

Institutional Planning

Institutional planning assures that Parkland can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness while advancing the six college values. Initiated in 1991, Parkland's strategic/operational planning process is closely tied to the college's mission and purposes. It is an evolving process committed to using data-based projections and knowledge regarding the impact of known future events to anticipate opportunities and threats that will require responses. The college planning committee, a standing PCA committee, continues to refine a consensus-based planning process that involves the entire college community and to connect Parkland's planning priorities with the college budget. The planning process addresses three themes from the college's mission and purposes: student development, community service, and process. Parkland's planning structures form a continuous feedback loop, with both internal and external information and data providing ongoing assessment to refine the planning process itself.

Strategic Planning

Three overall objectives guide the strategic planning process:

- To develop a participatory, consensus-based planning process that involves representatives of the entire internal and external Parkland community;
- To integrate the vision, goals, and strategies of the college's strategic plan into budget and operational planning;
- To develop the capacity to identify, collect, and interpret significant information about important influences on the college's future.

Strategic planning, the long-term component of the planning process, is revisited and refined during the spring of even-numbered years. Strategic planning spans a five-year period and specifies in broad strokes the directions in which the college must move to accomplish its mission and purposes. The college planning committee and the administrative e-team use the evaluation of planning effectiveness from previous years, environmental scanning of key data and trends, and input from stakeholders—faculty, staff, community leaders, and organizations—to review and revise the key strategic points. The EVP then distributes the proposed plan to the campus community via e-mail open hearings for comment; a draft of the plan is e-mailed to all faculty, administrators, and staff, along with a request for comments and recommendations. The EVP shares the comments with the college planning committee, revisions based on them are made, and the college planning committee approves the final draft. The revised plan is then presented to the PCA and to the board of trustees for their approval. The approved strategic plan is then used to develop short-term objectives through the operational planning process.

Operational Planning

The operational planning process drives budgetary priorities and initiatives. One-year plans and plus-two-year plans are used to specify those initiatives that are carried over from one year to another. The one-year plans include specific action plans to be implemented in the next budget year. The plus-two-year plan supplements the one-year plan by providing an overview of initiatives to be continued during the subsequent two years.

Each fall, faculty, staff, and administrators use the college strategic plan and focused strategic plans, such as those in agriculture, information technology, industrial technologies, health care, and workforce development, to develop department and unit action plans. Also used are results of program advisory committee meetings, academic assessment and institutional effectiveness assessment, and the program-review process required by the ICCB. These action plans are submitted to the appropriate administrators, who then develop operational plans for their areas and submit them to the chair of the college planning committee, the EVP, who prepares an initial draft operational plan for the committee's review and discussion. The EVP e-mails the revised draft operational plan to all faculty, staff, and administrators for comment. Revisions based on these comments are made, and the college planning committee approves final drafts of the one-year and plus-two-year operational plans.

Budget Planning

Once the operational plans have been developed, annual budget planning can begin. Operational plans guide the development of college, department, and unit budgets. The annual college budget is a public document that is approved by the board of trustees and submitted to the ICCB each fall. The EVP separates the items in the department/unit action plans into three categories: personnel requests, equipment requests, and other action proposals.

The EVP and the e-team review the new personnel requests prior to presenting the next staffing plan to the board of trustees in December. The full-time faculty staffing plan is developed by the EVP and department chair council, using course enrollments, faculty load, known/projected faculty retirement/vacancy, and new program-development information. The following faculty load information for each course prefix (e.g., ENG, CHE, CSC) is collected around October 1 each year: regular full-time faculty ECH load and percentage of the total ECH for that course prefix, full-time faculty overload/percentage, and part-time faculty load/percentage. This information, along with the total faculty load in each prefix, is compared with all department-chair requests for full-time faculty positions. Each December, the board of trustees authorizes a given number of full-time tenure-track faculty positions through a staffing plan; 167 full-time, tenure-track teaching faculty positions have been authorized for 2002-2003. Subject to available budget resources, full-time teaching faculty positions are refilled in the same prefix or reallocated to other areas, based on an operational planning goal ratio of 60:40 of full-time to part-time faculty ECH in disciplines and departments. Another factor considered is availability of part-time faculty. The e-team considers all other operational planning personnel requests prior to submitting the annual staffing plan to the board of trustees.

Equipment requests are submitted by each unit in ranked order, separated into instructional- and office-equipment categories based on strategic goals, operational planning goals, and department/unit needs. The instructional-equipment requests are separated into those that can be grant-funded and those that must be college-funded. The EVP and the chief financial officer, who manages the budget, set an annual total available instructional equipment budget allocation amount that the EVP, in consultation with each department chair, then allocates to instructional units, based on their prioritized requests. Similarly, the EVP and the chief financial officer set an annual total available office equipment budget allocation amount that the EVP, in consultation with each unit supervisor, allocates to each unit, based on their prioritized requests.

The following revenues are included in the initial draft of the college budget: all continuing grants, new grants, ICCB credit-hour grants, student tuition, and local property tax. Department and unit budgets are prepared and included in the initial college budget, using the action plans as a guide. Contract-based items and basic operating costs are included. All approved full-time positions included in the staffing plan are budgeted at approved salary levels. Part-time salary projections are based on historical cost and enrollment projections.

Once the department/unit budget is prepared, the EVP meets with each department chair/unit director to review the budget and the action plans. Any action plan proposal for which budget resources are not available is deleted from the department/unit action plan. The remaining action plans become the operational plan for the department/unit and are returned to the department/unit in the fall for review and implementation. Each spring, department/unit administrators update the status of the implementation, indicating whether and to what extent the action plan item has been completed.

Early in the budget process, the president determines an allocation from the budget to be set aside for funding operational planning initiatives not included in the initial budget. The EVP, chief financial officer, and other e-team representatives then review the operational plan and action items and indicate those not included in the initial budget (e.g., funded through other resources) for the following fiscal year. The college planning committee then reviews those unbudgeted operational action plans selected by the e-team for ranking. Initiative developers are invited to make presentations to the college planning committee. Following discussion of the proposed action plans, the committee members rank all presented items. The activities are then funded, according to their ranked order, within the constraints of the budget. Funded initiatives are budgeted within the operational planning section of the college budget and do not necessarily carry over to the succeeding year's department/unit budget. The college planning committee and e-team will review any

continuing initiative for possible inclusion in the following year’s budget, based on its own merits. Any action plan proposal for which budget sources are not available is deleted from the one-year operational plan. These plans may be submitted again in the next operational planning cycle.

The major construction projects portion of Parkland’s long-term capital development plan is filed with the ICCB. Capital projects statewide are ranked by the ICCB and IBHE, based on anticipated availability of state funding. Projects typically are on the list for several years before they are funded. As the likelihood of being funded increases, Parkland’s planning process begins to address the budgetary implications of the anticipated project. Colleges are required to match 25% of the capital expense for a funded project. When a project such as the new D-wing addition is funded, additional planning assures fair and effective use of the new facilities.

Environmental Scanning

The educational decision-making process requires consistent, reliable input from its constituents. Parkland’s planning and budgeting processes depend on data and information from both external and internal sources. Environmental scanning, the ongoing process of data and information gathering, serves two major functions in the planning process: as input at the beginning of a process, and as feedback to allow for evaluation and adjustments during the process. Table 17.1 lists some of the information used as both inputs and feedback.

Table 17.1: INFORMATION USED IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Plans

College Strategic Plan
 Focused Strategic Plans
 Department Strategic Plans
 Operational Plan
 Technology Master Plan
 ADA Plan
 Drainage Master Plan
 Facilities Master Plan
 Facilities Maintenance Master Plan
 Master Capital Development Plan
 Five-year Capital Budget Plan
 Enrollment Management Plan
 Retention Plan
 Marketing Plan
 Staffing Plan
 Disaster/Crisis Management Plan

Other Inputs

College-Wide Futures Conferences
 Focused Futures Conferences
 Program Advisory Boards
Environmental Scanning Data
Performance Indicators
 College Surveys
 Student Occupational Follow-up Survey
 Transfer Program Graduate Follow-up Survey
 Student Satisfaction Survey
 Student Diversity Climate Survey
 Faculty/Staff/Administrator Climate Survey
 Evaluation
 Program Review
 Academic Assessment/Plan
 Institutional Effectiveness/Plan
 Customized Analyses
 Trend Analysis
 Profiles

Source: OIRE

OIRE coordinates and compiles much of the data and information in the environmental-scanning process through the direction of the college planning, academic assessment, and IE committees. OIRE identifies, collects, tracks, and analyzes data, prepares informational documents for the college, and compiles the information necessary for compliance with ICCB requirements. Internal and external data sources are identified, their data are collected and analyzed, and the results are reported to the college.

As part of the environmental-scanning process, OIRE compiles two fact booklets. *Environmental Scanning Data* (<http://www.parkland.edu/oire/envirn.htm>) provides information that answers the questions most frequently asked about Parkland. It is compiled at the end of each fall semester and is designed for the general college audience. Copies are distributed to the general public as well as to individuals at planning

conferences, college-wide discussions, and leadership-training events. The second fact booklet, *Performance Indicators*, provides five-year financial, student, and staff indicators. To coincide with development of the strategic plan, it is designed primarily for administrators and the college planning committee and is published in the fall semester of even-numbered years. Two versions are published; senior administration and the college planning committee use a long version, and a much shorter version is available to all members of the campus community. Copies of each are in the resource room.

The college also sponsors college-wide and focused futures conferences to assess community needs. The college-wide futures conference is conducted in even-numbered years and gathers community input for the development of the strategic plan. The focused futures conferences gather community input to enhance the programming in career program clusters. In 1999-2000 and 2000-2001, the college conducted focused futures conferences for agriculture, health care, information technology, industrial technologies, and workforce development. The process for both types of futures conferences is similar. First, a SWOT analysis is conducted to determine alignment with the college's mission and purposes and to generate consensus on adjustments to the strategic plan. For the college-wide strategic plan, the college planning committee and e-team conduct the SWOT, while program faculty and department chairs conduct the SWOT for the focused strategic plans. *Performance Indicators* and *Environmental Scanning Data* are used as information resources in these analyses. Based on the SWOT analysis, keynote speakers, reaction panels, and community participants are selected to engage in discussion, facilitated by Parkland staff, answering open-ended questions regarding Parkland's performance in the area spotlighted. The responses are collected and analyzed in a report circulated within the college. Six-month and one-year follow-up studies of the focused strategic plans are also completed. The various reports feed into the operational- and strategic-planning process. New programs, courses, and services may be created.

Planning Process Effectiveness and Recommendations

The interlocking-step planning process serves Parkland well, providing the necessary structure to accomplish the college's purposes and strengthen its educational objectives. Two examples, the focused futures conference and the annual budget adjustments, illustrate how the planning process has enabled Parkland to position itself for the future by strengthening its educational objectives and developing its resource base.

The futures conferences identify ways the college can strengthen its educational programming. For example, the information technology (IT) futures conference held April 27, 1999, resulted in the creation of several new programs as well as the establishment of the Computer Science and Information Technology department. New programs in network management/technology (e.g., CISCO network technician), Web design, and e-commerce were created, based on community identification of IT job needs. The conference also identified several trends, such as a growing need for "any time, any place, any way" educational delivery, IT professionals in the community, and partnerships between Parkland and the local IT community. The new CSIT department was created to meet these needs, providing a single point of contact at Parkland for the community to obtain information about course offerings. The department also delivers IT programs in a variety of ways, such as through the open-entry, open-exit computer technology center and online, weekend, off-campus, and abbreviated semester courses. The department's program manager increases partnerships with the community and helps develop new programs and revise existing ones.

Parkland strives to maintain adequate budget reserves to allow for negative enrollment shifts, decreased state support, or other unforeseen negative budget developments. However, an example illustrates how the college budget can withstand some unexpected challenges. Due to several factors, including construction, increased medical expenses, and increased utility costs in FY 2001, Parkland sustained a deficit of \$2,412,798 in its operating funds. The chief financial officer, controller, and EVP first identified some expenses that could be reduced. Presenting the situation to campus constituents allowed feedback from supervisors about how these cuts would affect their areas. The chief financial officer and EVP reviewed this feedback and weighed the potential effects of the proposed cuts. The final decision was to make cuts in overtime, student employee salaries, and capital expenditures (except for the new wing and essential items). Neither the quality of education nor new-program development was compromised.

The development of the strategic plans also allows the college to strengthen its educational effectiveness. The college updates the five-year strategic plan in even-numbered years. This process, initiated in 1991 for the development of the 1993-1998 strategic plan, involves as many stakeholders as possible. Communication and consensus-building help the college to continue to evolve. A comparison of the goals from the 1993-1998 plan to those of the 2001-2006 plan shows a dynamic process.

In the 1993-1998 plan, the strategic goals revolved around enhancing our learning community, constantly renewing our commitment to high standards of quality instruction, enhancing our leadership role in post-secondary education to extend our influence beyond the boundaries of District 505, and achieving and maintaining financial viability. One of the primary tasks was to develop a college-wide academic assessment plan and to charge OIRE to provide significant, objective, and accurate data to guide the academic assessment process. This task was accomplished, and today the planning process is data-driven.

The goals of the 2001-2006 strategic plan are refinements of those from 1993-1998. They include a focus on student-centered learning to meet the needs of our increasingly diverse population. There is also further development of our regional leadership, with a concentration on partnerships with businesses and schools, emphasis on enrollment management and retention to further meet the needs of our community, and the maximal development of all of our resources to maintain financial viability.

A concern regarding campus involvement in the planning process is that stakeholders must understand their roles in the process. This is especially true for those involved on the fringes of the planning process, such as faculty conducting academic assessment or staff conducting IE assessment. This concern became evident in the results of the faculty/staff/administrator climate survey administered by OIRE during the spring 2001 semester to all 805 Parkland employees. Nearly 41% (328 persons) responded.

The climate survey documented significant strengths. There was consensus among administrators, staff, and faculty that the college has common institutional direction, focus, and goals and that the planning process is important. The majority in all employee groups also felt that the college implements its plans and that it has a data-driven decision-making process. Those who have participated in the focused futures conferences find them effective. Most feel that the planning process includes community and local business representation, and most who had experienced operational and strategic planning were satisfied with the process. However, while there was agreement on the importance of the planning process, the level of experience with it varied. At least 80% of the administrators but only half of the support staff respondents had experience with any of the planning-process questions. The level of experience was more variable for faculty, but it always fell between the experience of administrators and staff.

Another concern is the level of experience and importance of the IE process to support staff. The IE process, a tool for improving the quality of services, is the support unit's equivalent of academic assessment for the faculty. Please see Chapter 16, Institutional Effectiveness. More than half of the support staff respondents reported having no experience with IE, and 42% did not feel the process is important. In contrast, only part-time faculty had no experience with academic assessment (42% of 21 respondents, 9 persons). Very few faculty (13% of 101 full-time, 13 persons, and 18% of 44 part-time, 8 persons) felt the academic assessment process was not important. Efforts must be made to increase staff experience with this process.

The survey also provides some insight into the level of understanding of the planning process. While nearly all employee groups felt that an understanding of the planning process is important, only 56% of 90 full-time faculty respondents (50 persons) and 32% of 38 part-time faculty (12 persons), 53% of the 101 staff respondents (54 persons), and 73% of the 30 administrators (22 persons) felt they understood the planning process. Participation in the planning process is not in the part-time faculty job description, so their level of understanding of the planning process is a strength for the college. The lack of understanding of the planning process by staff is a concern. Half of the 127 staff surveyed (64 persons) indicated they had no experience with the planning process or its individual components: strategic planning, operational planning, academic assessment, and institutional effectiveness. This lack of experience does not appear to be a function of employment length, since at least half of the staff who did not understand and did not have experience had been employed at Parkland for more than five years.

Only 7% of the administrators surveyed indicated they had no experience with the planning process. Although 44% of the 90 full-time faculty respondents (40 persons) reported they do not understand the process, they do have experience with it. Fewer than 17% of 98 respondents (40 persons) have no experience with strategic planning, operational planning, and academic assessment, and 28% of 96 (27 persons) have no experience with institutional effectiveness. The challenge that the planning process faces, as documented by the climate survey, is that many now have limited or no experience with the process, do not understand it, and do not see it guiding the plans of their individual units. With the least levels of experience, support staff are particularly at risk of being left out of the planning process.

There is work in progress to enhance awareness of the planning process:

- Faculty and staff are encouraged to become involved in campus committees through employee orientations and mentorships.
- IE assessment is a relatively new initiative at Parkland. By comparison, academic assessment has a longer history at Parkland, but its effects and benefits have become more obvious to academic units in the last year or two. This better understanding is reflected by the higher-importance and satisfaction-survey ratings for academic assessment for faculty, and by more agreement by faculty than staff that they play a role in the planning process. As more and more instructional support units engage in IE assessment, more staff and administrators should see its benefits, understand how it fits into the planning process, and enhance their experiences with the planning process. Department chairs and administrators are involving their staffs and faculty in the process.
- To help improve the understanding of the planning processes, an explanatory electronic model is being developed, comprising a series of flowcharts diagramming strategic planning, operational planning, budget planning, department budget planning, institutional effectiveness assessment, academic assessment, and program review processes. Within each flowchart are hypertext links to the other flowcharts, definitions of terms, and documents used in that process. Elements of the flowchart are color-coded to reflect whether that element occurs in the fall or spring terms. To use the model, faculty, staff, and administrators start through a frequently asked questions page that links them to the part of the model that addresses the question. From there, the model can be browsed to see what comes next or what comes before. A copy of the model is available in the resource room. Current plans are to place this model on Parkland's Web site. There are also plans for new staff and faculty orientation programs to address the planning process, using the model as an instructional aid.

Please see Appendix B for college planning honors and awards.

Summary of Institutional Planning Strengths

- There is consensus across employee groups that the college has common institutional direction, focus, and goals, that the planning process and its components are important, and that the college implements its plans.
- Most employees have experience with data-driven decision-making, and most feel it is effective.
- Those attending focused futures conferences find them an effective method of identifying trends.
- Most who have participated in strategic and operational planning are satisfied with the process.
- Most feel the planning process includes community and local business representation.
- Most faculty have had experience with academic assessment and feel that it is important.

Summary of Institutional Planning Challenges

- Support staff have limited experience with the planning process.
- Many support staff lack experience with the IE process or feel that it is not important.
- Some staff do not understand the planning process, and they may be unaware they are affected by it.