

Strategic Planning in the Community Colleges Characteristics of Excellent Planning Processes

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1. Participation
 - a. Active participation and support (not just permission) from the CEO (both district and college, and including authority delegated by the Board), executive staff, academic and classified leadership, and other movers and shakers on campus.
 - b. Broad, effective participation from the campus constituencies—faculty, classified staff, managers, and students—all of whom have a significant stake in the process and its outcomes.
 - c. Sufficient orientation and training to make participation effective.
2. Scope: Broad enough to encompass all programs and services, without becoming so diffuse as to be meaningless.
3. Integration: Effective connections among levels, structures, and processes; between planning and established institutional mission(s); between planning and resource allocation; and between evaluation and planning for the next cycle, in accord with accreditation requirements.
4. Improvement: Focuses on sustainable improvement of institutional effectiveness, in programs, services, and/or infrastructure, again in accord with accreditation requirements.
5. Communication: Effective flow of information among all entities in the process, and between the process and the college community.
6. Information: Sufficient useful, reliable, available research and other information on which to base plans and decision-making.
7. Measurability: Progress toward objectives and goals is clearly measurable.
8. Accountability: Clearly assigned responsibilities.
9. Schedule: Ambitious yet attainable timelines.
10. Efficiency: Minimal duplication of effort; minimal waste of participants' time.
11. Flexibility: Flexible enough for orderly change in response to changing circumstances, but stable enough for people to depend on.
12. Frequency: Often enough to be relevant to programmatic and budgetary reality; not so frequent as to drive participants nuts; may involve multiple cycle lengths (e.g., annual and triennial).
13. Simplicity: Simple enough for participants to tackle at the indicated frequency, but not so simple as to be useless.
14. Products: Written outputs of high quality, clarity, and utility.