An Introduction to Strategic Planning in Higher Education

Transfer Strategic Planning – Kickoff Meeting, Spring 2022
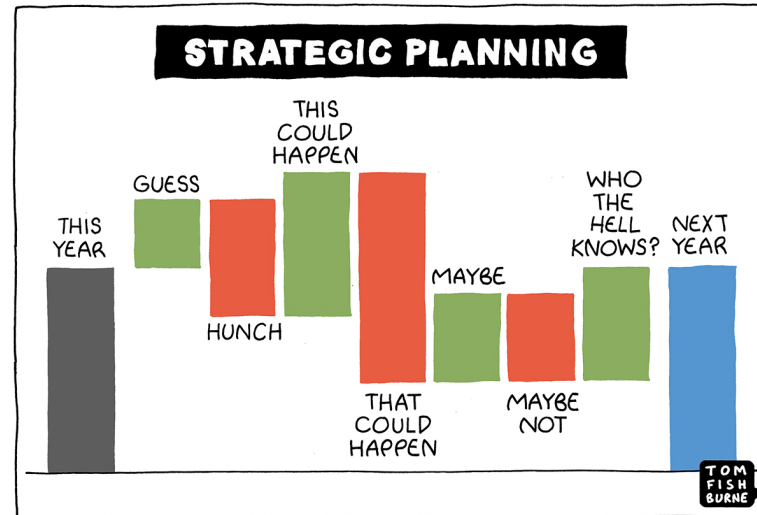
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Agenda

- Brief history
- Strategy models
- Strategic process
- Role of stakeholders

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- Implementation phase

History of Strategic Planning in the U.S.

- 1st - Military origins

  The Science of planning and directing large scale operations to maneuver forces into the most advantageous position prior to engagement with the enemy.

- 2nd – Business/Private sector

- 3rdth - Government and municipal agencies

- 4th - Translated to education sector

Education Sector

- 1980s and especially in the 1990s there was a shift

- Increase in competition, new technology, fiscal changes impacted by state funding, accountability, & external demands

Strategic Planning: A Response to the Changing Landscape of Higher Education

- Had to keep pace with the external and internal demands
- Rapidly changing landscape
- Focus on efficiency
- Program review and elimination
- Data driven decision making
- Need to connect planning with budget
- **Strategic planning was identified and adapted to keep pace; it became mainstream in the 1990s and 2000s & remains presently**

Basic Linear Business Strategy Planning Model

Analyze → **Environmental Scanning** → **Action**
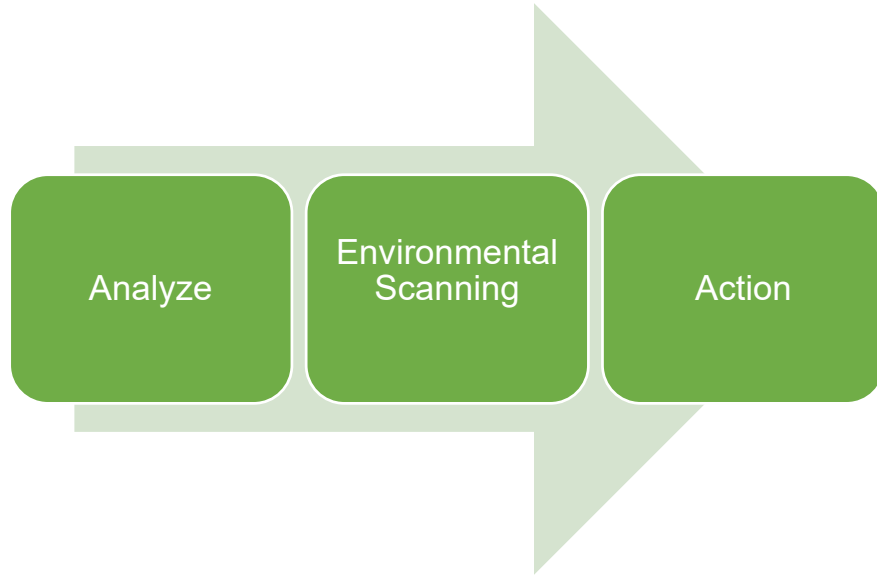
Three Main Stages

1. Analyzing the situation
2. Scanning internal and external environments
3. Deciding on a course of action

❖ Results in a formal document

❖ Should include an implementation plan

Basic Non-Linear Business Strategy Planning Model

Primary Elements

1. Understanding the strategic position
   - Purpose

2. Decision making/strategic choices
   - Where to focus energy

3. Action
   - Results in a formal document
   - Should include an implementation plan

Strategic Analysis Models for Higher Education
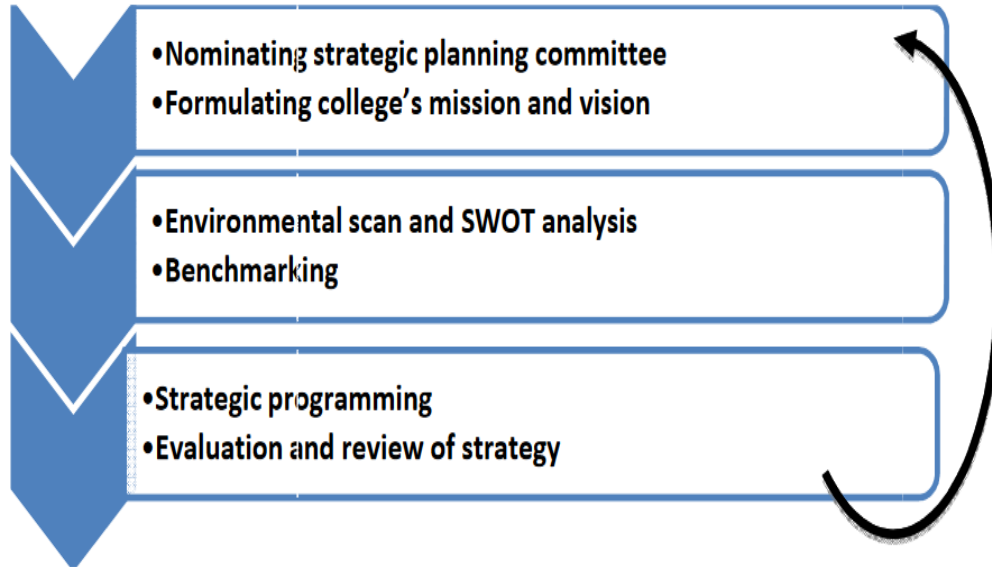
Strategic Process in Higher Education

1. Creation of strategic planning steering committee

2. Creation of mission and vision

3. Environmental scan and SWOT analysis

4. Benchmarking
   o Research/literature

5. Strategic planning/programming

Creation of strategic planning steering committee (SPSC)

- Chairperson is typically well versed in strategic planning

- Committee should represent various areas of the department

- External stakeholders should be included, albeit with a smaller presence

- A member from the financial department is recommended or someone well versed in the unit's budgetary condition

Purpose and our Why
(Mission and Vision is Typical)

- Both should be clearly formulated, well known, and communicated within the department

- This process involves a similar representative committee to that of the SPSC

- Aligns with the overall university mission and vision

Environmental scan and SWOT analysis

- Examination of external & internal environment
- A review & analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
- It is important the SPSC evaluate the difference between the current situation and the desired future – Gap analysis
- All this is done within the framework of the mission and vision, plus within the framework of the departments purpose

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats Analysis

Benchmarking

- When we select comparable universities to assist with determining where we should be or how we align when compared to the higher education landscape

- USF has already identified our peer and aspiring peer universities

USF's National Peer Institutions

- North Carolina State University
- Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey*
- The State University of New York, Buffalo*
- The State University of New York, Stony Brook*
- University of Alabama, Birmingham
- University of California, Irvine*
- University of Cincinnati
- University of Illinois, Chicago

USF's Aspirational Peer Institutions

- Georgia Institute of Technology*
- University of Pittsburgh*
- University of California, San Diego*

AAU Institutions

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Strategic Programming

- Typically started after the first four steps are completed
- Identified the strategic issues
- Set strategic goals
  - Identified how they will be assessed, by what means, and how often
- Created an action plan
  - Provides a roadmap of the work ahead
- Implementation plan - Detailed
  - Names actors, series of actions, and desired results
  - Timeline
  - Communication/education

Stakeholders in Strategic Planning

- Participants in strategic planning must be aware of players present internally & externally

- The metrics and outcomes of transfer students have and will continue to be influenced by the interest of stakeholders

- The mutual influences in these relationships will directly & indirectly affect and effect the choice of strategies to be implemented

Importance of the Implementation Plan

- Where the rubber meets the road
- Arguably one of the most important parts of ensuring desired outcomes of the strategic plan are met

Consider:

- Who needs to support the requirements set out in the implementation plan?
- Have the relevant people been consulted?

Implementation Plan

Identify issues to implementation:

- Barriers to acceptance

- What are the constraints?

- Are there any additional costs/resources which may arise as a result of implementation?

- Identify contingency plans to offset any difficulties which may

- Has this process marginalized any groups or special populations?

Implementation Plan

Consider :

- Will we need to educate others? Is professional development or student training required?

- Include information about the categories of professional development/training

- Are changes recommended or required to execute the plan?

- Identify who will be responsible.

Implementation Plan

- Propose timelines, including checkpoints to monitor implementation success and effectiveness over time.

- Identify an Implementation Chairperson

- Identify and assign areas of responsibility to individuals and groups

References

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