

INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS
Planning and Resource Allocation Committee
May 2010

Introduction

Regular, systematic assessment of progress on the college's goals and plans, along with assessment of the planning process itself, are indispensable components of integrated planning. Without such evaluation and reflection, the college cannot ensure that mistakes are being corrected and operations are being approved, that desired changes are taking place, and that good work is being recognized and celebrated.

The first iteration of the *Integrated Planning Manual* created a series of timelines for these assessments. In addition it charged IPC (now PRAC) to prepare the first annual *Report on Institutional Effectiveness* by April 2010, "to document and quantify the progress on each of the college's strategic objectives and the unit plans presented in program reviews." PRAC was also charged with informally evaluating the planning process itself each year, and conducting a formal review in the year preceding the development of the next strategic plan.

In the first year of the implementation of the new planning process (2009-2010), it quickly became clear that the college could not complete all of the various tasks by the deadlines. Many reasons contributed to the delays, including turnover in the office of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness, but the broader problem was that the plan is very ambitious, requiring faculty, staff, and administrators to develop new operations and procedures and new ways of working together. The learning process took more time than was available.

Fortunately, the college is solidly committed to the fundamentals of planning, and the PRAC is determined to assess and recommend modifications to the planning process as charged. To that end, one of its meetings in May 2010 was devoted to an initial assessment, and the PRAC will complete the first *Report on Institutional Effectiveness* in Fall 2010. What follows here is a summary of the initial assessment, supplemented by observations made in PRAC meetings over the course of the year.

General

- Timelines needed to be adjusted for 2009-2010 to account for delays in beginning the process; timelines will be adjusted for 2020-2011 to better coordinate the planning, resource allocation, and implementation components in the planning cycle.
- The PRAC needs to monitor the planning process continuously rather than intermittently.
- In order to strengthen integrated planning and the "culture of evidence," the college needs to communicate with the college community more frequently about the purpose, activities, and results of planning.

- The PRAC needs to review its own operation and prioritize its own goals. This is a new kind of committee for COM. While it retains some of the functions of the old Institutional Planning and Budget Committees, its far more critical function is to maintain the integrity and momentum of the planning process itself.
- Administrators who have major responsibility for addressing the goals in the Strategic Plan need to make achieving those goals their highest priority.
- The integrated planning process that the college has adopted requires significantly more and better data and research support than is currently available. Particular focus should be given to PRIE and IT needs.

College Strategic Objectives

The strategic objectives were not addressed at this meeting. They will be assessed in the first *Report on Institutional Effectiveness* in Fall 2010.

Program Review, Student Learning (Instruction, Student Services)

- One of the outcomes of program review should be that *dialog* within and between programs--as well as with planning committees--results in better understanding of programs throughout the college community. Program review should not be seen as simply a process for gaining additional resources.
 - The feedback loop from program review needs to be closed in terms of allocation of resources. People need to see what happens to their requests. For example, there was no report out from PRAC listing instructional equipment requests that were approved or not approved, or showing the multi-year information regarding the equipment.
 - Each allocation committee should document that their deliberations reflect not only their understanding of the requests but also an understanding of the program themselves.
 - Timelines should be revised so “reporting back” to various committees can occur.
- The current, annual program review is too labor intensive. The college should consider a process in which “major” program review takes place every two or three years, and “program update” review occurs in the intervening years, with resource review continuing to occur annually, along with the updating of key program data (e.g. enrollment, retention), SLO development, and curricular change.

Administrative Program Review

- To reduce confusion, the program review form needs to be substantially revised and simplified, with clearer definitions for key terms.

- For example it was not clear what “program” meant in the context of instructional deans.
- Estimating resource needs created confusion as well. Figures for “total cost of ownership” were not provided, and there were no standards for estimating other costs. The resource allocation forms were ambiguous. As a result, requests for one time increased costs and ongoing increased costs were not always clearly delineated. Some administrators did not differentiate between funds to maintain existing budgets and funds for net new activities.
- As with Student Learning program review, the degree of dialog about programs goals varied considerably, and was not documented. Many managers saw the exercise as one dealing only with resource allocation.
- The process should be more global, with greater emphasis on setting objectives, assessing progress, and making plans to improve.
- The relationship of administrative program review goals and the college’s strategic objectives needs to be clarified and strengthened.
- Manager-users should have major input the revision of the process.

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