

# A Guide to Strategic Planning

*March 2008*

This Strategic Planning Guide is written for members of The Ohio State University community, including those engaged in strategic planning processes, and those in consulting roles.

Those outside of The Ohio State University who use this as a resource are asked to make explicit reference to this guide.

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## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Strategic Planning Defined</b>	3
A strategic planning model from the U. of Wisconsin	4
Framework from Rutgers University	5
Elements of a strategic planning process	6
Strategic planning process at OSU Medical Center	6
Strategic planning at The Ohio State University (2008)	7
Prior to strategic planning	9
Conditions for success	10
Leadership assessment	11
A strategic planning team	12
Planning to plan and group norms	13
 <b>Mission</b>	
Definition of mission statement	14
The Ohio State University purpose (mission) statement	14
Sample mission statements	15
Creating a mission statement	16
 <b>Vision</b>	
Definition of a vision statement	18
The Ohio State University Vision – October 2000	19
Sample vision statements	20
Developing a vision statement	21
 <b>Values</b>	
Definition of organizational values and sample values	23
Developing values	24
 <b>Situation Analysis</b>	
SWOT analysis	25
Additional questions for consideration	26
Generating SWOTs	27
Worksheet: SWOTs	28
Additional methods for analyzing current performance	29
 <b>Strategies/Strategic Directions</b>	
Identifying strategies/formulating strategic directions	30
Critical issues	30
Definition of strategy	31
The Ohio State University’s strategies	31
Sample academic strategies	31
Asking for feedback on strategic priorities	32

Suggestions for “closing the gap”	33
Evaluating existing services and products	34
Analyzing the interplay between SWOT’s	35
SWOT Interplay Grid	36
Prioritizing critical issues	37
Prioritizing strategies using criteria rating	38
Strategic priorities criteria rating scale	39
<b>Goals and Objectives</b>	
Definitions of goals and objectives	40
Alignment with vision and strategies	41
Creating a mind map	42
Mind map example	43
Creating a tree diagram	44
Example: Tree diagram	45
<b>One-Year Action Plan</b>	
One-year action plan	46
Template: Annual operational plan	47
<b>Performance Measures</b>	
Performance scorecards and measures	48
Criteria for selecting measures	48
Sample performance measures and alignment with vision	49
Developing performance measures	50
<b>Evaluation and Periodic Checks</b>	
Three types of evaluation activities	51
Evaluating the organization's strategic planning process	51
Worksheet: Evaluation of planning process and plans	52
Periodic checks of the annual plan	54
Periodic checks of the strategic plan	54
Worksheet: Monitoring the strategic plan	55
<b>The Strategic Planning Document</b>	57
<b>Facilitation Issues and Tools</b>	
Using an outside facilitator	58
On-campus resources	58
Brainstorming	59
Reaching consensus	60
Nominal group technique	61
<b>Bibliography</b>	62

## Strategic Planning Defined

Strategic planning is a systematic process through which an organization agrees on and builds commitment to priorities that are essential to its mission and responsive to the operating environment. Strategic planning is a means of establishing major directions for the department, college, or administrative unit. Strategic planning has a 3-5 year, results-oriented focus.

Through strategic planning, resources are concentrated in a limited number of major directions to maximize benefits to stakeholders – those we exist to serve and those affected by the choices we make. In higher education, stakeholders include students, employers of graduates, funding agencies, and society, as well as internal stakeholders such as faculty and staff.

An organization's strategic plan is not an end in itself, but rather a means of achieving its purpose. The result of a strategic planning process is clarity about vision and priorities. Specific objectives to achieve the vision and priorities should be fluid, and identified in annual, tactical planning discussions.

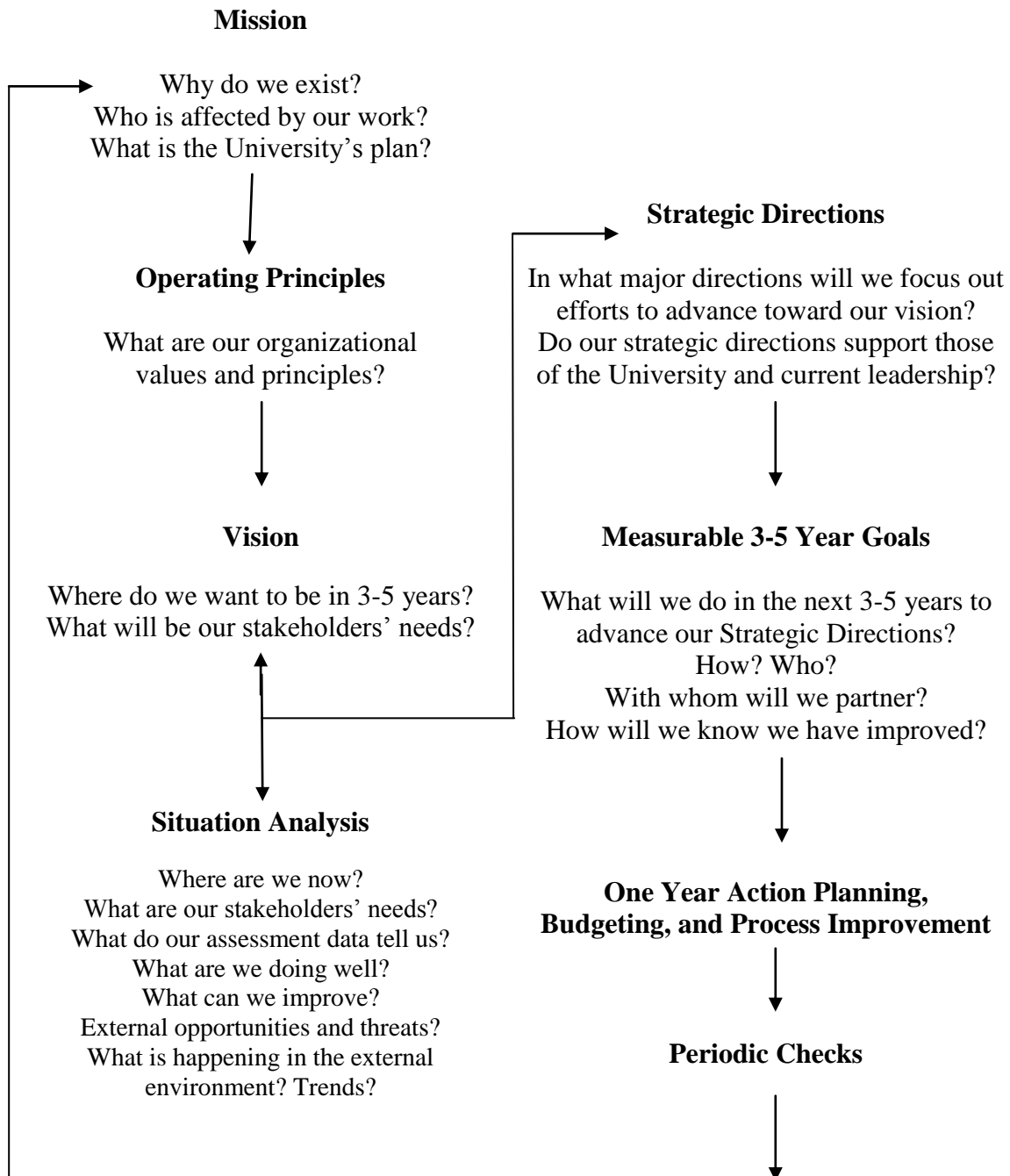
Models and frameworks for strategic planning can be found on pages 4-6. The language used in the model on page 4, from the University of Wisconsin, is the language used throughout this guide book.

### The Value of Strategic Planning

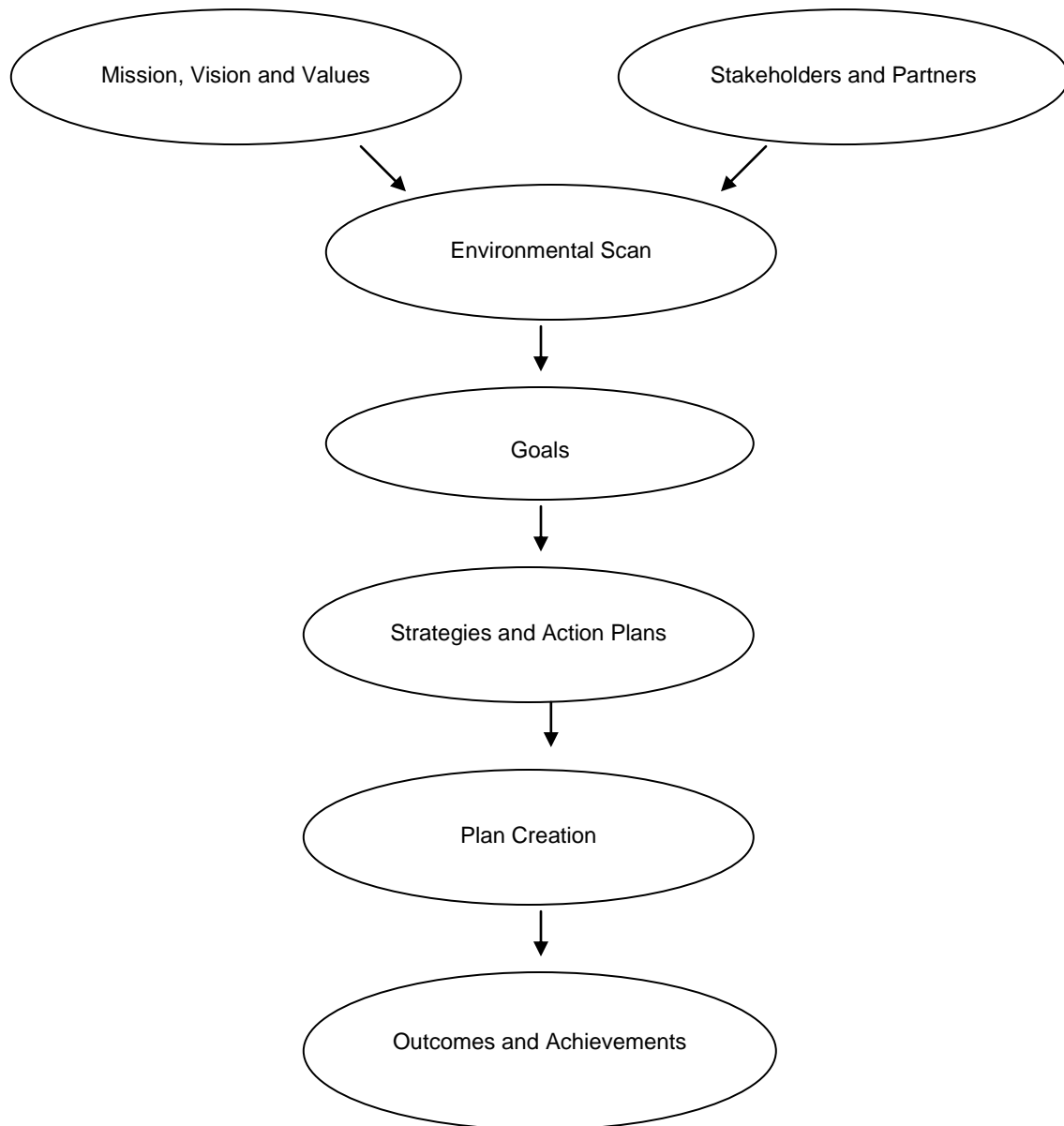
#### *A strategic plan will:*

- Present clear alignment between the overarching goals of the university, its colleges, departments, and administrative units.
- Create a shared understanding about what the organization is trying to achieve and how it will go about achieving it.
- Create a vision of the future that can be shared.
- Provide a clear sense of direction.
- Offer a framework for action based on the organization's priorities.
- Develop specific and quantifiable measures that will identify success.
- Generate specific strategies, goals and objectives to which the organization is committed.
- Identify resources (financial, human, facility, technology, etc.) required for future success.

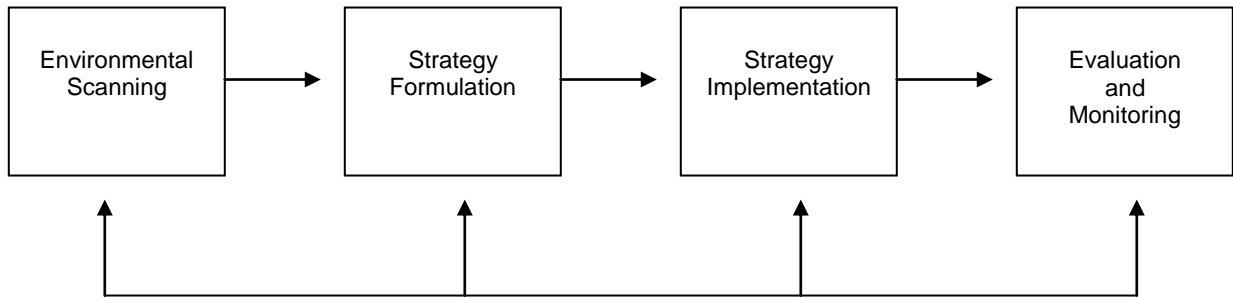
## A Strategic Planning Model from the University of Wisconsin



## Strategic Planning in Higher Education Framework from Rutgers University



**Elements of a Strategic Planning Process from *Successful Strategic Planning*  
(Dooris, Kelley & Trainer, 2004)**



**Strategic Planning Process Used at the OSU Medical Center**

1. Identify mission, vision and values
2. External competition and market analysis
3. Internal analysis of resources and capabilities
4. Goals and objectives
5. Identify priorities based on goals and objectives
6. Develop action plans
7. Strategic indicators and performance tracking
8. Annual review of assumptions, trends and goals

## Strategic Planning at The Ohio State University (2008)

The Academic Plan and the current leadership agenda should be focal points for strategic planning efforts at Ohio State. For more information, see [osu.edu/academicplan/preface.php](http://osu.edu/academicplan/preface.php) and [senate.osu.edu/gee/oct4gee.html](http://senate.osu.edu/gee/oct4gee.html).

Six strategies exist in the 2000 Academic Plan:

1. Build a world-class faculty.
2. Develop academic programs that define Ohio State as the nation's leading public land-grant university.
3. Enhance the quality of teaching and learning environment.
4. Enhance and better serve the student body.
5. Create a diverse university community.
6. Help build Ohio's future.

In a Faculty Council Address on October 4, 2007, President Gordon Gee identified six strategic goals for “making the coming years Ohio State’s time”:

**Forge *one* Ohio State University.** We are the most massive intellectual platform in America gathered on one campus. We unite a stellar liberal arts tradition with professional schools second to none and health sciences on the frontiers of medical discovery. We must capitalize on that platform by defining ourselves comprehensively.

**Put students first.** Being student-centered is a fundamental priority for Ohio State. We must provide our students – undergraduate, graduate, and professional students alike – with unique and compelling educational experiences.

**Focus on faculty success.** We must do everything we can to retain, attract, and reward world-class teachers and researchers in all academic areas of the university. Likewise, we have great expectations that our faculty will contribute in remarkable ways to the success of their students, the community, the state, and beyond.

**Recast our research agenda.** Our mission to create new knowledge is considered by many to be a sacred social compact. Ohio State must not fail to keep that compact. Accordingly, we must stimulate new discoveries on the frontier of research and innovation in all its forms and all across the institution.

**Commit to our communities.** We must revitalize our covenants with our communities and, understanding our responsibilities to Ohio’s taxpayers who want their assets to be used wisely, we must make a difference in the state and in the world.

**Simplify university systems and structures.** It is only through an uncompromising focus on performance, through transparency and accountability that Ohio State will earn the public trust and allow our faculty, staff, and students to thrive. We will, therefore, examine and modify our administrative practices, review our budget system, share resources, and streamline services.

## **Strategic Planning at The Ohio State University (2008), continued**

### **Strategic Plan Elements**

In a memo to the Council of Deans, dated August 27, 2007, Provost Joseph Alutto states that a college strategic plan should contain the following elements:

1. Identification of the general process used to develop plans.
2. Goal statements and tactical implementation steps tied to key Academic Plan dimensions, including:
  - Developing and sustaining world-class faculty whose teaching, research, and service re-energize the approach to solving today's pressing problems.
  - Developing top 10 and 20 departments/programs.
  - Improving the quality of teaching and learning environments.
  - Enhancing and serving more effectively the student body.
  - Creating a more diverse university community.
  - Building Ohio's economic future.
  - Positioning the university as a world resource for education and research.
3. College and center/department goal statements that are integrated and reinforce each other.
4. An overview of resource needs and income streams, including:
  - Identification of financial requirements believed essential to achieve goals, including new resources distribution or current resources redistribution.
  - Identification of human resources believed necessary to achieve goals.
  - Identification of college centric incremental funding sources and levels providing the foundation for achieving goals (e.g., anticipated marginal income from enrollment, IDC projections).
  - Identification of incremental external college funding sources and levels required for success (e.g., development funding, OAA support).
5. Identification of unique facilities and technology requirements needed for success.
6. Time period specific metrics for assessing progress.
7. Periodic (e.g., annual) assessments of college and decanal progress towards plan goals.

## **Prior to Strategic Planning**

Before starting a strategic planning process, it is important to ask, “What do we want to accomplish through strategic planning?” The reasons for planning will have a major impact on how to go about the planning, who to involve, and whether a strategic plan is what you need.

Ask your departmental leadership to answer the following questions:

1. What do we want to achieve from a planning process? What will success look like at the completion of our planning process?
2. What are the issues facing our department/college? What questions need to be answered during the planning process?
3. Are there any products or processes that are non-negotiable (not up for discussion)?

Once you have received responses to these questions, determine if there is agreement on the desired outcomes of the process. Evaluate whether or not strategic planning will help you achieve the results intended by leadership. Are the outcomes of strategic planning consistent with leadership’s desired outcomes? It may be that leadership defines outcomes that will require only one or two of the planning steps. A full strategic planning process in that case is not appropriate.

Assess whether the issues raised are strategic in nature. Strategic issues have a long-range focus (3-5 years) and are geared to fundamental questions about the organization’s ability to deliver results that meet stakeholder needs. In addition, strategic issues are those that affect the whole organization. Are these the types of issues identified in the responses to question 2 above?

Be sure there is agreement on the non-negotiable issues. These should not be a part of strategic planning discussions.

## **Conditions for Success**

Before beginning the strategic planning process be certain the following conditions for success are in place:

- Commitment and support from top leadership.
- Agreement from top leadership to be actively involved in the process. Delegating the process to other staff is not “active involvement.”
- Commitment to collecting and using relevant data. Intuitive decisions cannot guide the process.
- Commitment to involve staff and faculty, key customers, and stakeholders in the planning process.
- Dedicated organizational resources to complete the planning, e.g. staff time, money for off-site retreats, etc. If money for this process is not available, do not get started.
- Agreement on the desired outcomes of the strategic planning process.
- Willingness to question the status quo, look at new ways of doing things, and make difficult decisions.

An assessment of leadership’s readiness for strategic planning follows on page 11. The conditions for success are embedded in the assessment. This assessment contains items you should be asking yourself and verifying with leadership.

## **Leadership Assessment**

The leader of this department:

- Has expressed an interest in setting direction for the organization.
- Has a grasp of the commitment needed for strategic planning.
- Has committed to investing time and high-level resources.
- Has stated a willingness to try out new ideas and directions, even if they are not totally congruent with current practices.
- Is willing to commit his/her personal attention to strategic planning activities.
- Is willing to commit to monitoring the strategic planning process.
- Is willing to personally approve and fund the approved action plans.
- Understands the risks of failure to support strategic planning over the long haul.

## **A Strategic Planning Team**

Strategic planning should be an inclusive effort that involves key stakeholders. Stakeholders are those who care about the organization and have a stake in the success of its mission. Being inclusive builds enthusiasm and commitment. Those who have contributed to the plan will be invested in its successful implementation.

The composition of the planning team, those engaged in the actual strategic planning meetings, will vary according to the unit. There are many different kinds and levels of participation needed. Following are guidelines to follow when selecting those to be involved:

- Keep the group size manageable. More than 10 people will be difficult to manage.
- Leadership must be involved. This is the person ultimately accountable for the department's success. The department head, unit director, dean or vice president of the area must be a part of the team.
- Direct reports of the leader should also be included. This group of people is frequently called the "leadership team," "executive team," or "management group."
- Some non-managerial staff should be on the planning team. They will be able to provide information about day-to-day realities and needs of the customers they serve.
- Customers are valuable to include. They will be critical in sharing insight into the organization's current performance and expressing future needs.
- Combine visionaries (people who think in "big picture terms" and see what the organization can be) and people who are more operational in thinking (people who think about logistics and who evaluate issues based on feasibility).
- All members selected should have an organization-wide perspective and orientation. Protecting individual territories and interests will hinder the process.

## **Planning to Plan and Group Norms**

After identifying the planning team, it is important to meet as a group to discuss:

- The purpose of the team and the strategic planning process.
- The steps in the planning process and how the group will proceed.
- The role of the team: clearly state how decisions will be made and by whom.
- If consensus is the decision-making style that will be used, review the definition of consensus and the process for reaching consensus (see page 60).
- The language that will be used during the process. Agree on definitions of strategic plan, mission, vision, goals, objectives, etc.
- The frequency and length of your meetings.
- The responsibility for note taking during meetings and actual writing of the final plan.
- The ways in which the rest of the organization will be kept informed. After each step of the planning process, information should be shared with and feedback solicited from the rest of the organization. If the planning team waits until they are completely finished with the strategic plan before engaging the rest of the unit, there will be little support for implementation.

## Mission

### Definition of Mission Statement

A mission statement is a brief statement of purpose for the organization. It describes what the organization currently does and whom it serves. It answers the questions:

1. Why do we exist?
2. Whom do we serve?
3. What products and services do we provide?

A mission statement provides a blueprint for an organization's work -- the what, why, and how of what it does.

With a clear mission, people know what is important to them and can focus their activity. They can be strategic and pick priorities, rather than be reactive.

### Format of Mission Statements

Mission statements can take many formats. The one essential criterion is brevity. A simple yet effective format follows:

Our mission is to serve... (*customers*) with the... (*products and services*) in order to achieve... (*why we exist*).

### The Ohio State University Purpose (Mission) Statement

To advance the well-being of the people of Ohio and the global community through the creation and dissemination of knowledge.

## Sample Mission Statements

Agency/Department	Mission Statement
Master of Business Administration Program, Fisher College of Business, The Ohio State University	The Master of Business Administration (MBA) program is a leading national and international program, offering integrated and comprehensive learning environments that provide students with executive leadership skills, appropriately sophisticated perspectives on management processes, and opportunities for developing career specializations. The MBA program is designed to prepare students to achieve excellence in their management careers and to assume leadership roles in a complex and diverse global environment.
Printing Services, University of North Texas (UNT)	UNT Printing Services is in business to provide quality, cost-effective, and timely printing and copy services to the UNT community and other state agencies.
Ohio Board of Regents	The Ohio Board of Regents leads, advocates, and coordinates the process of on-going transformation of higher education to maximize accessible, quality learning opportunities in a fiscally responsible manner resulting in individual successes and an improved intellectual, social, and economic life for all Ohioans.
Ohio State Office of Human Resources	Our mission is to provide quality human resource services to faculty and staff in support of the university's teaching, research, and service objectives.
Project OpenHand Columbus	Our mission is to provide for the nutritional needs of people living with HIV/AIDS.
YMCA	The YMCA of San Francisco, based in Judeo-Christian heritage, seeks to enhance the lives of all people through programs designed to develop spirit, mind, and body.
Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles	The mission of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles is to provide prompt, courteous, and efficient service to the public while fulfilling our obligations as set forth in the motor vehicle laws of the State of Ohio.

## Creating a Mission Statement

Time required: Approximately 3 hours.

Process:

1. Define mission statement for the team and share examples. Refer to pages 13-14 of this guide. (10 minutes)
2. Divide the large group into small groups of 3-4 people. (5 minutes)
3. Review the brainstorming guidelines found on page 54. (5 minutes)
4. Ask each of the small groups to brainstorm answers to the three questions listed below. (25 minutes)

The small groups should write their answers on flip chart paper. A different piece of flip chart paper should be used for each of the three questions. Label the flip chart papers according to the highlighted words in the questions below:

- A. What are the **products, services, and information** we currently provide?
- B. Who are our **customers**? Who receives our products, services, and information?
- C. Why do we provide our products, services, and information? When we deliver our products, services, and information, what are the **consequences** we intend?

At the end of this step in the activity, each small group has three papers that look like this:

Products, Services and Information	Customers	Consequences
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•

4. Post the brainstorm responses. Post them so that all "**products, services and information**" papers are together, all "**customers**" papers are together and the same for "**consequences.**" (5 minutes)

### Creating a Mission Statement, continued

5. Ask the large group to review the posted responses. Ask, "What are the commonalities between all the small group responses?" Highlight or circle common responses. For example, if there were three brainstorming groups and all three listed "faculty" as a customer, circle the word on all of the **customer** pages. (10 minutes)
6. Give each small group a set of responses, mixing up the pages from each of the groups. Each group will have a paper that says "products, services, and information," and a paper that says "customers" and one that lists "consequences." They should not have their own original papers - mix them up. (5 minutes)
7. Ask each small group to use information from the pages, and particularly the highlighted words, to draft a mission statement. Remind the groups that all three elements should be present: (A) products, services, and information, (B) customers, and (C) intended consequences. Each draft should be limited to three sentences or less. (30 minutes)
8. Post the draft mission statements. Ask the group to work toward consensus on a draft mission statement. If there are a couple of words that are debated, allow the group time to reflect on the words and bring their thoughts back to another meeting. (60 minutes)
9. Decide what happens next with the mission statement. How will you get feedback from the entire unit? Involvement needs to be widespread for the department to have commitment. Is there a stakeholder (dean, vice president, etc.) from whom you need feedback? Determine how the draft statement will become finalized. (15 minutes)

## Vision

### Definition of a Vision Statement

A vision statement is a shared picture of performance excellence. It is a guiding image of success and answers the questions: “What do we want to create?” “How do we want to be known?”

A vision statement is a realistic, credible, attractive future for your organization. The right vision is an idea so energizing that it jump-starts the future by calling forth skills, talents and resources to make it happen. A vision statement is about tomorrow and its primary purpose is to inspire.

A clear, common picture of the desired end provides criteria for decision making. The picture focuses and empowers employees at all levels of the organization.

### A Vision Statement:

- Motivates and inspires.
- Is challenging and compelling, stretching beyond what is comfortable.
- Is achievable, not a fantasy.
- Fits with the highest values of the organization.
- Is easy to communicate, clearly and simply.
- Can be used to guide decision-making.

## **The Ohio State University Vision from the 2000 Academic Plan**

### *Overarching Goal*

The Ohio State University will be among the world's truly great universities.

### *Future*

The Ohio State University will be recognized worldwide for the quality and impact of its research, teaching, and service. Our students will be able to learn and to advance knowledge in all areas. As a 21st century land-grant university, The Ohio State University will set the standard for the creation and dissemination of knowledge in service to its communities, state, nation, and the world. Our faculty, students, and staff will be among the best in the nation.

Academic excellence will be enriched by an environment that mirrors the diverse world in which we live. Within this environment, we will come to value the differences in one another along with the similarities, and to appreciate that the human condition is best served through understanding, acceptance, and mutual respect. Throughout the learning process, our faculty and staff will find the highest levels of fulfillment and satisfaction as they collaborate to educate and support a student body recognized for its scholarship and integrity.

Students will have the opportunity to learn on our campuses or from locations around the world through the innovative use of technology. The quality of our physical facilities and grounds will be consistent with our world-class status. Extracurricular activities will support the personal growth of all members of our community. Our intercollegiate athletic programs will routinely rank among the elite few.

Graduation rates for all students will compare favorably with the nation's best public universities. Most of all, our graduates will be among the most sought after by the world's best employers and will become leaders in their communities and accomplished professionals in their chosen work. We will lead Ohio to a dynamic knowledge economy, and our research, widely known for its multidisciplinary programs, will help solve the most challenging social, cultural, technical, and health- related problems.

The excellence of our programs will be recognized by the highest levels of public and private support. As a result, The Ohio State University will earn an intensity of alumni loyalty and of public esteem unsurpassed by any other university.

## Sample Vision Statements

Organization	Vision Statement
OSU College of Public Health	To make a difference in the health of the public by advancing knowledge through multidisciplinary research and education and by reaching out with knowledge, service and leadership to Ohio and the world.
OSU Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Geodetic Science (College of Engineering)	The Department of CEEGS will be the premier department in the State of Ohio and among the top universities nationally providing education, research, and public service in areas of geoinformation, infrastructure, transportation, environmental engineering, and computer-aided engineering.
Printing Services at the University of North Texas	A department motivated by customer needs, staffed by well-trained employees, working together with the latest technology to provide quality printed products and services to the university community and other state agencies.
Ohio Board of Regents	The Ohio Board of Regents will be a catalyst in helping campuses transform society through state-of-the art education and research systems that are responsive to societal and economic needs.
Baylor Health Care System	To be one of the preeminent health care systems in the world.

## Developing a Vision Statement

Time required: Approximately 2.5 hours

Process:

1. Define “vision” and share examples. Use pages 18-20 of this guide as a reference. (10 minutes)
2. Explain to your group that they will be creating an affinity diagram that will help define the organization's vision. An affinity diagram begins with divergent thinking (many ideas), and ends with convergent thinking (fewer, condensed ideas). (5 minutes)
3. On a large, empty wall, post the question, "When you envision a truly excellent (fill in the name of the unit) five years from now, what exists?"
4. Give each member of the group a stack of sticky notes and a black marker. Ask each group member to answer the question posted on the wall, writing one response per sticky note. Encourage participants to be creative and thoughtful. Ask the participants to use the black marker and to write legibly, in bold, large print so that it is visible 4-6 feet away. (10 minutes)
5. After everyone has had time to generate their ideas, post the sticky notes below the question in random order on the wall. (5 minutes)
6. Ask the group to sort the ideas simultaneously into 5-10 related groupings. The sorting should be done without talking. Give these instructions: “Group the sticky notes together so similar notes are grouped together. Move the notes where they fit best for you. You don’t need to ask, simply move any notes that you think belong in another grouping. Give everybody a chance to participate in the categorizing.” (40 minutes)
7. Invite the team to start talking. Ask them to work collectively and to agree on a header for each grouping. Record the header on a sticky note and post it above the grouping. It is helpful to use a color other than black for these header notes. (45 minutes)

(Continued on the next page)

### **Developing a Vision Statement, continued**

8. Ask the group to respond to what they see. Ask, "If each category heading is present in five years, will the department be excellent?" (10 minutes)
9. Ask the leader to draft a vision statement using the information generated through this activity. The draft vision statement should include each of the category headings identified in the affinity diagram. (5 minutes)
10. Discuss how the draft vision statement will be shared with this group, with others in your department and with key stakeholders. Remember that participation creates alignment! Be sure to establish mechanisms for incorporating feedback into the statement. (15 minutes)

### **Facilitation Tips:**

- Sorting in silence allows the participants to focus on the meanings behind and connections among all ideas, instead of emotions and “history” that often arise in discussions.
- As you, the facilitator, observe an idea getting moved back and forth, try to see the logical connection that each person is making. If this movement continues beyond a reasonable point, agree to create a duplicate sticky note.
- It’s okay for some notes to stand alone. These loners can be as important as others that fit into groupings naturally.

## Values

### Definition of Organizational Values

Organizational values are the human factors that drive the conduct of business. They are a set of precepts, principles, beliefs, or statements of advocacy to which everyone in the organization pledges adherence. Values provide guidelines on how the vision should be achieved.

Research shows that people cannot focus on more than three or four values or those values will not really have an impact on behavior. There is also the thinking that values should be rank ordered to be effective. Why? Because life is about value conflicts. When these conflicts arise, people need to know which value to focus on. Walt Disney knew this when he ranked “safety” ahead of other values – “courtesy,” “the show,” and “efficiency.”

### Sample Values

The following is part of the strategic plan of The Ohio State University College of Nursing.

The Ohio State University College of Nursing will carry out its mission by committing to the following:

<b>Collaboration</b>	Collaboration is a partnership between individuals and organizations that bring diverse skills and perspectives to a task.
<b>Diversity</b>	Diversity is the acceptance and appreciation of differences in culture, thought and experience, and the integration of them into everything we do.
<b>Excellence</b>	Excellence will be achieved when the reputation of the College facilitates the recruitment and retention of high quality students, faculty and staff, and when the College is highly ranked.
<b>Innovation</b>	Innovation is the generation and discovery of new ideas and ways of doing things through creative inquiry.
<b>Integrity</b>	Integrity is the maintenance of high and consistent standards that hold up under scrutiny.
<b>Respect</b>	Respect is the acknowledgement, consideration and regard for the ideas and unique contributions of others.

## Developing Values

Time required: Approximately 1.5 hours

Process:

1. Offer a desired outcome of this activity, such as “To come to agreement on 5-6 organizational values.” Emphasize that this is a conceptual exercise, with no time for detailed editing. Define “value” and share examples. Use page 23 of this guide as a reference. (10 minutes)
2. Give each participant three blank index cards. Ask each person to write one value per index card. The three values they write should be what they believe to be the most important values for the organization to hold. (10 minutes)
3. Ask each person to examine the additional “value cards” in the middle of the table. These are index cards, face down, with values, such as (one per index card):

Visionary	Continuous Improvement	Quality-Conscious
Diversity	Respect	Creativity
Innovation	Inclusive	Equitable
Professional	Teamwork	Collaboration
Ethical	Integrity	Responsive
Results-Oriented	Trustworthy	Efficient

5. Invite group members to “trade in” one or more of their personal value cards for a value card from the center of the table. The goal is to keep in one’s hand the three most important values he/she believes the organization should hold. (10 minutes)
6. Ask participants to “show their hands.” Each person should reveal the three values they are holding, which should be the most important values the organization should hold. The facilitator can capture on a flip chart the values in each person’s hand. (15 minutes)
7. Where there is redundancy, or words with similar meaning, group the responses together. If there are more than six values offered by the participants, discuss which are most important and why. Come to agreement, or ask the leader to make a decision on the six organization values. (40 minutes)
8. As a group, decide if the values should be rank ordered or left as a list of values with each being as important as every other in the list. (5 minutes)
9. Each of the values should be defined so that everyone in the organization understands the intent and the expectation of each value. This should be done outside of a group meeting, by one or two individuals. The definitions can be shared with the larger group for feedback and revision.

## Situation Analysis

Situation analysis involves taking a hard look at the current performance of the organization and the environment in which it operates. The essential task in this step is to assess the organization’s programs, their effectiveness and competitive position, and the opportunities and threats in the environment relative to meeting customer needs.

### SWOT Analysis

A useful framework for the assessment of the current situation is the SWOT analysis:

<b>SWOT</b>	What are the organization’s internal <b>strengths</b> ? What do we do well?
<b>SWOT</b>	What are the organization’s internal <b>weaknesses</b> ? Where can we improve?
<b>SWOT</b>	What external <b>opportunities</b> exist with respect to pursuing our mission and vision? What changes are taking place in our environment that might allow us to better achieve our mission?
<b>SWOT</b>	What external <b>threats</b> might hinder the pursuit of our mission and vision? What changes in the environment do we need to guard against or prepare for in doing our work?

Opportunities and threats typically include:

- Customers, stakeholders, competitors, and strategic alliances.
- Social, political, economic, and technological forces.

Generating SWOT data can be done at the level of the whole organization or at the level of each program. For example, a college can gather SWOT data at the college level, or it might gather it for each department or degree offered.

When doing this data collection, it is important to involve as many faculty, staff and customers as possible. Each stakeholder will have perceptions about the SWOTs. One option is for the planning team to develop SWOTs and then get feedback from faculty, staff, and customers beyond the planning team.

### **Additional Questions for Consideration**

In addition to the SWOT questions listed on page 25, the following questions (from the Fisher College of Business) can guide a situation analysis discussion:

- Who are our competitors?
- What disruptive business models threaten the existing landscape?
- What disruptive technologies are likely to emerge?
- Who are our stakeholders and what do they expect of us?
- Who are we? (e.g. what capabilities do we have that are valuable, potentially relatively rare, and not easily copied and may therefore be a potential source of sustainable competitive advantage?)

The President of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute posed the following key “directive questions” in 1999 to guide a strategic planning process for her university:

- What defines the intellectual core in key disciplines at Rensselaer? Is it important and why?
- In these disciplines, are we in a leadership position? Do we set the standard and the agenda? That is, do we have great impact nationally and globally?
- If we are not in a leadership position, do we have the underlying strengths and capabilities necessary to move rapidly into a position of primacy with the proper focus and investment?
- Are there areas that are so vital and so important that we must create a presence in them (even if we do not already have one) in order to stand in the community of world-class universities?
- What areas of current endeavor must we be willing to transform – or to give up – in order to focus our resources and our energies to create the impact we envision?

## **Generating SWOTs**

Time required: 1.5 hours

Process:

1. Participants should be asked to brainstorm answers to the four questions listed below. Ideas should be captured on flip chart paper or on the worksheet found on page 28. This step in generating SWOTs can be done with a large group, in small groups, or individually. (60 minutes)

Participants should be asked to contribute ideas that are as specific as possible. For example, it will be more helpful to note “75 percent of staff have worked in this department for six or more years,” rather than “knowledgeable staff.”

- A. What are our strengths? What do we do well?
  - B. What are our weaknesses? Where can we improve?
  - C. What are our opportunities? What changes are taking place in our environment that might allow us to better achieve our mission?
  - D. What external threats exist? What changes in the environment do we need to prepare for in doing our work?
2. After all the ideas are generated, group the ideas into similar, broader categories, e.g. staffing, marketing, funding, etc. It's helpful to do this on flip chart paper so that everyone can see the ideas generated and the broader categories. (30 minutes)

**Worksheet: SWOTs**

<b>SWOTs</b>	
<b>Internal Focus</b>	<b>External Focus</b>
<p><b>Strengths:</b> What do we do well?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p><b>Opportunities:</b> What changes are taking place in our environment that might allow us to better achieve our mission?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p><b>Weaknesses:</b> Where can we improve?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats:</b> What changes in the environment do we need to prepare for in doing our work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

## **Additional Methods for Analyzing Current Situation and Performance**

Generating SWOTs is a frequently used strategic planning method for discovering the “what is” of an organization. There are many other ways to assess your organization’s current situation and performance. Some of those include:

1. Focus groups or confidential interviews with unit staff. The purpose of these is to determine employees' attitudes toward the organization and its direction. To protect anonymity, an outside consultant typically conducts interviews and focus groups. Some of the questions that might get asked include:
  - What are the department's strengths? Weaknesses?
  - What are external opportunities and threats?
  - What barriers do you encounter to getting your work done?
  - How is morale? How is communication?
  - Are there programs or work processes that don't work?
  - Are there new directions the department should pursue?
2. Management effectiveness survey – This is a tool distributed to internal staff to identify how effectively the organization is managed.
3. Customer satisfaction survey – This is a tool distributed to customers to determine their perceptions of the organization's services and products. At the heart of this survey are answers to the questions:
  - What do customers expect from us?
  - How well are we performing against those expectations?
4. Reviewing industry journals and information from industry-specific conferences will provide information on external opportunities and threats. These sources also provide valuable benchmarking information.
5. Analyzing financial reports from the previous five years will provide information on financial performance and health. Sometimes detailed financial analyses are conducted on parts of the organization that are thought to be deficient, such as a program, degree, or service.

## Strategies/Strategic Directions

### Identifying Strategies/Formulating Strategic Directions

Identifying strategies or formulating strategic directions involves closing the gap between the organization's current situation and its vision or ideal future. In essence, the unit must answer the questions:

- Where are we now versus where we want to be and need to be?
- What strategies will advance us toward our vision?

Page 33 contains a list of suggestions for how to “close the gap.”

When closing the gap, the planning team should generate and then prioritize a list of critical issues that must be resolved through the strategic planning process. Once prioritized, the list of critical issues can be rewritten as strategies.

### Critical Issues

A list of critical issues will naturally emerge from a gap analysis. The issues are the concerns the organization should prioritize for resolution. Your list of critical issues might look something like this:

- Our benchmark institutions have started offering an executive weekend degree program. Will we follow?
- The older students we serve have evaluated us poorly on our student satisfaction surveys. How do the needs of this population differ from a traditional-age population? What are we doing to meet these needs?
- Our research has declined over the last five years, and there have been no federal grants approved for the last two years. What are our research aspirations?
- Our model for providing “X” service is outdated; we need a new delivery model.

Narrowing down a list of critical issues is essential. Every concern cannot be addressed in the next 3-5 years. What is most important to be addressed in this strategic plan? A process for prioritizing is illustrated on page 37.

### **Definition of Strategy (also called Strategic Priorities, Strategic Imperatives, etc.)**

Strategies are a limited number of broad directions on which collective attention must be focused for the foreseeable future. Being strategic means making conscious choices about how you are going to use your limited resources to achieve your purpose in response to a dynamic environment.

Strategy is something different than and larger than, goals and objectives. The best strategies focus a unit's strengths to seize opportunities to get over, around or through the barriers it faces to being what it wants to be (its vision). A strategic plan should include 5-8 strategies or strategic directions.

A strategy:

- Defines what you will do differently than you have in the past
- Affects the whole organization, and will require cross-functional effort
- Requires multiyear efforts
- Supports your mission and vision

### **The Ohio State University's Strategies**

As stated in the October 2000 Academic Plan, Ohio State's strategies are:

- Build a world-class faculty
- Develop academic programs that define Ohio State as the nation's leading public land-grant university
- Enhance the quality of the teaching and learning environment
- Enhance and better serve the student body
- Create a diverse university community
- Help build Ohio's future

### **Sample Academic Strategies:**

- Streamline/simplify
- Decrease/discontinue
- Partner with others
- Focus on different audiences
- Use technology to do something that is difficult/impossible to do now
- Refocus job responsibilities
- Have one person do what many did
- Improve/redesign a particular process
- Decentralize/centralize

### **Asking for Feedback on Strategic Priorities**

As with other steps in this planning process, input from staff, customers and other stakeholders is critical. Share a draft list of your strategic priorities and ask for feedback. Some of the questions you might ask include:

- What clarification do you need about these priorities and why they are on the list?
- What is on this list that you believe should not be on the list?
- What is missing from the list that you believe should be on the list?
- From what you know about us, what will be our challenges and our opportunities in successfully carrying out each of these priorities?

## Suggestions for "Closing the Gap"

1. Review and discuss the organization's SWOTs relative to the vision statement by asking:
  - How do we get to the desired state?
  - What are we currently doing that is helping or hindering us (strengths and weaknesses)?
  - How can we capitalize on our strengths to move us closer to our vision?
  - What new programs and initiatives are needed to respond to the external environment?
  - What should we keep doing? Stop doing? Start doing?
2. Evaluate current services and products relative to the vision. The general question that should be asked is, "Should we make changes in the services or products we are currently offering or how we go about doing business so as to be better able to achieve our preferred future?" Page 34 details an activity associated with this method of "closing the gap."
3. Compare data from management effectiveness surveys and/or customer satisfaction surveys against your vision of the future.
4. Compare information from financial statements against external opportunities and threats.
5. Analyze the interplay between the SWOTs. By examining the intersection of SWOT variables, the likelihood of gaining new insights about strategic choices increases. An activity for this analysis is on page 35.

## **Evaluating Existing Services and Products Relative to the Vision**

Time Required: Approximately 2 hours for each existing service or product

Process:

1. Share with the group the overall question you are trying to answer: “Should we make changes in the services or products we are currently offering or how we go about doing business, so as to be better able to achieve our preferred future?”
2. Determine if additional people should be brought into the discussion. Who you involve should be determined by the specific service/product being discussed.
3. Ask each of the following pragmatic questions about each service or product currently offered to help answer the overall question.
  - A. Why is this service needed? What are the current and future market demands for this service?
  - B. Is this the most effective way for us to meet the needs of our customers? Can we meet those demands by providing the services in a different format?
  - C. Are we the best organization to provide this service? Do we have the necessary organizational capabilities to provide quality service?
4. As each service or product is reviewed compile a list of critical issues that need to be prioritized and resolved throughout the strategic planning process. Ask the planning team to reach consensus on the list of prioritized issues.

## Analyzing the Interplay between SWOTs

Time Required: Approximately 4 hours

Process:

1. Review your SWOTs (see pages 27-28). (10 minutes)
2. Prioritize the top 5-7 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. (30 minutes)
3. List the top 5-7 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in the appropriate boxes in the SWOT grid on page 36. (10 minutes)
4. Discuss, make decisions, and fill in the Invest, Decide, Defend, and Damage Control boxes using the definitions and questions below. (120 minutes)

**Invest:** Clear matches of strengths and opportunities lead to competitive advantage. How can you leverage your strengths to capitalize on a perceived opportunity?

**Decide:** Areas of opportunities matched by areas of weaknesses require a judgment call: invest or divest; collaborate. How can you invest or divest resources in weak programs, or your infrastructure, to respond to a perceived opportunity?

**Defend:** Areas of threat matched by areas of strength indicate a need to mobilize resources either alone or with others. How can you mobilize your strengths to avert a perceived threat?

**Damage control:** Areas of threat matched by areas of weakness indicate a need for damage control. How will you respond to a weakness that makes you vulnerable given an impending threat?

5. Compile a list of critical issues that need to be prioritized and resolved throughout the strategic planning process. Ask the planning team to reach consensus on the prioritized list of issues. (60 minutes)

**SWOT Interplay Grid**

	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Invest</b>	<b>Defend</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>		
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Decide</b>	<b>Damage Control</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>		

## Prioritizing Critical Issues

Time for activity: 2 hours

Process:

1. List all of the issues that have emerged to this point. Combine those that are clearly related and eliminate redundancies.
2. Ask each individual team member to evaluate each of the remaining issues using the following A-B-C weighting factor:
  - A = an issue that must clearly be addressed
  - B = an issue where more information is needed before a decision about the priority of resolving the issue can be determined
  - C = an issue that could be referred to a specific unit, deferred for later consideration, or dropped without impairing your future progress
3. On a flip chart piece of paper, record and total each individual team member's selections under each weighting factor. An example where there are eight planning team members follows:

Critical Issue	A	B	C	What, Who, and When
Benchmark institutions are offering weekend exec degree program	7	1		
We've received poor student satisfaction ratings from older population	1	7		What percentage is this population? With what specific services are they dissatisfied? J. Roberts
Alumni have not been a priority in the past	4		4	
Our model for delivering "X" is outdated	6	1	1	

4. Compile a list of tentative priorities based on the number and nature of the responses. Where there is consensus that additional information is needed, write in the "What, Who, and When" column the information required, the name of the person accountable, and when the information will be provided.
5. Discuss the issues to ensure team agreement on the tentative priorities and determine when you will meet again to reach final agreement.

## **Prioritizing Strategies Using Criteria Rating<sup>1</sup>**

Time Required: Approximately 2 hours

Process:

1. Review all of the strategic issues that have risen in the planning process. (You might share this list with stakeholders before the list is finalized.)
2. Addressing one issue at a time, define strategies to respond to the issues.
3. Develop agreed-upon decision criteria. Try to limit the criteria to 5-7. These criteria will be used to prioritize the strategies. Examples of criteria include:
  - Fits with vision
  - Resource availability
  - Meets customers needs
  - Low/modest cost
4. Agree on the relative importance of each criterion and give each criterion a weight. To do this, ask, “How important is each of the criteria in relationship to the others?” The total of the assigned weights for all criteria must equal 100 percent.

One way to do this is to ask each team member to weigh the criteria individually. Determine the final weight by averaging the individual weights assigned by each team member.

5. Create a criteria rating scale (see example on page 39) with the proposed strategies along the horizontal axis and the criteria along the vertical axis.
6. Using a consistent rating scale, evaluate each strategy against each of the criterion. Any scale will work as long as the same scale is used for all strategies and criteria. An easy scale to use is 1-10, with 10 being high and 1 being low.
7. Calculate the score for each strategy by multiplying the weight by the rating. Write this figure in parentheses in the appropriate boxes on the criteria rating form.
8. Add the numbers in parentheses for each strategy and write the totals in the appropriate boxes. The highest totals reflect the highest rated strategic priorities.

<sup>1</sup> Criteria rating can also be used to prioritize critical issues, prior to developing strategies.

<b>Strategic Priorities Criteria Rating Scale</b>		<b>Strategies</b>			
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Weight</b>	Offer degree programs similar to benchmark institutions	Enhance services to better meet the needs of older student population	Enhance relationships with alumni	Develop new model for delivering "X"
Fits with vision	40% (.4)	8 x .4 (3.2)	5 x .4 (2.0)	3 x .4 (1.2)	8 x .4 (3.2)
Resource availability	30% (.3)	4 x .3 (1.2)	8 x .3 (2.4)	2 x .3 (.6)	8 x .3 (2.4)
Meets customer needs	20% (.2)	9 x .2 (1.8)	9 x .2 (1.8)	5 x .2 (1.0)	8 x .2 (1.6)
Low modest cost	10% (.1)	9 x .1 (.9)	5 x .1 (.5)	5 x .1 (.5)	4 x .1 (.4)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>7.6</b>

## Goals and Objectives

### Definitions of Goals and Objectives

Goals are targeted outcomes; they clearly describe desired accomplishments. Goals have a beginning and an end – they get set and they get achieved.

**Goal:** A statement of what is to be achieved. It is an outcome statement that guides performance. (In the 2000 Academic Plan, The Ohio State University refers to goals as “initiatives.”)

**Objective:** A step or activity taken to achieve a goal.

Goals and objectives should be written so there is no misunderstanding about what needs to be accomplished. Effective goals/objectives are SMART:

<b>S</b> pecific	It is detailed enough so that anyone reading the goal will know what is intended to be accomplished.
<b>M</b> easurable	The end result can be identified in terms of quantity, quality, acceptable standards, etc. You know you have a measurable goal when it states in objective terms the end result or product.
<b>A</b> ttainable	The goal is feasible.
<b>R</b> elevant	The goal is relevant to the organization's mission and vision.
<b>T</b> ime-framed	There is a specific date attached to the completion.

## Alignment with Vision and Strategies

In strategic planning, goals are established for the next 3-5 years. At the end of five years, and with effective goal setting and implementation, the unit will be closer to its desired vision. An example of this cascading relationship follows:

**Vision:** The Ohio State University will be among the world's truly great universities.

**Strategy:** Enhance the quality of the teaching and learning environment.

Goals:	Objectives:
1. Upgrade the quality of our classroom pool space and enhance the appearance of the campus facilities and grounds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build 25 state-of-the-art classrooms (5/year for 5 years).</li> <li>• Add Project Cleaning Teams to augment today's custodial staff.</li> </ul>
2. Transform the library into a 21 <sup>st</sup> century, Information-Age center within the next 5-10 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combine fundraising with support from state capital funding budgets over the next several biennia.</li> </ul>

The degree of detail of the goals and objectives in the strategic plan is a decision point. The written strategic plan might end with goals. The important thing to remember here is that a vision without accountability is likely to fail. The more details that are provided, the easier it will be to measure success and track progress.

The following two activities - creating a mind map and creating a tree diagram - might be helpful in thinking through all of the goals required to support a strategy or all of the steps necessary to accomplish a goal.

## Creating a Mind Map

Mind maps can be used to define the goals needed to achieve a strategic priority or to define the objectives needed to achieve a goal. The example demonstrated here is related to a goal and its objectives.

This is not necessarily a group activity. It is very detailed work and might be more effective for one or two individuals. Before the goals and objectives are finalized, they should be shared broadly.

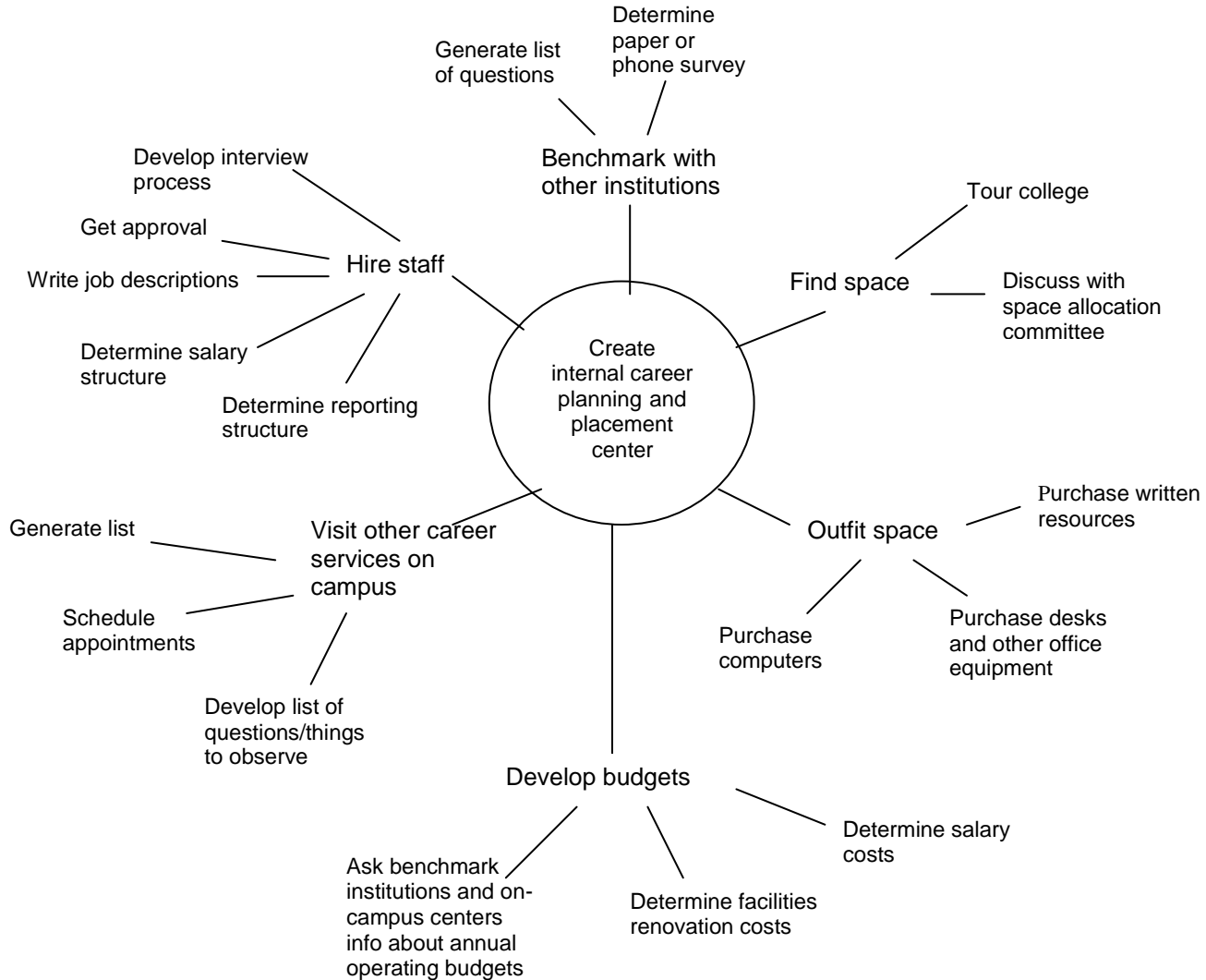
Time Required: Depends on the level of detail developed.

Process:

1. Define mind map. A mind map is a visual way to start breaking down a larger concept (strategic priority or goal) into manageable chunks.
2. Write the goal in the center of a large sheet of paper.
3. Brainstorm all the things that will have to happen in order for the goal to be achieved. Write all these ideas around the goal; branching out from the center. These will become your objectives.
4. From each brainstormed idea, identify specific steps (tasks) that will have to take place to reach the larger idea. Write all these thoughts around the first ideas, branching out from them. Keep branching out your ideas.
5. Using your visual mind map, create a linear list of your goal, objectives, and specific tasks, paying attention to sequence and organization. What should happen first, second, etc?
6. Edit your goal and objectives so they are written in a SMART fashion (see page 40).

**Mind Map Example for Goal:  
"By 2010, create internal Career Planning and Placement Center."**

This is not meant to be all inclusive.



## Creating a Tree Diagram

A tree diagram can be used to define the goals needed to achieve a strategic priority or to define the objectives needed to achieve a goal. The example demonstrated here is related to a goal and its objectives.

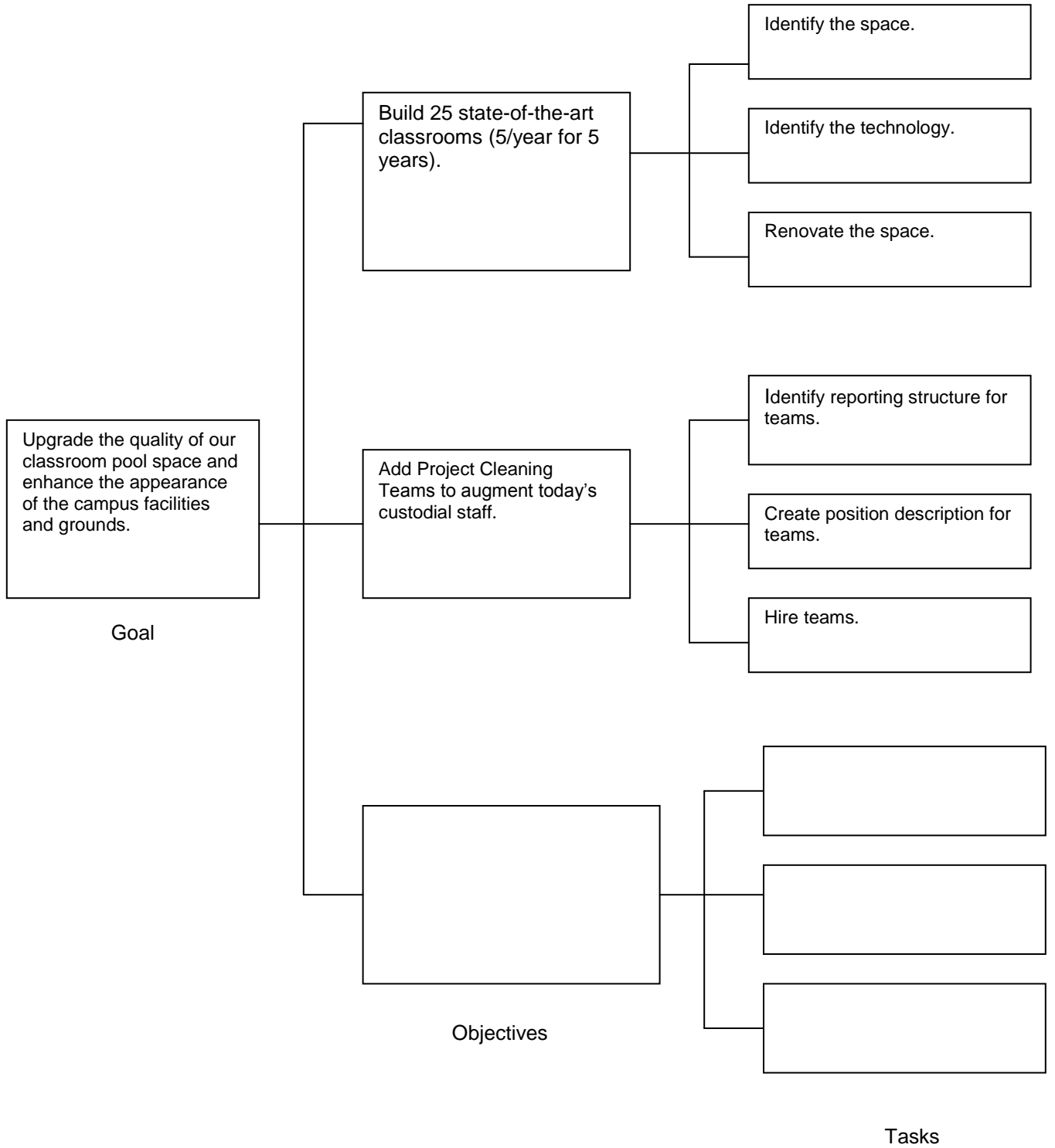
This is very detailed work and might be most effective with one or two individuals. Before the goals and objectives are finalized, they should be shared broadly.

Time Required: Depends on the level of detail developed.

Process:

1. Define tree diagram. A tree diagram is a planning tool used to map out the path and tasks that need to be accomplished in order to achieve a goal and all related objectives.
2. Select someone to be the recorder. The job of the recorder is to write potential tasks, or process steps, on 3" x 5" sticky notes.
3. Write the goal on a sticky note and place the sticky note on the left side of a large piece of paper posted on the wall (see page 45).
4. Brainstorm all the steps or tasks that need to be accomplished in order to reach the goal. Write each task on a sticky note (one task per note).
5. When you have completed the brainstorming, choose the tasks you consider the most important. These tasks are objectives and are the first or broadest level of detail on the tree diagram. Place these three to four objectives (listed on sticky notes) immediately to the right of the goal identified in step 3.
6. Select the tasks that must be accomplished in order to reach the objectives, and line them up to the right of the appropriate objective. (It might be necessary to brainstorm additional tasks at this point.) Place these tasks in sequential order.
7. Review the tree diagram, checking for any gaps in logic or things that do not make sense. Start at the far right of the diagram since these are the tasks that need to be completed first. To check the sequence, ask, "If we complete this task, will it lead us to the next task on the tree diagram?"

**Example: Tree Diagram** (this is not meant to be all inclusive)



## One-Year Action Plan

To ensure that the strategic plan is implemented in a coordinated and effective manner, each year it must be translated into an annual operating plan and budget. The operational plan and budget describe the same work over the same period of time, they are simply written in different languages.

The annual operating plan provides a detailed plan in the language of objectives, action steps and responsibilities. The budget provides a detailed plan in the language of dollars, organized by types of revenue and types of expenses.

The purpose of the operational plan is to provide enough detail to keep everyone moving in the same direction with a common understanding of how far and how fast to move.

There are three important characteristics of a useful operating plan:

- An appropriate level of detail - enough to guide the work, but not so much detail that it becomes overwhelming, confusing, or unnecessarily constrains flexibility.
- A format that allows for periodic reports on progress toward specific goals and objectives.
- A structure that allows a user to easily see that the annual plan is consistent with the priorities in the strategic plan.

A sample template for one page of an annual operating plan follows on page 47. The most important pieces of this template are “personnel responsible” and “timeframe.” Clearly established accountability and deadlines will increase the likelihood of a successful plan.

**Template: Annual Operational Plan**

<b>Strategic Priority:</b>				
<b>Annual goal to meet strategic priority:</b>				
<b>Objectives/ Action Steps</b>	<b>Personnel Responsible</b>	<b>Time Frame or By When</b>	<b>Status: As of (date)</b>	<b>Amount of Money Needed</b>

## Performance Measures

### Performance Scorecards

Performance scorecards measure how well organizations do their jobs (meet their mission) and help groups discover how performance in one area may affect achievement in another area. A scorecard is a tool for focusing resources and efforts, and it summarizes a great deal of information in a way that allows for a high-level understanding of how well an organization is performing. A scorecard should include just a few measures focused on the critical functions of the organization.

### Performance Measures

Performance measures are the components of a performance scorecard. They should be derived directly from the organization's strategic plan. The intent of performance measures is to determine the extent to which the organization is progressing towards its stated goals.

Measures take different forms:

- Measures over time – performance is tracked and compared from year to year (or other appropriate interval).
- Benchmarking – your organization's performance is compared to performance of another organization that you consider to be a benchmark (peer).

### Criteria for Selecting Measures

The fewer the measures on a scorecard, the more it will communicate the organization's focus and priorities. A good guideline is no more than 10-15 measures. The services, processes, or outcomes a college or department selects to be on its scorecard should be:

- Important and meaningful to stakeholders.
- Viewed as important to the organization (mission critical).
- Linked to the larger organization's strategic plan or priorities.
- Earmarked for improvement.

The measures selected should:

- Represent value-added work as opposed to work activity.
- Be amenable to change and positive intervention.
- Be easily understood by stakeholders.
- Demonstrate efficiency, accountability and fiscal soundness.
- Be collectable without great difficulty or resource investment.

**Sample Performance Measures and Alignment with Goal, Strategy, and Vision**

<b>Vision</b>	The Ohio State University will be among the world’s truly great universities.
<b>Strategy</b>	Create a diverse university community.
<b>Goal</b>	Recruit, support, and retain to graduation larger numbers of academically able minority students.
<b>Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minority freshmen retention rate – African-American Students 2001-2005</li> <li>• Gap between Minority Rate and Overall Freshman Retention Rate – African-American Students 2001-2005</li> <li>• Minority freshmen retention rate – Hispanic Students 2001-2005</li> <li>• Gap between Minority Rate and Overall Freshman Retention Rate – Hispanic Students 2001-2005</li> <li>• Minority Six-Year Graduation Rate – African-American Students 2001-2005</li> <li>• Gap between Minority Rate and Overall Graduation Rate – African-American Students 2001-2005</li> <li>• Minority Six-Year Graduation Rate – Hispanic Students 2001-2005</li> <li>• Gap between Minority Rate and Overall Graduation Rate – Hispanic Students 2001-2005</li> </ul>

**More Information**

For more information about The Ohio State University Strategic Indicators and Measures, visit the web site of Institutional Research and Planning at [oaa.osu.edu/irp/home.php](http://oaa.osu.edu/irp/home.php).

Staff in the Office of Institutional Research and Planning can also assist your department and/or college in establishing measures and providing benchmark data from many sources. The office phone number is (614) 292-1340.

## Developing Performance Measures

Time required: Approximately 3 hours

Process:

1. List all of the critical functions of the organization. Critical functions of an academic unit will include research, admission of students, graduation of students, outreach and/or service, etc. Critical functions will be those explicitly named in the unit's strategic plan.
2. Consult with the Office of Institutional Research and Planning for appropriate measures.
3. The office phone number is (614) 292-1340.
4. Brainstorm measures for each critical function, including those suggested by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning.
5. Evaluate your list of measures by asking the following questions:
  - Will the measure result in a number you can quantify?
  - Will customers and other stakeholders care about this measure?
  - Will the measure give you useful feedback (and guide behavior)?
  - Can you establish a target measure?
  - Can you assess performance against competitors or industry standards?
  - Can the members of your unit influence the outcome of this measure?
  - Does the measure relate directly to your strategic priorities and vision?
6. Narrow your list of measures to the critical few.
7. Determine how these measures will be communicated to the rest of the unit.
8. Begin to think about how managers can work with employees to link their specific jobs to these performance measures.
9. Identify measures currently in place that are no longer needed.

## Evaluation and Periodic Checks

### Three Types of Evaluation Activities

There are three types of evaluation activities to consider:

- An evaluation of the organization's strategic planning process – how effective was the planning process?
- Periodic checks regarding the strategic plan – how well are we focusing on our strategic directions and meeting our goals? What do our performance indicators tell us?
- Periodic checks regarding implementation of the one-year annual plan – how well are we doing in meeting the deadlines and staying on track?

The following schedule provides some guidelines on how often these evaluation activities should occur.

Activity	Schedule
Evaluate the organization's strategic planning process	At the conclusion of the planning process
Check implementation of annual plan	Monthly or quarterly
Check the strategic plan	Yearly (at least)

### Evaluating the Organization's Strategic Planning Process

The Planning Team should plan a meeting to celebrate its accomplishments and evaluate its work. This meeting is an opportunity to reflect on the process so as to set the stage for future successful plans. Both the planning process and the planning documents should be reviewed and evaluated. The worksheet on pages 52-53 might be helpful in gathering feedback about the planning process and the documents generated as a result of the planning process.

**Worksheet: Evaluation of Planning Process and Plans**

<b>The Planning Process</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Was input from critical stakeholders received during the process?		
Were planning team decisions made by consensus?		
Was sufficient time spent on each step of the process?		
Did we know what step in the process we were working on and what the expected outcomes were?		
Comments about the planning process:		
<b>The Annual Operational Plan</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Does the annual plan operationalize the strategic plan?		
Were those responsible for implementation part of the development?		
Does it provide an easy implementation and monitoring tool?		
Comments about the annual operational plan:		

**Worksheet Continued: Evaluation of Planning Process and Plans**

<b>The Strategic Plan</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Does it provide guidance on long-term priorities?		
Does it help the organization allocate resources?		
Is it understandable by people who have not participated in the development of the plan?		
Does it respond to the organization's best understanding of its internal and external environments?		
Comments about the strategic plan:		

### **Periodic Checks of the Annual Plan**

Department leadership needs to decide how the annual plan will be monitored. Some of the questions that need to be answered are:

- How will progress be documented? Note that the template for an annual plan found on page 47 has a column for status updates.
- How often will progress be reported?
- Who will be responsible for tracking the progress?
- Who will receive the progress reports?
- How often should the leadership team review progress and discuss barriers to progress?
- How will achievement of goals be recognized and rewarded?

Communication to the larger unit is necessary once these questions have been answered. Everyone should be clear on what will be tracked, how it will be tracked and by whom.

### **Periodic Checks of the Strategic Plan**

On a regular basis and no less than once a year, the Strategic Planning Team should monitor the progress that has been made toward the completion of the strategic plan and assess whether any major or minor adjustments should be made to the plan. As part of this monitoring process, the Planning Team should meet and focus on these questions:

- Is the current strategic plan on target? What has or has not been accomplished?
- Are the assumptions of the internal and external environments still valid?
- What are the current issues facing the organization? After discussing these issues, should we change or add priorities to the strategic plan?
- Are there new performance targets, or modified intermediate checkpoints that need to be looked at?

The worksheet on pages 55-56 might be helpful to capture the outcome of the Planning Team's discussion.

**Worksheet: Periodic Check of the Strategic Plan**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Overall accomplishments and status of strategies:

Reasons for non-accomplishments:

**Worksheet Continued: Periodic Check of the Strategic Plan**

Changes in the Environment Since the Last Meeting:

<b>Previous Strengths</b>	<b>Current Strengths</b>
<b>Previous Weaknesses</b>	<b>Current Weaknesses</b>
<b>Previous Opportunities</b>	<b>Current Opportunities</b>
<b>Previous Threats</b>	<b>Current Threats</b>

Recommended Changes in Strategies/Strategic Directions:

## The Strategic Planning Document

Writing is done most efficiently by one or two individuals, and not by a whole group. Who has responsibility for writing is not nearly as important as making sure that the plan reflects all the decisions made by the planning team. The final plan is a compilation of all the previous steps. It is a document that summarizes why the organization exists, what it is trying to accomplish, and how it will go about doing so.

Typically, the document will include:

- Introduction by the unit leader
- Mission statement
- Vision statement
- Summary of strategies/strategic directions
- List of goals and objectives
- Performance indicators
- Optional appendices: SWOT data, summary of interview or survey data, budget information

The key to writing the plan is to keep it short and simple, and circulate it among the planning team to ensure accuracy. The focus should be on the strategies/strategic directions and the measurements (goals and performance indicators).

For Ohio State academic units responding the Provost's request for strategic plans in 2008, remember the strategic plan elements listed on page 8.

## Facilitation Issues and Tools

### Using an Outside Facilitator

Deciding to use an outside facilitator for the planning process will depend on a number of factors.

- Is there someone in the organization experienced in the planning process?
- Is there someone involved in the process who can address group process issues? Group process issues include such things as: making sure there is equal and full participation of all team members, ensuring that all points made are captured and receive full consideration, keeping the group on track to achieve desired outcomes, etc.
- Will there be extensive controversy and conflict in the group? A group facilitator can “stand outside” the issues being discussed and monitor *how* decisions are made rather than *what* decisions get made.
- Do you have a facilitator available to you?

### On-Campus Resources

Organization Development Consultants in the Office of Human Resources - Organization and Human Resource Consulting, are able to facilitate strategic planning processes. To make a request for facilitation services call (614) 292-4500.

Analysts from the Office of Institutional Research and Planning can provide data related to Ohio State and to our benchmark institutions. They can also offer assistance in linking unit strategic planning processes to The Ohio State University Academic Plan. The phone number for the Office of Institutional Research and Planning is (614) 292-1340.

### Facilitation Tools

The tools on the next three pages might be helpful to those who choose not to use an outside facilitator.

## **Brainstorming**

Brainstorming is a creative thinking tool. Brainstorming is used when many ideas (new or old) need to be identified, when support for ideas is essential, and when group members sense their ideas are not being heard. Quantity of ideas is valued in brainstorming. It will be used many times throughout the strategic planning process, so it is helpful to be versed in it.

It is useful to share guidelines with the group prior to starting a brainstorming session. Suggested guidelines include:

- No criticism, compliments, or questions related to any of the ideas generated
- Wild ideas are welcome
- Don't wait to shout out your thought
- Build on each other's ideas
- Repetition is okay
- Don't be anxious to end
- Agree on a time limit and appoint a timekeeper

After brainstorming for a set period of time, then members of the group can seek clarification of ideas by asking questions of one another.

Brainstorming can happen verbally, with team members sharing ideas aloud. The building of ideas can happen easily with this method. Brainstorming can also occur silently, with team members generating their ideas on paper.

## **Reaching Consensus**

Consensus is finding a proposal acceptable enough that all members can support it; no member opposes it.

Consensus is reached when everyone in the group agrees to support a decision, even if they do not think it is the "best solution."

Consensus is not:

- A unanimous vote
- A majority vote
- Completely satisfying everyone

When the group is seeking to reach consensus, the group facilitator (leader) should ask each member of the group, "Do we have consensus?" and wait for acknowledgement.

When asked, "Do we have consensus?" each person should reflect to himself or herself, "Can I live with this?" If the answer is yes, there is consensus.

If the answer is no, then the facilitator should ask, "What about this proposal is preventing you from accepting it?" This invites individuals to bring out their opinions. Once opinions are aired, the group is expected to dialogue about the identified issue. After discussion and negotiation on the identified concern, again the facilitator should ask, "Do we have consensus?"

## Nominal Group Technique

This technique is used when a group needs to come to consensus on the relative importance of issues, problems, or solutions.

1. Brainstorm the list of issues, problems, or solutions to be prioritized.
2. Write the statements on a flipchart or board.
3. Eliminate duplicates and/or clarify meanings of any of the statements.
4. Record the final list of statements on a flipchart or board. Use letters rather than numbers to identify each statement so team members do not get confused by the ranking process that follows. Example:

What is the best way to respond to students' request for career planning?

- A. Create a library of written resources
  - B. Create an interactive web page
  - C. Create an office dedicated to career planning
  - D. Partner with the College of Education to meet this need
5. Each team member records the corresponding letters on a piece of paper and rank orders the statements. For example, Anne's paper would read:

<b>A</b>	1
<b>B</b>	2
<b>C</b>	4
<b>D</b>	3

This example uses "4" as the most important ranking and "1" as the least important. Since individual rankings will be later combined, this "reverse order" minimizes the effect of team members leaving some statements blank. Therefore, a blank (value = 0) would not, in effect, increase its importance.

6. Combine the rankings of all team members. Example:

	Anne	Larry	Sam	Total
<b>A</b>	1	2	2	5
<b>B</b>	2	1	1	4
<b>C</b>	4	4	3	11
<b>D</b>	3	3	4	10

In this example, C, "create an office dedicated to career planning," would be the highest priority.

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