Introduction
The Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment (OIRPA) conducted a survey of Administrative Council members asking them a series of questions about their units’ planning activities. This survey was conducted as a follow-up to the Institutional Effectiveness Audit undertaken in preparation for SACS reaccreditation. The purpose of the survey was to identify areas for improvement in the unit-level planning process. The survey findings and proposed recommendations are summarized in this Research Brief. Part I lists the major findings of the survey, and Part II lists several proposed recommendations to improve the planning process at NOVA.

I. Findings
Based on the Institutional Effectiveness Audit conducted by OIRPA on the annual planning and evaluation reports for the last eight years, the following became evident:

- There is no consistent process across planning units.
- Some units had a group focused on unit planning while others did not.
- In some units an individual other than the Vice President or Provost was responsible for the planning process.
- Some units had a formal planning meeting two to three times per year while others did not.
- In some units the communication about unit planning was not widely shared within the unit.
- In some units the head of the unit appears to have been the sole planner compiling documents from subunits into an Annual Planning and Evaluation Report.
- During certain years some subunits did not submit any planning and evaluation documents for the final report.

II. Proposed Recommendations to Improve the Planning Process at NOVA
Based on the findings of the Institutional Effectiveness Audit and the survey of Administrative Council members, the following recommendations are proposed to improve the planning process at the unit level:

- Having unit members in addition to the Vice President or Provost participate in the planning process helps to create a higher quality report.
- Unit staff should meet every two weeks with planning as a formal agenda item.
- One staff member should have responsibility for formatting and final document preparation.