

Institutional Planning and NCAHLC Criterion 4: What's Going On, What Works, and What to Look For

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Overview

- ◆ NCAHLC and Institutional Planning
- ◆ Experiences at BGSU
- ◆ Experiences at FVTC
- ◆ Comparisons, Summary, Case Study and Questions

NCAHLC Criterion 4 and Institutional Planning

- ◆ Criterion Four: “The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.”
- ◆ “An effective planning process offers the means to modify goals, to alter or develop programs and methods of instruction, to cope with shifting levels and sources of support, and continually to strengthen institutional vitality.”

NCAHLC Criterion 4 and Institutional Planning

- ◆ An effective planning process:
 - ◆ is ongoing, involving representatives of all constituencies;
 - ◆ takes into account present and projected internal and external circumstances that can affect the institution;
 - ◆ results in a written, annually-updated document that has widespread usefulness throughout the institution;
 - ◆ enumerates annually the accomplishments, obstacles, or other changes accommodated through modification of the previous year's plan. (NCAHLC Handbook of Accreditation)

NCAHLC Proposed New Criterion 2 and Institutional Planning

- ◆ Potential patterns of evidence:
 - ◆ Effective links between evaluation programs, finance and budgeting, and organizational planning
 - ◆ Effectiveness of institutional processes for visioning and planning

Purposes of this Presentation

- ◆ Highlight the importance of planning within the NCAHLC accreditation process
- ◆ Showcase practices at two different institutions
- ◆ Suggest good practices in planning and questions that C-Es should ask
- ◆ Answer questions and share information

Experiences at BGSU

Institutional Background

- ◆ public, residential, Doctoral-Research Intensive university
- ◆ BGSU prior to 1995
- ◆ new leadership in 1995-96
- ◆ new directions, new activities
- ◆ much more interest in information-based decision making and planning

Preparing for a New Planning Process

- ◆ Many people expressed a concern over where the institution was going and how to cope with the many changes we were experiencing.
- ◆ Numerous discussions and background research was done in 1997-98 to try to determine what works and what doesn't generally concerning planning in higher education and specifically at BGSU.
- ◆ The result of this activity was development of a list of attributes of a successful planning process. I would offer the same list as things that NCAHLC C-Es should look for in institutional planning processes.

A Successful Planning Process . . .

- ◆ is comprised of a series of systematic, annual activities, not disconnected five-year plans.
- ◆ Plans don't sit on the shelf for 5 years and the process doesn't coincidentally start up the year before the NCAHLC C-E team visit.
- ◆ There should be an obvious connection between institution-wide plans, division and department plans, resource allocation, and enrollment, technology, human resources, facilities, etc. plans.

A Successful Planning Process . . .

- ◆ receives ongoing staff support from professionals with adequate experience in planning, knowledge of the institutional culture, and adequate time, resources, access to leaders, and access to information.
- ◆ should be grounded in reliable and meaningful information about both the institution (e.g., institutional research, program review, accreditation self study) and the external environment (environmental scanning).

A Successful Planning Process . . .

- ◆ should provide tangible positive results for participants and pose minimal administrative burdens, such as paperwork and committee time.
- ◆ must offer continuity, flexibility and timely consideration of current and future issues.
- ◆ requires regular evaluation and revision
- ◆ acknowledges that it can not capture all issues or solve all problems.

A Successful Planning Process . . .

- ◆ requires active, visible support from the President and other University leaders.
- ◆ should strike a balance between broad-based participation and centralized authority.
- ◆ requires recognition and integration of institutional history, culture and politics, and acknowledgement of the role of established governance mechanisms.

The Role of the IR Office in Planning

- ◆ The IR office supplies information about BGSU's internal and external environment to support the planning process at all levels. Specific tools developed to support planning efforts include the Planning Support Indicators and Planning Success Indicators.
- ◆ The office collects and codifies unit-level planning documents, maintains documentation, and serves in a coordinating role for University planning efforts.

The University Planning Council

- ◆ analyzes institution-wide (internal) strengths and weaknesses and (external) opportunities and threats, reviews and refines as necessary its recommended Strategic Future Directions for the University, and recommends annual priorities to the President.
- ◆ meets monthly through the academic year.
- ◆ is comprised of 12-15 persons who hold a University-wide perspective and who represent a broad cross section of the University community.
- ◆ Members are appointed by the President and serve for staggered two-year terms.
- ◆ is co-chaired by the President and the Director of Planning and Institutional Research.

Tools for Planning

- ◆ The Planning Support Indicators provide information on BGSU's internal and external environment to support the planning process, specifically the UPC's annual analysis of strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats facing the University.
- ◆ web-based with built-in links
- ◆ updated on an ongoing basis by the IR office
- ◆ see <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ir/planning/coverpage.html> for details

Tools for Planning

- ◆ The Planning Success Indicators provide evidence of progress BGSU has made toward its long-term strategic future directions.
- ◆ comprised of reliable, meaningful data elements provided by the IR office and gained from other sources
- ◆ includes trends over time and peer comparisons where possible
- ◆ web-based with built-in links
- ◆ updated on an ongoing basis by the IR office
- ◆ see <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ir/planningsuccess/success.htm> for details

Unit Planning Activities

- ◆ All academic units and administrative offices submit a list of their goals for the next few years, timelines, and benchmarks of success, relating them to the Strategic Future Directions.
- ◆ The IR office collects these, produces a compilation document, and places all materials on its web site, which is accessible to the entire University.
- ◆ see http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ir/unit_plan/content.htm for details

Activities to Date

- ◆ The results of planning activities have been shared widely within the University community.
- ◆ UPC members and executives have been asked to evaluate the success of planning efforts.

Future Planning Activities

- ◆ continue all current activities
- ◆ work with executives, budget committees, etc. to improve both the perception and the reality that budgeting is more closely aligned with institutional goals
- ◆ more closely link university strategic planning with enrollment planning, technology planning, human resources planning, facilities planning, etc.

Experiences at Fox Valley Technical College

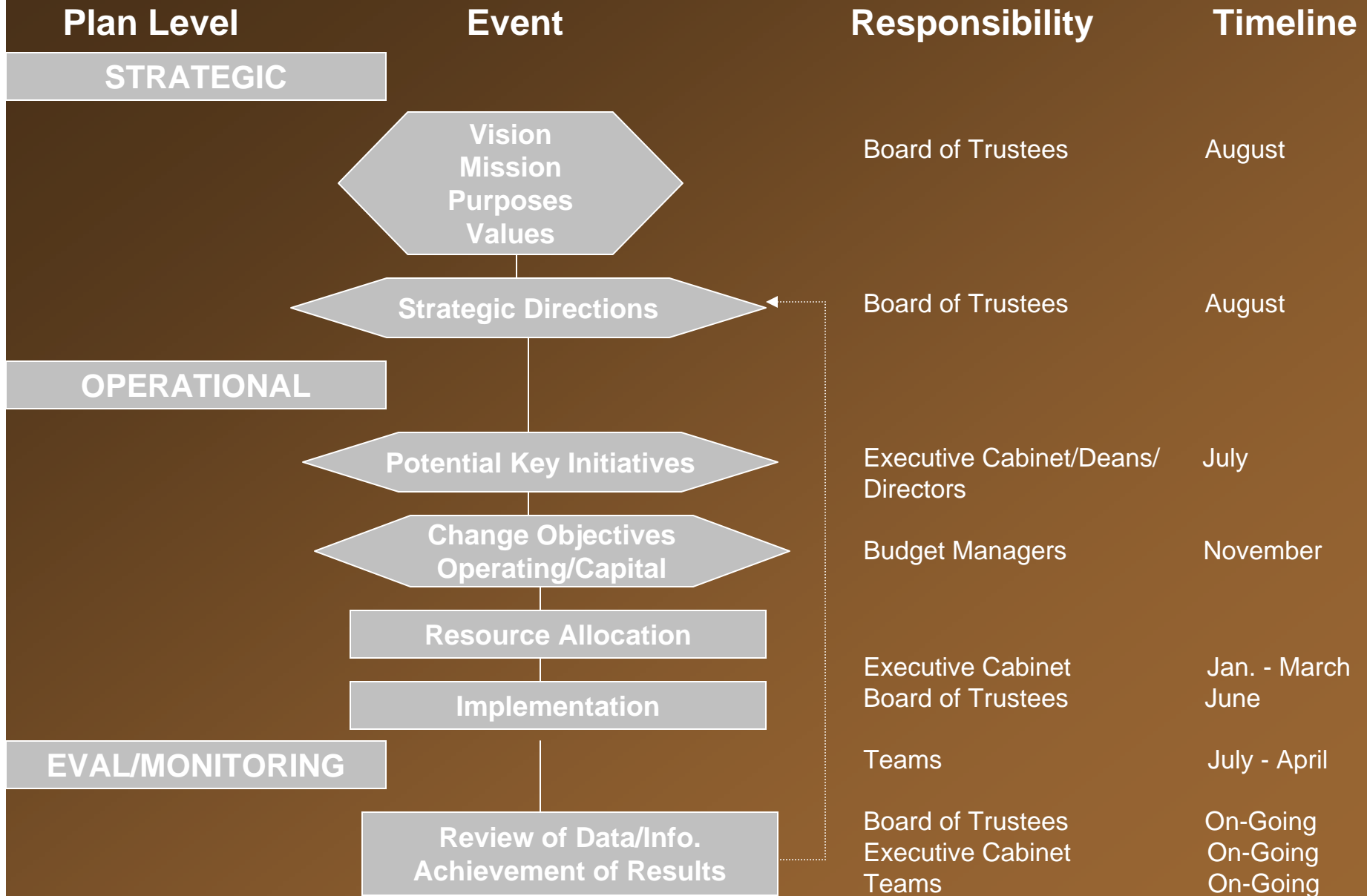
Institutional Background

- ◆ public, two-year, commuter technical college serving 50,000 students annually
- ◆ New leadership in 1993
- ◆ Policy governance in 1994
- ◆ NCAHLC self-study in 1993-95
- ◆ Focus on improving planning

Preparing for a New Planning Process

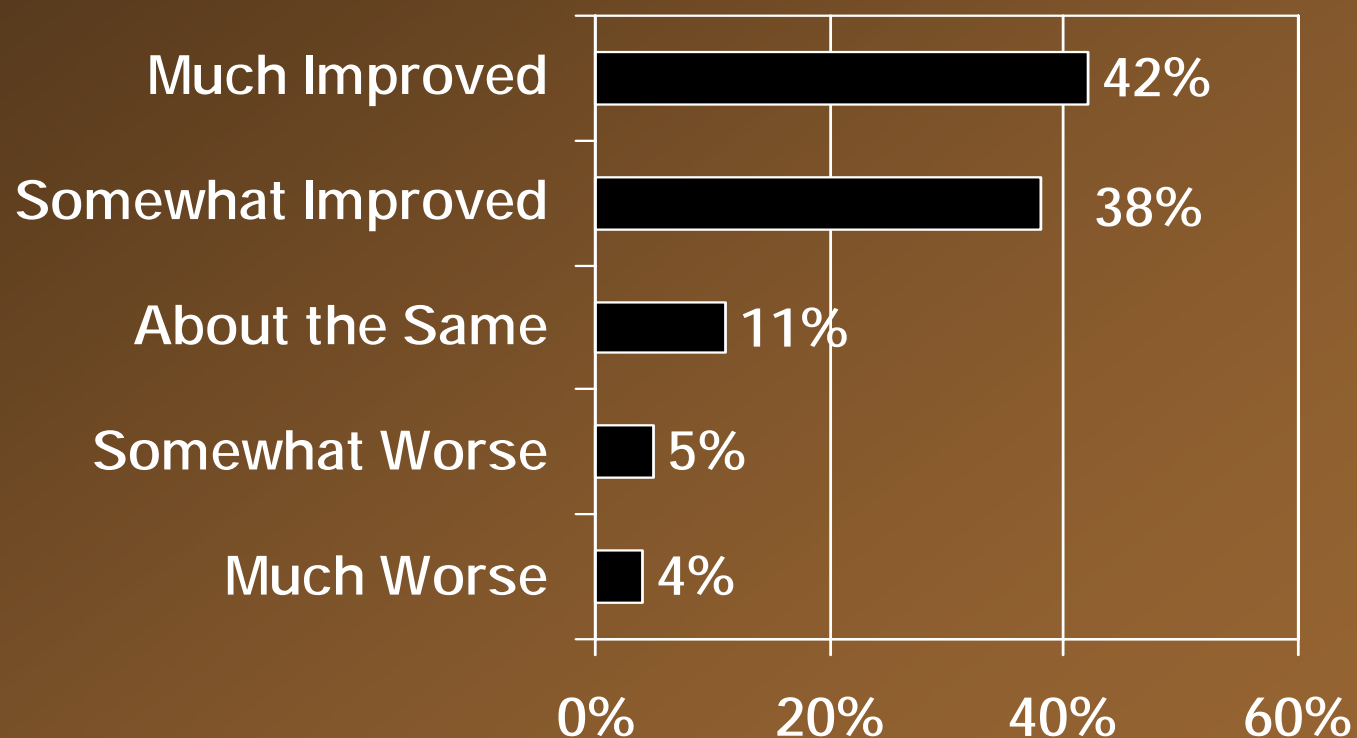
- ◆ Too many strategic directions--67+
- ◆ Lacked environmental scan, other information
- ◆ Lacked orientation/training for departments
- ◆ Unclear which office had responsibility for planning
- ◆ Lack of monitoring of plans

FVTC Planning Process



How has the college's planning process changed?

1996 Survey



Successful Strategic Planning

- ◆ Solicits stakeholder input
- ◆ Includes an environmental scan
- ◆ Orchestrated by someone
- ◆ Has presidential involvement, support
- ◆ Produces mission, vision, strategic directions, values, and or purpose statements
- ◆ Drives annual, operational planning
- ◆ Elements are monitored regularly:
<http://www.fvtc.edu/planres/monitor.htm>

Successful Operational Planning

- ◆ Cyclical, routine process
- ◆ Involves wide spectrum of staff
- ◆ Proceeds according to an organized calendar with deadlines
- ◆ Driven by, related to strategic directions
- ◆ Clear requirements, forms, cost information
- ◆ Based on data re: enrollments, prior plan results, program review data, etc.

Successful Operational Planning, cont.

- ◆ Fair process for deciding among initiatives
- ◆ Plans are tied to resources
- ◆ Gives feedback to staff who submitted ideas, budgets
- ◆ Coordinated by someone/some office
- ◆ Results in a plan and budget for the next fiscal year(s) suitable for taxpayers
- ◆ Is monitored regularly

Role of the Planning Research & Development Office in Planning

- ◆ Proposes and conducts strategic planning activities
- ◆ Produces environmental scans, program review data, program evals
- ◆ Creates planning calendar and planning materials (forms, etc)
- ◆ Conducts annual planning “kick off”
- ◆ Receives proposed plans, initiatives

Role of Planning Research & Development Office, cont.

- ◆ Oversees rating of initiatives against criteria
- ◆ Disseminates ranked list of initiatives for next fiscal year
- ◆ Prepares (non-financial) parts of proposed budget for taxpayers
- ◆ Monitors progress on plan initiatives
- ◆ Evaluates process, makes revisions

Role of Executive Cabinet (President + VPs)

- ◆ Similar to a “planning council” at other colleges
- ◆ Meets weekly, heavily on planning in Jan--March
- ◆ Approves rankings of Change Objective Review group (10 cross-functional members) who rate proposed initiatives against criteria
- ◆ Has final responsibility for college plan and budget

Tools for Planning

- ◆ Nine criteria:
 - Generation of new growth
 - Support of growth
 - Measurability/accountability
 - Relationship to college purposes
 - Relationship to college strategic directions
 - Requests by external sources

Tools for Planning, cont.

- Positioning for competitive advantage
- Avoidance of negative impact
- Bang for the buck/cost effectiveness
- ◆ Planning packet with forms (also Word templates), costing info, deadlines, college's strategic directions

Future Planning Activities

- ◆ A planning “Help Desk” being considered
- ◆ Greater use of the 9 criteria in developing proposals for new department plans
- ◆ Continue with Change Objective Review group’s work

Comparisons and Summary

- ◆ Connections between plans, resources, strategic and operational planning
- ◆ Vested in a broad-based group
- ◆ Grounded in information
- ◆ IR/Planning office plays substantial role
- ◆ Broad participation in planning
- ◆ Follow-up, monitoring of plans (Success Indicators at BGSU, Monitoring at FVTC)
- ◆ Evaluation, continuous improvement of planning processes
- ◆ Use of web sites

Case Study and Questions