

# Planning ahead: Strategic planning for scaling and sustaining your LC/LLC program

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**Strategic planning** is the process of setting goals, deciding on actions to achieve those goals and mobilizing the resources needed to take those actions.

\*Thoughtexchange; May 2012

# Brainstorming Activity



- What are the institutional goals? Does the LC or goals further advance such goals?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- Are resources/funding available?
- Who will be/should be included, impacted?
- Support of faculty/professional development?
- Support from administration?
- Involvement from student life, admissions/enrollment, faculty?
- How will the program(s) be assessed (e.g. Institutional Research)?

# Making the case for strategic planning:

“Today a great many American colleges and universities -- ranging from those that, at least for now, seem reasonably secure to those that are hanging on by just a slight financial thread -- are faced with a series of threats. Some institutions are involved in thoughtful, data-informed and effective planning, but others are not directly confronting such challenges and are failing to engage in such planning.

The institutions that ignore their challenges offer important cautionary tales. Those who find ways to address them by planning strategically can be useful models.

The threats are pervasive. Many colleges and universities are grappling with cascading declines in enrollment and escalating tuition discounts, resulting in decreased net tuition revenue. Public institutions are also suffering from diminished state support, and structural deficits are becoming more and more commonplace”.

# Quotes on survival

“If colleges and universities are to survive in the troubled years ahead, a strong emphasis on planning is essential. The type of planning that appears to be most appropriate for the future is strategic marketing planning. It is one of the most revolutionary commercial sector developments in the last ten years and promises to be a potent tool for use in non profit organizations.

Most colleges and universities are not set up with a strategic planning capacity. They are basically good at operations, that is, doing the same thing day after day.....”

# Strategic planning should be:

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- ▶ Inspired by leaderships' vision, developed in consultation with other stakeholders (advisory board, provost, faculty, staff, students, etc.)
- ▶ Informed by data (institutional as well as national)
- ▶ Simultaneously aspirational and feasible, ultimately mediating between the real and the ideal.

# Scaling learning communities

Consider the following :

- ▶ An **intentional** strategy, aimed at improving student success?
  - ▶ Focus on the strategy
  - ▶ Many times there is a great plan but no strategy to meet it.
- ▶ There is nothing sacred about a 5 or 10 year plan.
- ▶ **Alignment** with the mission and strategic plan of your institution?
- ▶ Staffing in a way that aligns people's **skills** with **tasks**?
- ▶ Targeting a specific **population**? (Typically a population that has a history of trouble spots or low achievement)
- ▶ Program **planning** to accommodate students, faculty and or staff needs?
- ▶ Ongoing collaboration for intentional planning and **communication**?

# Planning Steps

- ▶ Develop a mission, vision, & strategic goals that connect with the institutional mission
- ▶ Create a team, with a clearly identified leader, & make sure it includes those impacted by the plan
- ▶ Clearly articulate what is is you aim to achieve & make sure all understand it
- ▶ Be realistic
  - ▶ It is OK to think big
  - ▶ At the same time, be realistic
  - ▶ Don't negotiate against yourself in the plan

# Planning Steps (continued)

- ▶ After you decide what you want to achieve, focus on the strategy to get there.
  - ▶ For example, if a coordinator is needed, think about the strategy for getting it
  - ▶ Perhaps that means obtaining data about workload, a comparison to successful programs, a rationale (etc.). Who will be responsible?
  - ▶ Faculty recruitment? Student recruitment? What strategy(s) could be used?
- ▶ Follow through
  - ▶ Make scheduling meetings a priority & be sure there is a clear agenda for moving forward.
  - ▶ This is also why a shorter timeline may make more sense – it is

# As You Are Scaling...

## *Key elements as the work continues*

- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Coordination with other college-wide initiatives
- ✓ Evidence



# Design Charette

- ▶ Participate in a mini design charrette with 3 “college strangers” to build a mini strategic plan
- ▶ Purpose: Design a mini strategic plan that:
  - ▶ aligns at least one (no more than three) agreed upon institutional pillars (e.g., leadership, social justice, academic excellence)
  - ▶ prioritizes a minimum of three goals
  - ▶ clearly identifies the student population(s) its serving
  - ▶ promotes collaboration
  - ▶ demonstrate a strategy to implement the plan

# Charrette

- ▶ **SHə'ret/ *noun***—An intense period of design or planning activity

# Charrette Overview

- ## Stage One

- Ensure your team is 3 people from 3 different colleges. Decide who will go 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>. Everyone has **3 minutes silent reflection** to review the task.

- ## Stage Two

- Each person gets **5 minutes to talk, write, or sketch ideas** on the flip chart paper. Group members listen only. **1 minute of silent reflection** between each 5 minute round.

- ## Stage Three

- After every team member has had time to talk, sketch, write ideas for 5 minutes, **the team has 10 minutes to rapid prototype a mini strategic plan. Write or sketch your combined ideas on a new piece of flip chart paper.** When time is called, **post the assignment in the designated space.**

# Get Ready ...



- Ensure your team has 3 people from 3 different colleges
- Decide who will go 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>

# Get Set ...



- Everyone has 3 minutes to silently reflect and prepare for the task:
  - ▶ Design a mini strategic plan that:
    - ▶ aligns with three agreed upon institutional pillars (e.g., leadership, social justice, academic excellence)
    - ▶ prioritizes a minimum of three goals
    - ▶ clearly identifies the student population(s) its serving
    - ▶ promotes collaboration
    - ▶ demonstrate a strategy to implement the plan

# GO! Round 1

- ▶ 1<sup>st</sup> person gets 5 minutes to talk, write, or sketch assignment ideas on the flip chart paper
- ▶ Other group members listen only
  - ▶ DO: Practice “deep listening”
  - ▶ DO: Smile, nod, exhibit encouraging body language
  - ▶ DO: If you get ideas from what the person says, write them down so you don’t lose them!
  - ▶ DO NOT: interrupt (even to agree).
- ▶ Richie will mind the time
  - ▶ 1 minute left
  - ▶ 30 seconds left
  - ▶ Hard Stop

# 1 Minute Silent Reflection

- ▶ Write down ideas that occurred to you during your deep listening

# GO! Round 2

- ▶ 1<sup>st</sup> person gets 5 minutes to talk, write, or sketch assignment ideas on the flip chart paper
- ▶ Other group members listen only
  - ▶ DO: Practice “deep listening”
  - ▶ DO: Smile, nod, exhibit encouraging body language
  - ▶ DO: If you get ideas from what the person says, write them down so you don’t lose them!
  - ▶ DO NOT: interrupt (even to agree).
- ▶ Richie will mind the time
  - ▶ 1 minute left
  - ▶ 30 seconds left
  - ▶ Hard Stop

# 1 Minute Silent Reflection

- ▶ Write down ideas that occurred to you during your deep listening

# GO! Round 3

- ▶ 1<sup>st</sup> person gets 5 minutes to talk, write, or sketch assignment ideas on the flip chart paper
- ▶ Other group members listen only
  - ▶ DO: Practice “deep listening”
  - ▶ DO: Smile, nod, exhibit encouraging body language
  - ▶ DO: If you get ideas from what the person says, write them down so you don’t lose them!
  - ▶ DO NOT: interrupt (even to agree).
- ▶ Richie will mind the time
  - ▶ 1 minute left
  - ▶ 30 seconds left
  - ▶ Hard Stop

# 1 Minute Silent Reflection

- ▶ Write down ideas that occurred to you during your deep listening

# Collaborate



- Your team has 10 minutes to collaboratively design a mini strategic plan
- **Write** or **sketch** your *combined* ideas on a new piece of flip chart paper
- When time is called, **post** your strategic plan in the designated space

# Use to Think/Now I Think



- ▶ Complete the following sentence:

Before this session I thought...

Now I think...

So, now I will...

# Resources

- ▶ Eckel, P. & Trower, C. (2019). Colleges Need to Rethink Strategic Planning (opinion). Inside Higher Ed.
- ▶ KIDD, B (2011). Cautions, Questions and Opportunities in Sport for Development and Peace. Third World Quarterly. Toronto, Canada.
- ▶ *More to Most: Scaling Up. Effective Community College Practices*, MDC (2012). To download a copy of *More to Most*, go to <http://www.more2most.org>
- ▶ National Center for Postsecondary Research. Scaling up learning communities: The experience of six community colleges. [http://www.postsecondaryresearch.org/i/a/document/12887\\_LCfullreport.pdf](http://www.postsecondaryresearch.org/i/a/document/12887_LCfullreport.pdf)
- ▶ Public Agenda & Achieving the Dream. Cutting edge series: Scaling community college interventions. <http://leap.aacu.org/toolkit/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/CuttingEdge2.pdf>
- ▶ Pierce, S.R. (2017). How Colleges Should Rethink Their Strategic Planning Processes (essay). Inside Higher Education.

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