Performance Metrics for Research Administration: What Matters?

“What's measured improves”
Peter F. Drucker

2018 Florida Research Administration Conference
January 12, 2018

Kerry Peluso
AVP for Research Administration and Finance
Florida State University
Today’s Discussions

• A metric structure that will successfully support individual, department, and institutional goals
  • Strategies to identify, organize, and prioritize key metrics
  • Steps to develop a metric structure
  • How metrics can be used to increase performance
Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted.

-Albert Einstein-
Defined

- What is a **metric**?
  - Per Webster’s Dictionary....
    - A standard of measurement

- What is a **Key Performance Indicator (KPI)**?
  - It is a metric that indicates performance in a key area
Why so much talk about metrics?

• In a period of sparse resources and increasing administrative burden, everyone is looking for ways to maximize resources.

• Metrics assist us in communicating...
  • Results and Reality (Transparency)
    • Provides results (workloads, length of time, other)
    • Assists in identifying possible bottle necks or delays in processing
  • Direction and Priorities
    • Allows management to communicate clear priorities to staff
Why now?

• New Systems which can be configured to capture various metrics
• New tools available that can be utilized to pull and report on metrics
• Continued desire to maximize resources and ensure that staff time is focused on key areas
How can they assist us?

- Demonstrates and measures **performance** in various areas (including growth in research funding)
- Provides results of new initiatives or changes
- Identifies changes in **workload**
- Identifies **time length** successes and delays
- Manage **expectations**
- Identify and manage **risks**
- Communicates **priorities** to staff
An Well-Built Structure for Metrics

- Communicates what is important to your organization
- Communicates to staff where focus should be directed
- Provides staff with the opportunity to be recognized for accomplishments
- Emphasizes priorities and progress to customers
- **Supports the goals of the organization**
Driving Performance

• Acknowledgement and Recognize
  • Public Acknowledgement
  • Linking to annual performance goals (which can be linked to salary increases and/or bonus programs)
  • Link to positively viewed non-monetary awards such as opportunities to telework, time off, etc.
  • Build in incentives for team accomplishment where appropriate
Largest Mistakes Made With Metrics

• Not developing an organized structure for which metrics are captured and simply gathering/reporting what you can

• Believing that we can capture any metric we want

• Developing metrics for many areas and expecting success across the board (no focus) or reporting all the metrics that we can from our system(s)

• Not carefully evaluating and communicating what a metric means
Data, Performance, Workload and Customer Service

• By institution, school, department, PI, Administrator
  • #/$ of Awards, Proposals, Expenditures
  • # of Subcontracts issued
  • # of financial reports, invoices
  • # of projects/awards

• Customer Service
  • Satisfaction survey results
Processing Times

- Time tracking
  - Provides statistics on service provided
  - Identifies delayed processes
  - Can set targets for performance goals and/or set service expectations
- Often tracked
  - Time for award setup, etc.
  - Contract negotiation time (by stage and type of contract)
  - Processing time for miscellaneous tasks such as processing No Cost Extensions
  - Response times to inquiries
  - On time reporting and invoicing
Risk

- Delinquent reporting or invoicing
- # of cost transfers
- % on time effort reports; # of delinquent reports; etc.
- Reconciliation and approval of expenditures
- Delayed AR collection
- Increasing workloads
How do we identify \textit{what matters}? 

- Not as easy as pressing a button.

- When developing systems, start with the "END" in mind.
Before You Start...

• Understand this is not a one or two meeting process

• A team needs to be defined that includes
  • Knowledge experts from key areas
  • Data experts from system areas
  • Someone designated as an organizational lead who will lead the team through process
  • Someone designated as the recorder who will record the information covered in the sessions
Developing a Metrics Structure to Drive Performance

The key to developing a structure that will drive performance begins with understanding what the organizational goals are. From there, we can build our Key Performance Indicators to support those goals.

- **Step 1:** Structure Development
- **Step 2:** Implementation Plan
- **Step 3:** Communication Strategy
- **Step 4:** Refinement, Maintenance and Ongoing Development
STEP 1:
Structure Development
Goals Development

- Identify goals
- Prioritize goals
- Identify the KPIs that link to/support goals
  - At this stage, do not think about what data you can access from your systems. Focus on what KPIs would reflect performance in the key areas.
STEP 1: Structure Development
Identify/Evaluate

- Determine the data that you will need to support the KPIs
- Evaluate what exists and what would be needed to obtain the additional data
- Evaluate effort and value of KPIs in relation to goal prioritization
- Identify realistic goals
STEP 1: Structure Development Complete Process

- In completion of this process, you will have completed the development of a DRAFT KPI Structure:
  - List of Goals and the KPIs that support them
  - This could be a multi-year plan.

- You will also have a list of what is needed to obtain the metrics necessary to support the KPIs
STEP 2: Implementation Plan

Overall Process

- Designate an Owner for the overall plan and an owner for each KPI
- Develop a timeline that leads to the implementation date for the new KPI structure.
STEP 2: Implementation Plan
Delivery Strategy

• Need to identify how the KPIs will be shared (with who, when and how)
  • The method of sharing the KPIs needs to be identified and developed.
    • Dashboard?
    • Report?
    • Newsletter?
    • Website?
    • Other?

• A KPI dictionary should be developed which details:
  • What the KPIs reflect
  • *How, when, and with-who* each will be shared
STEP 3: Communication Strategy Development

Introduction Strategy

• Introduction to the new structure: A multi-faceted communication plan needs to be developed that is directed towards various groups:
  • Action Owners (those who are responsible for achieving the goals measured by the KPIs)
  • Institutional Leadership (those who we want to understand how these KPIs support the mission and goals of the institution)
  • Research Community (those who will be informed of the results of the KPIs)
Communication Strategy Development

Introduction Strategy

STEP 3:

• Communication Plan should include:
  • Introduction to KPI structure (at appropriate level)
  • Opportunity for feedback
  • Method and timeline for communication
STEP 4: Refinement, Maintenance and Ongoing Development

• Regular review process
• Plan in place for development of planned additional KPIs
• Option for feedback is available and feedback is responded to
• Make sure you acknowledge progress!!!
Developing a Metrics Structure to Drive Performance

Summary of Steps

Step 1:
Structure Development
- 1a Goals Development
- 1b KPI Development
- 1c Identify/Evaluate

Step 2:
Implementation Plan
- 2a Overall Process
- 2b Delivery Strategy

Step 3:
Communication Strategy

Step 4:
Refinement, Maintenance and Ongoing Development
More Information

• Networking (Finding Out What Others are Doing)
• Conferences
• Online research
Questions?
Kerry Peluso

- Assistant Vice President for Research Administration and Finance
- Florida State University
  kpeluso@fsu.edu