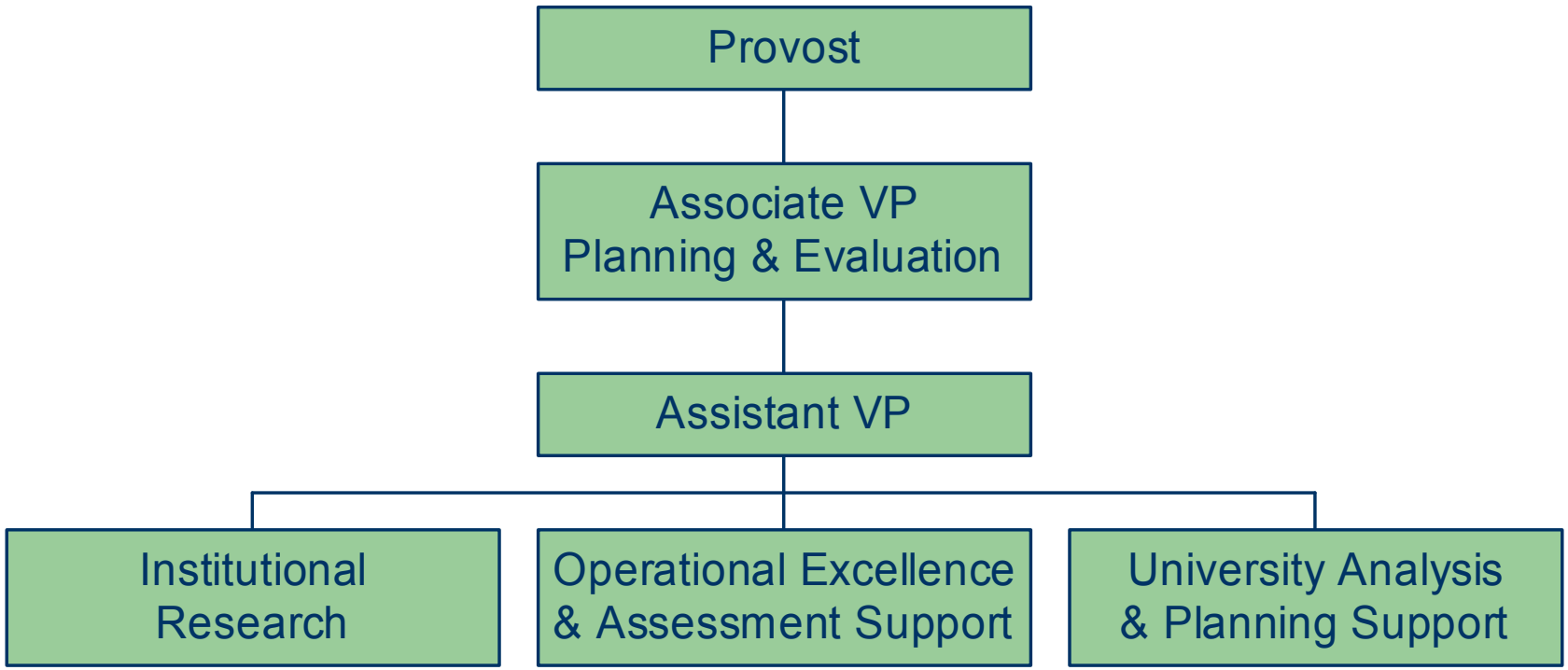
Case Study: University of Central Florida

- UCF established in 1963 located just outside Orlando
  - Metropolitan Research University
- Grown from 2,600 to 36,000 students in 38 years
  - 30,000 undergraduates and 6,000 graduates
- Doctoral intensive
  - 76 Bachelors, 57 Masters, 3 Specialist, and 19 PhD programs
- Second largest undergraduate enrollment in the state
- Approximately 1000+ faculty and 3500 staff members
- Five colleges plus Honor's College
  - Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Education, Engineering and Computer Science, and Health and Public Affairs

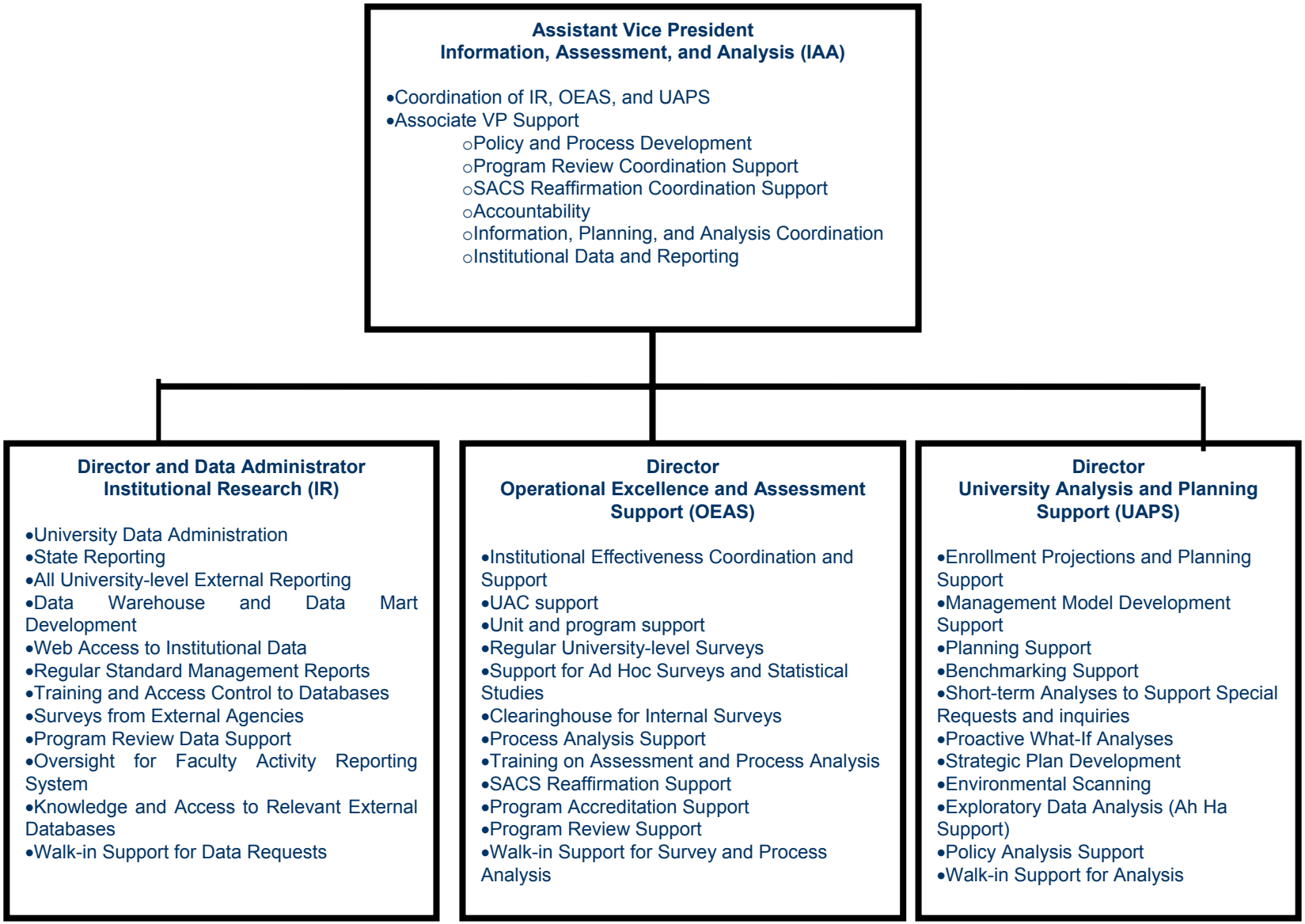
Organizational Relationships (1999)



Proposed Reorganization (January 2000)



Planning and Evaluation Functions



March 2000 - Status of Survey Information Sources at UCF

- Fragmented collection of program level information
  - By units and programs
- University level periodic surveys
  - Graduating seniors and graduate students
  - Student satisfaction
  - Alumni
  - Parent
  - Employers
  - Clients

March 2000 - Status of Survey Information Sources at UCF

- Efforts fell short of needs
  - No program level information
  - Not ongoing
  - Response rates often poor
- Programs lacked capability to design, implement and analyze survey data into useable information
- Dissemination and use of results poor

Process Integration: Graduating Senior Survey with IE Process

- Use of existing organizational structure - University Assessment Committee (UAC)
- UAC provides leadership for UCF's IE process
  - Quality assurance of assessment process
  - Reviews assessment plans and results
  - Provides technical assistance
  - Reviews requests for funds to support assessment

UAC Membership

- Chair (faculty member)
- College of Arts & Sciences
- College of Business Administration
- College of Education
- College of Engineering & Computer Science
- College of Health & Public Affairs
- Administration & Finance
- Information Technologies and Resources
- Sponsored Research
- Student Development & Enrollment Services
- Academic Affairs
- University Relations
- President's Division

Process Integration: Graduating Senior Survey with IE Process

- Collaborative efforts of OEAS survey staff and UAC made possible shift from periodic to ongoing Graduating Seniors Survey
- Objectives
  - Produce survey to meet Univ. needs
  - Produce buy-in
  - Effective implementation (Univ. and program level)
  - Promote use of results
- Engaged UAC, faculty & staff in survey design, administration, dissemination, and use

Survey Design

- Revisions to existing Graduating Senior Survey
  - Used existing university level survey
- OEAS staff made some changes unilaterally
  - Question order
  - Likert rating scales
  - Question removal
- Review by UAC, faculty and staff
  - Ensure items measure university-wide assessment objectives

Survey Design

- Program specific items added
  - 20 closed-ended
  - Three open-ended
- Use promoted through UAC and IE process
- Scantron form design implemented for ongoing collection
  - Old: dissemination in only spring semester
  - New: dissemination in every semester

Graduating Seniors Survey University Level Data Elements

- Overall experience (E-P)
- Recommend to friend or relative
- Challenged to do best
- Overall ratings (E-P)
  - Academic
  - Social
  - Safety
  - academic support
  - student services
  - Advising
- Quality of instructional experience in major and outside major
- Quality first year advising
- Quality academic and career advising in major
- Use of and quality rating – academic support and other services
- Perception of General Ed competency
- Social engagement
- Demographic & other person variables

Program Specific Question Design Support Provided (First Year)

- Initially, UAC referred program faculty to OEAS staff for assistance with program specific questions that measure IE objectives
  - Before launch semester (Collection 10/2000 – 12/2000 for Spring 2001)
    - 18 programs design program specific questions
    - Some cover all College majors

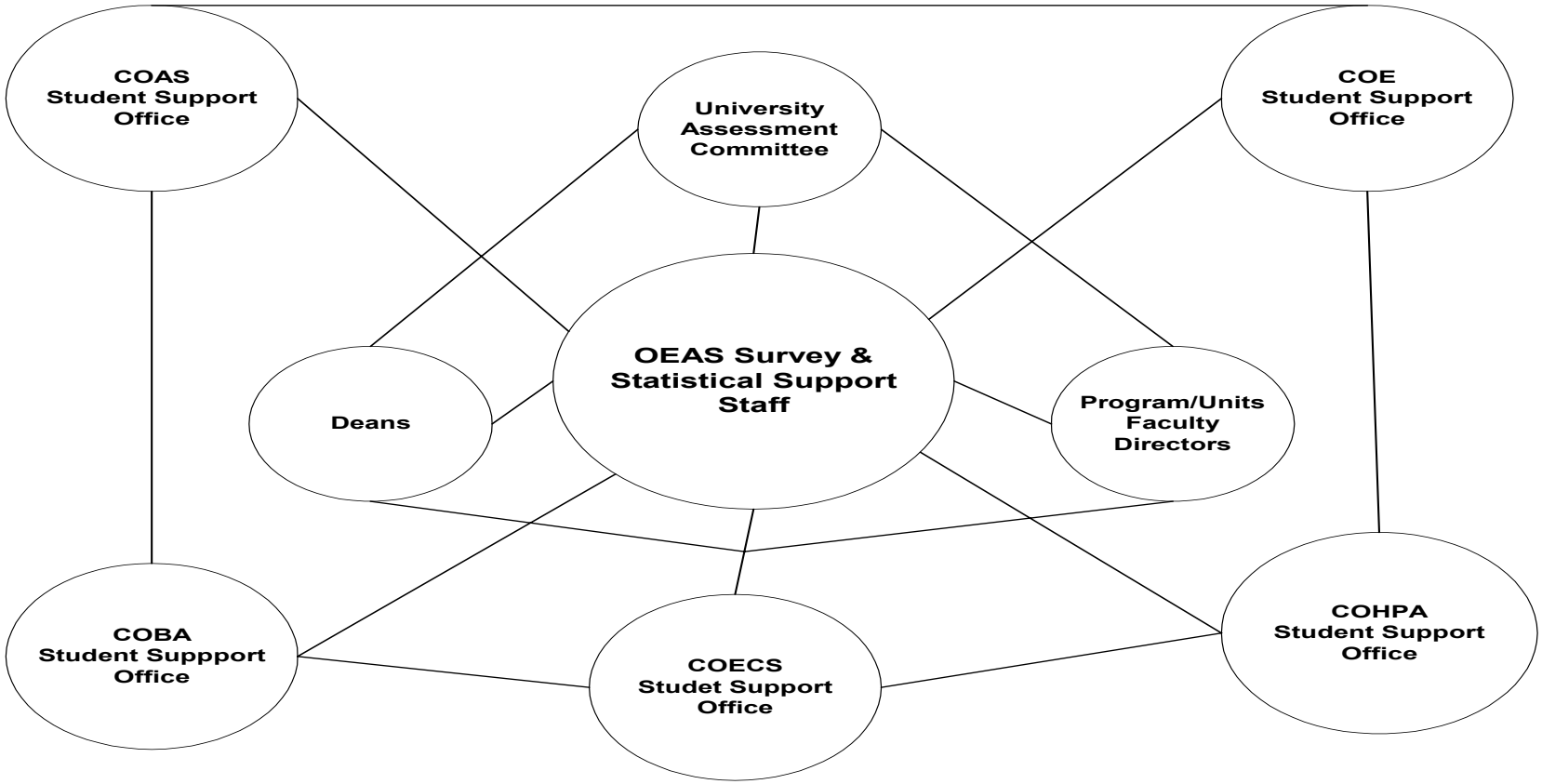
Program Specific Question Design Support Provided (Second Year)

- Increased visibility of OEAS
  - Through committee work
  - Proactive dissemination
  - Expanded referral network
  - Program self-referral
- Additional 13 programs designed program-specific questions during 2001-2002

Program Specific Data Elements

- Overall educational experience in program
- Quality of instruction
- Availability and breath of courses
- Perceived competency learning outcomes
  - Knowledge
  - Skills
  - Abilities
- Preparation for career or further study
- Quality faculty academic and career advising
- Plans after graduation
  - Work -Applied? In field/Out of field? Offer?
  - Graduate or professional school - Applied? Program of study ? Acceptance?
- Membership professional organization
- Strengths
- Recommendations for improvement

Survey Implementation Produced Ownership



Dissemination Integrated with IE Assessment Plan Cycle for Use

- Surveys collected every semester
  - Summer, Fall, Spring
- Administration at time student files Intent to Graduate Form in College Student Support Office
- Data analyzed in summer
  - University level report
  - Program level reports
  - Unit level reports

Dissemination Integrated with IE Assessment Plan Cycle for Use

- Results disseminated electronically in August
  - UAC disseminates results to Colleges and Administrative units
  - OEAS disseminates directly to deans, program faculty & directors, VPs and Provost
- Provided in August so programs and units can use in October report of IE Assessment Plan results

Major Benefits

- Increased awareness and use of information
- Increased awareness of OEAS support capabilities
- Maturation in IE Assessment Plans
  - Student–oriented objectives at both the university and program level
  - Use of multiple measures
  - Improvement targets

Major Benefits

- Cultural shift - Buy-in Value Ownership
  - Partnerships to collect accurate information
  - Information driven decision making – Believers
  - We need more…How fast can we run?
- Involvement by all levels improves measurement
  - What
  - How

Primary Challenges

- Manual process – labor intensive all phases
- Accurate tracking of programs and units that would benefit from information and proactive dissemination is imperative
- Meshing survey process with IE process and external accreditation – time sensitive

Primary Challenges

- Emerging unmet demand – seizing opportunities to promote cultural change – value of continuous improvement
- By example, providing customer-driven service
  - Responsive staff, multi-tasking
  - Belief in vision
  - Humor and perspective
- Linking data sets as surveys evolve
  - Trend analysis for strategic objectives and accountability

Future Directions

- Data mart
  - Web-based dissemination of information
  - Provide decision-makers with dynamic access
  - Features
    - drill down capacity
    - different units of analysis
    - tests of association
  - Link survey data sets with other information sources
    - Student
    - employee data bases

Future Directions

- Shift and expand OEAS survey & statistical support staff efforts
  - Implement additional ongoing surveys
  - Move beyond descriptive analysis
    - higher order analysis
    - trend analysis
    - exploratory analysis

Discussion

Presentation will be available at

http://oeas.ucf.edu