

Strategic Planning at Capital Community College 1997-2006 Synopsis of Process

In 1997, the newly-appointed President created a college-wide team to initiate a planning cycle. The team drafted new mission and vision statements and seven strategic goals. These were approved through the college governance structure. In 1998, the President appointed an Ad Hoc Planning Review Committee to oversee college progress toward the goals. This committee fell outside of the collegiate governance structure, so the governance by-laws were amended to establish a Planning Review Committee with specific areas of responsibility and reporting to the College Senate. The Planning Review Committee worked on the development of a Strategic Plan based on the seven identified college goals. The Committee developed forms and procedures in consultation with the Senate and management.

In 2000 the President asked the Planning Review Committee to write the NEASC Interim Status Report. The Committee designed a framework for the report but was unable to get from relevant offices the necessary information for assembling the report. The Committee advised the President to put the project into the hands of {a} group that was empowered to get information from all parts of the College. The President appointed a Task Force with major institutional support for the status report preparation. The Planning Review Committee continued with ongoing Strategic Planning Review, consulting with all areas of the College and soliciting information on progress toward the College goals. The information received from the various departments was spotty. In April, the Planning Review Committee compiled a progress report for the 1998-2001 planning cycle and met with the President to design the 2001-2006 planning cycle. The design connected strategic planning with the annual budgeting process for division operations, and the College Senate approved the structure.

However, the President, in 2001-02, met with the deans and established a different planning design. He asked the Planning Review Committee to develop a revised set of College goals that would embrace the goals of the System Strategic Plan as well as the deans' annual operational objectives. He further requested a condensed Mission Statement. The committee complied, and the College adopted the new mission and goals. In 2002, the PRC was again unable to get necessary operational information to complete a review of progress toward the goals, and the President appointed an ad hoc committee with more management support to take over strategic planning. The Planning Review Committee was disbanded and the Senate removed it from the College Governance System.

In a parallel process, administrators in the Academic and Student Services Divisions established additional objectives that would be accomplished if the College were awarded a federal Title III grant. These goals included development of student learning assessment methodologies, the exploration of learning styles, the development of learning communities, the establishment of a Welcome Center with related student support services, and the initiation of an internship program for students in pertinent programs. The grant was received, and these objectives were included in the College Strategic Plan.

The last phase of the 2001-2006 strategic planning cycle coincided with the appointment of a new College President in the spring of 2005. He appointed a new planning committee representing all areas of the College to develop a set of goals and objectives for the next planning cycle. A subcommittee is reviewing the College Mission Statement. The new Strategic Planning Committee is co-chaired by a manager and a faculty member, a collaboration that aims to facilitate the integration of departmental operations into the strategic plan. The new strategic plan will tie goals and objectives to funding, a linkage that had not been achieved in the previous plan. The planning process has included focus groups and surveys, and it has also been responsive to the focus groups and surveys generated by the current NEASC Self-Study. As this process develops, the question of its relationship to the College Governance System reemerges.

Again, a grant application provides a parallel planning process with complementary objectives. The 2005-2006 Achieving The Dream initiative, a year of institutional study leading to an application for a five-year grant, has generated close examination of student data and careful analysis of barriers to student success. Focus groups and reports generated by this initiative have informed the College's present strategic planning process, and the Achieving the Dream grant application will be informed by emerging College strategic goals.