

# Perception is Reality: At Least in Surveys!

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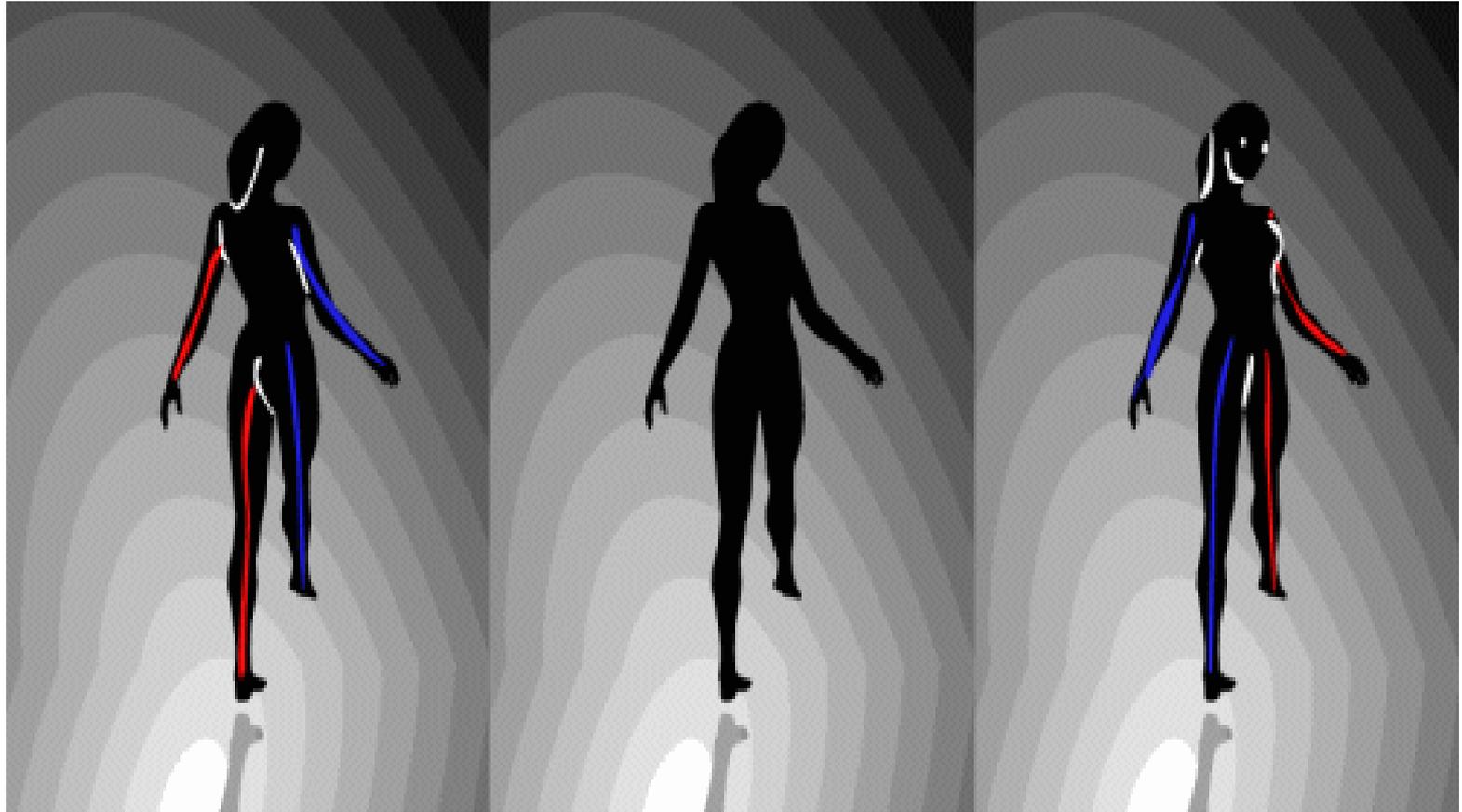
AAIR Conference, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012

## Bridge of Doom???



## Bridge from another angle





# Presentation Outline

- I. GAP Overview and Definition
- II. Applications for GAP Analysis
- III. Examples
- IV. AUS Surveys- Tools of Satisfaction
- V. Survey Analysis within the GAP framework
  - 1) Positive GAPs
  - 2) Negative GAPs
- VI. Interpretation of results
- VII. Strengths of the GAP
- VIII. Limitations of the GAP
- IX. Conclusion

## GAP Overview-Definition

How can we change what the university perceives to be inaccurate perceptions?

By performing a **Gap Analysis**.

- A Gap Analysis is the process of comparing two things in order to determine the difference or “gap” that exists between them.
- In using student surveys, the two things usually compared are level of satisfaction and level of importance.
- Once the gap between these things is understood, the steps (time, money and human resources) required to bridge the gap can be determined.

# GAP Applications

- Strategy development
- Quality Assurance
- Project and Performance management
- Forecasting and budgeting
- System maintenance and iterative development.

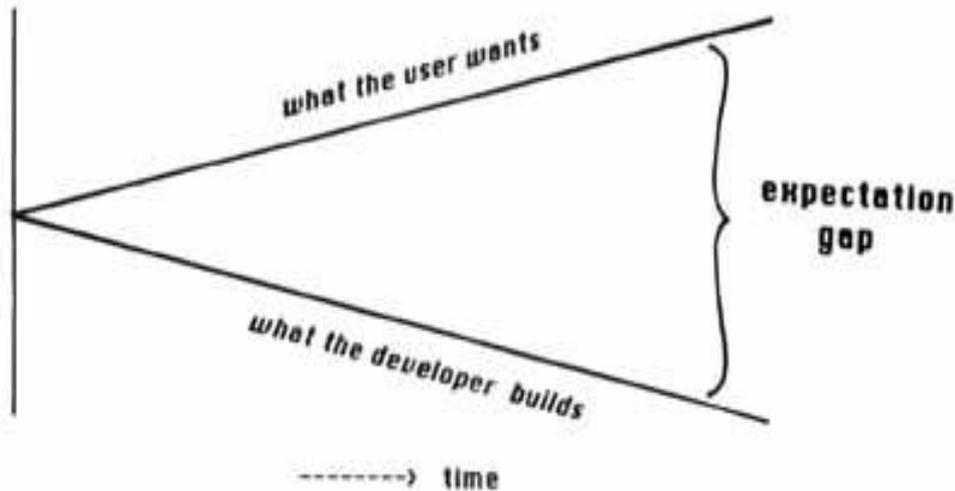
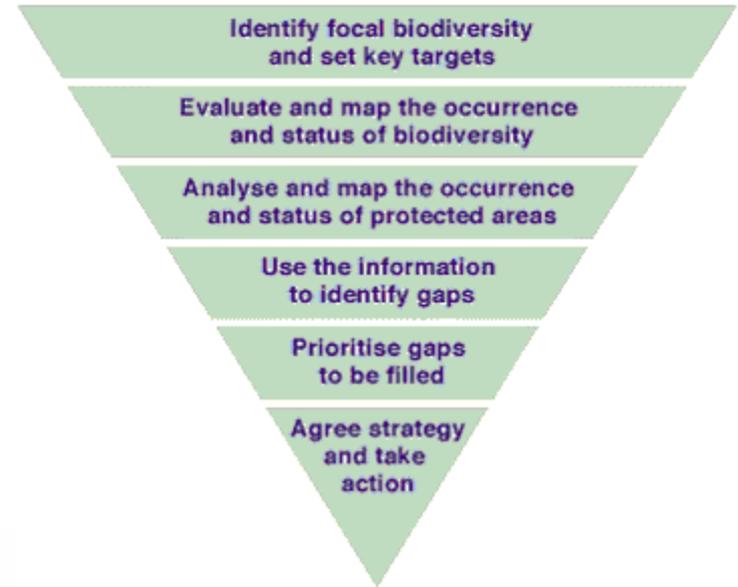
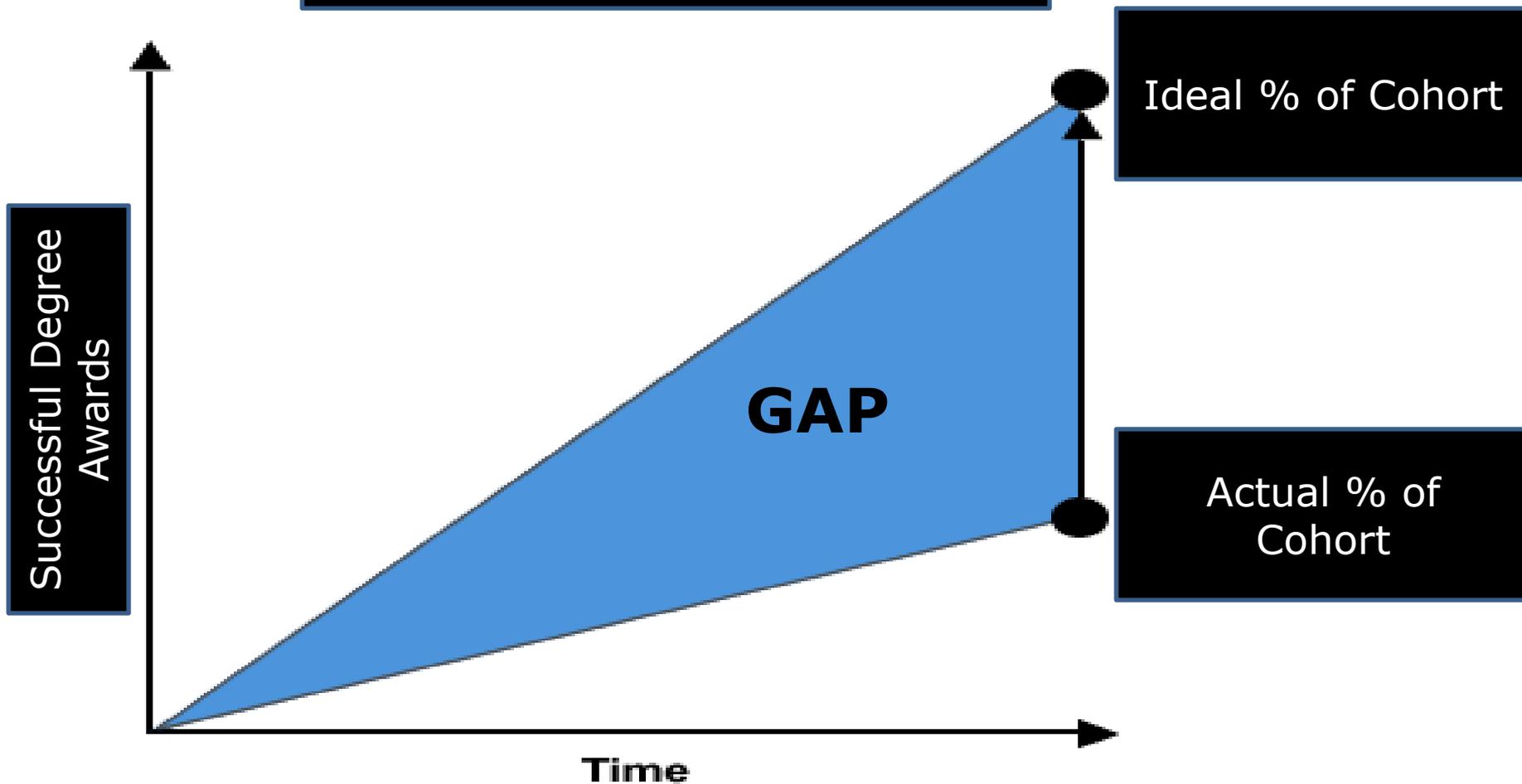


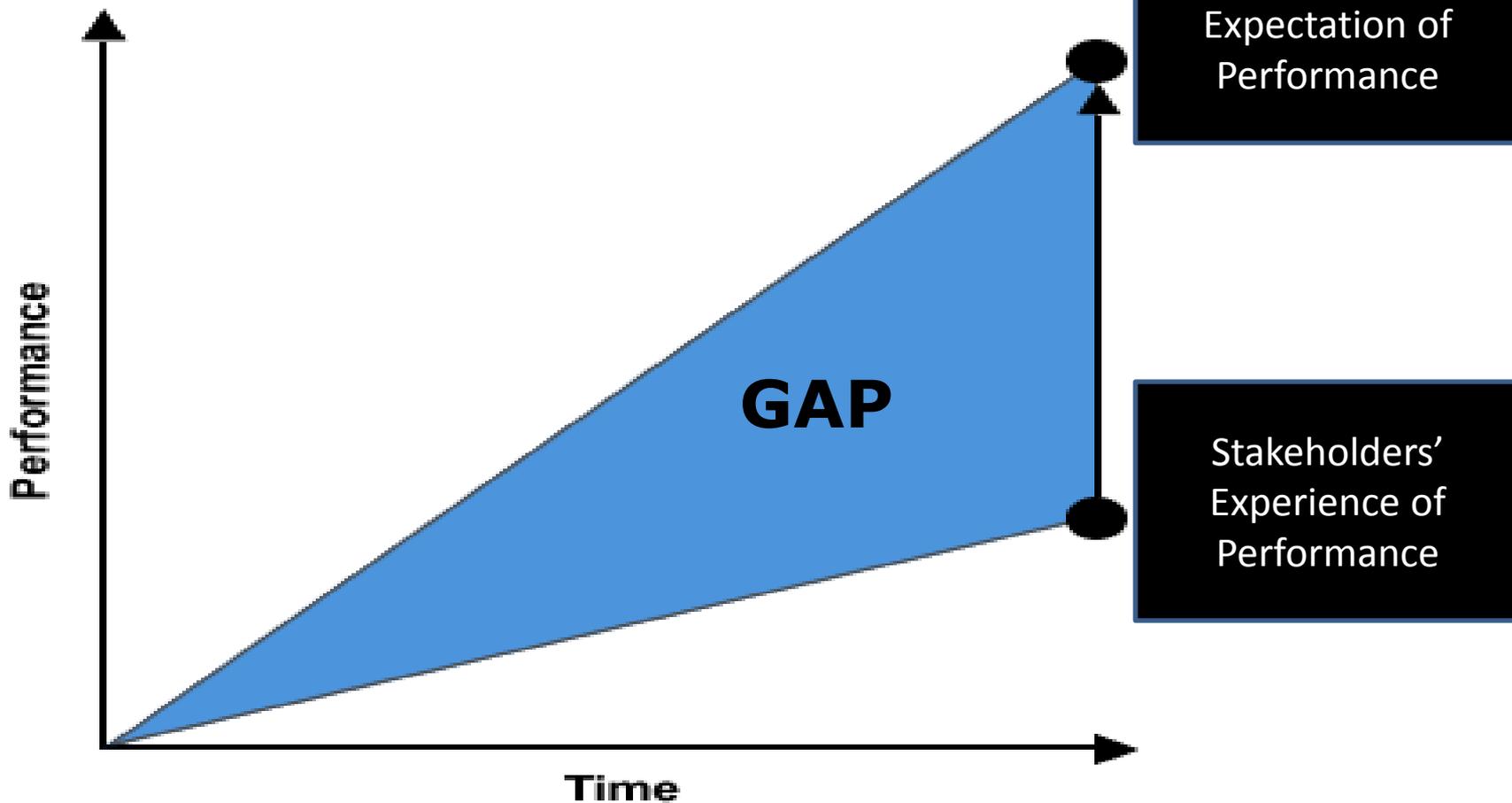
FIGURE 1. EXPECTATION GAP FOR CLASSIC LIFE CYCLE DEVELOPMENT.



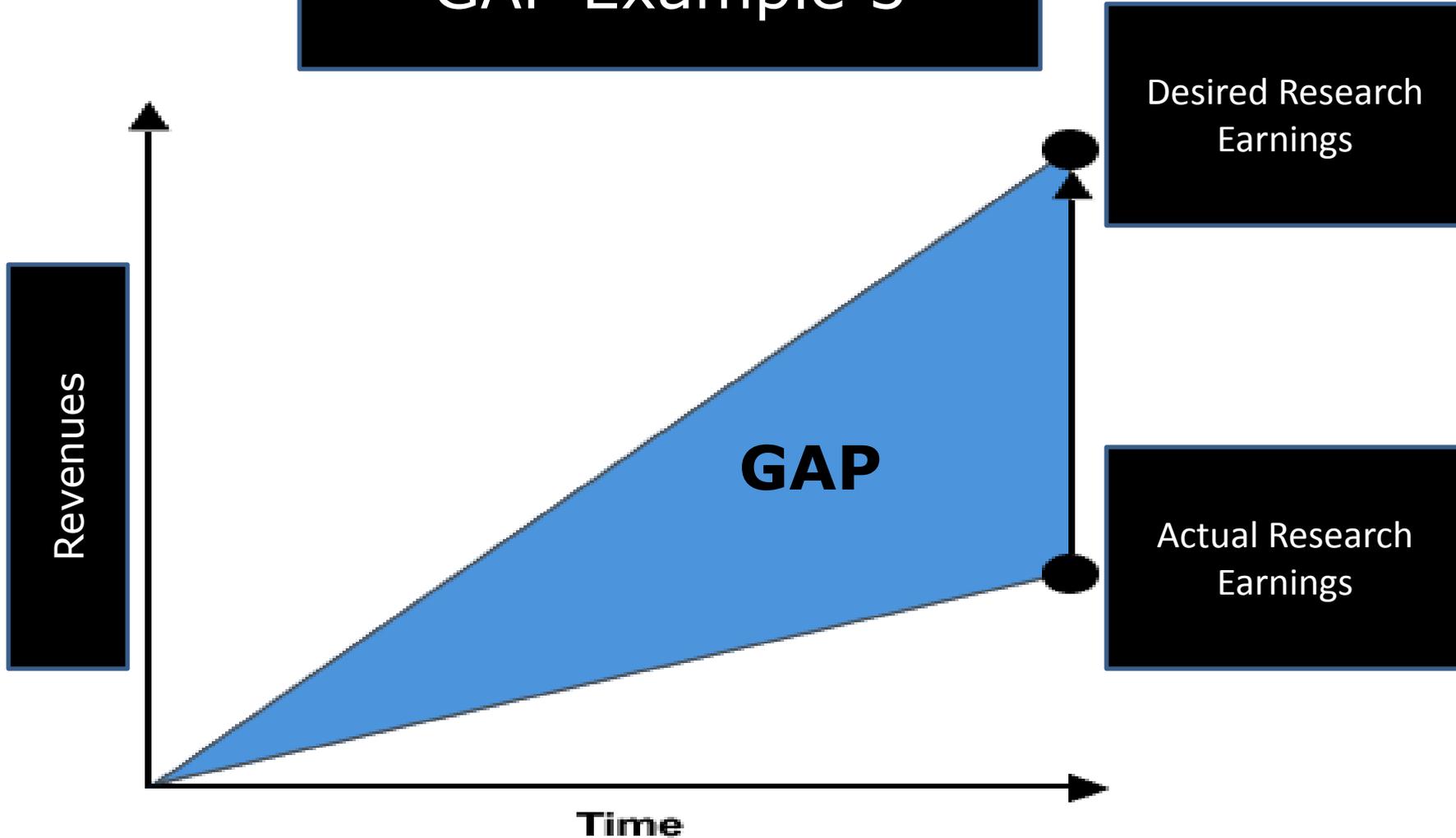
## GAP Example 1



## GAP Example 2

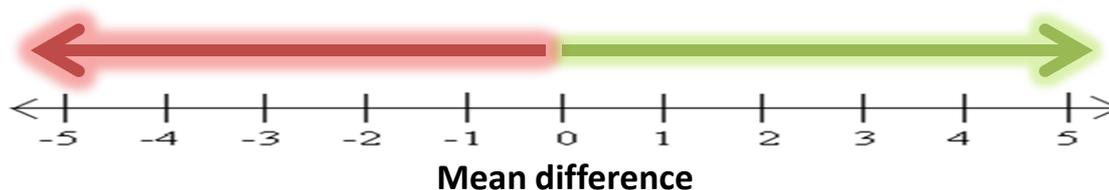


## GAP Example 3

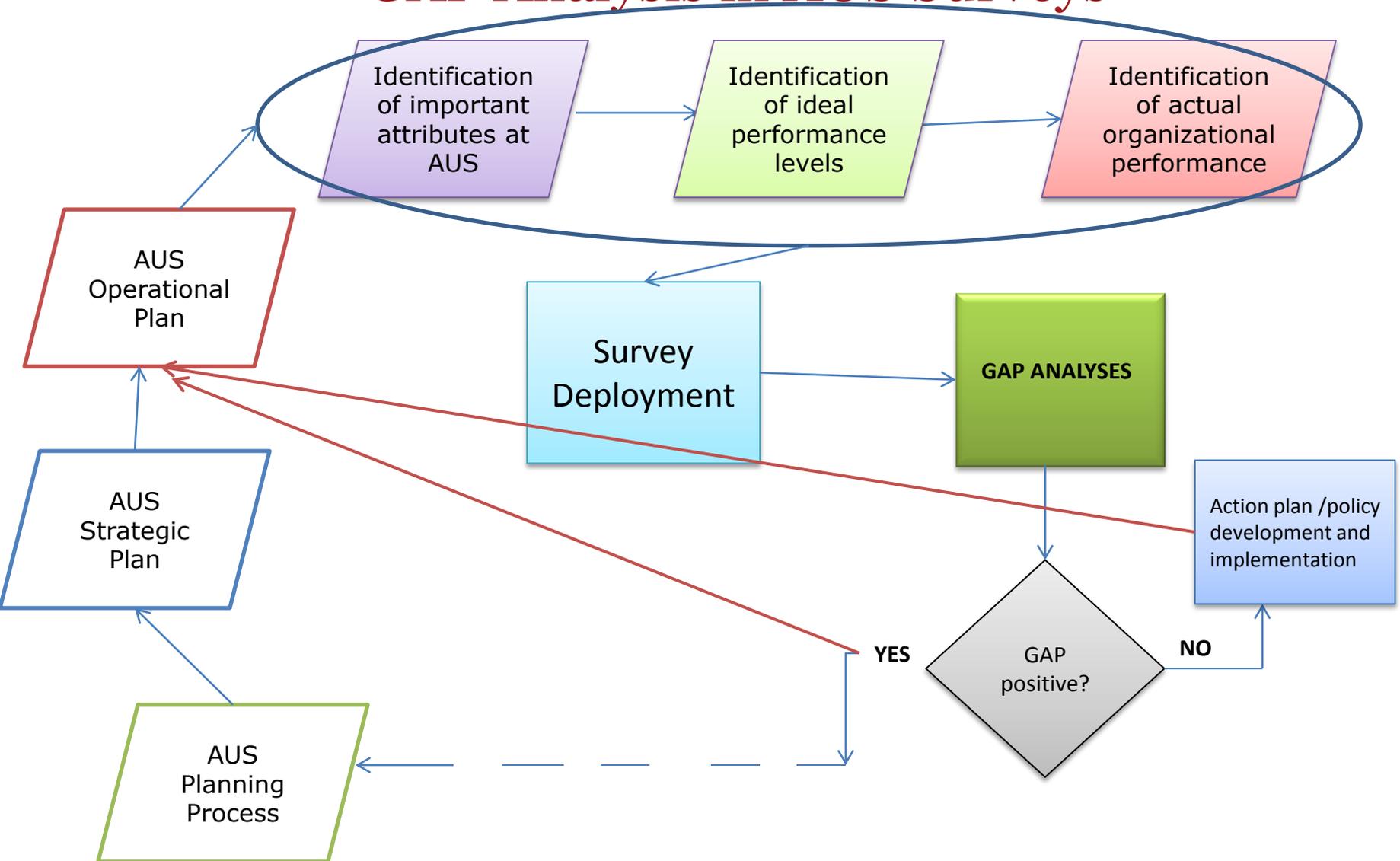


## The GAP Methodology- AUS Context

1. Attribute identification: Identification of the attributes that AUS considers desirable and where measurements need to be made.
2. Identify the benchmark: Once lists of attributes are determined, the mean of ideal state need to be listed for each of the attributes in the list. These means serve as the benchmark against which the comparisons are made against student's rating of the university.
3. Comparison: The next step involves calculating the point difference between the two means. Positive differences indicate AUS is performing better than the benchmark. A negative difference indicates AUS is performing below the benchmark in which case, attention needs to be given to reduce and eventually eliminate the gaps.



# GAP Analysis in AUS Surveys



## Surveys: Tools of Satisfaction

1. First Time in College Survey
2. Admitted but did not Enroll Survey
3. Graduating Student Survey
4. Alumni Survey
5. Early Leavers Survey
6. Faculty/Staff Satisfaction Survey

The information you supply on this survey will be kept confidential. Your name, address, and student identification number will enable university officials to identify your response and to contact you if necessary. The data you supply will be used for research purposes and will not be individually listed on any report. If, however, any question requests information that you do not wish to provide, feel free to omit that item.

**Please provide the following information:**

Name

Student ID (@000xxxx):

E-mail address:

Home Address:

**Age:**

**Gender:**

- Male  
 Female

**Country of Residence:**

- UAE  
 Another GCC Country  
 Another Arab Country  
 United States of America  
 Other (Please Specify)

Please indicate how important each of the following are to you and then rate your perception of AUS at the current time:

	Important					AUS				
	Very Important	Moderately Important	Neutral	Slightly Important	Not Important	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Faculty respect for students.	<input type="radio"/>									
Quality of instruction.	<input type="radio"/>									
Availability of faculty for office appointments.	<input type="radio"/>									
Quality of faculty in my major field.	<input type="radio"/>									
Quality of courses in my major field.	<input type="radio"/>									
Faculty concern about my success as an individual.	<input type="radio"/>									
Quality of academic advising.	<input type="radio"/>									
Ability of advisor to solve problems.	<input type="radio"/>									
Class size.	<input type="radio"/>									
Flexibility of degree requirements.	<input type="radio"/>									
Semester registration process.	<input type="radio"/>									

**How important was each of the following in your decision to apply to a university?**

	Degree of Importance					How do you rate AUS on these things					If you are attending another university, how do you rate that university				
	Very Important	Moderately Important	Neutral	Slightly Important	Not Important	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Academic reputation of the university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
Availability of a particular program of study	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
Variety of courses offered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
Location of the university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
Size of the university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
Entrance requirements for this university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
Cost of attending	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
Type of community in which the university is located	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
Opportunity for part-time work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
Social climate and activities available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
Racial/ ethnic makeup of the university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
Male/ female ratio of the student body	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
Type of housing available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
Facilities available (labs, classrooms, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					

## Survey Analysis: First Time in College

GAP Analysis 1: Comparison between Respondent's perceived importance and consequent rating of AUS

Question	Frequency	Impt. Mean	AUS Mean	Gap Analysis
Language development services for English as a second language.	1,001	1.79	1.7	0.09
Residence hall services and programs.	1,001	1.9	1.84	0.06
Services of the Academic Achievement Center.	1,001	1.81	1.81	0
Registration process.	1,001	1.5	2.01	-0.51
Career planning services.	1,001	1.52	1.8	-0.28

## Survey Analysis: First Time in College

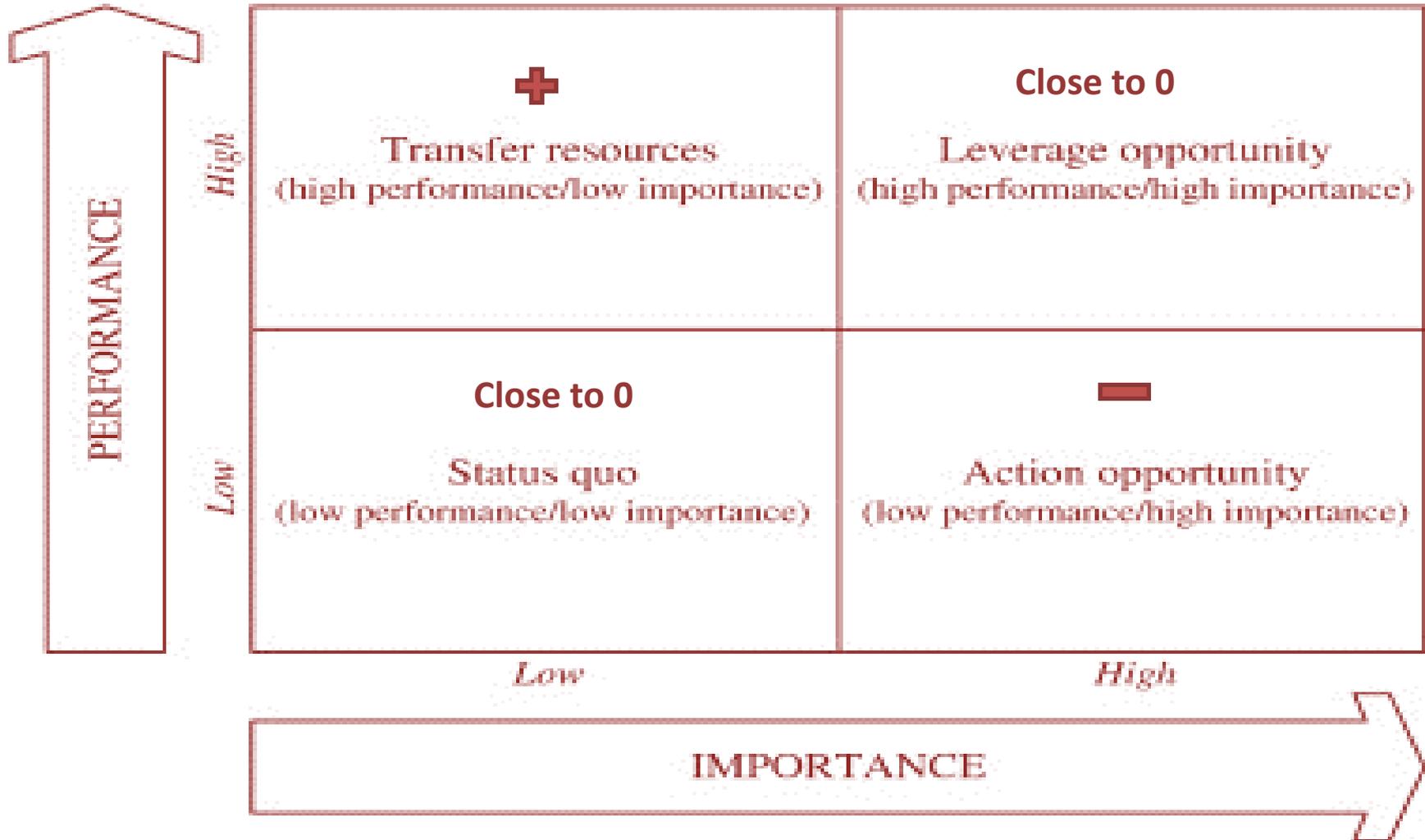
GAP Analysis 2: Comparison between Respondent's perceived importance and consequent rating of AUS and student's university of next choice.

Question	N	Impt. Mean	Other university Mean	AUS Mean	GAP	GAP	GAP
					Impt.- Other Univ.	Impt.- AUS	Other- AUS
Academic reputation of the university	1,001	1.18	1.84	1.41	-0.66	-0.23	0.43
Availability of a particular program of study	1,001	1.27	1.88	1.65	-0.61	-0.38	0.23
Male/ female ratio of the student body	1,001	1.9	2.03	1.74	-0.13	0.16	0.29
Facilities available (labs, classrooms, etc.)	1,001	1.31	1.9	1.51	-0.59	-0.2	0.39
Cost of attending	1,001	1.38	1.97	2.26	-0.59	-0.88	-0.29

## Survey Analysis: Admitted But Not Enrolled

- Unlike the *First Time in College Survey*, the *Admitted but Did Not Enroll* survey attempts to capture the perceptions of students who were offered admission to AUS but did not enroll. The students are asked to provide their feedback in an attempt to uncover why they chose not to enroll and to determine their satisfaction with any interaction they had with AUS first-hand. The survey also aims to identify the student's perception of the alternative institution the student chose to attend, if at all.
- The Admitted but Did Not Enroll survey contains two sets of questions similar to the First Time in College Survey for gap analyses to determine the satisfaction of students who chose not to enroll at AUS.
  - GAP 1: Student's perceived importance of attributes considered in their decision to apply to a college vs. perception of AUS
  - GAP 2: Student's perceived importance of attributes considered in their decision to apply to a college vs. perception of AUS vs. Reality of other college the student is currently attending

## Interpretation of outcomes



## Interpretation of outcomes

- New student satisfaction at AUS is high.
  - All mean responses were either rated “Very Good” or “Good”
  - Gaps in means do not exceed one point difference.
- Admitted but did not enroll students rate AUS higher in most categories compared to the other university they chose to attend.
- Overall, students are most satisfied with the academic reputation of the university and the facilities that AUS offers.
- AUS falls within the two quadrants on the far right. AUS should direct resources and importance to the areas of low performance and high importance from the students perspective.

## Future Considerations

- Compare same survey gap means across years to measure improvement in student satisfaction.
- Compare gap means across different surveys (e.g.. New Students vs. Graduating students)
- Apply Gap analyses to typical student assessment practices (e.g. Student proficiency test scores)
- Apply Gap analyses to significance tests (paired-sample T-Tests)

## Strengths of the GAP Scores

1. A simple tool that serves as a concrete means of comparison to close the gap between student's reality (importance) and student's perception (satisfaction).
2. Flexible adaptation to any process or scenario
3. Guides organizational focus and planning by:
  - a) Quickly identifying key areas of needed management attention (negative gaps)
  - b) Identifying areas of positive growth (positive gaps)
4. Complements other performance measures rather well

## Limitations of the GAP Scores

1. May be too simplistic for critical organizational processes.
2. More suited to internal, short term comparisons rather than long-term, external organizational comparisons
3. Accuracy of means due to student perception vs. reality
4. Typical survey limitations affect GAP validity:
  - Misinterpretation of wording
  - Insufficient sample size
  - Respondent fatigue
  - lack of student incentive

## Conclusion

- The GAP is a very useful tool that is assisting AUS with identifying the areas of importance to students and their perceptions before, during and after their student career at AUS.
- The results can be used to develop plans of action and the progress of bridging the gap can be monitored over time.

## Questions & Comments?



Thank you

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