

Youngstown State University Board of Trustees Case Study

Prepared for the YSU Board by Trustees Molly Seals and Ted Roberts with intent to incite emotional catharsis, engagement, discussion & self-reflection

Background: Nine members of the YSU Board of Trustees are selected by the Governor of Ohio and appointed to 9-year terms. The board also consists of 2 student members who attend Youngstown State and are appointed by Governor, and up to 2 non-voting national/global members appointed by the Trustees. The appointment and powers of the Board are set forth in the Ohio Revised Code Chapter 3356 and R.C. Section 369.180. The YSU Board of Trustees governs by statute, its bylaws and its policies.

This approach fulfills the American model of higher education governance and the unique concept of volunteer citizen trusteeship that provides for autonomy, independence and academic freedom. Public trustees adhere to core principles pertaining to effective trusteeship as advocates for the university: ensuring its institutional mission, education quality and fiscal vitality; selecting, supporting and assessing its chief executive while respecting the balance between governing and managing; charging the chief executive with leading, implementing and evaluating effective strategic planning, participating in the process and monitoring its progress; engaging with the university's major constituents to provide community perspective; participating in fundraising and practicing personally affordable philanthropy; ensuring current and effective institutional and board policies. Trustees are called to conduct business with transparency, high ethical and fiduciary standards, and adherence to public meeting and record laws.

The Key Role of the Board: YSU Trustees are advocates for the university to further its mission and enhance its legacy to the local, regional, national, and global communities, while maintaining the highest level of accountability to the taxpayers of the State of Ohio. To do this, the YSU Board of Trustees must assure effective Presidential leadership and work with the university faculty, staff and students to create an effective strategic plan to be supported by university resources in a fiscally responsible way that achieves the budgetary balance so critical to the long-term sustainability of the university. Thereafter the board monitors the plan and calls for sound corrective plans where needed to assure successful achievement.

From "A Practical Guide To Strategic Planning In Higher Education" published by the Society for College and University Planning, the following reflects the role of the board in the planning process:

"Generally, members of governing boards should (1) ensure planning takes place, and (2) insist plans are used regularly for decision making. In carrying out these basic responsibilities, boards should attend to the following:

- Recognize and promote the usefulness of planning in higher education and support its use,
- Review and approve a planning process for the institution,
- Hold the chief executive accountable for the planning function,

- Participate in certain steps in the planning process, and
- Use the institution's plans to make decisions, especially those that involve setting priorities and allocating resources."

How our Strategic Plan Will Guide Us to our Future: The Youngstown State University Strategic Plan will need to answer key "Who, What, Where and How" questions. The following points appeared in a Strategic Plan of Cornell University, 2010-2015 and similar questions appear in other University strategic plans:

Four basic questions to help organize the planning process:

- Who are we as a university?
- Where do we want to go as a university?
- How do we get there?
- How do we know when we arrive?

The 2020 Strategic Plan of YSU will likewise need to answer:

- Who are we as a university?
- Who do we want and need to become and where do we want to go as a university?
- How do we get there?
- How do we know when we arrive?

As an anchor institution and given that our local, state and national challenges are also our challenges (poverty, urban decline, job loss, income inequality, increasing diversity, racial and gender inequities, and climate change), we are also called to answer additional profound questions like:

- How do we sustain higher education at our university as a powerful, affordable and meaningful agent of self-realization and social progress that address many of these challenges?

The process to construct our new Strategic Plan shall support our *Guiding Principles of Shared Governance*. The goal is to engage all stakeholders in the process and provide opportune time and approach to collect input, feedback, and thought leadership from a diversity of stakeholders as well as progress updates and feedback throughout the life of the plan. Some of the key principles driving our engagement plan shall include the following:

- Creative engagement (Not just asking for input but finding creative ways of assuring input and considering it)
- Input precedes feedback (Opportunity for big ideas from all)
- Exchange throughout the process (Input, Shared Data Reservoir, Build, Feedback, Activate & Achieve)
- Everyone is a connector to someone (Communication and Engagement is a shared responsibility of all)
- Meet constituencies where they are (Go where they are and seek first to understand unique WIIFMs of each constituency group)

Our strategic plan should be *aspirational* to inspire our university through its aims, goals and ideologies to higher levels of achievement and thus helping our students to achieve higher levels of success. *Student Success and Achievement* shall be paramount in our new Strategic Plan as that is why we exist and without students we would not be. *Economic development* and job growth will be of key focus as well -- as without it the Ohio tax base cannot exist to support sustainability of this and other Ohio universities. *Research* shall be of key focus – as that is the pathway to assuring students (undergraduate and graduate) are prepared with the critical thinking and application skills required to meet the challenges of today.

Some of the aspirational goals that appear in the Strategic Plan of Cornell University, 2010-2015 involve:

- Enroll, educate, and graduate deserving, promising, and diverse students.
- Recruit, nurture, and retain an excellent and diverse faculty, and an excellent and diverse staff who provide outstanding support to faculty and students.
- Strengthen public engagement of university education, research, and programs with local, national, and international communities.
- Sustain organizational structures and processes that promote and support academic excellence in a cost effective, balanced-budget manner.

Given our unique challenges, just as recognized by Tulane University, we will also:

- Seek *a more collaborative and applied scholarship*, committed to change that brings faculty, students, local residents and government together in projects addressing community, region and world needs.



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How colleges should rethink their strategic planning processes (essay)

Submitted by Susan Resneck Pierce on January 31, 2017 - 3:00am

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.

For example, Moody's reports in its annual *Tuition Discounting Study* that at nearly half of all private non-profit college and universities it surveys, undergraduate enrollments declined every year between 2011 and 2014. The decline continued between 2014-15, with 37.5 percent of all colleges reporting decreased enrollment. The situation appears even more dire for the current academic year: As an *Inside Higher Ed* [survey of admissions directors](#) ^[1] reported, of those surveyed only 41 percent of private colleges and 29 percent of public colleges were meeting enrollment goals.

Moreover, even as many colleges have been successful in their efforts to enroll increasing numbers of students from low-income backgrounds, they find themselves struggling to afford the additional financial aid required to do so and the added support services some of these students need if they are to succeed. These new claims on the operating budget devour resources that, in past years, would have gone to faculty and staff salaries, renovation and new construction, technology and equipment, and to new initiatives.

Such circumstances are negatively impacting the financial health and sometimes even the viability of many colleges and universities. These financial stresses in turn lead many campuses to experience a clash between their commitment to excellence as they have historically defined it and their quest for financial sustainability. Or to put it another way, many colleges and universities are struggling to afford the kind of educational program they wish to offer. And so when educational decisions need to be made for financial reasons, campuses often experience tensions between the faculty, on the one hand, and the administration and the board, on the other hand. This is especially true when institutions need to make tough decisions or are engaged in strategic planning.

I commonly hear from administrators that they and their boards need to be able to make timely, sometimes immediate and often difficult decisions but that doing so conflicts with a faculty culture that assumes that all decisions require elaborate consultation, that strategic planning processes be consensual, and that all plans be ultimately approved by the faculty. In my experience, even as most presidents and boards believe that consultation and collaboration are necessary and that faculty approval is needed for academic initiatives, they also argue that planning needs to be ongoing and immediate and that *institutional* strategic planning is the responsibility of the board of trustees, upon the recommendation of the president.

Meanwhile, many faculty members, administrators and trustees oppose change because they are rightfully proud of their institution's mission and its long-standing programs -- even when that mission and those programs no longer attract the desired and often necessary number of students. Others resist change because they believe that everything will be fine if they just keep on doing what they have always done. They believe that their institution should, and therefore will, be immune to demographic shifts and changing student interests.

In my work with colleges and universities across the country, I hear the following refrains:

- "My institution has been successful for more than 100 years. We will be here for another 100 years. "
- "The value that we offer is so great that we are immune to disruption."
- "The liberal arts have always been at risk; this is no different."
- "The problem is not changing demographics, student interests or cost but simply that our admissions staff is not bringing us the students we used to attract."

As optimistic as such notions are, they are often unrealistic and based on intuition rather than evidence. They also ignore the lessons to be learned from many other organizations -- newspapers, magazines, encyclopedias, travel agencies, taxi cab companies and the U.S. Postal Service, among others -- that mistakenly believed that their value was so great that they were immune to disruption.

Myths that Serve as Obstacles

For institutions to be successful in today's environment, they must move beyond some of the damaging myths held by many people on campuses. Those myths include:

Excellent marketing and admissions efforts are a panacea. David Strauss, principal of the Art & Science Group, reports that "the array of studies we've done for various types and levels of individual colleges and universities over the years, using highly rigorous techniques, indicates that the trend in prospective undergraduates' preferences tends toward metropolitan (vs. rural) institutions, toward larger (vs. smaller), and toward pragmatic/professional fields (and away from many traditional liberal arts fields)." And the best marketing in the world combined with an excellent admissions operation will not persuade students with these clear preferences to enroll in small, rural or liberal arts colleges.

All strategic planning processes are of equal value. Sadly, many planning processes fail because those involved have been encouraged to "Blue Sky It" without grounding their planning in a clearly-articulated vision for the future and without tethering it to in-depth, cost-benefit analyses and a realistic financial plan -- or sometimes simply any financial plan at all. Or to put it another way, it is a recipe for disaster when those involved in planning are asked to imagine a rosy future without regard to available resources: human, financial and facilities. It is also dangerous to rely on overly ambitious fundraising goals to fund new initiatives.

Planning processes also fail when they are designed to try to accommodate all constituencies rather than to seek to identify a small number of strategic institutional imperatives or priorities. This

approach generally results in an unwieldy wish list that does not produce an institutional road map for the future from which sound financial choices and fundraising goals derive.

Many institutions also continue to create five-10 year static plans even though change is happening much more quickly and requires more nimble choices and actions.

Our institution will thrive because it is so different from others. Far too many campuses persist in believing in the myth that they are unique or in some significant ways better than their competitors – and then they make their choices accordingly. For example, I often hear from faculty and staff members that they provide students on their campus a level of personal attention that occurs nowhere else in the country. But although giving students individual attention is important and something institutions want to promote, it is not unique -- and therefore not a differentiator.

Many colleges today also claim that they are unique in their focus on such matters as social justice, civic engagement, globalism, sustainability, experiential learning, diversity and inclusion, research in collaboration with a faculty member, internships and, increasingly, mentorships and career preparation. Again, each of those emphases is worthy, but once again, they are neither distinctive nor differentiating.

On the other hand, many institutions that do focus on these notions have done so in ways that resonate with the students they wish to enroll by leading those students to understand and value the nature of the educational experience they are being offered.

Successful Models

The colleges and universities described below, despite their varied missions, have addressed their challenges effectively. Each of these institutions also have a set of common characteristics that made a difference for them:

- Each was inspired by a presidential vision, developed in consultation with the campus and approved by the board.
- Institutional planning was informed by data
- Planning was simultaneously aspirational and feasible, ultimately mediating between the real and the ideal.

They each have also pursued new approaches, such as:

Making core characteristics manifest in the education of all students. Agnes Scott College has seen record enrollments over the past two years, after redesigning its curriculum and co-curriculum based on extensive market research. Its new [Summit program](#) [2] has positioned the college as one “for women who want to become leaders in an increasingly global society.” All “Scotties” will have a four-person board of advisers, including a career mentor. They will also have a common orientation and a required “leadership lab,” will study a foreign language, and will create a digital portfolio. In addition, all first-year students will have an eight-day cultural immersion, most abroad, led by a faculty member tied to a course, and all students will have a second more extensive [global experience](#) [3].

Diversifying to attract new student populations. Kettering University, formerly the General Motors Institute, is taking advantage of 600 corporate partners and more than 1,000 alumni who are or have been CEO’s in this country and around the world. After an extended visioning and planning process informed by market research, the university launched the Kettering Global Initiative, which offers online, on-campus and hybrid continuing education courses to those partners and others. Kettering has also been integrating the humanities, social sciences and the creative arts into its STEM and management programs by creating a new College of Sciences and Liberal Arts --

expanding its interdisciplinary offerings and developing new majors and minors in new areas of applied science.

Focusing on innovation. *US News & World Report* has named Lynn University one of the country's most innovative universities. Taking advantage of a new wireless infrastructure that it created through successful fundraising for one of the 2012 presidential debates, Lynn has placed all course materials for its Great Books Core Curriculum on iPads that it provides its 600 freshmen. By replacing conventional textbooks with faculty-produced e-books, Lynn reports that it has saved students ^[4] 90 percent of the cost of textbooks. The university also has a highly personalized approach to admissions, tailoring each potential student's campus visit with a separate visit for their families.

Both initiatives ^[5] have brought the university welcome publicity and increased enrollment. More recently, Lynn has been experimenting to good effect with three-year accelerated degrees program.

Rethinking the institutional mission. In January 2014, low enrollments at Iowa Wesleyan University led to draconian steps. Despite its 173-year history as a liberal arts college, the institution announced that it would abolish half of its 32 majors in such areas as philosophy of religion, history, general studies/liberal arts, sociology and pre-law and shrink the faculty from 52 to 22 and the staff from 78 to 55. The university now concentrates on business, education and nursing, seeking to enroll older students.

This mission shift ^[6] and many layoffs were unquestionably painful. Yet Iowa Wesleyan recently announced that its "incoming class enrollment has jumped 150 percent in just two years," that "student retention ^[7] has grown 35 percent over the last three years," and that its "international student population has drastically increased ^[8]."

Recommendations for the Future

When it comes to strategic planning, these examples suggest some lessons for other institutions:

- There is no magic bullet or single approach that fits all institutions. What works at one institution may not work even for competitors that have similar if not identical missions. To be successful in planning, an institution must creatively build on and sometimes even modify its history, culture, values and mission.
- Data must inform all planning. Assuming that people on the campus intuitively know what will attract potential students, for instance, can be dangerous since programs that resonate with one applicant pool may discourage another.
- Rather than pursuing what is often an elusive notion of uniqueness, those involved in planning must recognize that the most selective liberal-arts colleges in this country often offer similar programs and services. The public flagship universities are also quite similar to one another, as are the top private research universities. What matters to the current and prospective students is that the institution they choose actually provides what it promises and that what it provides is compelling.
- If what a campus does resonates with its particular pool of prospective students, the institution should both emphasize those aspects of the education it offers and also provide evidence of excellence. In some cases, as with Agnes Scott and Lynn, it makes sense to embed what the institution values in the experience of all students. In other cases, such as Kettering, it may be most effective to build on that common experience by offering a diversity of new programs that are consistent with mission.
- As part of making data-informed decisions, colleges and universities must understand their competition. Mission statements should not all sound alike. (And many do.) Moreover, if an institution does claim to be distinct in some way, that claim must be legitimate.
- If the campus is offering programs that no longer appeal to the students it seeks, it should consider changing what it does -- but again based on evidence and taking its mission into

- account, not guessing.
- An institution should think in terms of a three-year horizon and develop an evolving set of at most four to six strategic imperatives -- rather than crafting a static plan for a much longer horizon that will sit on the proverbial shelf.
 - The institution should focus its planning process on how best to educate students rather than what will best serve any particular constituency.
 - The institution should be wary of seeking new revenue streams that run counter to its mission or may not be financially sustainable.
 - The planning process should be a model of shared governance. From the outset, the president must be clear who is responsible for which aspects of the process -- who is involved, who serves in an advisory role and who makes the ultimate decisions.

Ultimately, institutions cannot predicate their planning on the hope that, in time, external realities will change, and they will once again regain their previous stability. Nor can they deny external realities and their own circumstances. In short, they must understand that hope and denial are not strategies.

Susan Resneck Pierce is president emerita of the University of Puget Sound and president of SRP Consulting. Her latest book, Governance Reconsidered: How Boards, Presidents, Senior Administrators and Faculty Can Help Their Institutions Thrive [9], was published by Jossey-Bass.

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Links:

- [1] https://www.insidehighered.com/news/survey/pressure-build-class-2016-survey-admissions-directors?mc_cid=8373632e40&mc_eid=0e96bde369
- [2] <https://www.eab.com/daily-briefing/2016/01/08/how-one-liberal-arts-college-used-a-new-curriculum-as-a-recruiting-tool>
- [3] <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/content/dam/journey/us/en/private/2016/03/ElevatorPitch.pdf>
- [4] <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/01/15/lynn-university-require-all-new-students-buy-ipads>
- [5] <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2012/09/27/lynn-university-personalized-campus-visit-bid-attract-more-students>
- [6] <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/02/24/after-deep-cuts-can-iowa-wesleyan-rebound>
- [7] <https://www.iw.edu/enrollment-surges-2016/>
- [8] <https://www.iw.edu/iowa-wesleyans-international-students/>
- [9] <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-1118738497,subjectCd-ED27.html>



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Essay on how to do strategic planning

Submitted by Patrick Sanaghan and Mary Hinton on July 3, 2013 - 3:00am

Just about every higher education institution periodically engages in strategic planning. Some of this planning is part of the fabric and culture of a college, but many campuses engage in planning only when required by accrediting agencies or mandated by statewide system offices, or after a crisis.

Regardless of the motivating factor, challenges with the planning process result in too many campuses failing to achieve their original planning goals even when a great deal of time and effort are invested

We wanted to find out what made strategic planning work on campuses and initiated a series of discussions with presidents, faculty and senior administrators of institutions that believe in strategic planning and embrace it as a cultural practice.

We also spoke to a handful of campus leaders and faculty who were unsure about the importance of strategic planning. While these presidents conduct planning in order to comply with a variety of mandates, they question the value of the process and indicate that plans are rarely utilized once developed. These postures of resistance to planning are as valuable as hearing from those who truly believe in its value. In fact, both perspectives are needed.

The following advice might provide some helpful information to administrators and faculty as they think about crafting their institution's strategic planning process and connecting it to the life of the campus.

1. Visible and committed senior leadership is essential. The president needs to be seen as visibly and meaningfully supporting, but not exclusively controlling, the planning process. If campus stakeholders believe the president is engaged in the planning process, they tend to participate more. If they don't witness this engagement, they will question the credibility of the process and

meaningful participation will be minimal. In fact, if the president is resistant to planning or in any way intimates that the plan will not be utilized once developed, campus stakeholders will pick up on this and will have limited or no investment.

On many campuses today, there are senior-level administrators whose titles include planning or planner. While these individuals are responsible for carrying out the planning process, in no way should they be the sole drivers of the plan. Rather, these administrators should be ensuring that the information needed to develop the plan is readily available. They should also ensure that all of the planning processes are transparent and that there is widespread engagement in the process. While many presidents may be tempted to divest themselves of the planning process and allow the "planners" to take the lead, this is a mistake. A president must be the leader of the planning process and use the designated "planner" as a key resource.

2. Authentic faculty involvement and engagement will make or break a strategic planning process. Without the meaningful engagement of faculty in the strategic planning process, the resulting plan will not get carried out. Top-down, administrative planning simply won't work any more. There was a time when senior leadership, along with the board, created a strategic plan and "sold" it to the campus with limited results. Those days are gone. In fact, faculty should play a key role – often in concert with the president and any "official" planners on campus -- in designing the process.

Presidents also need to organize a planning task force of highly credible leaders throughout the campus and make sure a majority of the task force consists of faculty. On many campuses this task force will emerge from – or morph into – a standing committee that is responsible for monitoring the implementation and assessment of the strategic plan.

Campuses should seriously consider the benefits (and challenges) of having such a standing committee. On the plus side, it does ensure that a wide swath of the campus has ongoing engagement with the strategic plan. It also increases the likelihood that the plan will be subject to rigorous assessment if a group is formally charged with carrying it out. A potential negative consequence, though, is that the campus community may view this standing committee as *the* group responsible for the plan when, in fact, the plan is owned by the entire campus community. If such a committee is in place, one of their explicit directives must be to engage all campus stakeholders in the planning process.

Again, faculty should play a leading role in this process. The president and senior leaders need to talk openly with the faculty about the strategic planning process and its importance to the institution. Most importantly, they need to listen to the hopes and concerns of campus stakeholders, especially faculty. If they listen well, they will have access to vital information many senior leaders never hear.

3. The board of trustees needs to have a balanced role in the strategic planning process. Having faculty and other campus community stakeholders lead the strategic planning process may be difficult for some trustees to hear as they often take seriously their charge of setting the trajectory and strategic priorities of the institution. This is a trend presidents across higher education are reporting. Of course, trustees need to play a prominent and informed role in the planning process. However, while they are responsible for ensuring the plan is carried out and strategic goals accomplished, the day-to-day execution of the plan happens on the campus.

In fact, regional accreditors discourage top-down planning and instead emphasize collaborative, participatory planning processes. The board is responsible for ensuring that an intelligent, disciplined and inclusive planning process takes place for their institution. Trustees need to charge the president and senior leadership with conducting this kind of process and hold them accountable.

4. It is important to avoid "listening to yourself too much." Attention to the external environment is an ongoing necessity and practice. Faculty and administrators need to pay attention to what is going on regionally, nationally and internationally. They need to be well versed about program enrollment trends, student demographics, parent expectations, broad financial trends and issues, employment demand, technological innovations and new teaching strategies. Just think about how much change we have experienced over the past five years.

The next five years promise to be equally complex, fast-paced and challenging. Campus stakeholders throughout the campus, not just the senior level, need to understand the big picture and changing context of higher education on an ongoing basis. This type of engagement can only happen if the president and senior leaders create opportunities for people to convene and discuss the events, trends and issues facing their institution. This is not a one-shot thing. There should be multiple opportunities throughout the year for these important and strategic discussions. These internal SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analyses are a vital component of the

planning process and remain equally critical once the plan is implemented in order to ensure assessment of the plan is realistic and ongoing.

5. You need to make extraordinary efforts to communicate with stakeholders throughout the planning process. Too often there is some kind of an official kickoff to a strategic planning process and then things just seem to fade away until the plan is launched, when another big event may be held. This is poor process. Instead, the strategic plan needs to be a part of the fabric of the community, from the time it is being developed until the time it is concluded. While many campuses believe periodic e-mail updates about the plan are sufficient, it is important to use a variety of communication vehicles that include both high-touch (e.g., town hall meetings or "chews and chats" where stakeholders congregate over a breakfast or light lunch to discuss institutional issues and receive updates about the planning process) and high-tech.

High tech has its place (e.g., electronic newsletters and updates) but don't make technology your primary vehicle for communication. It may be efficient and convenient but we have found that face-to-face interactions keep the planning process alive. This is especially important during the planning process when you are trying to gather campuswide input into the plan priorities. Rich dialogue can help unveil hidden aspirations that are easily ignored or passed over when using electronic communication tools. Utilizing a variety of communication tools enables participants to choose their most comfortable level of engagement and increases the likelihood you will hear from a variety of perspectives.

6. Trust is the most important factor in a planning process. This was *the* pervasive theme in all of our conversations. It kept coming up over and over again. Trust is one of the most enduring and fragile elements in institutional life. With a great deal of trust you can accomplish many things, even if there are scarce resources. Without a fair amount of institutional trust, every detail becomes a debate; conversations quickly become contentious and things move at a glacial pace. Without trust, a "perfect" plan will be sure to fail. Campus leaders need to know how to build and nurture institutional trust if they are going to carry out their strategic plan. They can build campus trust by creating an inclusive, transparent and participative planning process.

7. Planning is not a linear process. There is a myth that lives large in higher education that there is a perfect process. This myth is driven by the belief that facts, data and quantitative information are all you need to create a strategic plan. Although good information and clear thinking are essential to effective planning, people's hopes and aspirations, fears and doubts all play an

important role. People, not perfect data, develop and execute plans. Great care should be taken to avoid the "plan to plan" syndrome where there is way too much research, planning, analysis and synthesis in an attempt to do planning perfectly. In these instances there is a lot of thinking but little doing. The plan never really lifts off the ground. Perfection should never be the goal for either the planning process or the plan. Rather, campuswide engagement, a shared vision, and ongoing feedback about achieving goals is the priority.

The linear approach is an attempt to control the future, which simply cannot be done. Intelligently responding to and influencing the future, however, is possible. We need to build agility and resiliency into our strategic planning process given the changing and complex environment we live in. Recognizing this early on in the planning process will ensure work is done rather than merely thought about.

8. Visionaries are a dime a dozen. Those leaders who can actually execute important things are as rare as blue diamonds.

It is not difficult for really smart people to create beautiful pictures of the future. But beautiful ideas won't matter unless things are actually accomplished. Senior leadership needs to be committed to paying attention to the process, rewarding and recognizing accomplishments, and resourcing the strategic plan. Implementation is the hard part of strategic planning but essential to its success. If the campus culture lacks rigor and discipline, and is unwilling to hold stakeholders accountable for shared aspirations, implementation will falter.

9. Campus stakeholders need a way to keep score. People need to see and feel that they are making progress toward the goals outlined in their plan. This can only happen if processes and protocols are established that keep people informed and updated. At a minimum, senior leadership needs to commit to a series of yearly "report outs" to the campus community about progress toward institutional goals. This holds stakeholders accountable for implementation and communicates to everyone that the strategic plan is an institutional priority.

It is essential that leadership reports shortcomings as well as successes, especially in dynamic times. It helps build transparency, credibility and faith in the planning process, especially in low-trust environments. If a campus has been less than successful in accomplishing their stated goals, senior leadership can communicate why certain things did not occur and share what they will do moving forward. These report outs also further the premise that the campus "owns" the strategic plan, not the president, a planner, or a committee.

10. The danger of doing too much. When it comes to carrying out the strategic plan there is often an attempt to do way too much in the first year. People want to see progress toward the plan goals and often try and move on all fronts. This well-intentioned effort soon becomes exhausting rather than creating momentum and energy. Pace and manage the implementation process in chewable chunks. Ongoing communication about achieving goals, no matter how small, is key to keeping the momentum of the plan alive.

Taken together, the above ten points suggest that the most important elements of planning are around connectedness. Connecting colleagues across the campus in the development of a shared vision and shared plan. Connecting in multiple modes – face-to-face and electronically – to gather robust feedback and support. Connecting our individual institutions to the broader higher education landscape. Connecting the planning process and the subsequent plan to the daily operations of the institution. Connecting realistic goals with shared aspirations. And, finally, connecting what we do with what is measured and valued on our campus.

These connections are led and facilitated by the president and extend up to trustees and down to faculty, staff and students. The plan becomes a reflection of the valuable – and valued – connections needed to thrive.

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This President Tripled the Size of His University. Here's How.

By Lee Gardner JULY 15, 2018 *THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION*

Growth has come with challenges. In 2008, UCF stopped getting additional state support for enrollment, even though it continued to increase its enrollment by an average of 2 percent a year. (The state now bases part of its allocation on performance.) The cost of teaching more students with limited resources "kind of came out of our hide," says Keith Koons, a professor of music and former chair of the Faculty Senate. "The faculty have had a lot to do with how we've been able to thrive during this growth."

UCF has a student-to-faculty ratio of 31:1. The University of Florida, by comparison, has a ratio of 20:1. UCF has relied on online teaching to handle the scale. Only about 9 percent of its students take courses online only, but 80 percent take some courses either entirely online or in hybrid classes that combine online content and classroom time. Some courses can be as large as 1,000 students. "We're educating 66,000 people on about a 40,000-person campus," Whittaker says.

To do that, UCF has adapted its teaching to keep pace with its growth. Schminke once taught at a private university where "the department chair would apologize if he had to add that 26th student," he recalls. Now, at UCF, he regularly teaches a hybrid class with more than 900 students. He delivers a lecture each week that students can attend — "not that many ever do," he says — that is also videostreamed. Most of the students watch online, on their own schedules. (More than 50 percent of UCF students work at least 20 hours a week.) A team of a dozen instructors then runs 25 or more lab sections for 40 or fewer students that offer more hands-on learning. Many introductory classes are taught at that scale, though upper-division courses are typically limited to 40 students.

But Schminke sounds excited rather than overwhelmed. "It's been fun," he says. "If you asked us, 'Could it go to 75,000, is that doable?,' we'd say no. However, we've done that three times over the past two decades, and it's fine."

The growth in enrollment together with broader access and other improved outcomes for students are perhaps Hitt's chief achievements, says Joshua Wyner, founder and director of the College Excellence Program at the Aspen Institute. UCF grew in response to demand for education in its region, and in doing so it has also expanded access to underserved students. The proportion of minorities enrolled rose from 16 percent in 1991 to 46 percent in 2017, and the percentage of students eligible for Pell Grants grew from 27 percent in 1991 to 41 percent in 2017.

Want to Better Engage Your Employees? Explain the Business Side

By Richard K. Boyer JULY 15, 2018 *CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION*

Each year the Great Colleges to Work For survey, along with our company's consulting work for individual colleges, reveals emerging trends in the campus workplace. Among the more compelling trends is the increasing effort by colleges to help faculty and staff members understand their institution's business operations.

The more intentional a college is about helping employees understand administrative processes, the more likely it is to avoid issues regarding a lack of confidence in senior leadership or in shared-governance procedures. More than simply heading off problems, though, efforts to broadly educate employees about the business model can significantly contribute to a greater sense of alignment and community.

A common issue we see is that faculty and staff members are unfamiliar with the actual composition of the senior leadership. At one institution we worked with this spring, we found that outside the ranks of senior administrators, many staff members were unaware of who, beyond the president, made up the leadership team. Additionally, many staff members had little understanding of the role of the cabinet or even of the board of trustees. If faculty and staff members aren't familiar with the composition, roles, and responsibilities of their institution's leadership, they are unlikely to perceive its members as a team in which they have great confidence.

This lack of understanding often even extends to a basic knowledge of the institution's funding model and budgeting processes. During a Q&A session at a recent campus meeting that drew a diverse mix of staff members, we found that many people did not know what an endowment was or how it affected the institution's budget and financial model.

Yet another source of potential confusion is a lack of understanding of how a college's shared-governance model works. There is no one "right" or "textbook" way to practice shared governance if faculty and staff members don't understand how that model works. How are decisions made? Who participates? How is feedback collected? Without an understanding of those issues, it is impossible to ascertain whether decision-making processes have been appropriately transparent, collaborative, or informed. A failure to effectively communicate the structures, processes, and roles of the institution's shared-governance model is a frequent cause of miscommunication.

Often there is some level of faculty resistance to professional-development activities that are not directly related to professors' scholarly fields. Increasingly, in the Great Colleges survey submissions we receive, we see concerted efforts to provide supervisory and managerial training, and even business-management training, to faculty members in leadership roles. Not surprisingly, we see the impact of these kinds of trainings in survey results. At colleges that provide such training, faculty members are more likely to respond positively to survey statements regarding the supervisory competencies of department chairs and other academic leaders.

One compelling example of the benefits of such management training can be found at Florida International University, which earned a place on the survey's Honor Roll this year. During the university's [Leadership Education Advancement Program](#), participants, who must be nominated by their supervisor, spend five days building a management skill set. They are guided by experienced facilitators who provide insight into institutional culture and solutions to common campus problems. The program, designed for supervisors and managers, divides participants into teams to develop a capstone presentation that offers new proposals to increase revenue, save money, or meet financial objectives spelled out by the university's governing board. Many of these capstone proposals have led to policy changes.

Florida International has also initiated the President's Leadership Program, designed to provide emerging leaders with an executive perspective. Over the course of the academic year, participants attend sessions that focus on key higher-education issues and challenges facing the university. In addition to facilitating connections across the campus, the program helps to develop the next generation of FIU leaders.

A common tool used to connect faculty and staff members to senior leaders, improve communication, and model collaboration and partnership is the "town hall" meeting. Often held just before or after board meetings, these can be effective forums to provide updates on strategic plans, board actions, and major initiatives. The most effective town-hall meetings are more than just information downloads, however: They are structured in such a way that interactions are not all one-way but provide opportunities for Q&A, dialogue, and, in some cases, activities to strengthen relationships and a sense of community.

Smaller-scale and less time-intensive efforts can also be effective. At McPherson College, a monthly "huddle" replicates the town-hall meeting, and a publication called the "Campus Communicator" provides weekly updates on issues such as enrollment, financial goals, and fund raising. At Lake Forest Graduate School of Management, an intranet makes institutional documentation and information available to staff members at any time.

The ideal scenario — in which faculty and staff members feel heard, informed, and empowered, and administrators feel they have the flexibility, trust, and partnerships to manage and lead in times of rapid change — is neither a fantasy nor even unrealistic. It does, however, require effort from the community as a whole. It requires a willingness to challenge convention, dedication to continuous improvement, and a genuine commitment to model partnership rather than a zero-sum mentality.

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