Introduction

In this era of rapid social change, educational institutions are continually challenged to reexamine their purposes and restructure their models for effective delivery of services. Internal organizational processes seek to clarify purposes, missions, and vision. Once strategic directions and priorities are clarified, organizations devise implementation strategies that can go far beyond task assignments to include fundamental changes in organizational structures and working relationships. Feedback on effectiveness is sought through various forms of reviews, evaluations, and assessments of learning outcomes. Evaluations of programs, faculty members, and achievement have long histories in education. These continue, though sometimes with new twists and with "encouragement" from different constituent groups, some of which dictate types of institutional accountability.

While higher education professionals aspire to excellence in the academic achievement of all learners, they receive additional motivation from a wide range of constituent groups with varying levels of influence and, often, with differing priorities. Federal and state governments are increasing their involvement with higher education laws, policies, and management. Institutional and program accrediting agencies emphasize fiscal management, adequacy of resources, best practices in student engagement and retention, and achievement of learning outcomes.

Business and other community leaders, parents, alumni, and students themselves
emphasize attainment of an array of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes for learners. In addition, they demand first-class facilities, expert technology, fine arts, athletics, and other services to the community. The presence of diverse learners (multicultural, adult, virtual, millennial, among others) requires institutions to consider a variety of student service initiatives. Stakeholders are demanding institutional effectiveness in a myriad of areas, including the assurance of student safety and protection. Some results on institutional effectiveness are observable in the short term—after a class or at the end of a degree program. Other outcomes are not known until later, throughout graduates' personal and professional lives.

**Overall Objectives for This KAM**

Your scholarship in KAM 6 should allow you to meet the following objectives:

1. To identify major higher education constituencies, understand their perspectives on what constitutes effectiveness, and understand major efforts to demand or demonstrate effectiveness, especially those based on expectations from constituents external to the institution.

2. To understand contemporary strategies for improving organizational effectiveness, including the extent to which such strategies are based on disciplined inquiry or other scholarship.

3. To apply an improvement strategy through development of a detailed plan for improvement of a selected aspect of higher education practice.

Plan to accomplish objective #1 in the Breadth component of the KAM, objective #2 in the Depth component, and objective #3 in the Application component. These
objectives are further explained with examples in the discussion of each component that follows.

**Challenges and Opportunities in This KAM**

This knowledge area module will introduce you to a wide range of scholarly and professional literature on effectiveness in higher education. It should challenge you to think critically about public concerns with higher education and to identify available strategies for improvement. Your own ability to synthesize ideas about institutional effectiveness may be based in part upon your work in KAM 3. Therefore, you may want to revisit literature on systems theory before you delve into readings that are more specific to higher education. Higher Education in the United States is facing increasing calls for accountability. It is not unusual for the federal and/or state government to initiate protocol for demonstrating educational effectiveness, thereby altering the role and function of higher education within the larger society. If you do not have a strong background in the history of American higher education or the public policies and laws that pertain to higher education administration, you should include that review as part of your scholarship for this KAM.

In the Breadth component, your analysis of the literature should include the perspectives of a number of stakeholders—all of whom believe that they have a vested interest in the effectiveness of higher education in today’s world. Therefore, analyzing this literature is more than simply reporting what the writers say. You need to demonstrate your understanding by using higher levels of thinking such as comparing and contrasting, analyzing, synthesizing, or evaluating them.
In the Depth component, you have the opportunity to bring your theoretical understanding to the examination of a particular trend or theme. You will build upon the foundational knowledge that you examined in the Breadth section and critically examine how that influences your professional context and is addressed in different ways by researchers. You will write about these in a way that shows that you know and understand what current researchers have discovered and can apply them to what you want to learn. You will also write to demonstrate that you are able to identify how their research is, or is not, helpful, perceptive, and well grounded, and what gaps remain in our understanding of effectiveness in higher education.

In the Application component, you will have an opportunity to apply your mastery to plan, revise, or evaluate a specific higher education program. This is an opportunity to integrate what you know about institutional effectiveness, and success, into a specific professional context.

Breadth Component

EDUC 8617 Perspectives on the Effectiveness of Higher Education Organizations (5 cr.)

This KAM concerns effectiveness in higher education from the perspectives of constituents, providers, and regulators/evaluators. It focuses on the major approaches to demonstrating and assuring quality within the system of higher education, as called for by external constituents, initiated by internal participants, and discussed in the professional literature. Strategies for organizational effectiveness and accountability are reviewed and evaluated within the current climate of change. Listed below are some suggestions for the kinds of issues you might want to pursue in the Breadth component of this KAM. They
are intended to be suggestive only but will give you an idea of the kinds of topics your paper should address.

1. Conduct a study of perceptions on higher education institutional effectiveness throughout different time periods in the United States. How was institutional effectiveness defined and by whom? What themes can you identify historically as well as in the present day? How does the definition of “effectiveness” contribute to the current and future role of higher education in society?

2. Identify major higher education constituencies and analyze their perspectives on what constitutes effectiveness. Consider a sufficiently broad array of constituencies to demonstrate the variety of values held by various groups. For example, differing perspectives may be expected from students and families, institutional faculty and administrative staff members, employers, state and federal agencies, and institutional and program accreditors. Distinctions are often made between the personal value of education to the learner and the public value of an educated citizenry. Views on educational effectiveness may also be expected to differ across educational organizations with different purposes (e.g., community colleges, technical colleges, liberal arts colleges, research universities, and schools providing continuing professional education).

3. Compare and contrast major efforts to demand or demonstrate effectiveness with particular regard to learning at several levels, such as
national, institutional or program accreditation, states, institutions, programs, or courses.

4. Identify the ways in which various constituencies place expectations or requirements on higher education to improve or demonstrate quality. Examples would include the consumer protection expectations of federal and state governments, performance funding from state higher education systems, quality demonstrations from accreditors, institutionally based expectations for programs, and performance-based expectations from employers.

Demonstration of Competence

Using the knowledge resources covered, write a scholarly paper that demonstrates an understanding of higher education effectiveness in general or as it relates to a particular phenomenon or group of phenomena. The emphasis of the paper is not on summarizing the content of various perspectives but on a critical assessment of them. Therefore, you should include comparisons, contrasts, evaluations, and a synthesis of different theories, assumptions, concepts, ideas, and elements encountered during the theoretical literature search and review. The expected length of the paper for the Breadth component is approximately 30 double-spaced pages, plus references.

Learning Resources

A bibliography of possible references for this KAM can be found at the Walden Library site accessed through the faculty or student personal start page/campuscruiser. Once in the Walden Library site, click on Get KAM Research Help and look for the appropriate program or KAM. The Resources links will take you to general references
that will provide an overview of the field or key thinkers. The Bibliography link will take you to a list of possible writings. The books and authors listed here are meant only to provide examples of the kind of literature you should be accessing. You can compile your own bibliographic references using this list as a starting point. If you have difficulty compiling a bibliography or choosing relevant readings, consult with your faculty mentor or KAM assessor and the Walden librarians.

Depth Component

EDUC 8627 Contemporary Strategies for Ensuring Effectiveness in Higher Education (5 cr.)

The purpose of the Depth component is to help you understand, analyze, and explain concepts associated with institutional effectiveness as they affect and are affected by your particular area of higher education. Your task in this component is to select a particular effectiveness topic that has salience in the current time period, is of interest to you, and intersects in intriguing and important ways with your professional context.

In the Depth you should consider the impact of the phenomena that you examined in the Breadth on some aspects of your profession. For instance, depending on the focus of the Breadth component, you may want to consider some aspect related to the following:

1. Investigate current laws and/or upcoming legislative issues concerning higher education effectiveness. What are the emerging policy trends that will impact institutions of higher learning?
2. Examine the relationship between institutional mission and institutional effectiveness.
3. What are the emerging trends and challenges for fiscal responsibility and institutional effectiveness?
4. Research crisis management in higher education. What are the implications for students’ legal rights, public safety, protection of institutional resources, accountability to faculty and staff, and other elements?

5. Summarize several of the contemporary strategies for improved organizational effectiveness. The effectiveness of educational organizations is sought both by external parties, often seeking accountability, and internally by an organization's own proactive efforts to achieve its educational goals. Compare and contrast several tools/strategies that demonstrate diversity in purpose or approach.

6. Select one strategy and critique the literature regarding how effectively that strategy contributes to the improvement of learning. Consider ways in which the strategy rests upon or has been tested by disciplined inquiry methods such as policy analysis, case study, or hypothesis testing.

7. Investigate current trends in student services and their contributions to student learning. What are significant trends and best practice strategies for increasing learning effectiveness in non-academic areas of the institution?

**Demonstration of Competence**

Compile an annotated bibliography that includes a minimum of 15 recent refereed or peer-reviewed research journal articles (or older articles if they are a particularly good fit) on a particular theme related to institutional effectiveness. For each source included on your list, prepare a critical analysis. Arrange the bibliography in alphabetical order. Suggested length is 1 to 1½ pages per annotation.
Write a 25-30 page double-spaced typed scholarly paper describing, analyzing, and explaining the selected theme and relating it to effectiveness. In this paper, be sure to include evidence of higher order thinking (comparison and contrast, analysis, and evaluation). The total Depth component assignment is equivalent to 5-quarter credit hours of graduate work.

Learning Resources

Because the Depth section is so individualized, it is difficult to offer reading recommendations. Both books and articles can be used, although current research is more likely to be found in journal articles. You are encouraged to review a wide range of sources for this assignment but focus particularly on dissertations and journal articles in selecting the sources that will ultimately comprise your bibliographic list. Consult your faculty mentor or KAM assessor and the Walden library staff for further assistance in identifying sources in your literature search.

Application Component

EDUC 8637 Application of Improvement Strategies in Higher Education (4 cr.)

In the Application component of the KAM, your focus should now turn to your own professional context—your work in an institution of higher learning. In order for the Application component to be the most productive learning experience possible, it is useful for this component to draw on the themes and findings from the Breadth and Depth components of this KAM. You are encouraged to review the resources presented in previous components of this KAM as well as the annotated bibliography compiled as part of the Depth component. In addition to these resources, you are urged to reflect on
Application projects you might consider:

1. Select a particular area of practice that needs improvement and analyze its improvement potential using one or more of the tools identified in the Depth section. The "area of practice" may be at any level in higher education, from the Federal Department of Education to an individual academic or support unit. It may also relate to the involvement of regional or program accreditors. Present your case for what needs improvement and why it needs improvement. Explain how your tool(s) of choice is relevant to this situation.

2. Develop a plan for increasing learning effectiveness. "Learning" relates primarily to individual learners (i.e., students), but you might also consider the learning effectiveness of an organization (i.e., a higher education institution). Describe the context, the major participants and process steps, and a general calendar of how the plan might be implemented. Write it as a detailed proposal to the responsible administrator or group that would have to approve and empower you to move ahead with implementation.

3. A major work you have previously completed (e.g., a master's thesis, curriculum design, or professional project) may demonstrate your ability to apply the theories, concepts, methods, and research findings that are the focus of this KAM. Such a demonstration of your competence may be submitted along with an essay that explains how the project illustrated a particular facet of the institutional effectiveness and your mastery of this domain. In addition, provide a brief rationale for the project and comment on how the situation might have changed
since the project was first undertaken and what you might do differently if you were to plan and implement something like this again.

**Demonstration of Competence**

The Application component of the KAM gives you the opportunity to put the theories and research pertaining to educational effectiveness into practice. Your final demonstration should include both the project and reflective commentary on it, where you show how it is informed by the theories and research studied in the earlier components of this KAM. The Application is considered equivalent to 4-quarter credit hours of graduate work in a traditional program.

Remember to secure Institutional Review Board approval to conduct research using human subjects.

**Learning Resources**

The resources you will use in this component are very specific to your particular project. If a theory or research paper is the foundation of the project, be sure to reference it. If you have difficulty compiling a bibliography or choosing relevant readings, consult with your faculty mentor or KAM assessor and the Walden librarians.