An Introduction to Academic Strategic Planning

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Presentation/Workshop Goals

- Familiarize everyone with traditional aspects of strategic planning.
- Provide outline and tools necessary to develop and participate in strategic planning exercises for your unit.
Overview of Workshop

• Why is Strategic Planning Important?
• Key Components of a Strategic Plan
• Leading the Development of a Strategic Plan
• Revisit and Revise
• Key Resources for Strategic Planning
Why is Strategic Planning Important?

- Organizations need a sense of “where they are going”.
- In an era of tight budgets, it is critical to use our resources where they will have the largest impact.
- A team working towards a common goal will achieve more than as single individuals.
Key Components of a Strategic Plan

• Mission Statement
• Vision Statement
• Guiding Principles
• Benchmarking
• Action Plan
Mission Statement

- Mission Statements should be brief statements which describes your core “reason for being”.
  - Often they are way too long.
  - Can you read your mission statement to someone from outside the university, and they know what you are ‘about’?
Match These Up....

- Nike
- Wal-Mart
- Hewlett-Packard
- Merck
- 3M

- To solve unsolved problems innovatively
- To experience the emotion of competition, winning, and crushing competitors
- To give ordinary folk the chance to buy the same things as rich people
- To make technical contributions for the advancement and welfare of humanity
- To preserve and improve human life
Example Academic Mission Statement - Dave C. Swalm School of Chemical Engineering

• The mission of the Dave C. Swalm School of Chemical Engineering is to prepare highly competent graduates at the baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral level. The baccalaureate program will provide a broad-based educational experience that prepares graduates for careers in chemical engineering, related industries, and postgraduate programs in engineering, medicine, and law. All graduates will receive a broad education that will enable them to become leaders in industry, the profession, and the community in the State of Mississippi, the United States, and the world-at-large.
Example - MSU’s Mission Statement

• The mission of Mississippi State University is to educate the workforce and leaders of the future, produce robust research for our state and nation, and provide expert services to our citizens, communities and businesses.
Vision Statement

• Vision - so where are we going?
  – This will tell a reader where you hope to be in the future.
  – These can be long or short depending on your preference.
Example Vision Statement - Dave C. Swalm School of Chemical Engineering

- The Swalm School of Chemical Engineering will produce exceptional chemical engineering graduates who are nationally recognized for their technical knowledge, work ethic, and “hands-on” approach to chemical engineering. Nationally prominent areas of technical excellence will include environmental and biochemical engineering, materials science, transport phenomenon and thermodynamics, and energy engineering. All graduates will participate in a “work experience” prior to graduation that could include cooperative education, summer internships, or work in a research laboratory.
Example - MSU’s Vision Statement

• The vision of Mississippi State University is to be the most respected land-grant institution in the region.
Exercise - Construction of Mission and Vision Statements
Guiding Principles

• What are the fundamental principles that are the same today as they were 50 years ago?
• Principles stand the test of time, and shouldn’t change with different Presidents, Deans, Unit Heads, or groups of students.
Core Ideologies of Visionary Companies

• Improving the quality of life through technology and innovation.
• Interdependent balance between responsibility to customers, employees, society, and shareholders
• Individual responsibility and opportunity.
• Honesty and integrity
Core Ideologies of Visionary Companies

- Service to the customer above all else.
- Hard work and productivity
- Continuous improvement, never being satisfied
- Excellence in reputation, being part of something special
Example Academic Guiding Principles - Dave C. Swalm School of Chemical Engineering

• The undergraduate educational experience will be the top priority of the School.
• Fostering positive faculty-student interactions is a cornerstone of the School.
• The School will focus its research efforts in selected areas of excellence, and will not try to represent all areas of chemical engineering equally.
• The curriculum will be structured to maintain a strong “work-experience” oriented educational program.
• The School will develop and maintain world-class teaching and research facilities, including the acquisition and maintenance of state-of-the-art laboratory equipment.
Benchmarking

• How does your program compare with your competition?
• What are the national norms used for comparison within your field?
• Be realistic in choosing your institutions.
Benchmarking Resources

- National Science Foundation databases.
- Professional Societies (ACS, AIChE, ASEE)
- Major periodicals (U.S. News and World Report, Gourman Report, etc..)
Example Benchmarking Institutions - Dave C. Swalm School of Chemical Engineering

- Peer Comparison Group: Clemson University [Public, Land Grant]; Washington State University [Public, Land Grant]; Auburn University [Public, Land Grant]

- Emulate Group: North Carolina State University [Public, Land Grant]; University of Florida [Public, Comprehensive]; University of South Carolina [Public, Comprehensive]; Georgia Tech [Public, Focused E&S]
Action Plan

• The Action plan is where you describe what you are going to do.
  • It should give details.
  • It should also be measureable - how do you know if you have accomplished some part of your plan.

• It should be widely disseminated.
• Buy-in from all people in unit and above is key.
Example Academic Action Plan - Dave C. Swalm School of Chemical Engineering

• Increase the number of faculty recognized by the grade of Fellow to 3 by 2007.
• In any faculty searches, ensure that 50% of the candidates in the final pool are women or underrepresented minorities.
Leading the Development of a Strategic Plan

- The way in which you lead the development of a strategic plan has to do with:
  - Style of your group.
  - Size of your group.
  - Your preferences.
Leading the Development...

• The Department head needs to take a leadership role in developing the plan, especially the Mission and Vision.

• In large units, a committee may be appropriate for putting draft documents together and getting feedback from the faculty.

• Involve the entire faculty and staff in goal setting!
4 Key Questions

- Where are we now?
- What is our competition doing?
- Where do we want to go?
- How are we going to get there?
Where are we now?

• SWOT Analysis
  – Strengths (internal)
  – Weaknesses (internal)
  – Opportunities (external)
  – Threats (external)

• Look at data used in benchmarking.

• Are we realistic on where we are now? Do we have the data to support our suppositions?
What is our competition doing?

- Benchmarking is very important to aid in understanding what your competition is doing.
- Articles in trade journals, or sessions at national meetings also can show trends and give data.
Where do we want to go?

• What would you like your unit to achieve?
• What is your BHAG? (Big Hairy Audacious Goals)
• I think it is important for the Unit Head to set the tone for this part of the plan.
How are we going to get there?

- Pick important topics which are common to most academic units:
  - Faculty, Staff
  - Facilities
  - UG Program
  - Grad Program
  - Alumni/Corporate Relations
  - Diversity

- Come up with goals in each.
How are we going to get there…

• Be sure to identify resources and who is responsible for getting them.
• Avoid the “we won’t do this unless I get X from the university” planning - while some of this is fine, be sure that your entire plan is not focused on getting more resources from the university.
• Can you tell whether you accomplished anything or not?
Revisit and Revise

- One of the biggest mistakes often made in strategic planning is to “put the plan on the shelf and forget about it”.
- Review the plan annually, and use it to make annual goals and objectives.
- Revise the plan to take into account new initiatives or opportunities.
Key Resources for Strategic Planning

Questions?

More Information: http://www.research.msstate.edu/