

Ensuring Convergence in a Bottom-up Approach to Strategic Planning (the Cal Poly Pomona Experience)

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Introduction

- * Aim of CPP academic leadership to develop a planning system that will enable the university to successfully navigate the challenges of the next 10-20 years
 - * A living system
 - * Not an ornament
 - * Strong buy-in from the entire university community
 - * A basis for allocating resources effectively

Historical Background

Before 2005

- * Experience with past (somewhat unsuccessful) strategic planning – perception was that:
 - * strategy-making under a previous President was too top-down
 - * it took the university in a wrong direction
 - * “no strategy” was preferred because of this “negative experience”

2005 and beyond

- * Major budget cuts to university funding in the 1990s and early 2000s had hurt the campus
 - * little promise of an improvement in funding seen
- * New Campus President
 - * sought to invest resources more wisely - in growth/opportunity areas
- * By eliminating:
 - * unnecessary duplications of courses and
 - * surfeit of small academic departments or programs

Prioritization and Recovery 2005-2007. I

- * Steering committee was formed
 - * President's cabinet and Executive Committee of Academic Senate
- * Robert Dickerson's prioritization approach to resource allocation seen as a model
 - * used by many universities and colleges
 - * perceived to be aligned with CPP culture and history
- * Committee representatives recruited from faculty, administration, staff, and students
- * Parallel activities were implemented in other divisions

Prioritization and Recovery 2005-2007. II

- * **Prioritization and Recovery Plan**
 - * To explore areas of improvement and efficiency across the campus.
 - * To prioritize academic programs for budget allocation
 - * To shape a model university for the next generation of students.
- * **It was made clear that in implementing P&R:**
 - * No serialized faculty would be laid off as a result of program reorganization or reduction
 - * Class size would be maintained at a level to promote quality learning
 - * Opportunities would be created for faculty growth and development

Prioritization and Recovery 2005-2007. III

- * P&R Committee publicized proposals at end of June 2007
 - * Its recommendations were a big surprise
- * A major reorganization of the university
 - * Reducing eight colleges to five through mergers
 - * Emphasizing a liberal arts agenda at a polytechnic university
- * Some unusual recommendations
 - * E.g. moving Art into the College of Engineering

Lessons Learned from Prioritization and Recovery

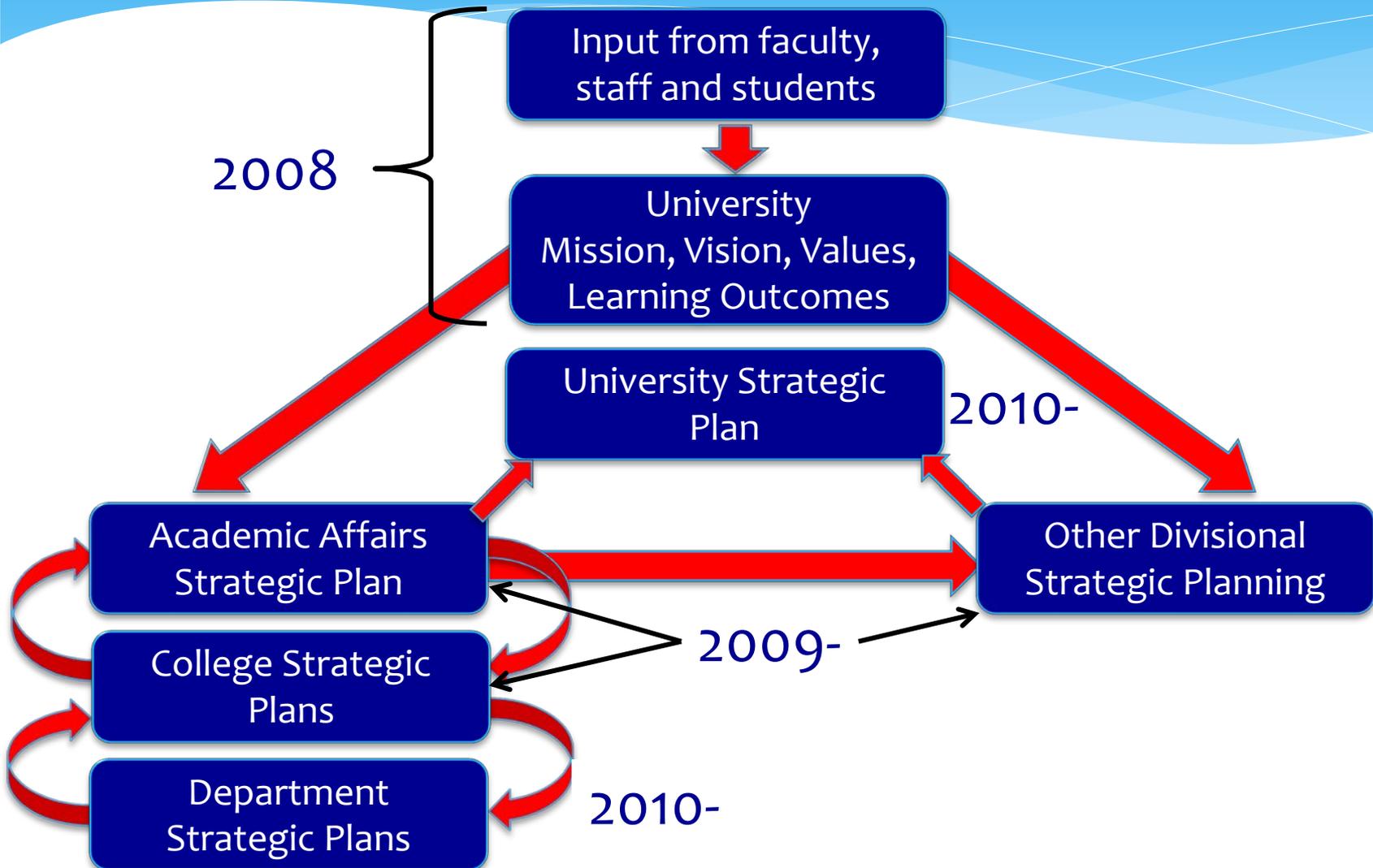
- * Important to focus on identifying ‘commonalities’ among programs and supporting activities
 - * To identify synergies/ eliminate duplication
- * Criteria for evaluating programs should be based on quantitative and qualitative data
- * Main problem was the lack of active consultation with the faculty at each stage of the deliberation process
- * The time lag between data collection and recommendations needed to be reasonable

Campus-Wide Strategic Planning 2008-

Impetus For a New Plan

- * Recognition of the importance of planning especially as we deal with diminished resources
- * Increased faculty awareness and engagement
- * WASC deadlines
- * Changing higher education environment

University Strategic Planning Initiative 2008-



Mission/ Vision & Values



- * Spring 2008 - the President established a committee to affirm mission and vision
 - * To set the scene for strategic planning within the divisions
- * Implemented a comprehensive review that resulted in a shared understanding of:
 - * Mission
 - * Vision
 - * Core values
 - * University Learning Outcomes
- * Based on a survey /consultations with faculty, staff and administrators.

Academic Plan



- * Fall 2008 – new Provost and Academic Senate established the Ad Hoc Academic Planning Committee.
- * A campus-wide planning process launched that resulted in a new Academic Affairs Strategic Plan
 - * Ratified by the Senate in Spring 2009
- * In a parallel process, Colleges developed their strategic plans
 - * A number of colleges already had a strategic planning process in place

Department & University Plans

- * June 2009, Senate's recommendation, the President formed the University Strategic Planning Committee
 - * To provide University Strategic Plan with priorities to 2015
 - * Driven by the:
 - * shared mission; vision, values and the
 - * Academic Affairs Strategic Plan
 - * Completed May 2010
- * In 2010-11 academic departments were required to develop and submit strategic plans
 - * These had to align with college plans and the academic affairs plan

AAPEC 1

- * Academic Affairs Planning Evaluation Committee (AAPEC) was established in 2009
 - * a permanent replacement for the Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee
- * Tasked to maintain the veracity, cohesion and advancement of planning within Academic Affairs

AAPEC 2

First tasks to support the planning process

- * Created online tools and enhanced campus data resources to help colleges and departments with strategic planning.
- * College plans evaluated for alignment with the Academic Affairs plan
- * Academic Affairs plan evaluated for alignment with the University mission, vision and values statement
- * Determine metrics to be used and resources for data capture

AAPEC 3

Current Activities

- * Developing data resources
- * Revising Academic Affairs Strategic Plan
 - * “Academic Affairs Strategic Plan 1.1”
 - * Revising to improve alignment/ coherence
 - * Identify gaps, redundancies and inconsistencies
 - * Simplify, clarify
 - * Identify key objectives in the plan
- * Revising University Strategic Plan
- * Recommendations to the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate

Features of CPP Planning

- * A circular process
 - * Top down elements
 - * Impetus from campus leadership – executive and faculty
 - * Bottom-up elements
 - * Colleges and some departments had already developed strategic plans
- * Concurrent activities
 - * Simultaneous planning at multiple levels due to time pressures for WASC accreditation
- * Shared governance
 - * faculty, staff and students all engaged
 - * use of campus wide surveys; focus groups; public meetings
- * Multi-level planning committees
 - * Department/ College/ Divisional/ University
- * A balance between central control and unit autonomy, appropriate to higher education and across such a diverse array of planning units.

The Outcome of Phase 1 – The Plan

- * Huge amount of information generated
 - * 50+ department plans, 8 college plans; 5 divisional plans, plus the university plan
- * The AA Plan is the proverbial race horse designed by a committee
 - * Principles more than strategies, operational rather than strategic, aspirations rather than objectives, descriptive rather than analytical
 - * Very wide ranging – including the kitchen sink
 - * It is who we are rather than where we are, want to go and how to get there
- * Large amount of information still needed
 - * Comprehensive environmental scan
 - * Performance benchmarking data
 - * SWOT analysis
 - * Formal assessment of our core competencies

Next Steps

- * To take the language of general principles and aims, and
 - * determine objectives that the faculty can coalesce around
 - * agree on appropriate performance measures
 - * integrate these with department annual reporting, and warehouse data capture systems
- * To evaluate the effectiveness of our planning
 - * identifying measures
- * Challenge is that as plan is revised where do we use shared governance?
 - * what level of minutiae
 - * very sensitive to this because of prior history with strategic planning

Challenges I

- * There are multiple challenges to be overcome towards effective planning:
 - * A lack of faculty/ administrator time to frame, implement and control the process
 - * Maintaining shared governance
 - * Need to balance input between faculty and university leadership
 - * e.g. Fine Arts

Challenges II

- * Lack of future orientation and vision among some
 - * Feeling that we are operatives - already committed to being at the forefront of knowledge in our professional area. Isn't that enough?
 - * Strategy committees get bogged down in minutiae
 - * Difficulty of obtaining consensus
 - * 10 committee members
 - * Internal politics
 - * Inertia

Challenges III

- * Building trust especially in light of severe budget constraints
 - * Suspicion of administrators – esp. in the current environment
 - * Utilization of metrics to exert closer control over faculty and departments
 - * Individual faculty and departments reluctant to create new yardsticks
 - * Creating and maintaining momentum
 - * The biggest pitfall to avoid is the one-off exercise that falls into immediate disuse

Lessons Learned I

- * We are on a learning curve in effective strategic planning
 - * Our trajectory is one of gradual improvement
 - * We need to find a formula that works well for us and respects our shared governance system
- * To be effective, the process has to be both authentic and doable
 - * If it is too intricate – we will have paralysis by analysis
 - * Sustained effort and pragmatic approach are critical
- * We have to:
 - * Rely on expertise of faculty and staff to identify issues/ develop plans.
 - * Provide basic tools and informational support to simplify and help planning committees overcome obstacles
- * Oh yes! An unambiguous, potent (& legitimate) external threat helps focus minds!

Lessons Learned II

- * What we would do differently
 - * Keep the basic structure
 - * More systematic environmental scan and SWOT analysis
 - * More focused plan
 - * with hard objectives and
 - * more consideration of how it would be implemented
- * What have been the rewards?
 - * A stronger sense of direction and purpose on campus
 - * A more cohesive relationship between faculty and administration
 - * Openness
 - * Involvement



THANK YOU