

Best Practices in Strategic Planning

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In the following report, Hanover Research examines best practices followed by institutions of higher education when setting strategic goals and developing plans for implementation. In our review, we focus on strategies for building broad support, ensuring effective implementation, and budgeting and financial planning. In addition, we profile the strategic plans and procedures of specific institutions, and identify common trends in their planning processes, goals and initiatives, and implementation and monitoring methods.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

This report examines best practices in strategic planning at higher education institutions and profiles the strategic plans and planning processes in place at three community colleges, Cleveland State University, as well as the Virginia Community College System (VCCS). Evaluation of current literature in addition to the examination of existing strategic plans and planning processes inform that three key concerns provide a common thread throughout modern strategic planning. Planners are primarily concerned with student recruitment and retention, funding, and student success.

The report is divided into the following two sections:

- **Section 1** examines best practices in strategic planning for higher education institutions. We look at the process used in preparation for planning, common goals and initiatives, as well as methods for implementing and monitoring the strategic plan.
- **Section 2** profiles the strategic plans of three community colleges (Northern Virginia Community College, Tidewater Community College, and Virginia Highlands Community College), Cleveland State University, as well as the VCCS.

KEY FINDINGS

PLANNING PROCESS

- Strategic planning involves: 1) Formulating goals, objectives, and actions steps; and 2) Monitoring implementation, tracking progress, and revising the plan. During the initial planning process, comprehensive institutional research is critical in determining the appropriate goals and objectives.
- Involving stakeholders in the planning process can help build broad support among diverse constituents. Constituents participating in a planning committee should represent a variety of institutional roles, demographic groups, and campus units. In addition to building buy-in, a diverse committee helps to anticipate the future cross-unit coordination necessary to carry out goals and objectives.
- The recommended number of planning committee members is between 10-12 people. These members often consist of senior administrators, faculty, staff, one or two students, an alumni representative, a board member, but committee make-up varies in size and representatives from institution to institution.
- Aligning the budget with the strategic plan helps increase the plan's impact. One way in which this can be done is to redesign the budget request form to include which key initiatives are being implemented with the monetary request.

- Creating a communications keeps stakeholders engaged in the process. The plan should involve more than just publication of the strategic plan on the institutions website.

GOALS AND INITIATIVES

- Ensuring students' academic success, diversifying financial resources, improving infrastructure and operations, and promoting community engagement emerged as common strategic goals among the profiled institutions. Related initiatives include increasing enrollment and retention, improving alumni engagement, building sustainable facilities, and establishing relationships with community organizations.
- Strategic plans usually contains between five and eight goals, with between 20 and 40 corresponding initiatives. The number of initiatives varies greatly depending on the scope of the goals.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

- The plan should answer the questions "How will we know if we reach this goal, and how will we prove it?" A comprehensive implementation plan describes action steps for each objective and the anticipated outcomes. It will also include a time line, criteria for success, assessment methods, the necessary resources, and the person or sub-unit responsible for each part.
- Reporting annually on the institution's progress can sustain momentum after the plan has been approved. This is especially important for strategic plans that have longer cycles. Creating scorecards to report on key metrics and track short, middle, and long-term objectives creates opportunities for measured success at different stages throughout the plan.

SECTION I: BEST PRACTICES IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

BACKGROUND OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning gained popularity at U.S. colleges and universities in the mid-1990s to mid-2000s. During the mid-2000s, increased competition and reduced financial resources led to higher expectations of accountability from government and accrediting bodies, which shifted institutions' focus to objective measures of performance and financial sustainability.¹ Institutions saw strategic planning as an opportunity to adopt business management approaches to issues such as assessing the competitive environment, tracking progress toward goals, and resource allocation.²

Today, just about every higher education institution has embraced periodically developing and updating a strategic plan. Much of this can be credited to statewide mandates and accreditation but, regardless of where the encouragement incited, campus leaders and faculty are increasingly in agreement that a working strategic plan is important to a working institution.³

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The process of strategic planning involves two interrelated steps:

- Formulating goals, objectives, and action steps based on institutional values and mission. This step requires communicating with a wide array of university stakeholders and developing a coherent set of institutional priorities. In order to be effective, the plan should not merely outline institutional needs, but must describe a reasonable and ambitious path that will advance the institution toward its desired state. This latter component is commonly referred to as the implementation plan.
- Monitoring implementation, tracking progress, and revising the strategic plan as necessary. This step requires that the strategic plan include measurable criteria for success, assessment methods, and clear accountability. In addition, it is important for the institution to routinely report its progress toward achieving its goals to all stakeholders.

¹ Fain, P. "Vision for Excellence." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Oct. 5, 2007. <http://chronicle.com/article/Vision-for-Excellence/4138>

² *Ibid.*

³ Sanaghan, P., and Mary Hinton. "Be Strategic on Strategic Planning." *Inside Higher Ed*, 2013 p. 1. <http://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2013/07/03/essay-how-do-strategic-planning#sthash.cz2x4oqX.dpbs>

Before the plan can be implemented, tracked, and assessed, it has to be created. The recommended process to follow in preparing a strategic plan for an institute of higher education is the collaborative planning process.⁴ It is designed to foster buy-in and commitment while representing diverse objectives from a wide cohort of stakeholders. According to Patrick Sanaghan, founder of the higher education organizational consulting group bearing his name, a successful collaborative strategic planning process can be broken down into five phases:

- Getting Organized;
- Data Gathering;
- Sensemaking;
- Vision Conferences; and
- Goal Conferences.

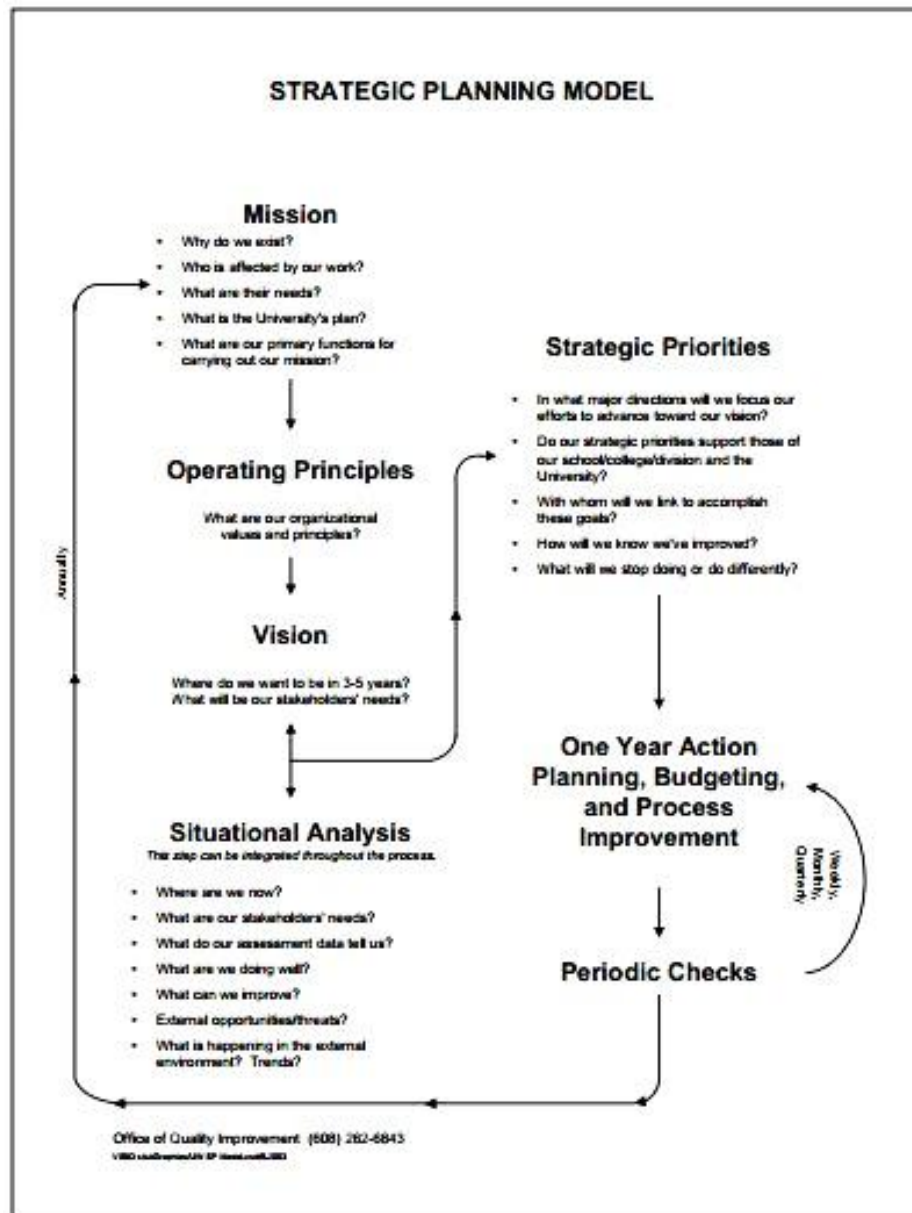
The latter three phases (Sensemaking, Vision Conferences, and Goal Conferences) comprise the formulation of the strategic plan and, thus, can be grouped together. Figure 1.1 on the following page shows the flow from process to process of how the University of Wisconsin-Madison formulates their strategic plan.

⁴[1] Ibid.

[2] Kogler Hill, S., E. Thomas, and L. Keller. "A Collaborative, Ongoing University Strategic Planning Framework: Process, Landmines, and Lessons." *Planning for Higher Education*, Jul.-Sept. 2009

[3] Sanaghan, P., "A 'Collaborative' Strategic Planning Process." 2011.

Figure 1.1: Strategic Planning Model



Source: University of Wisconsin-Madison⁵

⁵Paris, K., "Strategic Planning in the University." Office of Quality Improvement at University of Wisconsin-Madison <http://oqi.wisc.edu/resourcelibrary/uploads/resources/Strategic%20Planning%20in%20the%20University.pdf>

GETTING ORGANIZED

Getting organized can also be considered the planning of the plan. This process involves the establishment of a strategic planning task force and clearly defining committee leadership, as well as the roles of other individuals involved.⁶

Karen Hinton, a higher education consultant, notes that a **strategic planning committee runs most effectively with 10-12 people**. Senior administrative staff members typically serve as permanent members and it is recommended that the president serve as a chair or co-chair of the committee.⁷ The importance of having standing members of the committee cannot be overstated. **Standing members allow for the evolution of the plan and the planning process** and should be involved in more than just the planning. They should also be involved in the plan's implementation and assessment. This allows for the lessons learned by previous committees to be transferred to new additions to the planning committee for subsequent iterations of updated plans.⁸ Additionally, in a planning guide published by the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP), a membership organization for higher education senior administrators and planning professionals, Hinton notes that academic staff and students should be represented on the committee for terms of one or two years. These latter positions may be drawn from organizational leadership positions, such as the presidents of the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association.⁹

According to Hinton, committees which execute poorly typically fall into one of two “traps.” They either believe that they have no authority to affect real change or that they are endowed with the supreme authority over all aspects of the strategic plan – both scenarios do not result in the best outcome for the institution.¹⁰ To avoid these two traps, clear expectations should be placed on committee members from the highest level administrator involved. These professional responsibilities may include: Attending and contributing at meetings, collecting and analyzing information, helping to educate the campus and community about the plan, and dissemination of the plan.¹¹

GATHERING DATA

The recommended starting place for gathering information about the institution is with previously prepared planning documents. Documents from other committees or planning bodies such as capital planning, master planning, academic planning, non-academic planning, and budgeting can be considered.¹² This affords the opportunity to learn from the

⁶Kogler Hill, S. et. al., Op cit. p.14

⁷ [1] Ibid.

[2] Kogler Hill, S., et. al. Op. Cit., p. 17.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid. p. 15.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Kogler Hill, S., et. al. Op. cit., p. 20

past when thinking about the institution's future. These documents can show historic trends in institution priorities and demonstrate both past successes and past failures.

Other sources of important information may need to be gathered through an assortment of environmental scan methodologies. One introspective scan type that can be conducted by the planning committee members is known as a SWOT analysis. This is an evaluation of an institution's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. It will typically focus on an institution's external environment (economic, social, demographic, political, and technological).¹³ Analyzing and synthesizing this information not only gives the committee an idea of the current state of the institution and where it may need improvements, but also builds the capacity of the committee members with regard to implementing the collaborative planning process in the following ways:

- Internal stakeholders witness their own people working hard to create an effective planning process;
- Builds credibility for the planning process because it is led by insiders;
- Allows for the continuation of data gathering at departmental levels; and
- Saves a lot of money by avoiding consultants in this process.¹⁴

With the data gathered, a committee can move forward in assessing the mission of the institution and triaging the institution's priorities for the upcoming planning cycle.

FORMING THE PLAN

At this point in the process, it is important to include larger groups in the collaborative effort. Involving stakeholders in the step-by-step process of developing the institution's strategic plan can help the institution achieve broad support among its diverse constituents. This practice ensures that a range of interests are present in the planning committee and subcommittees that draft the institution's goals, objectives, necessary resources, timelines, and assessment methods. In addition to helping build broad support, relying on a community-driven process helps to anticipate the coordination among sub-units and mission-specific task forces that will be needed in order to implement and assess certain goals and objectives.

Strategic planning university review (SPUR) sessions for campus leadership is the way in which Cleveland State University made their strategic plan an institution-wide conversation. SPUR sessions included student government leaders, faculty senators, Board of Trustee officers, senior administrators, academic deans, the strategic plan steering committee, and

¹³ Lerner, Alexandra. "A Strategic Planning Primer for Higher Education." College of Business Administration and Economics, California State University, Northridge. 1999.
<http://grapevine.laspositascollege.edu/academic/services/documents/InstitutionalEffectiveness/CSUStrategicPlanningReport.pdf>

¹⁴ Sanaghan, P., Op cit., p. 3-4.

other leadership across campus. The purpose was to update campus leadership on the state of the planning process, discuss the strategies developed from gathering and analyzing data, and begin the process for setting planning priorities.¹⁵ Subsequent SPUR meetings were held after the planning committee was able to narrow down initiatives. They were used to make sure that plan kept widespread support and didn't leave out any stakeholders. More information regarding SPUR sessions can be found in the CSU profile in **Section II**.

COMMUNICATING THE PLAN

Once the strategic plan has been approved, the plan's goals and objectives should remain accessible and the institution's progress should be reported regularly. Kathleen Paris, PhD and organizational planning expert, notes that, in addition to making the strategic plan available on the institution's website, colleges and universities may choose to "provide different versions for different audiences, have a one page summary, limit the number of priorities so people can remember them, set annual and longer-term targets and periodically check the targets, and establish time to talk about the plan at regular meetings."¹⁶ In **Section II**, we profile institutions that communicate institutional progress through an annual conference and/or an annual scorecard that contains key performance indicators.

BUDGETING AND FINANCIAL PLANNING

The strategic plan has an interconnected relationship with an institution's budgeting and financial planning. On one hand, the goals and objectives of the strategic plan must be based on realistic financial planning. On the other hand, the strategic plan does not merely react to the institution's budget, but rather drives future financial planning.

First, planners should have a realistic understanding of the financial resources available and the financial consequences stemming from the plan's goals and objectives, given the institution's current and projected situation. Once the plan has reached the implementation stage, financial plans should include "not only a determination of financial requirements, but also the timing and source of funding." In particular, all financial commitments should be recorded in a centralized document so that the allocation of resources is apparent to all parties. In cases where the strategic vision is clear but the necessary actions are less well defined, financial planners can assist in allocating the resources to initiatives that will support the vision.¹⁷

In addition to assisting at the institutional level, financial planning at the unit level can help faculty and staff determine the financial resources for and implications of their strategic initiatives. Effective financial planning should also involve documenting the commitments

¹⁵ Kogler Hill, S., et. al., Op cit., p. 20.

¹⁶ Bulleted items taken verbatim from: "Best Practices in Implementing Strategic Plans." Pennsylvania State University. <http://www.psu.edu/president/pia/advocates/2005/11/>

¹⁷ Brinkman, P. and A. Morgan. "Financial Planning: Strategies and Lessons Learned." *Planning for Higher Education*, 38:3, Apr.-Jun. 2010, p. 8.

made to individual units so as to prevent any obstacles regarding the provision, nature, and timing of these financial commitments from central administration. Finally, prioritizing budget cycle requests related to the strategic plan ensures that strategic initiatives are implemented and builds good will among faculty and staff as they begin to see that the planning process reaps concrete rewards.¹⁸

Second, the strategic plan guides future resource allocation. Assuming comprehensive and diverse participation in the planning process, the resulting document is a representation of a collective decision regarding institutional priorities. In this sense, a budget cycle that reflects the priorities outlined in the strategic plan offers a decision-making rationale to the campus community.¹⁹ Eugene Trani, president of Virginia Commonwealth University, puts it this way: “At our university, the worst thing you can do is not participate in the strategic plan . . . Then you’re not going to get any resources.”²⁰

Aligning the budget and planning cycles can help in determining appropriate resource allocations for different initiatives. Depending on the institution’s conventions, this practice may be difficult to manage. For instance, Hinton notes that “the budget cycle often follows either the state or federal fiscal calendar . . . and the planning cycle tends to follow the academic calendar.”²¹ However, relying on the academic calendar to guide the planning process creates a disconnect with the institutional budget and can create scheduling difficulties over the summer term for faculty and students.²²

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 8-9.

¹⁹ Hinton, K., Op. cit., p.28

²⁰ Fain, P., “Vision for Excellence,” Op. cit.

²¹ Hinton, K., Op. cit., p. 35.

²² Ibid., p. 15-16.

SECTION II: INSTITUTIONAL PROFILES

INTRODUCTION

This section profiles the strategic plans of five specific institutions, including:

- Northern Virginia Community College
- Highland Community College
- Tidewater Community College
- Virginia Community College System
- Cleveland State University

In the profiles, we discuss the planning process and cycle, goals and initiatives, implementation plan, and details regarding accountability, where data are available.

NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) is the largest educational institution in Virginia and second largest in the United States with more than 75,000 students. It is a two-year higher education institute located near Washington, D.C. and hosts six campuses.²³ NOVA is a member of the VCCS.

NOVA's Mission Statement:

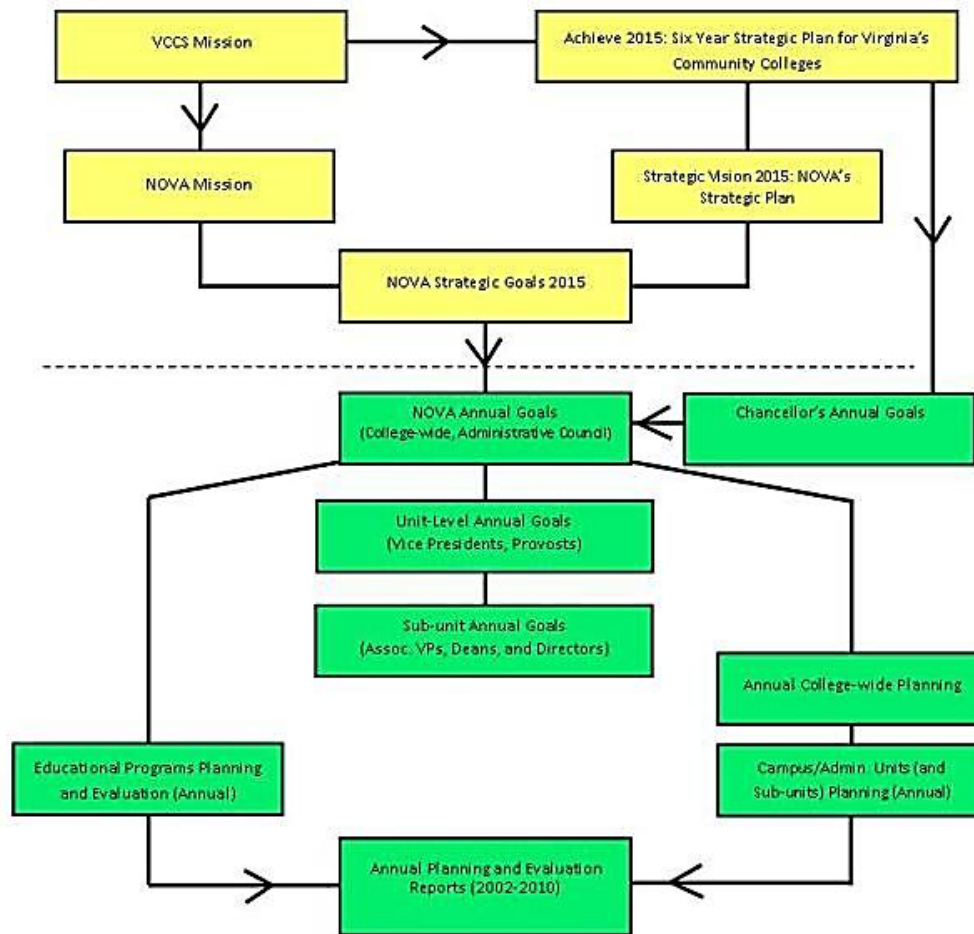
“With commitment to the values of access, opportunity, student success, and excellence, the mission of Northern Virginia Community College is to deliver world-class in-person and online post-secondary teaching, learning, and workforce development to ensure our region and the Commonwealth of Virginia have an educated population and globally competitive workforce.”

PLANNING PROCESS

The NOVA planning process is on-going to ensure integration of planning and budget, critical institutional functions, and to facilitate informed decision making. The current plan, “Strategic Vision 2015: Gateway to the American Dream,” involves overall institutional goals as well as goals for each campus, administrative unit, and instructional program. The institution undergoes through the planning and evaluation process every year but does so to develop a five year plan. Figure 2.1, taken directly from the NOVA website, depicts the planning process at NOVA.

²³ <http://www.nvcc.edu/about-nova/index.html>

Figure 2.1: NOVA Planning Process



The last iteration of the plan was developed in 2010 and followed timeline featured in Figure 2.2 below.

Figure 2.2: NOVA Strategic Planning Timeline

DATES	ACTIVITIES
July 15, 2010	End of the 2009-10 planning cycle. Final Reports submitted to OIR.
July 15, 2010	Preliminary goals for 2010-11 planning cycle are submitted to OIR.
September 15, 2010	First part of the 2010-11 Annual Planning and Evaluation report is submitted to OIR.
December 1-15, 2010	Mid-year evaluation of 2010-11 cycle to be completed with the President.
April 15, 2011	2010-11 Annual Planning and Evaluation draft report submitted to OIR Budgetary discussions begin.
July 15, 2011	End of 2010-11 planning cycle. Final reports submitted to OIR. Budgetary discussions finalized.
August 15, 2011	Preliminary goals for 2011-12 planning cycle are submitted to OIR.

OIR is the Office of Institutional Research

GOALS AND INITIATIVES

Figure 2.3 below outlines the eight goals and 53 initiatives NOVA has developed for this strategic planning cycle. Each goal is associated with between two and thirteen initiatives.

Figure 2.3: NOVA Strategic Plan Goals and Initiatives

GOAL	STRATEGIC INITIATIVES
Student Success	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. College Readiness – Decrease need for developmental courses at NOVA from 54% to 40%. 2. Developmental Course Completion – Increase by 30%. 3. Retention – Increase from 62% to 70%. 4. Persistence – Increase rate by 3% annually . 5. Bridging attainment gap – increase graduation, transfer, and retention/persistence rates of traditionally underachieving groups to equal or exceed that of other groups. 6. Graduation – Increase from 1,200 to 2,000 the number of graduates transferring to a 4 year college; increase by 25% baccalaureate graduates. 7. Career Placement - Increase from 75% to 90% within 180 days of graduation.
Access	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enrollment – Increase from 59,000 to 84,000 taught in credit programs annually; full-time equivalent students will increase from 24,000 to 38,000. 2. Workforce Training – Increase annual enrollment of workforce development continuing education students from 24,500 to 38,000. 3. Dual Enrollment - Increase from 1,800 to 2,600 for dual enrolled high school students. 4. Underserved Populations – Increase by 15% the college-going rate of underserved populations in Northern Virginia by establishing new programs with a focus upon minority males and Spanish speaking adults. 5. Adult Learners – Assess, develop, and implement at least three needed programs for adult learners in the area. 6. Distance Education – Increase the number of students enrolled in distance education from 11,000 to 22,000 students and from 2,000 to 4,500 full time equivalent students annually. 7. Financial Aid- Increase from 6,500 to 26,000 the number of NOVA students receiving financial aid.
Teaching and Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diverse Faculty and Staff – Increase the diversity of NOVA faculty and staff to reflect the diversity of students being served. 2. Center for Teaching and Learning – establish a Center for Teaching and Learning dedicated to assisting faculty and staff in improving the quality of teaching and learning services, beginning with distance learning and hybrid instructional delivery modes. 3. Faculty Salaries – increase faculty compensation such that it is ranked in the top one-third of community college faculty salaries nationally. 4. Classified Staff Salaries – increase staff compensation such that is competitive with Northern Virginia economic standards. 5. Faculty and Classified Staff Professional Development – increase professional development opportunities for faculty and staff that result in enhanced teaching, increased productivity, and improved services to students. 6. New Educational Programs – develop and offer new programs that are responsive to and supportive of the region’s knowledge-based economy.
Excellence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instructional Programs – enhance programs in the arts and sciences, nursing

	<p>and allied health technologies, health information systems, distance learning, ESL (English as a Second Language), world languages, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) disciplines, and specialties within information technology and the biosciences.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Global Learning – leverage NOVA’s strength in serving students from around the world to create learning experiences that build greater global awareness across the college. 3. Faculty and Student Achievement – lead the nation in the number of students recognized nationally for outstanding achievement and faculty recognized for outstanding teaching, scholarship, student service, or excellence in professional accomplishment. 4. “One College” Reputation for Excellence – enhance NOVA’s brand as a single institution with a consistent level of quality and a local reputation for excellence. 5. Campus Distinctiveness – develop at least one focal point of excellence at each campus that will help define the campus’ distinctiveness and contribute to the college’s reputation for quality. 6. Customer Service – provide excellent service by all college and campus offices to external and internal customers that matches or exceeds the benchmarks of recognized leaders in service-oriented industries. 7. Academic and Student Excellence – provide NOVA’s best and brightest students with a coherent set of challenging educational experiences, such as honors, that stretches their intellectual abilities and invites them to set academic and personal development goals on par with America’s best college students.
<p>Leadership</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regional Health Care Workforce – convene and help lead a regional coalition of private sector, government, community, and education leaders that develops a business-driven, sustainable strategy addressing the Northern Virginia health care worker shortage. 2. Access to Higher Education – work across educational boundaries and develop and ensure access to affordable higher education for all Northern Virginians. 3. Educational and Economic Gateways – provide educational and economic gateways for all Northern Virginians, especially those who are from New American families and low-income neighborhoods.
<p>Partnerships</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community-Based Organizations – identify and secure partnerships with key community agencies and community-based organizations that work with immigrant communities and low-income neighborhoods. 2. Local Governments – develop key relationships with those local governments that are willing to invest in NOVA as a strategic asset in their localities’ future. 3. Business Sectors – identify key business sectors to be served by the college and establish strategic relationships with leadership organizations and key businesses and associations within those sectors. 4. George Mason University – strengthen the partnership with George Mason University to create a joint admissions program and advance a comprehensive and seamless system of higher education in Northern Virginia. 5. Nationally Ranked Universities – identify and develop strategic relationships with at least four nationally ranked universities for preferential transfer agreements and the recruitment of diverse and talented faculty. 6. Schools – develop strategic relationships with targeted public schools in the Northern Virginia region, especially those with a commitment to serving traditionally under-represented populations.

	<p>7. National Organizations – develop and strengthen strategic relationships with national organizations where NOVA can play a leadership role, including American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), American Council on Education (ACE), the League for Innovation in Community Colleges, and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT).</p>
<p>Resources</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Operating Expenses – Increase from \$110 million to \$260 million in annual operating revenues. 2. Outreach Activities – Develop workforce development and continuing education activities to generate from \$8million to \$20 million in gross annual revenue. 3. Grants and Contracts – increase annual revenue from grants and contracts from \$2 million to \$8 million. 4. NVCC Education Foundation – increase the NVCC Educational Foundation (NVCCEF) holdings from \$10 million to \$30 million. 5. Capital Campaign – conduct a successful \$25 million capital campaign to support implementation of the College’s strategic plan. 6. Expansion Plan – develop a capital plan to include 1.3 million square feet of new and renovated college space and achieve funding for facilities and campus expansion through private, local, state, and federal funding. 7. Local Government Support – increase local jurisdiction to support for capital outlay from \$2 million to \$4 million annually. 8. Federal Support – maximize the opportunities afforded by NOVA’s proximity to Washington, D.C. and underrate strategies to receive increased federal appropriations. 9. Entrepreneurial Activity – establish structures that encourage entrepreneurial activity that redounds to the benefit of college programs. 10. Out-of-State Enrollment – establish a funding model that allows retention of out-of-state tuition and increase the number of out-of-state students attending NOVA. 11. Tuition and Fees – increase tuition and student fees to rates comparable to regional and national averages at community colleges but not exceeding half of the average cost to attend a public four-year institution. 12. Student Centers – establish Student Centers on each campus to increase student engagement. 13. Administrative and Financial Support Services – provide infrastructure resource allocations for effective operation of college and campus services commensurate with the increasing demands placed upon them by the growth of the College’s students, faculty, staff, funding and physical plant.
<p>Emergency Preparedness and Continuity of Operations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emergency Preparedness – develop, test, and maintain current emergency response plans that further the safety and security of students, faculty, and staff based on meeting or exceeding the standards set by federal and state emergency preparedness agencies 2. Continuity of Operations – develop, test, and enhance plans that provide for the survival and recovery of critical college functions during emergencies such as building fires, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, or a flu pandemic

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

NOVA employs a “bottom up” monitoring and evaluation technique. Each subgroup is responsible for developing criteria for each initiative and monitoring progress against their goals. Subgroups are also responsible for annual reports which are submitted at three different levels – Education, Administration, and by each Campus. The steering committee and Office of Institutional Research review the reports.

TIDEWATER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Tidewater Community College (TCC) is a two-year higher education institute which serves South Hampton Roads (Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, Virginia) with five campuses and nearly 45,000 students. TCC is a member of the VCCS.

TCC’s Mission Statement:

“Tidewater Community College provides collegiate education and training to adults of all ages and backgrounds, helping them achieve their individual goals and contribute as citizens and workers to the vitality of an increasingly global community.”

PLANNING PROCESS

The institution is under new leadership at the highest level, welcoming a new president as of July 2012. The new president, Dr. Edna Baehre-Kolovani, has made strategic planning her first priority and established a process called Appreciative Inquiry (AI). AI is based on the assumption that every organization has positive attributes and invites everyone in the college to listen to one another’s stories and find themes among them.²⁴ Over 500 TCC employees participated in four-hour workshops to develop over 100 proposals for the future.

Through AI, the college community identified TCC’s Positive Core, or the qualities that they believe characterize the college as a whole when operating at its peak potential. They identified their three Positive Core attributes to be as follows:

- Collaboration;
- Dedication; and
- Innovation.

AI and Positive Core lead the way to TCC’s strategic plan, a five year endeavor with annual planning supplements to keep up-to-date. They have dubbed their strategic plan “One College-One Voice-One Future” and it consists of four main goals.

²⁴ http://www.tcc.edu/welcome/tccfyi/planning/documents/TCCStrategicPlan2013Final082013_001.pdf

GOALS AND INITIATIVES

One College-One Voice- One Future consists of four goals with 12 key initiatives and 34 corresponding sub-initiatives.

Figure 2.4: TCC Strategic Plan Goals and Initiatives

GOAL	INITIATIVE
<p style="text-align: center;">Student Success: Advancement to Successful Goal Achievement</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategic enrollment management system. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create a collaborative partnership between academic and student affairs to enhance curricular advising, student engagement, and other services for students b. Restructure student recruitment and enrollment practices c. Conduct a review of the implications of eliminating late registrations, act on recommendations, and conduct follow-up analysis of impact on student success d. Improve upon the various services provided to diverse learners including military personnel and dependents, working adults, displaced workers, on-line students, dual enrollment students, and traditional high school students e. Utilize cutting-edge technology to support effective multi-directional communication between students and the college community and provide effective teaching and learning tools to improve student success 2. Strengthen college readiness initiatives. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop and implement pathways for high school students to earn certificates and degrees b. Develop and implement a plan to expand placement testing to all service area high schools c. Improve developmental education through the expanded use of technology-enhanced pedagogy 3. Meet the occupational needs of the region for a highly skilled and educated workforce through successful student advancement to goal achievement <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Offer new degree and certificate programs in high demand occupational areas b. Actively engage advisory committees to be a part of enhanced curriculum planning c. Renew attention to post-collegiate placement activities, both educational and employment opportunities d. Enhance services for veterans and active duty military with attention to prior learning 4. Review and refine policies and practices that impact student advancement and successful goal achievement <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review policies and practices that impact student advancement for consistency and currency, and revisit those that are out-of-date and no longer applicable to the current environment b. Identify barriers to completion of credentials and graduation and develop strategies to assist students in goal completion

	<p>5. Leverage the college’s investment of student fees into Student Centers to improve student engagement through comprehensive extracurricular activities</p>
<p>Innovation through Collaboration: One College—One Voice</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capitalize on professional development investments through technology and collaboration <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. As a best practice, utilize technology to share information from conference attendance and other professional development activities b. Utilize technology for discussion forums, monthly newsletters, discussion blogs, chat rooms, webinars, intranet, and video conferences that can encompass community and social presence 2. Create a culture of collaboration and innovation to maximize efficiency and effectiveness <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Research best practices to assist TCC in developing a culture of innovation b. Research best practices to assist TCC in developing a culture of innovation c. Conduct a review of the college governance system with a vision of One College—One Voice and an eye toward a governance structure that is more effectively integrated with academics and better suited for the current environment, both internal and external d. Create more strategic teams with representatives from every campus to address areas of college-wide concern 3. Create policies and procedures that are systematically reviewed for currency and in accordance with one college—one voice <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Inventory existing policies and procedures within student affairs, academics, and administration; identify differences in application among, campuses, divisions, and departments; and adopt strategies to create consistent and unified practices with one-college one voice b. Develop and implement a system to review and audit policies and procedures for applicability, effectiveness, and efficiency c. Implement customer service training across the college to disseminate new policies and procedures and inform employees about implications for students and employees
<p>Internal Resource Development: Internal Reinvestment, Restructure, and Building Community</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invest in the college’s human capital and assess the college’s infrastructure for efficiency and effectiveness <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Implement an exemplary Professional Development Program with offerings delivered in multiple formats to support leadership development, technology training, faculty training, customer service training, staff orientation, peer mentoring, and holistic development b. Examine and recommend changes to the various administrative structures of the college with an eye for currency and keeping with forecasted trends in education 2. Ensure that the college’s facilities and equipment are appropriate to create a dynamic teaching and learning environment <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Invest in the college’s facilities to ensure the physical environment is conducive to teaching and learning

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Develop an equipment replacement, renewal, and investment plan informed by curriculum development and usage
<p>External Resource Development: Regional Alliance and Collaboration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enable the college to make strategic investments through targeted external funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Extend the college’s relationship with other foundations to identify areas within the college that align with their priorities b. Conduct a gap analysis to determine the areas where funding is most needed and target grant proposals to those areas c. Continue to expand the Alumni programs and foster a culture of service and philanthropy among alumni 2. Collaborate with business and industry to serve the needs of the region through education, training, and workforce development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Work strategically with local business and industry to define areas of need and create mutually beneficial partnerships b. Promote community partnerships to encourage support for internships, cooperative learning, new curriculum development, and other community supported learning activities, including TCC staff volunteer activities that support local communities c. Research best practices and recommend ways to link students more directly to employers

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

TCC does not provide information about how they monitor their progress towards achieving their four goal strategic plan. In the publishing of the strategic plan, TCC listed between one and five names of staff members next to each initiative. These individuals may be responsible for the implementation and reporting of each of the 12 initiatives.

VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Virginia Highlands Community College (VHCC) is located in Abingdon, Virginia and is a member of the Virginia Community College System. It serves over 4,000 students each semester.

VHCC’s Mission Statement:

“Virginia Highlands Community Colleges serves our community by providing quality and affordable education, training, and cultural activities through an array of flexible, diverse programs that enable community members to succeed today and in the future.”

PLANNING PROCESS

VHCC plans for five year cycles. Each cycle begins with an evaluation of their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT Analysis). This analysis is reviewed by the steering committee at a retreat. The planning committee consists of students, faculty, staff, the College Board, Advisory Committees, and community members. Annual goals and

objectives are communicated to administrative and academic sub-units which are responsible for annual outcomes assessment. This involves developing, implementing and assessing the achievement of each objective and outcome in order to improve VHCC's programs.²⁵

Figure 2.5 below provides an overview of the timeline THCC followed for its strategic planning process.

2.5: Strategic Planning Timeline for VHCC

PRE-PLANNING—JULY-SEPTEMBER 2008
<p>July 2008 Proposal for planning process, timeline, and budget presented to President</p> <p>August 2008 Kick-off Strategic Planning at August in-service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President reviews successes of last plan • Invitation for Strategic Planning Team (SPT) presented <p>September 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review “plan for planning” and makes any needed adjustments. (Steering Committee) • SPT first meeting: President presents the charge to the SPT and shares his vision. • “Plan for Planning” presented to SPT
DATA GATHERING/ANALYSIS--OCTOBER 2008-JANUARY 2009
<p>Environmental Scanning (SWOT Analysis):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advisory committee meeting, College Board, Foundation Board ○ Community leaders & Constituents survey: employers, business and industry, local government, school board, etc., advisory committees. Send to email list with link and email a letter with a link. • Internal Analysis (Faculty/Staff surveys, focus groups, open forums, and meetings with internal constituents, i.e. PAC, CSSA, Faculty Senate, SGA, Alumni) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review Spring 2008 CCSSE results, Graduate Follow-up Survey, Graduating Student Questionnaire • Review other Strategic Plans from similar colleges. (SPT) <p>October 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWOT Analysis exercise at fall in-service. (Steering Committee) • Meet with PAC, CSSA, Faculty Senate, SGA to discuss process • Develops and/or reviews internal and external surveys; reviews data obtained from early SWOT analysis. (Steering Committee, SPT) • Send invitation and letter to Advisory Committee to notify them of process and what will be asked of them during the November meeting. • Create folder on shares drive with Strategic Plan documents. • Review previous strategic plan and determine if any priorities/goals should be integrated into the next plan. (SPT) <p>November 2008</p>

²⁵ <http://www.vhcc.edu/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=1064>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with College Board to review process and solicit input. • Meet with Foundation Board to introduce process. • Send out internal and external surveys to constituents. • Meet with internal constituents with updates PAC, CSSA, Faculty Senate, SGA. • Open forums held to provide VHCC community opportunities for input. (Steering Committee, SPT) • SWOT Analysis/Environmental Scan exercise conducted during college-wide Advisory Committee meeting (Steering Committee)
<p>December 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final reminders to complete surveys to go out. • Additional open forums (Steering Committee, SPT) • Update internal constituents (PAC, CSSA, Faculty Senate, SGA)
<p>January 2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a report on the data analysis (Steering Committee, IR)
<p>SETTING MISSION, VISION, VALUES—FEB-APRIL 2009</p>
<p>February 2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review data from internal and external surveys (SPT) • Meetings with constituents (PAC, CSSA, Faculty Senate, SGA) with updates. • After reviewing data from internal and external constituents, Mission, Vision, and Value Statements are reviewed to determine if any substantive changes should be made. (SPT or a subcommittee during a “planning meeting” (Feb. inservice?)
<p>March-April 2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes made to Mission, Values, Vision Statements are circulated to internal constituents (PAC, Faculty Senate, CSSA, SGA) for final review.
<p>PLANNING RETREAT/PLANNING MEETINGS--APRIL-MAY 2009</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May College Board Meeting to discuss Strategic Priorities and/or Mission, Vision, Values. • Retreats with Strategic Planning Team and other guests to determine Strategic Priorities (issues) based on the data gathered in the Fall/Spring. (Steering Committee)
<p>WRITING THE PLAN: IDENTIFIED STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, SETTING GOALS AND STRATEGIES: AUGUST-JANUARY 2009</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the recommendations from the retreat, 5-6 Strategic Priorities are determined (SPT) • SPT breaks up into workgroups to write the strategies for the 5-6 Strategic Priorities (4-5 working sessions lasting 3-5 hours on Friday afternoons or two in-service dates in August and October)
<p>INCORPORATE VCCS GOALS: JANUARY-MARCH 2010</p>
<p>January 2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCCS unveils new strategic plan January -February 2010 • Incorporate VCCS goals into VHCC plan.
<p>March 2010</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unveil VHCC Plan
APPROVAL PROCESS: JANUARY 2010-MAY 2010
<p>January -March 2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Planning Team will review the work of the six task forces. <p>May 2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College Board will review the Strategic Plan
PLAN IMPLEMENTATION
<p>May -July 2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Strategic Plan informs budget planning and is linked to WEAVE plans for 2010-2011.

GOALS AND INITIATIVES

Figure 2.6 represents the five goals for “Strategic Plan: 2010-2015” with 19 corresponding initiatives.

Figure 2.6: VHCC Strategic Plan Goals and Initiatives

GOALS	INITIATIVES
Funding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase Corporate Donations/Partnerships to exceed \$400,000 annually 2. Increase “New” Grants to average 2 million annually 3. Increase Private Donations to exceed \$400,000 annually 4. Become Capital Campaign Ready by the end of 2015
Course Offerings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop guidelines for developing and evaluating online courses by December 2010 2. Evaluate productivity of all VHCC degree, diploma, and certificate programs by August 2012 3. Increase courses taught via distance education by at least 1 additional online or hybrid course from each division by fall 2012 and a 20% increase by 2015 4. Create and implement at least five new degree, diploma, career studies, or certificate programs by August 2015
Staffing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adjust staffing levels to better reflect industry standards and better meet the College’s needs 2. Maintain and enhance the quality of faculty, staff and administration
Student Success	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase student engagement in out-of-class activities by 2% 2. Increase the number of students employed in their field by 2% beginning in 2010-11 academic year 3. Increase retention of students from developmental courses to gatekeeper courses in English and mathematics by 10% 4. Increase retention of curricular students by cohort beginning in each fall term by 2% through graduation 5. Increase the transfer rate of Associates of Arts and Science Degree students matriculating to a 4 year college by the fall semester following their last completed semester at VHCC by 3% each year of the strategic

	plan
Facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Renovate the Learning Resources Center 2. Construction or Lease of a Nursing/Allied Health/Physical Education/Wellness Center facility to house health related programs 3. Construction / Lease of a Workforce Training Center facility by 2012 for Workforce Development 4. Provide motorcycle riding course

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

In order to achieve maximum accountability, the VHCC strategic planning team established six task forces, each with six to seven members. There is one task force for each of the five goals in the strategic plan as well as a sixth, which focuses on the mission and vision of VHCC. The steering committee is headed by the President, who remains very involved in the process, and contains six standing members with 14 supporting members (20 total members).

VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) has oversight over 23 community colleges and 40 campuses in Virginia. The System serves just about a quarter million students with an additional 170,000 students in workforce development services and noncredit courses.²⁶

Mission Statement and Preamble:

“To contribute to the economic and civic vitality of the Commonwealth and its international competitiveness, Virginia’s Community Colleges commit to increasing access to affordable education and training for more individuals so they acquire the knowledge”

The VCCS established five goals that are disseminated to its 23 statewide community colleges. The goals are for the system as a whole. The planning task force is made up of representatives from both the system office and community colleges throughout the system. The current co-chairs are the presidents of Blue Ridge Community College and Tidewater Community College. The task force and VCCS’s Chancellor DuBois make listening tours to member institutions in the system as part of the data gathering process to prepare for the next planning session. Figure 2.7 on the following page represents the five goals and corresponding initiatives of the “Achieve 2015” plan.

²⁶“Virginia Community College System” from Wikipedia.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Community_College_System

Figure 2.7: Goals and Initiatives, Achieve 2015

GOAL	INITIATIVE
Access	Increase the number of individuals who are educated and trained by Virginia's Community Colleges by 50,000 to an annual total of 423,000, with emphasis on increasing the number from underserved populations by at least 25,000 individuals.
Affordability	Maintain tuition and fees at less than half of the comparable cost of attending Virginia's public four-year institutions, and increase the annual number of students who receive financial assistance through grants and scholarships by 36,000.
Student Success	Increase the number of students graduating, transferring, or completing a workforce credential by 50%, including increasing the success of students from underserved populations by 75%.
Workforce	Double the annual number of employers provided training and services to 10,000, with a particular focus on high-demand occupational fields
Resources	Raise at least \$550 million in cumulative gifts and grants to support the mission of Virginia's Community Colleges.

CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

Hanover chose to profile Cleveland State University (CSU), a four-year, public institution located in Cleveland, Ohio, based on the vast amount of information available regarding its strategic plan development, as well as its use in numerous scholarly articles pertaining to the strategic planning process. It is often used as an exemplary model of how to develop and implement a successful strategic plan.

In 2002, CSU began the process of developing a strategic plan. The initial committee was charged with developing a planning process that would meet the following criteria:

- Include broad involvement
- Be consistent with the university's new vision
- Work in concert with the metropolitan community
- Link goals with budget and review processes
- Specify outcomes for each goal to measure progress
- Allow units to align their plans with the university plan
- Provide regular communication about the planning process²⁷

In fall 2004, the Faculty Senate and the university president approved a three-year planning and implementation framework. The planning component of this framework lasted roughly 16 months, from the spring of 2005 until September 2006, when the planning committee submitted its plan for approval by the Faculty Senate, the administration, and the Board of

²⁷ Bulleted items taken verbatim from: Kogler Hill, S., Op cit., p. 17

Trustees. The final plan, “Vision Unlimited,” spanned five years and included six goals and 20 strategies. The plan included 147 specific tactics to accomplish the goals laid out in the plan.²⁸

In Figure 2.8, we describe the stages of the strategic planning process at CSU, including the timeline. CSU relied on surveys, interviews, and department/unit reports to collect information from these constituencies to aid the steering committee. In addition, CSU has established an iterative planning process that periodically reviews and updates its institutional goals, strategies, and tactics according to internal and external factors,²⁹ led by the planning committee, which is a permanent committee with rotating membership.³⁰

Figure 2.8: CSU Strategic Planning Process

DATE	STAGE OF PROCESS	DESCRIPTION
Spring/ Summer 2005	CSU forms the University Strategic Planning Committee (USPC)	USPC consisted of 10 voting members and two ex-officio members. Of the voting members, five were faculty selected by the Faculty Senate and five were senior university leaders appointed by the president. One ex-officio member was the vice provost of planning, assessment, and information resource management. The second exofficio member was a student representative
		Tasks: Developed mission and operating principles. Developed planning process and timetable. Assigned liaison roles to facilitate communication with stakeholders.
Fall 2005	USPC collects input and feedback from campus units	All units held strategic planning sessions to answer questions regarding their vision for the next five years and insights that the unit could offer the university.
		Tasks: Developed process for campus-wide strategic planning sessions at department/unit level and at college/division level. Qualitatively analyzed 75 department/unit reports and 16 college/division reports. Based on results, prepared preliminary report on suggested strategies and tactics. Planned and hosted strategic planning university review (SPUR) session of strategies and tactics (with student leaders, faculty senators, Board of Trustees officers, deans, senior administrators).
Spring 2006	USPC Gathers more input and revises planning goals	Tasks: Surveyed students, alumni, visiting committees, campus committees. Hosted community leader breakfast. Developed planning process procedures. Based on results, revised strategies and tactics based on feedback from stakeholders. Presented interim report to Faculty Senate and administration.
Summer 2006	USPC finalizes planning report	Tasks: Integrated additional stakeholder data. Analyzed challenges and conflicts. Developed priorities and greatest opportunities. Assigned preliminary measures and metrics for evaluation. Finalized planning report.

²⁸ [1] Ibid, p. 21

[2] “Vision Unlimited.” Cleveland State University, Aug. 31, 2006, p. 1.

<http://www.csuohio.edu/committees/uspc/pdfs/VisionUnlimitedFINAL.pdf>

²⁹ “A Brief History of the Strategic Planning Process.” Cleveland State University.

<http://www.csuohio.edu/committees/uspc/historySPUR.html>

³⁰ “Visions Unlimited,” Op. cit., p. 1.

Fall 2006	USPC submits plan for ratification and begins implementation	Tasks: Submitted planning report to Faculty Senate and administration for ratification. Developed planning process and second-year timetable. Initiated strategic planning at the department/unit level and college/division level by asking each to answer planning questions. Supervised creation of brochure describing strategic plan. Met with plan champions (vice presidents and deans) to determine areas of ownership and accountability.
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Source: Cleveland State University³¹

One innovation in CSU's strategic planning process has been its strategic planning university review (SPUR) session. The initial SPUR session, held in November 2005, was designed to update campus leadership on the planning progress and begin establishing strategic priorities. In particular, participants provided input on four of the eight strategic areas listed in the draft report. Participants included "student government leaders, faculty senators, Board of Trustee officers, senior administrators, academic deans, USPC members, and other selected leaders."³² To ensure that participants spoke with many fellow participants and discussed at least three of the strategic areas, organizers used a "speed dating" approach: "When attendees arrived, they each received a 'dance card' indicating the three tables they would visit and the times they would visit them."³³ The SPUR session received very positive feedback.

In a 2009 article, Susan Kogler Hill, Edward Thomas, and Lawrence Keller, three of the original faculty members elected to the USPC, reviewed numerous lessons learned during the planning process, including lessons in the areas of "buy-in and communication" and "operations and budget":

- Buy-in and Communication:
 - **Spend as much time as necessary to get everyone on board.** At CSU, the process was designed by an ad hoc Faculty Senate committee, with participation by faculty members and appropriate administrators, and approved by both the Faculty Senate and the administration. Although this process took almost two years, it succeeded in part because it came "from the bottom up." Furthermore, the planning process included mechanisms for getting input and feedback from a wide variety of constituents.
 - **Set ground rules for committee operation up front.** CSU did not allow committee members to send alternates or substitutes. If they could not attend a meeting, they had to catch up on what they missed. Another ground rule was sending copies of meeting minutes and subcommittee work products to everyone before the next meeting so they could prepare.
 - **Take advantage of senior faculty members with experience in faculty governance and administration.** Senior faculty members have both institutional memory and an understanding of the academic culture from the faculty

³¹ Table items adapted nearly verbatim from: Kogler Hill, S., E. Thomas, and L. Keller., Op. cit., pp. 18-20.

³² Ibid., p. 60.

³³ Ibid.

viewpoint. Administrative members should also be relatively high-ranking individuals (e.g., vice presidents, deans) who bring a high status to the committee, have a fair amount of decision-making authority on their own, and have immediate and frequent access to top management.

- **Market the plan.** In addition to producing a brochure to help with university fundraising, the committee should market the plan internally by making frequent reports to the Faculty Senate, the major standing committees of the Senate, and the Board of Trustees; sending updates to various on-campus publications; maintaining and updating a strategic plan web site; and making committee members available to attend meetings of campus units to provide updates on the plan and the planning process.
 - **Communicate and collaborate.** The committee held annual meetings with president, the provost, the vice president for finance and budgeting, and the vice president for administration, as well as the major university committees, both academic and administrative. Major committees included those responsible for advising the administration on the budget, master planning, and capital planning.
- **Operations and Budget:**
- **Elect or appoint for three years.** Committee members should have staggered three-year terms rather than two-year terms. Losing half of the committee membership each year is extremely costly in terms of institutional and committee memory. To mitigate this problem, CSU invited former members to subsequent SPUR sessions and used them to facilitate discussion groups to capitalize on their previously demonstrated interest in and commitment to the process.
 - **Establish a dedicated budget for the planning committee.** The best approach is to give the committee chairperson the authority and responsibility for submitting and justifying an annual budget request based on the committee's needs for the fiscal year, just as budgets are allocated for other important institutional functions.
 - **"Seed money" is often needed to deal with the disconnect between the planning and funding of new projects.** In times of scarce resources, it is too easy for administrators to cite "the lack of funds" as a reason for not undertaking new ventures. Thus, CSU recommends establishing a separate fund, perhaps supplied from soft-money accounts or institutional fundraising, to provide start-up capital for promising new programs and initiatives.
 - **Incentivize colleges and administrative units to implement appropriate parts of the plan.** For instance, part of an administrator's performance evaluation could be based on his or her success in implementation. When college deans approach the provost for funding for new projects or programs, they should be required to

demonstrate how that project or program contributes to the achievement of the goals or objectives spelled out in the strategic plan.³⁴

To develop a system of metrics to assess progress toward institutional goals, the USPC formed subcommittees that outlined appropriate metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs). These KPIs would be used in preparing the institution's annual report card. The USPC also interviewed the president, vice presidents, and academic deans to determine "which areas of the plan they would be willing to 'champion.'"³⁵ In addition to facilitating buy-in and accountability, this process helped the committee ascertain which areas of the plan were being carried out and which areas were not receiving adequate attention.

Kogler Hill, Thomas, and Keller outline the following lessons learned regarding CSU's implementation process:

- **Track progress diligently.** CSU designed a system that identified what units were working on which parts of the plan and what the status was of each activity involved (e.g., in-process, modified, completed, eliminated). The committee updated this tracking document annually based on reports from the various academic and administrative units on campus. Such a tracking process is necessary in order to report to the various constituencies on a timely basis and to provide documented evidence to "naysayers" and skeptics that the strategic planning process is indeed working.
- **Ensure that each aspect of the plan has a "champion."** The plan's implementation truly began when the deans and vice presidents embraced parts of it during the champion interviews. The challenge was then to find parents to take responsibility for those tactics that remained orphans. If no adopters could be found, then the plan would have to be adjusted to eliminate or modify those tactics.
- **Provide administrative assistance.** Since the planning committee members will all have regular jobs to attend to, it is necessary that someone take care of all of the background details, including finding meeting rooms, ordering food and beverages, sending out meeting announcements and agendas, taking minutes, arranging for special meetings, and a myriad of other such items.
- **"SPUR" wide participation to keep the plan alive.** The planners had anticipated that the first SPUR session would be the only one of its kind, but then a large number of participants suggested that there should be such a meeting on an annual basis. An annual SPUR session helps keep the process alive and the faculty and administrators actively involved.
- **Understand that it doesn't get any easier.** The CSU planners learned that the process gets harder as it goes along. The fun stuff (gathering the input and creating the plan) comes up front, and the grunt work (figuring out how to implement and

³⁴ Bulleted items adapted nearly verbatim from: Kogler Hill, S., E. Thomas, and L. Keller., Op. cit., pp. 23-25.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 21.

evaluate the plan) comes later. Committee members naturally suffer a certain amount of burn out, and, because of turnover, feelings of group cohesion and dedication dissipate to a certain extent. In addition, as the environment in which planning takes place changes, new challenges typically emerge. However, having an ongoing strategic planning process in place provides the mechanism for coping with such challenges.³⁶

³⁶ Bulleted items taken nearly verbatim from: Ibid., p. 25.

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