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PSC 595.01: Performance Measurement

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Political Science 595
Performance Measurement
Summer 2003

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Course Description

Performance measurement is the process by which organizations routinely and systematically gather data to assess their progress toward achieving desired outcomes. Since the early 1990s it has been touted as the key to “managing for results” and “making public organizations more businesslike.”

This course examines how to identify mission-related outcomes, develop indicators for measuring progress toward achieving those outcomes, and use the resulting data to improve the performance of government and nonprofit agencies. Students are asked to assess the current use of performance measurement in a specific agency or government program and to develop a fully integrated performance measurement system for possible use by that agency or program.

Course Prerequisite

Must have sufficient knowledge of a government or nonprofit agency/program to be able to design a performance measurement system for it, or at least the ability to quickly obtain that knowledge.

Course Objectives

1. To gain a better understanding of the nature and purposes of performance measurement systems and the ideological assumptions on which they often rest.
2. To develop skill in designing a performance measurement system.
3. To draw personal conclusions about the value of such systems and whether their benefits outweigh their costs and technical limitations.

Required Text

Harry P. Hatry, Performance Measurement: Getting Results (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press, 1999).

This text may be ordered through the UM Bookstore and mailed to you for an extra \$6 (www.umtbookstore.com or call 406-243-1234). The Bookstore typically charges list price. Sometimes you can get discounts on Amazon.com, etc.

Other assigned readings are available through Electronic Reserve at the UM Library.

Course Requirements and Grading

Lessons must be completed each Tuesday by roughly midnight. Students are required to read all reading assignments, participate on the Discussion Board, complete six writing assignments (20 points each), and submit a Final Report as described below (100 points). For grading purposes, a minimum of 198 points are needed for an A, and 176 for a B.

The six writing assignments are to be integrated into a Final Report organized as follows and submitted no later than Sunday, August 3rd:

A Proposal for an Integrated System of Performance Measurement

- I. Introduction (Assign. #1)
- II. Current State of Performance Measurement in Our Agency [or Program] (Assign. #1)
- III. Program Mission, Objectives, and Outcomes (Assign. #2)
- IV. Measurable Indicators (Assign. #3)
- V. Performance Benchmarks (Assign. #4)
- VI. Collecting, Analyzing, and Reporting Data (Assign. #5)
- VII. Maintaining System Integrity (Assign. #6)
- VIII. A Final Assessment

Note: This assignment requires you to pretend you have been asked by a higher level administrator or board member to investigate and propose an integrated system of performance measurement. Consequently, it is to be written in the form of an internal report. It is to be as realistic as possible but you are not expected to actually submit it to your agency.

Weekly Assignments

Lesson 1 (Due June 3) An Introduction to Performance Measurement

Read Lesson 1's mini-lecture; read Hatry's Preface and Chapter 1; read Chapter 5 from Osborne and Gaebler's Reinventing Government (On Electronic Reserve; see instructions on Blackboard's Announcements Page); and respond to the Discussion Board questions.

Lesson 2 (Due June 10) The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993

Read Lesson 2's mini-lecture; read the article by Radin on the GPRA (On Electronic Reserve; see instructions on Blackboard's Announcements Page); skim the Veterans Affairs 2003 Performance Plan (go to the Announcement's Page and click on Links); and respond to the Discussion Board questions.

Lesson 3 (Due June 17) Outputs, Outcomes, and Efficiency Measures

Read Lesson 3's mini-lecture; read Hatry Chapters 2 and 3; respond to Discussion Board questions; and submit Writing Assignment #1.

Lesson 4 (Due June 24) Mission, Objectives, and Outcome Sequences

Read Lesson 4's mini-lecture; read Hatry Chapters 4 and 5; respond to the Discussion Board questions; and submit Writing Assignment #2.

Lesson 5 (Due July 1) Measurable Indicators

Read Lesson 5's mini-lecture; read Hatry Chapter 6 and skim Chapter 7; respond to the Discussion Board questions; and submit Writing Assignment #3.

Lesson 6 (Due July 8) Breakouts and Benchmarks

Read Lesson 6's mini-lecture; read Hatry Chapters 8 and 9; read the article "A Proper Mentality for Benchmarking" on Electronic Reserve; skim the Highlights of Oregon's 1999 Benchmark Report (click on the Links button on Blackboard's Announcements page); respond to the Discussion Board questions; and submit Assignment #4.

Lesson 7 (Due July 15) Collecting, Analyzing, and Reporting Data

Read Lesson 7's mini-lecture; read Hatry Chapters 10 and 11; respond to the Discussion Board questions; and submit Assignment #5.

Lesson 8 (Due July 22) Maintaining System Integrity

Read Lesson 8's mini-lecture; skip over Chapter 12 in Hatry and read Chapters 13-15; respond to the Discussion Board questions; and submit Assignment #6.

Lesson 9 (Due July 29) Your Final Assessment

Read Lesson 9's mini-lecture; respond to the Discussion Board questions; write the final section of your paper; and submit your Final Report no later than Sunday, August 3.