

Planning Definitions and Components

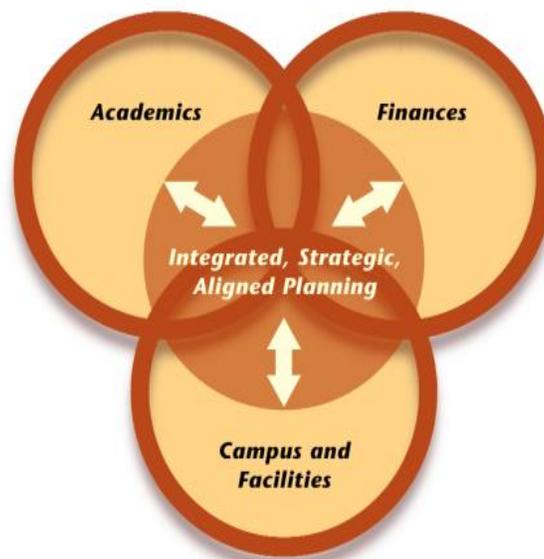
Integrated Planning

Integrated planning is the process whereby all planning and budget activities throughout every level of the organization are effectively linked and coordinated, and are driven by the institution's vision, mission, and academic priorities (SCUP-42 Pre-conference Workshop, Doug Dawson, Art Quinney, Philip Stack).

While planning is a basic responsibility of all leaders and managers, much can be overlooked if not viewed from an integrated perspective. Integrated planning is the linking of vision, priorities, people, and the physical institution in a flexible system of evaluation, decision-making and action. It shapes and guides the entire organization as it evolves over time and within its community.

Figure 2.1

Integrated, Strategic, Aligned Planning



Source: SCUP Planning Institutes.

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning (SP) is a means of establishing major directions for the future. Through SP, resources are concentrated in a limited number of major directions in order to maximize benefits to stakeholders – those we exist to serve. Those stakeholders include students, taxpayers, county and state funding agencies, and society, as well as internal stakeholders such as faculty and staff. SP provides the basis for all other planning. It is intended to convey to the stakeholders the thrust and nature of the institution.

Operational Planning

Operational planning primarily affects the day-to-day implementation of strategic decisions. While strategic decisions usually have longer-term implications, operational decisions **usually** have immediate (less than one year) or incremental (year 1, year 2, etc.) implications.

Operational planning assumes much more detailed planning regarding what, when and by whom activities will be accomplished. Types of operational plans are: Academic Plan, Technology Plan, Master Plan (facilities), Sustainability Plan, Enrollment Management Plan.

(Facilities) Master Plan

A Master Plan is a document that describes an overall physical (facilities) development concept through maps and narrative. The Facilities Master Plan documentation reflects a strategy to provide the facilities that support the college's mission.

PARTS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Vision Statement

All strategic plans involve a vision statement. A vision statement is a compelling, conceptual image of the desired future. The vision serves as a focal point for the institution.

A vision should inspire and challenge.

- ✚ It is a critical ingredient for change.
- ✚ It represents a global, continual purpose.
- ✚ It electrifies and invigorates.
- ✚ It is the ultimate standard toward which all progress is measured.
- ✚ Its structure is less important than its affect on the values and behaviors.

Vision Criteria:

- Brief and memorable
- Inspiring and challenging
- Descriptive of the ideal
- Appealing to employees, customers and stakeholders
- Descriptive of future service levels
- Idealistic, standing above the commonplace
- Enduring

Mission Statement

- ✚ Declares organizational purpose
- ✚ Who we are
- ✚ Distinctiveness
- ✚ Values & Culture

Mission Criteria:

- Succinct Can you say it in one breath?
- Meaningful Does it say anything of substance?
- Distinctive Can the same be said of your competition?
- Motivational Does it make you want to come to work?

Core Values

Core values are those values we hold which form the foundation on which we perform work and conduct ourselves. For example: Excellence is a value. Curriculum, assessment, shared vision and mission are not values, they can be *valued*.

Strategic Directions

Strategic directions emanate from the “strategic thinking” phase of the process. They are an outgrowth of the environmental scanning, mission review, SWOT analysis, and assumptions that evolve. They identify the critical directions the college desires to pursue in a more general and overarching nature.

Goals

Goals provide a framework for more detailed levels of planning. Goals are more specific than the mission statement, but remain general enough to stimulate creativity and innovation. Goals indicate the general changes that will take place. Goals describe the “to be” state. (SMART Goals – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound.) A baseline might need to be established in order to measure progress.

Criteria:

- ◆ Goals are in harmony with and clarify the vision and processes.
- ◆ Goals tend to remain essentially unchanged until there is a shift in the environment in which they were created or the desired outcome has been achieved.
- ◆ Goals encompass a relatively long period. If a goal can be accomplished in fewer than three years, it may be an objective.
- ◆ Goals address the gaps between the current and the desired level of service.
- ◆ Goals are challenging, but realistic and achievable.

Objectives

Objectives are the next level down from a goal and provide a more detailed level of planning.

Strategies

Strategies, sometimes referred to as action steps, are statements of what steps will be taken to accomplish the goal.

TOOLS UTILIZED IN DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC PLAN

During the Strategic Thinking phase of the planning process a large amount of information and data is collected through focus groups, interviews (both internal and external), surveys, and selected readings. This information is then analyzed in a variety of ways.

PEST Analysis

A PEST analysis is a technique that looks at the political, economic, social, and technological factors. It is often done prior to a SWOT analysis. The PEST factors combined with external micro environmental factors can be classified as opportunities and threats in a SWOT analysis.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT is a technique for gathering information for the strategic planning processes. SWOT information (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) provides data to accurately determine current performance. SWOT information provides a foundation for effectively and intelligently setting goals and priorities and making key decisions for the group's future.

Strengths and Weaknesses examine the *internal environment* of the community. Opportunities and Threats focus on the *external environment* affecting the group. The external environment can include industry, competitors, economic, social, political and organization-specific information.

GAP Analysis

GAP analysis is a technique for determining the steps to be taken in moving from a current state to a desired future-state.

Questions to Consider when Developing Plans

As we think about planning for the future, we need to consider these **four key** questions which are tied around our vision, mission and purpose:

- Whom do we wish to serve?
- What programs and services will reinforce our distinctive image?
- How do we want to be perceived?
- How will we know we are succeeding?

In addition, the following should be considered:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be in the future?
- What will we do to get to our desired future?
- How will we measure our progress along the way?

PLANNING, BUDGET AND ASSESSMENT INTEGRATION

Every effort must be made to ensure that processes work together (integration) and support each other. Progress needs to be assessed in terms of how it is helping toward achieving what we set out to accomplish and improve those areas that are not working properly.

Good practices always include budget considerations (integration) when conducting strategic planning. Strategic plans chart a direction, while the budget provides the resources to implement the plans. A strategic plan that ignores fiscal reality will not be realized. Conversely, resource allocation without strategic thinking is shortsighted and will be unresponsive to future conditions. Strategic planning is especially important with long-term budgeting since resource needs must be anticipated years in advance.

Strategic planning guides the budget process. It establishes priorities and affords an opportunity to reevaluate existing allocations of funds. Strategy steps (action steps) are developed that detail what will be accomplished to achieve goals and objectives each year. These strategies, together with outcome measures provide the strongest links between the operating and capital outlay budgets.

Planning and budgeting are interactive. The assessment component of the strategic planning process is valuable in identifying trends, demand factors and strategic issues to support budget development. Assumptions about available resources affect what can be achieved and help set priorities for resource allocation.

Current approaches to measurement (assessment):

- **Benchmarking:** When organizations want to improve their performance, they *benchmark*. That is, they compare and measure themselves against identified ‘peers’ – both a realistic list of similar institutions, as well as “wannabes” or aspirational peers – those one step up whom we can realistically compete with if we’re smart. Internal benchmarking can be done as long as the campus understands and basically buys the measures.
- **Balanced scorecard:** This identifies areas of desired accomplishment. It primarily uses surveys and focus groups in order to measure satisfaction, value, people’s perceptions, how are they feeling about your services.
- **Dashboard indicator:** A dashboard system is a tool that allows you to unify your data, build reports and show your results.
- **Key performance indicator:** A KPI is a quantifiable measurement, agreed to beforehand, that reflects the critical success factors of an organization.
- **Critical success factor:** This is the numerical representation of what you aspire to be that allows you to identify points that are of particular importance, measurable and concrete. For example, 5% more of something. Done at institutional level and unit level.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Institutional effectiveness is the systematic, explicit, and documented process of measuring performance against mission in all aspects of an institution.

When assessing institutional effectiveness, Middle States looks for:

1. Developing clearly articulated written statements, expressed in observable terms, of key institutional and unit-level goals that are based on the involvement of the institutional community. For example: MCC will increase completion rates to 30% by 2015.
2. Designing intentional objectives or strategies to achieve those goals.
3. Assessing achievement of those key goals, and
4. Using the results of those assessments to improve programs, with appropriate links to the institution's ongoing planning and resource allocation processes (**Integrated Planning**). (*Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education and Requirements of Affiliation*).

The effectiveness of an institution rests upon the contribution that each of the institution's programs and services make toward achieving the goals of the institution as a whole.