Strategic Planning & Assessment
Go Hand-in-Hand

Ellen Meents-DeCaigny, DePaul University

Ohio Student University
2014 Student Affairs Assessment & Research Conference
Two topics people love!
Provide a practitioner’s perspective

Outline key components of a successful strategic plan that includes assessment

Suggest ways in which assessment can be integrated at various points in the process

Presentation Goals
Purpose of a strategic plan
A clear understanding of external opportunities and challenges
A realistic and comprehensive assessment of organizational strengths and limitations
An inclusive approach
An empowered planning committee
Involvement of Senior Leadership
Shared responsibility
Clear priorities and an implementation plan
Clear plan to measure progress and success
A commitment to change

Keys to success

Mittenthal, 2002
A clear understanding of external opportunities and challenges
A realistic and comprehensive assessment of organizational strengths and limitations
An inclusive approach
An empowered planning committee
Involvement of Senior Leadership
Shared responsibility
Clear priorities and an implementation plan
Clear plan to measure progress and success
A commitment to change

Keys to success

Mittenthal, 2002
What is the mission, goals or vision for the organization?
What gaps, if any, exist in current programming and services?
What is the organization’s role in the university?
To what university initiatives, goals or plans does the new plan need to be connected?

Key questions to consider
Assessing the Current State
EXTERNAL: What data external to the division can be used to inform the process?

- National Trends
- Institutional Strategic Plan
- Institutional Goals and Outcomes
- Core Curriculum
- Enrollment Data
- Institutional Surveys

Assessing the current state
INTERNAL: What current divisional data exists to inform the process?

- Annual Reports
- Assessment Reports
- Department Self Studies or Program Reviews
- Department or Divisional Metrics
- Survey Data

Assessing the current state
How do current constituencies and stakeholders perceive the division?

- Stakeholder Meetings
- Student Meetings
- Student Needs and Satisfaction Assessment

Assessing the current state
Where to start if data doesn’t exist?

- Review of Institutional External Opportunities and Challenges
- Stakeholder and Constituent Meetings
- Abbreviated Department Self Studies and SWOT Analyses
- Student Satisfaction and Needs Survey

Assessing the current state
Measuring Progress and Success
- Defining clear goals, objectives and activities
- Defining measurable milestones to achieve activities
- Calculating progress based on milestones achieved

Measuring progress and success
Goal: Strengthen the organizational and operational effectiveness of the Division of Student Affairs.

Objective: Improve divisional communication

Activities:
- Develop and implement an external communication plan
- Develop and implement an internal communication plan
- Develop and implement divisional communication standards and guidelines

Milestones

Measuring progress and Success
GOAL 1: Lead and Promote an integrated, cumulative, and collaborative paradigm for student learning across the institution

Objective 1: Develop a Robust Partnership with Academic Affairs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Dependent</th>
<th>End Date</th>
<th>Exec. Responsibility</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1c</strong> Inventory/Gap Analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop, review and recommend collaborations and partnerships [membership on committees, initiatives, etc.] with Academic Affairs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mar-11</td>
<td>Peggy Burke</td>
<td>Eric Mata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1b</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify potential professional organizations where faculty, Academic Affairs staff, and Student Affairs staff may be jointly involved and determine strategic Divisional priorities for such involvement.</td>
<td>1.1c</td>
<td>Mar-11</td>
<td>Peggy Burke</td>
<td>Chris Robinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1g</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop common talking points and a unified message about student learning (from Student Affairs perspective). The outcome is to develop shared language for this topic.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jun-11</td>
<td>Peggy Burke</td>
<td>Eric Mata, Deb Schmidt-Rogers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1e</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educate Divisional staff on programs, processes and procedures within Academic Affairs based on identified Divisional priorities.</td>
<td>1.1d</td>
<td>Mar-11</td>
<td>Peggy Burke</td>
<td>Art Munin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1f</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish reciprocal membership on appropriate committees, advisory boards and task forces.</td>
<td>1.1b</td>
<td>Aug-11</td>
<td>Peggy Burke</td>
<td>Peggy Burke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessment as a Strategic Goal
Prime opportunity to focus on improving assessment

- Review assessment processes
- Build staff capacity
- Develop or strengthen learning outcomes
- Develop information management tools
- Strengthen collaborations

Assessment as a goal
Goal: Strengthen the organizational and operational effectiveness of the Division of Student Affairs

Objective: Strengthen assessment of student learning.

Activities:
- Develop departmental and programmatic learning outcomes.
- Map all student learning outcomes.
- Assess and report data on the achievement of student learning outcomes.

Milestones

Assessment as a goal
Challenges and Benefits
Determining priorities and connectedness to university initiatives
Translating important strategic goals into measurable objectives and activities
Determining what data to collect to demonstrate achievement of the plan
Consistently communicating progress toward the plan in order to keep staff members motivated and constituencies informed

Potential challenges
¶ Lack of integration
¶ Looking at only part of the organization and not the whole
¶ Not thinking BIG enough
¶ Limiting future thinking on current reality
¶ Not including stakeholders
¶ Ignoring data
¶ Not measuring key activities aligned with the vision

Common mistakes

Mitchell, 2006
- Being proactive
- Establishing organizational direction
- Making wise strategic decisions
- Increasing job satisfaction
- Increasing staff capacity
- Improving assessment efforts
- Gathering data to support work

Benefits

Mitchell, 2006
So why does strategic planning and assessment go hand-in-hand?
Ellen Meents-DeCaigny, Assistant Vice President for Assessment, Planning and Communications
Division of Student Affairs
DePaul University
emeentsd@depaul.edu
312.362.5680