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ABSTRACT

While various paradigms exist for planning in two-year colleges, from master planning to quality circles, three major elements invariably appear in planning activities: strategic or formal planning, operational planning, and effectiveness measures. Strategic planning attempts to systematically assess an institution's relationship with its external environment, relating internal strengths and weaknesses to external threats and opportunities. Operational planning, or planning at the level of organizational units, attempts to channel institutional activities in the areas of finance, facilities, enrollment, human resources, and organization. The institutional effectiveness element measures how well a community college performs its missions relative to the needs of its constituency, making effectiveness measures unique to each institution. However, these three elements cannot be pursued separately. One approach to combining them is the Integrated Planning Effectiveness Model (IPEM), producing a methodology that avoids duplication of effort and leads to one all-encompassing effectiveness document for an institution. In an IPEM, the institutional mission statement is the initial point of departure, linking the separate processes of strategic and operational planning. Further, each organizational unit performs both types of planning. Both strategic effectiveness measures, as well as operational effectiveness measures, become incorporated into one institution-wide effectiveness/action document. A review of planning paradigms and a list of references are included. (MAB)

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STRATEGIC PLANNING, OPERATIONAL PLANNING, AND MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS: AN INTEGRATED MODEL

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STRATEGIC PLANNING, OPERATIONAL PLANNING, AND MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS: AN INTEGRATED MODEL

Aaron P. Donsky

Introduction

> *If Planning Is Everything, Maybe Its Nothing. (Wildavsky, 1973, pp. 127-153)*

Wildavsky (1973) noted decades ago that formal planning processes were so all encompassing that they could not easily be separated from the other major organizational functions. As a result meaningful planning occurred as part of daily operational decisions. This he called, "Incremental Planning". His work both questions the adequacy and relevance of formal planning as well as advocates the merits of operational planning decisions.

Most recently, Schmidtlein (1989) studied the formal planning processes in 256 institutions and noted that:

> *... the overwhelming majority of the comments offered by those interviewed suggested that the performance of most of the processes that had been in operation for several years were rather disappointing. (p.13)*

A third element has been added to the debate between formal planning processes versus planning at the operational level: assessing institutional effectiveness. Increasingly, state legislatures as well as institutional accrediting bodies, such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, are asking institutions to produce effectiveness measures for program outcomes and relate them to goals and missions. Peter Ewell (1985) notes, that for such efforts to be successful, they must be institution wide in scope.

This paper takes the position that formal planning and operational level planning are not alternatives but, rather, can be viewed as part of one institutional-wide approach linked to the production of measures of institutional effectiveness. When these three processes are pursued separately, the efforts can often be less meaningful, less effective, and often redundant.

Planning as Evolution

Winstead (1986) in an extensive study of planning models notes:

> *...institutional planning in higher education has experienced historical evolution. That, rather than being synchronic, planning as a process has experienced a learning growth curve whereby new planning innovations over the years have added to the existing institutional planning knowledge base.(p.15)*

Winstead (1986) found 14 planning paradigms, many garnered from the industrial or military areas.

These fourteen include:

Innovation	Added Dimension
Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting, and Budgeting (POSDCORB)	Planning as a Management Function
Formal Planning	Discrete Documentation of Planning
Long Range Planning	Extrapolation Forward and Use of a Planning Specialist
Master Planning	A Look at the Total Picture
Contingency Planning	Asking "What If" with Alternative Solutions
Systematic Planning	How Factors Interrelate
Program Planning and Budgeting Systems (PPBS)	Emphasis on Programmatic Information Rather Than Line Items
Program Evaluation Review Technique (PERT)	Network Analysis
Management by Objectives (MBO)	Emphasis on Results and Accountability
Delphi Studies	Consensus Building
Zero-Based Budgeting (ZBB)	Total Program Justifications
Futures Research	Alternative Scenarios
Quality Circles	Staff Input Into Decision Making
Strategic Planning	Environmental Assessment (p.3-4)

To these fourteen we can add more recent trends such as TQM or Total Quality Management. Shirley (1988) notes that institutions differ drastically in the types of planning methods and elements employed.

Approaches to All - Encompassing Models

Muffo (1992) stresses the interrelationship among strategic planning, assessment, TQM and proposes an integrating philosophy. This attempt at integrating various planning strategies has been echoed by other authors. Shirley (1988) notes that:

> ...The strategic, operational, and unit-level decisions represent the destination points in any effective strategic planning venture. (p.10)

To strategic and operational level planning, Lisensky (1988) adds assessment measures and feedback of these measures to goals and mission. Specifically, he states:

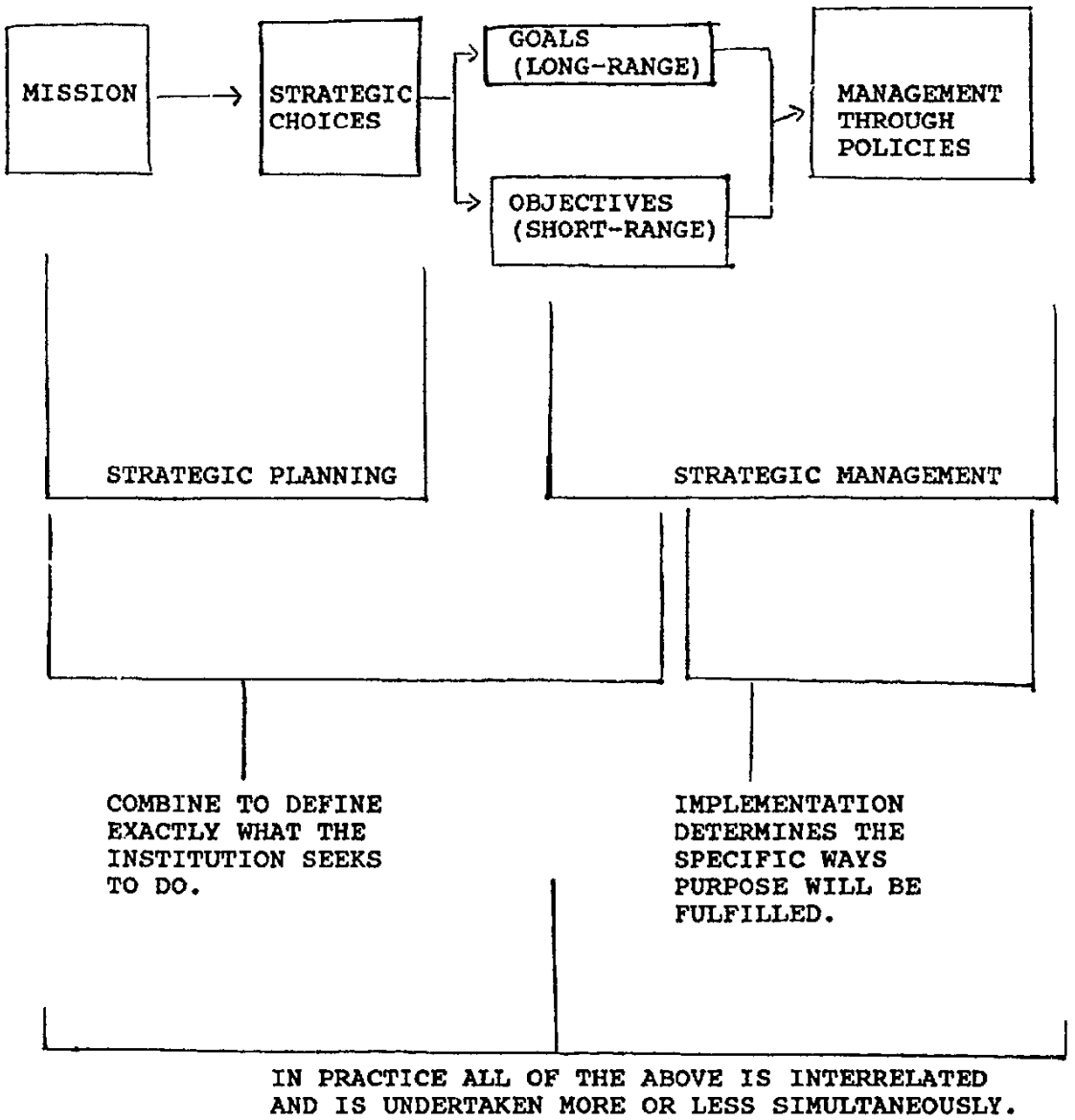
> *...We could also say that healthy colleges and universities are alike in that they share certain characteristics that are missing or are imperfectly developed in their unhealthy counterparts. Among the most important of these characteristics are a clearly articulated and widely shared vision of what the institution wants to accomplish; a plan with which to move the institution where it needs to go; a means for collecting and using information for self-assessment and a willingness to engage in self-corrective action.*

Wharton and Corak (1992) describe the successful planning case study of Minot State involving a combination of strategic and long range planning, mission review, total campus involvement down to the unit level including operational planning/budgeting and an evaluation component.

Cope (1985) also attempts to combine different planning techniques into one model he calls contextual planning. He envisions integrating long-range planning, and strategic planning with administrative policy. Figure 1 below summarizes his approach.

FIGURE 1

CONTEXTUAL
PLANNING/MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK



(P.15)

The Key Elements

In the various approaches already described, three major elements appear in one form or another: strategic planning, operational planning, and effectiveness measures. They form the basis for the model proposed in this paper. As such, they should now each be described in greater detail.

Strategic Planning

George Keller (1983) in his now classic work, Academic Strategy, describes strategic planning in the following way: it is a systematic way of assessing an institution's relationship with its external environment, relating internal strengths/ weaknesses to external threats and opportunities. It contrasts with more traditional forms of long-range planning that typically project direction for an institution as a linear extension of the past.

Cope (1985) further stresses the external nature of strategic planning by referring to it as outside-in planning. He sees it as leading to strategic choices which alter an institution's relationship to its environment. These strategic choices then serve as a framework for goals and objectives which can effect other levels of planning and action.

Shirley (1988) describes the key elements of strategic planning as analysis of external environment, assessment of institutional strengths/weaknesses, role of values, and the matching of congruent findings. More specifically:

> ...*External Environment. The measurement of external opportunities, threats, and constraints should identify both the positive and the negative aspects of the outside environment. Chief among the factors to be weighed are economic, demographic, political, legal, technological, and social conditions and changes.*

> ...*Institutional Strengths and Weakness. The assessment of internal strengths and weaknesses usually centers on six areas: human capital, financial resources, quality of facilities, program, image, and the character of the organization. The purpose of this assessment is to ascertain specifically what an institution can and what it cannot do.*

> ... Role of Values. *The analysis of personal values as a component in decision making has not received enough attention in the literature or the practice of planning. Personal values, which include one's "conception of the desirable," are critical determinants of personal and group responses to the overall strategic plan. Among other things, values define what groups and individuals want to do as the institution moves through time.*

> ... Matching Findings. *The crucial step in the analysis of external institutional strengths and weaknesses, and relevant personal values is the matching of congruent findings. For example, the external analysis may reveal significant opportunities for which there are insufficient institutional capabilities. There might also be points of institutional strength that no longer match external trends. Or there could be a match of institutional strengths with external opportunities, while the values of key individuals or groups point toward an alternative course for the college or university. (p. 10-11)*

Operational Planning

Shirley (1988) notes that in this level of planning, attempts are made to channel institutional activities in the areas of finances, facilities, enrollment, human resources, and organization within boundaries of the vision established by the strategic plan.

Lisensky (1988) further clarifies operational planning by suggesting that the view point is local rather than institutional. It relies on individual units to gather and interpret information. He sees a need for both a strategic and an operational viewpoint.

> *...it is important that an institution not rely solely on planning at the unit level as a means to shape its future. Colleges and universities need both operational and strategic planning. Both kinds of planning work incrementally, and each needs to possess access to data about the external environment. What, then, is the difference between them? The difference is the unit of analysis. For strategic planning, the unit of analysis is the entire institution. While units need to identify their specific goals, the central administration must determine the strategic issues for the entire institution: this is the process called strategic planning. (p.17)*

Effectiveness Measures

The League for Innovation in the Community College (1990) has defined institutional effectiveness as how well a community college performs its missions relative to the needs of the constituency. Effectiveness measures are then unique to each institution.

Ewell (1985) points out that:

> *...there is no single right way of measuring educational outcomes, because different kinds of outcomes are the result of different educational experiences and interpretation. (p.115)*

Ewell (1985) further reinforces the relationship of effectiveness measures to mission by stating:

> *...the form and content of assessment should be consistent with the institution's distinctive mission and educational objectives. (p.115)*

Ewell (1985) also stresses that the level of analysis for measuring effectiveness should be less than the institution as a whole. In other words, while effectiveness indicators relate back to the objective missions of an institution, they result from activities at the unit level.

Lisensky (1983) links effectiveness measures to the planning process as such:

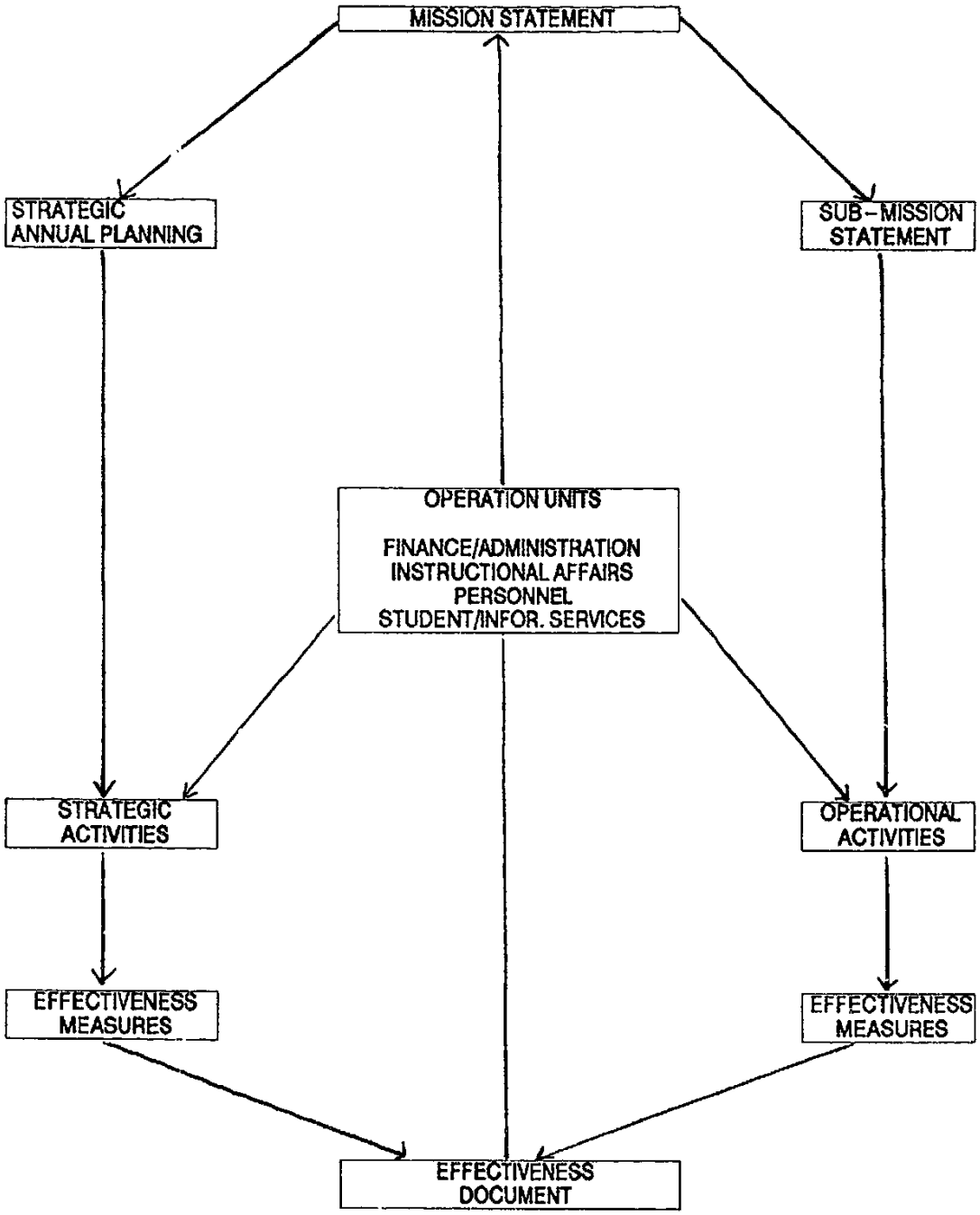
> *...Evaluation, or assessment, is a vital part of this process. Evaluation must discover what works and why. It must determine what is not working and what should be done about it. Institutions need to evaluate their activity on a continuing basis and fine-tune their plans wherever assessment recommends. (p.15)*

The Model

This paper proposes an integrated planning approach with three key elements: strategic planning, operational planning, and effectiveness measures. The model has the following characteristics (see figure 2 for illustration)

FIGURE 2

AN INTEGRATED PLANNING EFFECTIVENESS MODEL (IPEM)



(1) The institutional mission statement is the initiating point.
(2) Both strategic and operational planning are seen as separate processes linked through the mission statement.
(3) Organizational units perform both types of planning as they generate strategic as well as operational activities.
(4) Strategic planning generates a strategic plan as well as an annual plan which result in activities with effectiveness measures.
(5) Operational planning is reflected in statements of purpose (sub-mission statements) by institutional areas which lead to day-to-day functions that result in operational activities with effectiveness measures.
(6) Both strategic effectiveness measures as well as operational effectiveness measures become incorporated into one institution-wide effectiveness/action document.

Conclusion

While numerous planning elements can be found in two year college processes, three factors can be used to encapsulate much of the activity: strategic planning, operational planning, and effectiveness measures. When used in a combined system, an Integrated Planning Effectiveness Model (IPEM) they produce a methodology that avoids duplication of effort leading to one all encompassing effectiveness/action document for an institution.

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