



SMART: Developing Effective Goals and Objectives

Excerpted from Presentation Given by

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Agenda

Part A

- Goal/Objective Definition
- How to be SMART
 - Review of the component terms
- SMART tool
 - Table to facilitate SMART Objective Development
- SMART Benefits/Costs



Goal/Objective Definition



Goals/Objectives

- The most important element of a successful program is the development of attainable goals and measurable objectives
 - Guides program planning and design
 - Communicates to stakeholders
 - Enables evaluation
- Success is dependent upon realistic goals



Goals: Characteristics

- Describe the overall purpose of the program
- Describe broad outcomes and concepts (what we want to accomplish)
- Expressed *in general terms*.



Goals: Development Steps

- Research the topic (*define needs*)
- Involve stakeholders (*gains commitment*)
- Brainstorm goals
- Select the goals that have priority (*decide on what matters*)
- Limit the program to two-five goals (*select realistic goals*)



Goals: Samples

- The program will inspire and motivate students to pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
- The program will positively impact the gender diversity of the STEM workforce
- The program will increase the capacity of minority institutions in STEM research



Objectives

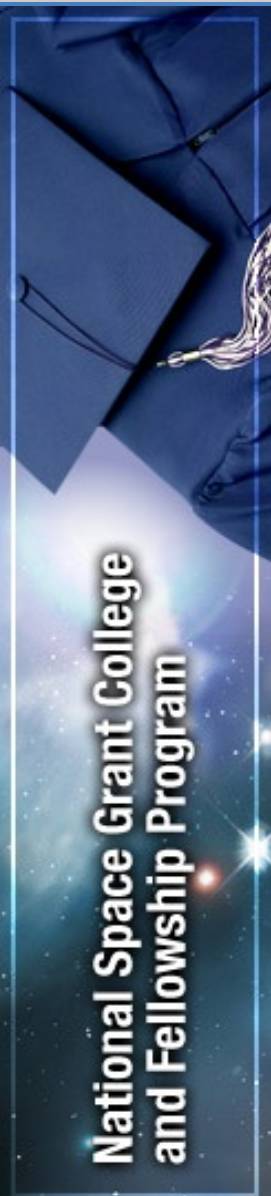
- Specifically state how the goals will be achieved
- Are measurable: Define **what you want to see**
- Encourage a consistent focus on program functions



Objectives Are Not...

Tasks

- Conducting a training session is a task.
 - *Poor objective: We will conduct a training session*
- An effective objective is something the program can **fail** at.
- An effective objective defines intent
 - *Better objective: Faculty that attend the training session will be able to identify at least three NASA grant programs that align with their research interests.*
 - *The affiliates that attend this training will be able to formulate three SMART objectives for each ASGP goal*



**National Space Grant College
and Fellowship Program**

How to be SMART



SMART Objectives

- **Specific:** Be precise about what you are going to achieve
- **Measurable:** Quantify the objectives
- **Appropriate:** Align with the needs of the target audience
- **Realistic:** Do you have the resources to make the objective happen?
- **Time-Specific:** State when you will achieve the objective



S_{MART}: Specific Objectives

Specific: Be precise about what you are going to achieve

- Specify target
- Specify intended outcome
- One outcome per objective
- Avoid vague verbs (e.g. know, understand)
- Make sure the objective is linked to the goal
- *Sample: By January 2010, at least 3% of the engineering majors at the institution will be female*



S **M**_{ART}: Measurable Objectives

Measurable: Quantify the objectives

- Use measures as indicators of program success
- If possible, establish a baseline (*e.g. In January 2009, 2% of the engineering majors at the institution were female*)
- *Sample: By January 2010, at least **3%** of the engineering majors at the institution will be female*



SMART: Appropriate Objectives

Appropriate: Align with the needs of the target audience

- Meeting the objective will advance the goal
- Identify a specific target audience
- Are inclusive of diversity within your group
- *Sample: By January 2010, at least 3% of the engineering majors at the institution will be **female***
- **Note: The “A” is sometimes called “Attainable” or “Achievable” in the literature.**



SMA **R**_T: Realistic Objectives

Realistic : Do you have the resources to make the objective happen?

- Are important to stakeholders
- Are adequately resourced
- Can be achieved
- *Sample: By January 2010, at least 3% of the engineering majors at the institution will be female*

Take care on what you say you can do! The January 2009 baseline was 2%. Is a 1% increase in one year realistic?



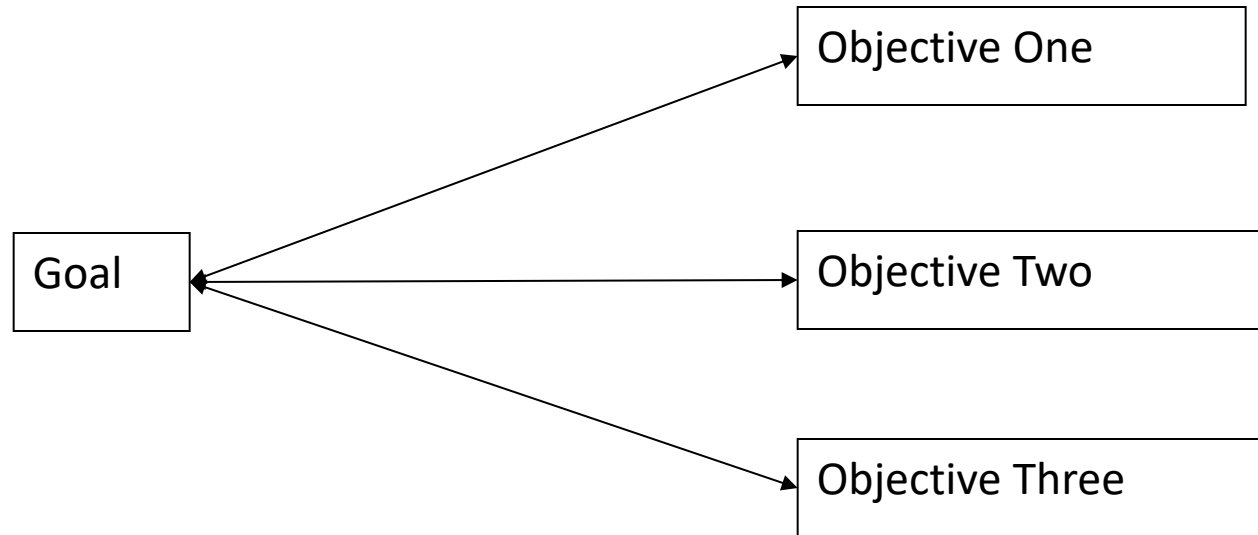
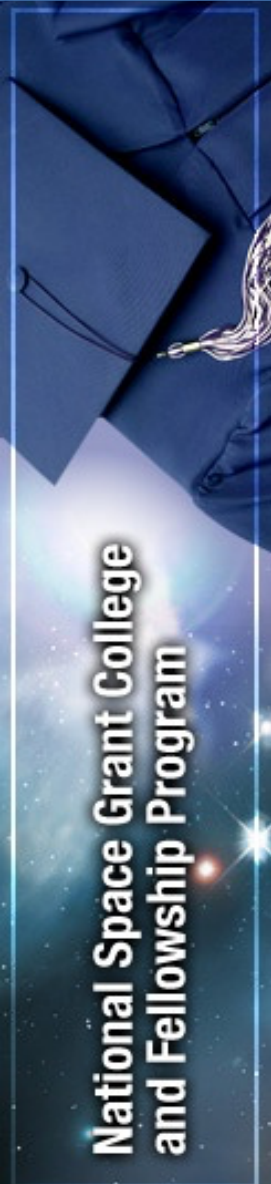
SMAR **T**: Time-Specific Objectives

Time-Specific: State when you will achieve the objective

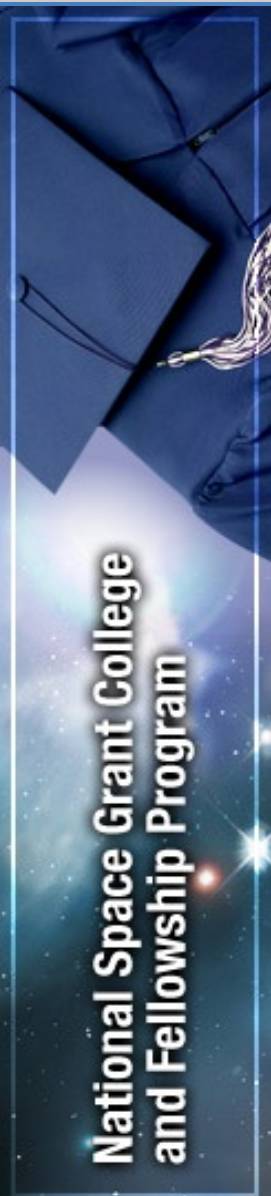
- Provide timeframe indicating when objective will be met
- *Sample: By **January 2010**, at least 3% of the engineering majors at the institution will be female*



Goals and Objectives



*Maintain a clear connection between your goals and objectives. By maintaining this connection, you are articulating your **theory** of goal attainment.*



SMART Tool

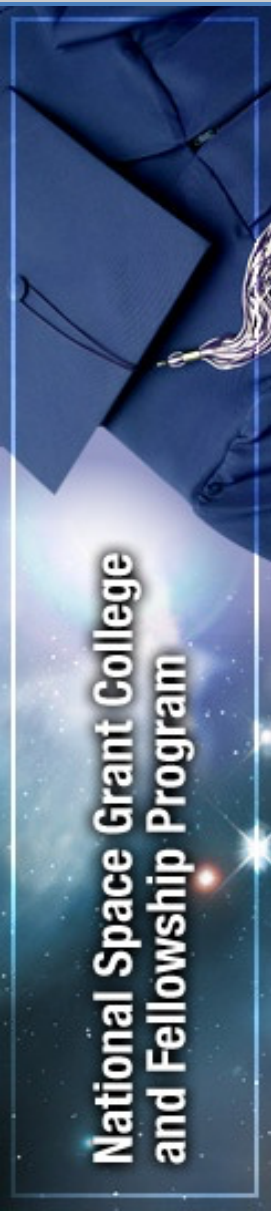


SMART Tool

Goal: The engineering department will positively impact the gender diversity of the engineering workforce

Objective	<i>By January 2010, at least 3% of the engineering majors at the institution will be female</i>						
	Verb	Metric	Population	Object	Baseline Measure	Goal Measure	Timeframe
Breakdown	be	Percentage	Institution Engineering Majors	Female s Selecting Engineering Major	2%	3%	January 2010

Objective	<i>On an annual basis, at least 5% of the students that apply to the program will be female</i>						
	Verb	Metric	Population	Object	Baseline Measure	Goal Measure	Timeframe
Breakdown	apply	Percentage	Institution Engineering Major applicants	Female Applicants Selecting Engineering Major	--	5%	Annually



SMART Benefits and Costs



Benefits

- Facilitates communication with program stakeholders
- **Informs on what data should be collected**
- Enables effective program management
- Enables government funders to better fulfill PART requirements
- Facilitates the linkage of activities and intended effects/goals
- Enables a focus on evaluation
 - Process level (activities)
 - Output level
 - Outcome level
- Facilitates replication



Costs and Limitations

- Impression that creativity is limited
- Time-consuming
- GI/GO
- Encourages too great a focus on discrete measures



Comment on Metrics

- A well-written objective suggests the metric(s)
- Example:
 - *On an annual basis, at least 5% of the students that apply to the program will be female*
 - *Metrics:*
 - *Total applications to the department*
 - *Percentage of applications from females*
- **While this may appear obvious, this is an area where programs often fail.**