The Human Side of the Strategic Planning Process in Higher Education

by Robert P. Delprino

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FOREWORD

Several years ago, I attended a preconference workshop at a SCUP conference. The presenter asked attendees to name the one college course they found most helpful as they engaged in their work as planners. Overwhelmingly, the attendees named courses in the social sciences such as psychology, sociology or even, as in my case, cultural anthropology. There were also those who noted business courses in leadership or organizational development that provided the understanding most necessary to conduct planning. I believe those who engage in planning in higher education rapidly come to the conclusion that, as Robert Delprino says, "at the end of the day it is still all about the people."

While the essence of planning rests on the people who develop and implement a plan, institutions successful in their planning know it is also all about the process. Managing a planning process for organizations as varied and complex as even the smallest of post-secondary institutions is a daunting prospect. How does the planner keep the process focused, structured, and on track when there are so many competing priorities and perspectives?

The Quality Improvement (CQI) movement of the 1980s and '90s is no longer the ubiquitous management practice it once was, except for businesses and industries covered by ISO standards. However, the CQI movement produced a number of process tools that can be used to structure and assess any process. These tools, if understood and used properly, are powerful in any planning process and can assist the planner in managing both the process and the people included in it. They provide methods for identifying challenges and goals, providing balanced opportunities for participation, and even for keeping a large-scale process on track. Using these tools can also improve group interaction and foster the type of team attitude that promotes acceptance and buy-in from participants. But process management tools require context to be useful, and that context can only come from a deep understanding of the institution and its people.

In *The Human Side of the Strategic Planning Process in Higher Education*, Delprino offers an overview of post-secondary institutions as organizational systems and then provides a review of some of the major theories regarding the characteristics and relationships of the various moving parts in that system. The use of the systems approach to analyzing institutions and their functions is a particularly apt way of framing the use of process management tools, since these tools were developed to be used in systems analysis.

As planners, we are always looking for that innovative method of breaking through resistance, better identifying a goal, or engaging stakeholders more effectively. Delprino's thoughtful research and analysis will add to the knowledge base that is critical to successful planning.

—Karen E. Hinton, July 2013

PREFACE

Strategic planning in higher education has the potential of transforming institutions as well as those who work in them and are served by them. However the ability of the strategic planning process to achieve long lasting change that transforms the institution and its members in a meaningful way is not consistently realized. Despite having an appreciation of the institution's past, present, and potential future as well as following all of the appropriate steps to develop a plan, some planners may be left wondering why the process did not work as smoothly as hoped.

Part of the answer lies in the human side of strategic planning. The development of the planning document may be the easier part of the process. Getting institutional members to buy in and understanding how the strategic plan is related to their personal success as well as the institution's success is a challenge. For many members of the institution, strategic planning is something that just takes place around them rather than by and through them. A premise of this book is that most things that happen in an organization, both good and bad, occur by and through its members. As part of the execution of a strategic plan, it is the members of the institution, their capacity to think and act strategically, who have the potential to give life to the strategic plan and make it a living document.

The focus of this book is on the human side of the strategic planning process. There are many tools and resources available that offer guidance as how to develop a strategic plan in institutions of higher education. A number of these resources devote some attention to the issues related to the constituencies involved in the process. However material that is devoted entirely to the topic is lacking. This book makes people, the human side, its focus and attempts to bridge the gap in the discussion. The book is not meant to be a comprehensive review of all of the issues. It is meant to provide the reader with some insight to appreciate the importance of people and how to best bring others into the process.

Given some of the unique characteristics of higher education institutions and the forces influencing them, this book discusses the players in the process and the challenges of working with them. Successful strategic planning in higher education is not only about who you bring to the table but also about how you get them there. Therefore a sample of tools is presented that are intended to engage institutional members and provide them with an opportunity to have their ideas and views heard. The way the human side of the institution is engaged is vital to achieving any level of success for a strategic plan and an outcome that is meaningful and results in enduring change.

—Robert Delprino, 2013

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Chapter 1: Change is a People Process

"only when an organization exists in stable circumstances, when its operations resemble clockwork, unvarying in their practices, can individuals be taken for granted or ignored without peril."

—Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1983), *The Change Masters*, page 17

Very few, if any, organizations operate with anything remotely resembling clockwork precision. As for stability, many organizations need to regularly adapt new practices just to maintain their status quo. Higher education institutions, perhaps more than other organizations, need to consistently practice adaptability to remain competitive and relevant. The idea that the higher education environment is more competitive is not new (Richardson, Nwankwo, and Richardson 1995). There are, however, many emerging factors that influence the current ability of higher education institutions to maintain their existing standards and thrive. Such pressures include shrinking enrollments, rising costs, demographic changes, online competition, accreditation burdens, and shrinking funding opportunities (Hughes and White 2006). A sound strategic planning process can allow higher education institutions to successfully maneuver through the evolving educational landscape.

Dooris, Kelley, and Trainer (2004) credit the beginning of strategic planning in higher education to campus facility and space planners, with one of the first formal meetings of campus planners taking place in 1959 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. These authors identify a developing theme in strategic planning: a move from an emphasis on the development of a strategic plan to a focus on the implementation of a strategic planning process. Strategic planning is not just about the development of a plan. It is about bringing change to the institution through its members' ability and willingness to carrying out the planning process.

The evolution of strategic planning from a focus on the plan to a greater emphasis on the process is similar to developments that have occurred in other processes in organizations that seek to enhance their members' performance. Most of us as employees have at some point undergone a work performance appraisal. The use of performance appraisal in the US workforce dates back to the early 1900s (Vinchur and Koppes 2011). Performance appraisal is an important process carried out by organizations that can be useful for fostering employee development as well as for making personnel decisions. Much of the early research on performance appraisal in the field of industrial/organizational psychology focused on the measurement process. Great attention was given to the development of the scales used to measure performance. During what can be referred to as the search for a better mousetrap to more accurately measure performance, the context in which performance appraisal takes place was not considered. However, newer approaches to performance appraisal focus on the importance of employee reaction as well as the motivation of the rater to be accurate (DeNisi and Sonesh 2011). Murphy and Cleveland (1995) view performance appraisal as a social and communications process, not just as a measurement tool. The rater is not a passive participant but rather an active agent pursuing specific goals. In this way performance appraisal instruments are part of the performance management process that links individual performance with organizational strategic goals (Aguinis 2008).

Similarly, in higher education strategic planning, a sound strategic plan, while important, is just one part of the larger planning process. Faculty, staff, and student perception of, reaction to, and participation in the process will

determine the success or failure of any planned strategic change. When it comes to change, either at an individual or organizational level, the development of the strategy or plan may be the easiest part of the change process.

There are many resources that can guide an individual or organization in the development of a strategic plan document. Similarly, if you want to make some lifestyle change such as to your diet or exercise, it's easy to find a resource to help. There are countless experts who would like you to purchase their diet product, piece of exercise equipment, or video or to attend a seminar that will change you and allow you to reach your goals. You may notice in the proverbial fine print that the majority of these life-changing strategies typically include a statement that "results presented are not typical." Besides protecting themselves from possible liability for claims of success that may not be achieved, there is a very good reason for that statement. While any plan for change takes thoughtful work and effort, a key factor that determines its success is the individual. This is also true in organizations. A premise of this book is that most things that take place in organizations happen by and through people. The flip side is that most things that get screwed up in organizations also happen by and through people. This premise applies to strategic planning in higher education.

Ideally, higher education institutions are learning organizations. Learning organizations can be described as organizations that facilitate the learning of their members and promote the continuous transformation of the organization (Garvin 1993). I am always amazed that in institutions of higher education, which are all about the education of others, the structures or processes that run the institution do not always support or allow for the internal transformation that is required for successful planning and change. Where institutions may fall short is in the management of the people side of the planning and change process. Part of this shortfall may be the inability or unwillingness to acknowledge that the people side of the strategic planning process can be handled with greater efficiency and effectiveness. In higher education, a student's performance is consistently critiqued and evaluated, resulting sometimes in a failing grade. It may be rarer to hear of higher education institutions freely admitting to their own failures or shortfalls.

While the mission and vision are important elements in a successful strategic planning process, it is also about how people fit into the process itself. An architect designing a new building that will fit into the existing campus footprint or redesigning an existing space to maximize usability must consider factors such as cost and technology and make sure that the construction is followed according to the design. However, it is the students, faculty, and staff who have to live with that design. They will be the ones who will use that building and space and give life to those architectural plans and visions. To leave the user out of the design plan would be a mistake. In many ways the same is true of the strategic planning process. It is the members of the institution who make the strategic plan real and bring it to life.

Unfortunately, in higher education there is sometimes a greater focus on the plan without similar appropriate consideration given to the human side of the strategic planning process. Neglecting the human side of the process can lead to the failure of the entire process. Lessons can be learned about the importance of managing the human side of organizational processes from the literature on managing the human side of mergers and acquisitions in business (Buono and Bowditch 1989). Mirvis and Marks (1992) coined the term "merger syndrome" to describe the negative consequences of the uncertainty and fear employees may experience when companies participate in a merger or acquisition. Often employees are more concerned about their positions and future with the company than they are about the success of the process. As Buono and Bowditch (1989) note, many mergers and acquisitions fail to meet

strategic or financial expectations due to poor handling of the human side of the process. Often a company's desire to merge with or acquire another company is based in part on the human capital that the targeted company possesses. While much attention is given to the legal and financial aspects of a merger or acquisition, failure to communicate the change process appropriately and to address the human side of the process can result in the loss of the human assets and talent that made the company an attractive acquisition in the first place. People, the talent, leave due to fear and uncertainty. A successful change process tells those involved what their roles are, provides direction, and explains the potential risks.

Strategic planning does not need to be an activity of trial and tribulation. Considering upfront the organizational factors that can influence the strategic planning process can provide a perspective for better managing the process so that it does not become an ordeal. Also, there is value in studying other organizational processes for tactics that can be easily adapted and applied to the strategic planning process. For example, in decision making, some changes can be made relatively easily. A successful decision results in part from an understanding of how it can best be made given some fundamental characteristics of the decision process. For instance, changing faculty office hours can be a simple process as long as students and the powers that be are notified. Changing class location, reserving space on campus, or allocating space for a department office can be considered relatively simple decisions. These decisions are programmed and automatic, with common policies and guidelines that exist for making them. A second set of decisions, those that are non-programmed, are more complex and may pose greater risk. Such decisions include where to make budget cuts to address a significant budget gap, how to deal with campus housing issues related to an unexpected influx of students, or when to change the mission and focus of the campus. In these types of decisions, how to proceed is not as clear. More specifically, programmed and non-programmed decisions differ on three dimensions: (1) type of task: simple task vs. complex task, (2) available guidance: reliance on organizational policies vs. no clear or historical precedent, and (3) type of decision maker: lower level vs. upper level supervisor. Other factors that can influence the success of a decision-making approach include the time in which the decision must be made, the level of commitment required from others, and whether the decision needs to be made by an individual or a group (Buhler 2001; Dinur 2011; Greenberg 2011).

There are many approaches and models that can be used to explain the decision-making process, such as the analytical model, the rational economic model, and the bounded rational model to name a few. However, regardless of the model, having insight into the process from the individual or group perspective is important in identifying the correct approach and attaining success.

This is also true for strategic planning. Considering the strategic planning process from the perspective of the individuals and groups that form the institution is vital for a positive outcome. Successful strategic planning requires gaining buy-in from others and addressing opposition to change. To those of you reading this who are seasoned managers, I would expect at this point that some of you may be saying to yourselves that this is all common sense. Maybe so, but as is often the case, those ideas we take as common sense are overlooked or not adequately considered.

A quote from Howard Ikemoto, a second-generation Japanese American artist born in Sacramento, California in 1930, may better make this point: "When my daughter was about seven years old, she asked me one day what I did at work. I told her I worked at the college—that my job was to teach people how to draw. She stared at me, incredulous, and said, 'You mean they forgot?'" (Masters 2004, ¶ 1). In strategic planning so much focus can be placed on the development

of the plan and the wordsmithing of the mission and vision statements that the obvious—managing the people factor, guiding institutional members through the process, and dealing with their fears and concerns—can be forgotten.

The importance of people in an organizational change process as well as the potential for mismanagement of people in the change process is not new. Jaffe and Scott (1998) discuss the belief companies may have that their members will welcome change and new ways of working. However, these authors go on to explain that members' responses to change could actually be similar to those of people who have been exposed to a traumatic, disastrous change. For some people, change is deeply disruptive; some will get worse before they get better, some will never buy into the change, and some will resort to stereotyped, rigid, unproductive behavior. There is a belief that little assistance or patience is needed from the organization because all members will fall in line and contribute to the change. This may be the view that some leaders in higher education have of how faculty, staff, and students will react to the introduction of a strategic plan.

Even those members who embrace the strategic planning process still need to be guided through the process. Rosen (1998) describes the everyday work of the leader as human interaction. While Rosen views people as an organization's most valuable resource, the nerve center of the organizational body, he also compares people to high-maintenance divas and racehorses that demand constant attention. In the higher education strategic planning process, the faculty, staff, and students are the nerve center of the campus. It is their work and success that contribute to the reputation of the institution. They are also the foundation of any change. How they are managed and led will determine the ultimate value of the strategic planning process.

I had the opportunity early in my career to conduct a job analysis of the firefighters in a moderately sized metropolitan city. The goal was to examine the tasks and functions of firefighters as they responded to calls. I spent four days living in what was described as one of the most historic as well as busiest stations in the city. While I did fulfill a childhood fantasy of learning how to slide down a fire pole, in four days there was not a single fire call. Either out of boredom or the need to show me something, I was introduced to and had demonstrated for me every possible piece of firefighting equipment the department had at its disposal. It was an impressive display. Afterward a retired fire captain who regularly visited the firehouse summed it up for me. He said, "Over the many years I served as a firefighter, I have seen and used a great deal of equipment and am still impressed by the new technology. But at the end of the day it is still all about bringing the water to the fire." In strategic planning, at the end of the day it is still all about the people. When it comes to strategic planning, an overemphasis can be placed on getting the plan, the mission, and the vision worded just right or on identifying the appropriate analytics to measure success. These are all greatly important and can be very impressive and useful. However, the bottom line is that beneficial strategic planning, the kind that will bring about sustainable change, is about the people involved in the process. The best strategic plan is meaningless if the intended participants do not buy into the process, contribute to its development in a meaningful way, or accept the integration of the plan into their daily work lives.

ARE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS DIFFERENT FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS?

In their classic work *The Social Psychology of Organizations*, Katz and Kahn (1966) view the patterns of human behavior as the essence of an organization. It may be in these patterns of human behavior that higher education organizations differ from other organizations. Generally, organizations have been defined as stable and predictable structured social systems of people working individually and in groups to attain common objectives (Champoux 2011; Greenberg 2011; Tosi, Rizzo, and Carroll 1986). Things might be much simpler when it comes to the strategic planning process if those social systems were consistently stable and predictable. The reality is that human behavior in organizations is complex and not always easily understood. However, a conceptual framework of organizations can provide a foundation for a discussion of characteristics to consider in managing the people side of the strategic planning process in higher education.

There are some commonalities among all organizations as to how they can be conceptualized, but, as with individual personality, each has unique idiosyncrasies that define it and provide some insight into how the organization and its members may respond to internal and external pressures. Like individual personality, which is commonly viewed as stable over time, an institution of higher education's personality, culture, or way of doing business may not be easily altered, thereby affecting the ability of members to respond to change or nimbly adapt to the introduction of a strategic plan.

There are some ways in which higher education institutions may differ from other organizations that can influence the success of the strategic planning process. These include organizational/power structure, terms of employment, faculty and staff allegiances, and the constituency served.

Organizational structure refers to the formal configuration of individuals and groups within an organization so as to identify responsibilities and authority (Moorhead and Griffin 1998). The structure of an organization will take different forms based on decisions made regarding the desired span of control of employees or the organizational division of labor, among others. It is the structure of the organization that allows it to successfully implement a strategic plan (Chandler 1962; Hall and Saias 1980). Typically, the power structure of an organization is relatively clear. An organizational chart clarifies who is in charge and defines decision-making and personnel responsibilities. An organizational chart of a college will clarify who is the president, who are the top administrators and academic deans, and so on. However, in higher education there are a number of influential entities that may not make the power structure as clear as it may seem on paper. For example, many campuses have faculty senates that serve as governing bodies in such matters as reorganization related to the development of new colleges and departments and changes to academic programs or policies. A faculty senate may not have official power in the institution to bring about change; however, the official powers on campus would not want to deal with a vote of no confidence from their faculty senate over concerns of shared governance. Even if such a vote is only symbolic, it can result in paralysis in a campus community and a strategic planning process. Other entities such as student government groups can also have significant power on campus. In addition to being responsible for expressing students' opinions and concerns, on some campuses they manage significant funds collected from student activity fees.

Another differentiating characteristic of higher education is the amount of time employees are employed with the institution. Most students entering the workforce do not have the expectation of earlier generations that they will

spend their entire career with one organization. In fact, campus career development centers often advise students to expect to have several careers in their lifetime. While there is some debate as to the number of career changes an individual will make (Bialik 2010), it may be more common for someone to change jobs within a single occupation several times. The average person born in the latter years of the baby boom, 1957–1964, held 11.3 jobs from age 18 to age 46, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics longitudinal survey begun in 1979 to track younger baby boomers over a considerable segment of their lives (US Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics 2012).

Beyond higher education, you may be hard pressed to identify many other organizations where employees spend their entire working career at one place or with so many well-attended 25-years-of-employment celebrations held each year. The job security that comes with tenure (for faculty) or continuing appointments after a one-year probation period (for staff) may not inspire organizational members to the ideals of strategic planning.

Related to term of employment is allegiance in higher education. Most faculty members have responsibility for scholarship, teaching, and service on campus and in the community. In some cases, faculty may act as independent contractors focused on obtaining their next research grant or completing a manuscript that will further their career at the expense of class lectures or campus service. In academia, often fame and fortune are what is rewarded. Faculty who spend significant time focused on students may not be rewarded professionally on campus or in their field of study. Despite this, some faculty choose to place a strong focus on teaching and appreciate the academic freedom they have to teach and mentor their students. However, those faculty may be more focused on their role as an educator or mentor than on the long-term strategic aspirations of the institution. I have had the opportunity to facilitate a number of workshops on strategic planning for faculty and staff on college campuses. At one campus, the staff member responsible for directing the college through a strategic planning process hoped the workshop would enlighten the campus on the benefits of strategic planning. At the end of the day, the staff member was anxious to get feedback from the group as to their excitement about beginning the strategic planning process. One faculty member who spent the day politely listening to the presentation said to the staff member, "I appreciate the work you are doing, so you focus on strategic planning and I need to focus on my classes and students." Such a statement may indicate that for some, strategic planning is something that happens around them, but not necessarily by or through them. For others the strategic plan may not be on their radar or part of the reality of their day-to-day job. Such views by faculty and staff do not contribute to making a strategic plan a living document.

Finally, higher education institutions differ from other organizations in the constituency they serve, their students. While faculty and staff may spend much of their careers in one place, the student body is continuously changing either through graduation or attrition. This continuous turnover in student stakeholders may create a cultural disincentive for change. Why bother with a change process when those for whom it is in part intended will not be there in four to six years?

FORCES INFLUENCING HIGHER EDUCATION

The factors described above are some of the challenges educational leaders contend with in the development and implementation of strategic plans. They are representative of a few of the unique internal forces working on institutions of higher education that can contribute to the creation of a culture that is less than enthusiastic about the strategic planning process. Beyond these internal forces, higher education is being transformed by new challenges

and opportunities coming from outside the institution, such as the changing cultural and academic demographics of entering students and the pressure to develop and deliver courses and programs through new media. Obviously, the strategic planning process in higher education must consider both the internal and external forces working on the institution to be successful.

The ability of an organization and its members to respond to internal and external pressures with adroitness is a necessary evolution of all organizations. This may be even truer in education, which has been perceived in the past as more stable and better insulated from external influences than other sectors. In 1966, Katz and Kahn referred to educational institutions as people-processing and people-changing organizations that are less open to the immediate influence of the marketplace and more concerned with long-range outcomes. The authors went on to suggest that people-changing organizations such as schools should be guided by gentler, more individually oriented norms in contrast to the norms that guide economic-based organizations (Katz and Kahn 1966). What a difference 50 years make. While it is at least hoped by educational institutions and those working in education that in both the short and long term they are helping to mold and change the lives of their students, you may be hard pressed to imagine any institution of higher education that does not consider its position in the marketplace and the economic realities of the current environment. Therefore, it is useful to examine some of these external and internal driving forces to better understand the challenges faced by those who try to bring about change in and planning to the institution.

A useful framework, one that recognizes both the importance of the environmental factors higher education institutions must contend with and the human response, is the open-system approach. From an open-system perspective, organizations are dynamic and continuously changing in response to internal and external pressures. Katz and Kahn (1966) were among the first to apply this perspective to the study of organizations. In an open-system perspective, organizations are not static but rather in a constant self-sustaining process where inputs are transformed into outcomes that are used by others or reused by the system. The behavior of the organization and its members can be understood in terms of their interaction with the environment. Figure 1.1 offers an example of how such a model may apply to higher education.

A benefit of viewing the institution as an open system is that this perspective can help to explain how organizational structures and job-role requirements can hinder or advance members' ability and willingness to promote a strategic planning process. For example, a college that is part of a larger university system may have its financial support determined in part by the number of students enrolled at the college. A plan to achieve a high enrollment number through an open enrollment policy may lead to admitting students with lower academic ability and conflict with a plan to raise the overall standard of students and the public perception of the institution. In terms of job-role requirements, an employee working at a computer help desk may be required to respond only to questions related to logging in and e-mail despite having knowledge beyond these two areas. A strict job role limiting what the employee can offer may be in conflict with stated plans to enhance customer service and may instill in the employee a reluctance to act on the strategic goal of enhanced customer service.

Figure 1.1 **Educational Institution as an Open System**
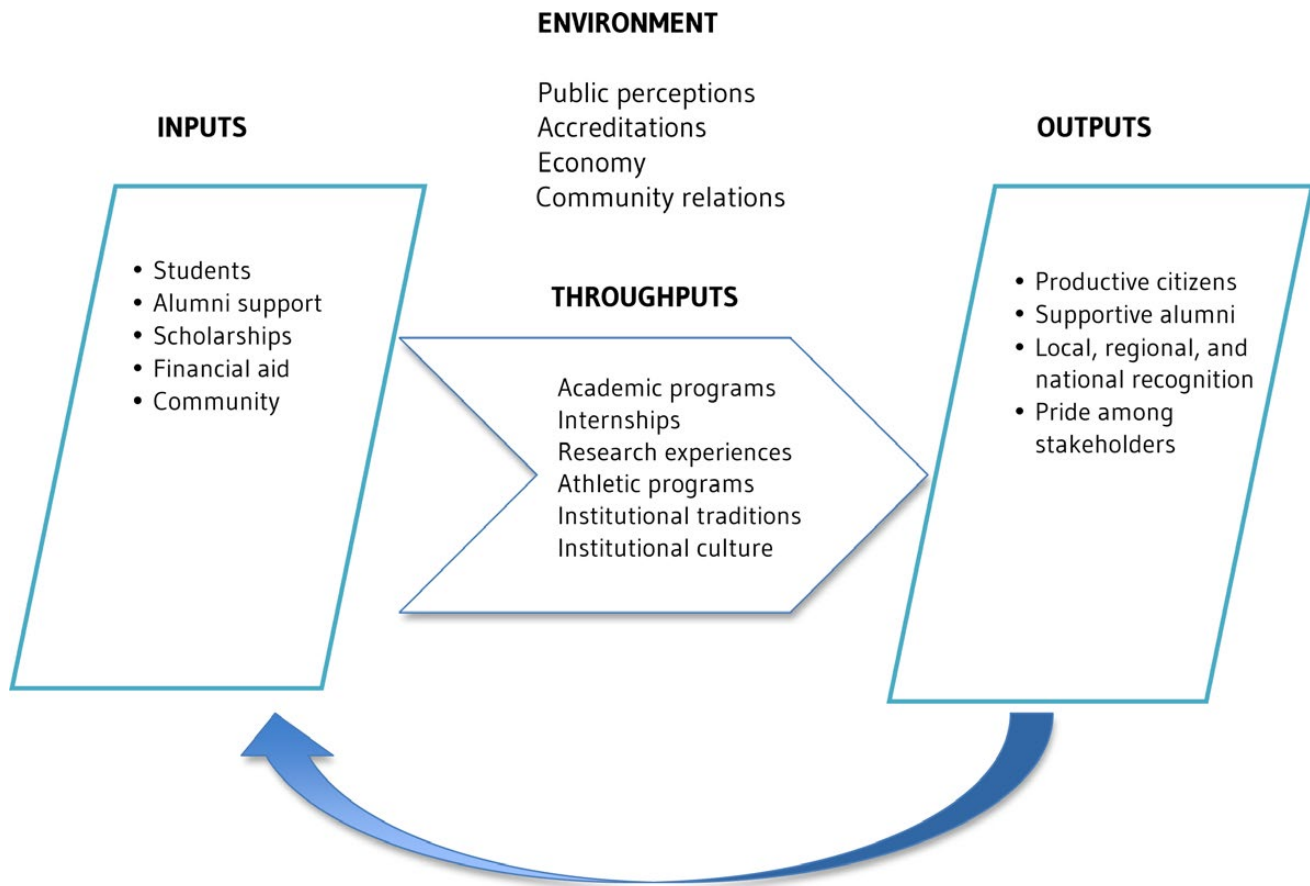
Morgan (2006) makes the point that we should always organize with the environment in mind and suggests that interest in corporate strategy is a result of the realization that organizations must be sensitive to what is occurring beyond their walls. The open-system approach allows for a greater appreciation of the interrelatedness of the environmental and internal forces working on the institution and suggests how to strategically align these forces. A college's or university's interactions with customers (students), staff, faculty, unions, competitors, vendors, and regulatory groups (to name a few) have important implications. In higher education strategic planning, it may be common to view these different groups as separate unrelated entities and to attend to the planning issues related to each group separately. Thinking about strategic planning from a silo perspective may have the advantage of making the process more manageable. However, in reality, all of the many planning processes that take place in higher education affect each other. The academic plans, building and facility plans, financial plans, human resources plans, etc., are all interrelated; at least they should be viewed that way. It can be very difficult to mentally juggle all of these groups and separate planning processes at one time. An open-system perspective provides a way to visualize and perhaps better manage the interconnections among all of the planning that takes place on a campus. However, for an institution to benefit from an open-system view in its strategic planning process, it must proactively scan the environment for changes, respond to those changes, and position itself to manage those changes.

Table 1.1 lists some of the potential external and internal driving forces that are relevant to higher education. External and internal driving forces differ in terms of their degree and the influence of control. While external driving forces

are centered on factors outside the institution, internal forces may represent unique characteristics of the institution. Also, while a higher education institution may be able to influence to some degree the external driving forces that affect it, there is a more favorable probability that the college or university can control and modify its internal driving forces.

These driving forces simultaneously represent both challenges and opportunities in the strategic planning process, depending on how they are managed and how the energy around them is harnessed. An analogy can be made to sailing. The square sail is the oldest type of sail, with its use dating back to 3500 BC. While a very useful way to harness the wind, a downside of the square sail is that with it all forces are working in the same direction. Because square sails are pushed by the wind, the ability to sail in different directions is limited. A lateen sail (sometimes referred to as a triangular sail) can convert wind power from any direction into forward thrust (Campbell 1995; Casson 1971), which takes away some of the uncertainty by sailors about their ability to get from point A to point B. Like the wind, the forces working on an institution are going to be there, pushing it along. The value of considering driving forces as they apply in an open-system perspective is that such consideration can help identify an approach to determine whether the driving forces will hinder the planning process or can be harnessed to move the institution in the desired strategic direction in a timely manner.

The list of driving forces in table 1.1 will have specific meaning for each institution. The following are offered as suggestions of what those forces may look like for some.

Table 1.1 **External and Internal Driving Forces Related to Higher Education**

External Driving Forces	Internal Driving Forces
1. Influence of a Larger System	1. Student Characteristics
2. Technology	2. Faculty and Staff Characteristics
3. Educational Reform	3. Organizational Leadership
4. Competition	4. Infrastructure
5. Location	5. Process and Logistics
6. Image	6. Sense of Community
7. Economy	

EXTERNAL DRIVING FORCES

1. INFLUENCE OF A LARGER SYSTEM

Some colleges and universities are part of a larger system (such as a state system) or are extensions of a campus (such as in the case of a college with a presence overseas or a community college with several campuses within a region). Being what can be viewed as a subsidiary of a main campus may limit an institution's ability to adapt and respond quickly to external forces. For example, a college campus that is part of a larger state educational system typically cannot introduce a new program of study to respond to interest in a popular area without first gaining approval from the overseeing administration. In some systems, that process can take years. A smaller independent college may be able to respond to market demand more quickly. Some systems may mandate a consolidation of resources among

their campuses across a region or state, requiring those campuses to modify their purchasing or resource allocation procedures and thus limiting their ability to purchase computer equipment or acquire library books and research databases.

2. TECHNOLOGY

For the majority of us, especially those of us in higher education, keeping up with the rate of technological change is vital. To say that technology is constantly changing is a platitude. Futurists such as Ray Kurzwell (Bloom 2007) have predicted that organizations will have to redefine themselves at faster rates due to the explosive power of exponential technological growth. Others such as Jaron Lanier (2011) believe that what is most important about technological change is how it changes people. The rate or impact of technological change may not be a concern from a student's perspective. Rather, students simply expect that all of their devices and technology will work on campus. Can you imagine if the campus was in a dead zone for cell phone use or if students had to register for classes in person rather than online? On some campuses students receive a text message when their laundry in an automatic washer or dryer is ready. Campuses are pushed to keep up with the latest technology in part by student expectations that this technology will be available to meet their needs.

3. EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Budget cuts and calls for affordable education and reliable outcome measures have renewed discussion of educational reform. Part of this discussion has focused on the training of teachers to enhance student outcomes (Darling-Hammond 2010; Rust 2010). Changes in state certification or licensure requirements for teachers and other professionals by external regulatory groups may require educational programs to make changes in their course curricula. Also, teacher training programs must respond to proposed federal agendas that would review and assess the quality of such programs with a focus on accountability and the collection of meaningful data. The outcome of such a review may influence access to federal funds for teacher preparation (US Department of Education 2011).

4. COMPETITION

All institutions would like to have a competitive edge. Challenges to achieving this edge include rising costs and a proliferation of programs, including online degree programs and programs offered by the for-profit sector. The New York metropolitan area is home to more than 240 private colleges and universities employing about 97,000 workers and attracting students and faculty from around the globe (Harcum 2009). Some colleges, such as the Humane Society University (HSU), are identifying unique niches in the marketplace. HSU's College of Arts & Sciences is the first higher education institution in the country to confer bachelor's of science and master's of science degrees in animal policy and advocacy and humane leadership. A 2011 survey of online learning reveals that the number of students taking at least one online course has surpassed six million; in other words, nearly one-third of all higher education students are taking at least one online course (Allen and Seaman 2011).

5. LOCATION

Higher education institutions typically cannot easily relocate their campus to respond to changing trends or reports of changes in potential applicant pools. It is anticipated that colleges in the northeast will face a grim future given declining state appropriations, unstable endowment returns, and a projected drop in the number of high school graduates (Bidwell 2013). From 2009 to 2028, the number of graduates in the region is expected to decline by 10

percent, meaning that 65,000 fewer students will be enrolling in higher education institutions. Of course, a great location can contribute to the success of a business. Proximity to competitors and potential customers will drive the success of any institution. Decision makers can capitalize on the physical location of their campus by marketing the benefits of a metropolitan or rural campus to potential students. Having a campus near an international border can allow a college to market to another set of potential applicants who otherwise may have limited opportunities because of a lack of certain programs or greater competition for enrollment in their country of origin. Opportunities for employment in certain professions can attract potential students who may find it easier to obtain a certification or licensure for a career they plan to pursue in the country in which they earn their degree. Another strategic reality to consider is how technology will minimize the importance of an institution's physical location. Visionaries such as Bill Gates suggest that technology will make place-based higher education less important (Young 2010). For higher education, the importance of location may refer more to its presence on the Internet.

6. IMAGE

Why is a college's image so important? The image of an institution is the mental picture that first comes to mind when the institution is mentioned. It is related to how others view the reputation of the college or university both nationally and locally. Some institutions have gained a national reputation based on the success of their sports teams, and in some cases they may be better known for their athletic programs than for their academic programs. Athletic programs can bring a great deal to a campus in terms of recognition, monetary rewards, and a sense of connection for students and alumni. Public image can influence student applications, alumni donations, research grants, and community partnerships. Some colleges go to great lengths to protect their image. One does not have to look too hard in the media to have a sense of how one action by a student, faculty member, or administrator can tarnish the public image of a school that is otherwise outstanding.

7. ECONOMY

Economic realities will influence many of these external driving forces. For example, a challenging economic environment may make a public college or a community college a more affordable option for potential students and their families. As a result, a public institution may see an increase in applications and enrollment, which may place stress on student services or conflict with its mission of accessibility to a quality education. Also, economic challenges may put more pressure on an institution to consolidate resources. For example, as a cost-saving measure a state system may attempt to consolidate campuses or eliminate redundant levels of administration at a number of campuses.

INTERNAL DRIVING FORCES

1. STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2012), between 2000 and 2010, undergraduate enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions increased by 37 percent, from 13.2 to 18.1 million students. Projections indicate that undergraduate enrollment will continue to increase, reaching 20.6 million students in 2021. An earlier report by the National Center for Education Statistics (2006) identified some of the most significant changes of the past 40 years in American higher education. Changes included the proportional growth of enrollees who are female, who are students of color, who attend full time, and who attend four-year institutions. The annual Mindset List first created at Beloit College in 1998 by Ron Nief and Tom McBride reflects the worldview of entering first-year college students

(Beloit College 2012). The list reminds us of the cultural factors that have gone into shaping the lives of students and how they see the world. As an educator, you may have found yourself needing to modify cultural references used as part of your class lectures for younger students. In addition to demographic and cultural changes, it is important to consider the changing academic characteristics of students. A 2012 ACT study reports that approximately 28 percent of all ACT-tested high school graduates did not meet any of the ACT readiness benchmarks for English, reading, math, and science (ACT 2012). The report notes that 60 percent of students tested missed the mark in at least two of the four subjects and that three out of four high school graduates were not fully prepared for college and would likely need to take at least one remedial class. This may have important consequences in terms of the allocation of resources needed to provide remedial courses. Also, consideration may need to be given to the admissions process so as to better select qualified students and meet projected student enrollment requirements.

2. FACULTY AND STAFF CHARACTERISTICS

Higher education is at a point where many of the faculty and staff of the baby boomer generation are preparing for retirement or would like to be. For some, the economy is delaying retirement as they try to recoup some of their retirement savings lost over the past few years. Where a mandatory retirement age is not in place, institutions may decide not to deal with possible law suits or clash with local unions to replenish their faculty and staff with new, younger employees. However, at some point the replacement of faculty and staff must be confronted, particularly given the projection that an estimated 6,000 administrative jobs in postsecondary education will need to be filled before 2014 (Leubsdorf 2006). A growing trend is to hire non-tenure-track faculty. It has been reported that in 1960, 75 percent of college instructors were full-time tenured or tenure-track professors; as of 2009, only 27 percent were (Stainburn 2009). The gap has been filled with graduate students or adjunct and contingent faculty. The employment of part-time adjunct faculty does provide a cost-saving benefit, but it can also erode a foundation of faculty who are connected to the institution. As part-time faculty may have to teach on several campuses to support themselves, their commitment to any one college through serving on campus committees, assisting students with research, or participating in extracurricular activities will be lacking.

3. ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Leaders are key to how an organization functions. According to Siddique et al. (2011), academic leaders should motivate, inspire, direct, and lead faculty members toward the achievement of shared objectives. Current academic leaders need to carry out these activities in more complex environments than those faced by their predecessors. Amey (2010) contends that current postsecondary leaders need to deeply reflect upon organizational culture and values in order to guide their institutions into the future.

An added challenge is the many stakeholders who must be addressed and managed, including students, faculty members, staff, community members, alumni, and political representatives. Each group may require different skills and tactics to successfully address its concerns and effectively use it to meet the institution's objectives. In applying the concept of leadership to college deans, Wolverton and Gmelch (2002) define academic leadership to include building community, setting direction, and empowering others. The many stakeholder groups need to feel connected to the institution. Members of the stakeholder groups need to be given direction as to how they should perform their responsibilities. And, academic leaders need to empower others to do their required tasks so they can reach given objectives. In a higher education environment, at times achieving these three objectives may seem equivalent to herding squirrels.

4. INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure refers to the basic facilities and services needed to allow a higher education institution to function, including technology, buildings, academic support systems, and research facilities. In many ways, infrastructure can determine an institution's success. Infrastructure needs to be in place to support innovation and to establish access so that innovation can work smoothly (Smith 2012). It can connect institutional members and provide them with the tools and services needed to facilitate teaching, learning, and research in a cost-effective manner. At one time, infrastructure focused on the condition of campus buildings and student housing (Pipho 1990). More recently, greater attention has been paid to technology infrastructure that supports not only campus computers and the increasing bandwidth that facilitates electronic communications, digital scholarship, and collaboration (all formerly done on paper), but also digital mobile devices such as iPods, personal digital assistants (PDAs), tablet PCs, and advanced cell phones. These devices are being more commonly used by students to access course-related materials (Galuszka 2005). There is an expectation that an infrastructure that supports student learning in this way will be available. Higher education institutions cannot use technology only to enhance traditional classroom teaching; doing so just adds cost to the system. Instead, institutions need to use technology to transform the way teaching is designed and delivered (Bates and Sangrà 2011). In terms of planning, just putting in the technology is not a guarantee that it will be used. Consideration also must be given to managing and servicing such technology. The initial capital investment will affect future operating expenditures; however, usually the operating cost of managing and servicing the technology infrastructure will be greater that the initial capital investment cost (Bates 2000).

5. PROCESS AND LOGISTICS

Process and logistics refers to how things get done on campus. In education, logistics can include how students register for classes, how space is allocated for faculty offices, how programs are offered, or how faculty and students are evaluated on competencies. The process and logistics for making decisions or accomplishing tasks may create hurdles for students and faculty in achieving success. Hooker (1997) refers to stakeholders in higher education as being caught in a paradigm paralysis. The paralysis is related to the ability to change thinking and behavior. Hooker acknowledges that educational systems have not changed to keep up with the exponential growth in knowledge. The paradigm paralysis may exist because of administrative structures that are inherited rather than changed or altered to address changes in the environment. Organizational models of how things are done in higher education will need to change to meet the new realities. Some institutions are moving toward systemness (Zimpher 2012). Systemness refers to the coordination of multiple components to create a network of activity that is more powerful than any action of an individual part on its own. A multi-campus system would need to rethink how many of its operating procedures and practices are conducted to achieve consistently attainable and actionable goals across all campuses.

6. SENSE OF COMMUNITY

A community is a vision of shared purpose. It provides shared commitment, relationships, and responsibility. It is a concept that is central to colleges and universities (Bogue 2002). A learning environment that fosters interaction and social learning is an essential feature of the higher education experience. There is value in college and university campuses increasing the sense of belonging in students, faculty, and staff. Building community on campus allows institutional members to grow in their identification with the institution, make valuable connections, and cooperatively work toward learning. Ernest Boyer, a champion of collegiate community, warns that a lack of commitment to serious learning among students can sap the vitality of the undergraduate experience (Carnegie

Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching 1990). Developing community can be a challenge on a campus that consists mainly of students who commute. Clark (2006) identifies one challenge faced by urban commuter students: the perception of needing to renegotiate college all over again each term. Clark reports that commuter students may lack a common ongoing experience that may be more typically found on a residential campus. Therefore, sustaining classroom-based friendships from one semester to the next may be a challenge, and the result may be a community of students and faculty who do not feel connected to each other or the institution. Consideration also needs to be given to how the growth of distance learning influences a sense of community. Such courses provide convenience and flexibility for students and administrators in terms of scheduling and access. However, Drouin and Vartanian (2010) report that online students conveyed lower levels of connectedness and an overall lower desire for a sense of community. Finally, sense of community can also refer to the institution's relationship to the community surrounding the campus. Institutions and their leaders need to consider how to create successful community-campus partnerships that capitalize on each other's assets (Seifer 2000).

The nature and degree of the external and internal forces presented will vary for each institution. Their effect on the larger strategic planning process needs to be carefully considered, especially in relation to the players and stakeholders the strategic plan is meant to influence. Some of the forces may not seem to be directly related; however, each has the potential to cause a ripple effect that can influence the other forces and the overall planning process.

Chapter 2: The Players

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

—Margaret Mead

Culture does not change because we desire to change it. Culture changes when the organization
is transformed; the culture reflects the realities of people working together every day.

—Frances Hesselbein (1999), *The Key to Cultural Transformation*, page 6

Change is a people process; the strategic planning process is not a solitary activity but one that involves a number of players. Its success depends on the individuals and groups who participate in the plan's development, application, and evaluation. To believe that all of those who will participate in and be affected by the process are on board may be wishful thinking or naivety. Before beginning a strategic planning process, it is useful to develop an understanding of some of the key players. It is these key players who will be expected to support the process and help develop an environment in which members of the institution are receptive to the process, willing to participate in and carry out strategic planning.

As a teacher, it would be nice to believe that at every class all students come fully prepared and excited about the opportunity to learn what is offered on the topic to be covered in class that day. Any teacher will tell you that this is not the case. In any class, students vary not only in their skills and abilities but also in their capacity to focus on the lesson of the day. Their ability to focus on the lesson competes with many other demands such as additional course work, family responsibilities, and jobs. A good teacher who recognizes and understands these differences and preoccupations will take the time to modify a teaching approach to fit the audience. An instructor may be challenged to recognize the potential greatness in each student and assist him or her in reaching that potential. Similarly, employees do not always come to the workplace ready to devote themselves completely to that day's work, let alone to think about strategic planning. We do not leave our humanness at the front door of the office building when we go to work. Employees often bring their family concerns, health concerns, mental illnesses, and other issues to the workplace with them. As a result, their preconceptions of the strategic planning process—or of any change—as a threat or opportunity have to be addressed. However, addressing the individual perspective, while important, should be viewed as only one part of a multi-step approach to guiding the institution through the strategic planning process.

A good planner should recognize that while there may be an individual or group charged with the strategic planning process, there are many individuals and groups to consider as part of the process. Each has a role in the initiation, implementation, and sustainability of the strategic plan. Each also offers a unique perspective, opportunity, challenge, set of fears and concerns, and potential resistance to change. Understanding how these players can potentially enhance or diminish a strategic planning process can allow them to be better managed if needed so that each can make a meaningful contribution.

Some of the key players in the strategic planning process include the individual charged with the process (the planner); the institution's administration; the institution's stakeholders (including students, faculty, staff members, alumni, and the community); and one entity not typically viewed as a player in the strategic planning process, the institution itself. While the discussion that follows treats each individually, they are all connected, interrelated, and equally important. It is possible that the others can compensate for one weak player, but each player has a unique role in the process. In a way they are all connected and need to be considered in a comprehensive manner.

THE INSTITUTION

Higher education institutions undertake a strategic planning process for a number of reasons. Sometimes the process may be in response to an accrediting organization or initiated by the leadership of a new administrator. The process may be a way to create a future that focuses and builds upon the institution's strengths or a means to rebuild and transform areas that pose a weakness. Regardless of the reason, considering the characteristics of the institution is important in adopting a strategic planning process that thoughtfully introduces an approach that best fits. Strategic planning is not a one-size-fits-all process. The approach used must be appropriate for the unique characteristics of the institution. The successful application of strategic planning requires an appreciation of where the institution and its members have come from, their current state of development, and their aspirations for future growth. The best plans will have little success if the institution's structure and culture do not support the process. Forces such as the institution's culture, administrative structure, and readiness for change will influence the process (figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 **Institutional Considerations in the Strategic Planning Process**
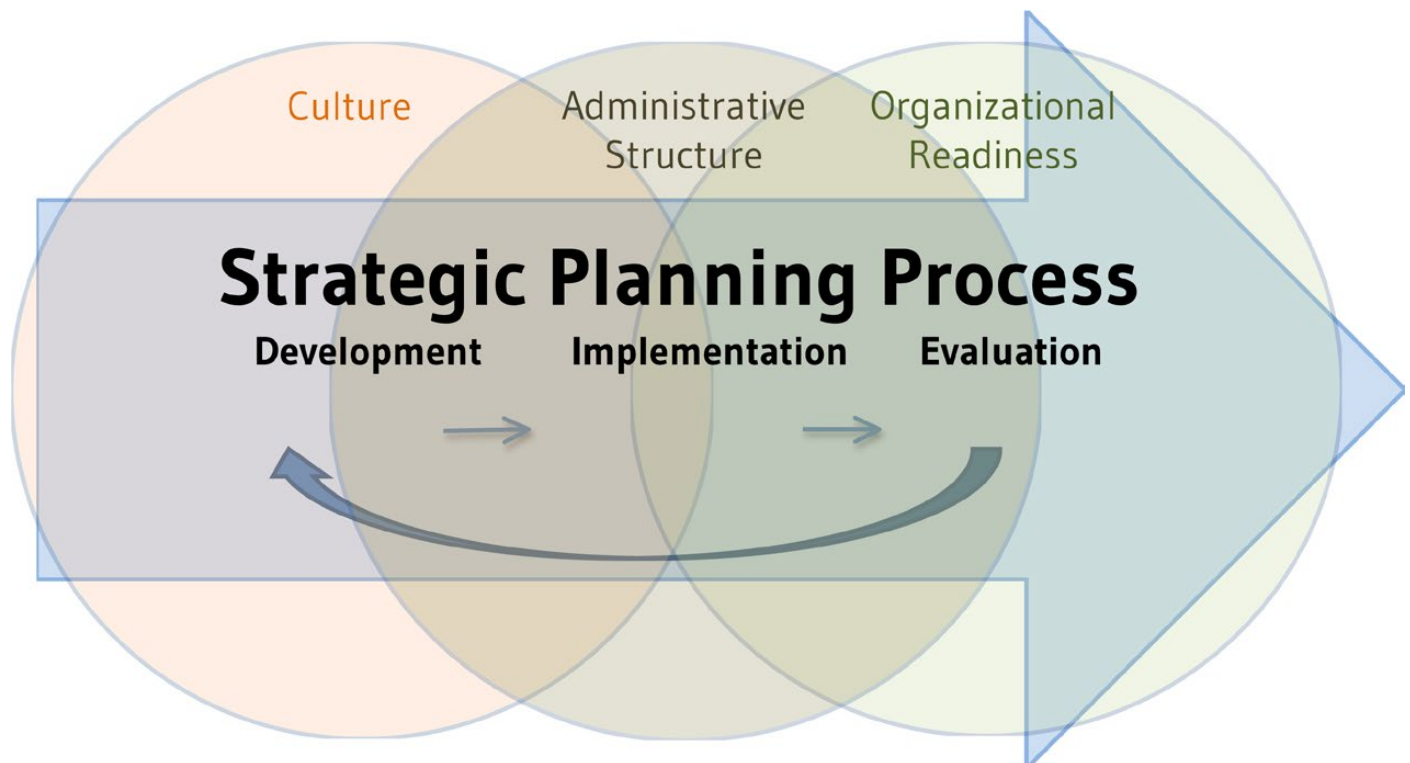
Having a sense of the institution's culture will lead to a better understanding of both potential roadblocks and members' irrational behaviors and opposition to the process. As Schein (1985) notes, examining cultural issues at the institutional level is essential for understanding what goes on in organizations and how to run and improve them. For example, consider the practice of a university's chief administrator assigning tasks of organizational importance, such as the renewal of accreditation by an external accrediting agency, to an individual based on the belief and past practice that a person of a certain title should be given charge of such tasks to justify his or her position and salary. Assignments are made based on title and rank without consideration that others on campus may have a more appropriate skill set or prior experience and success with the accreditation process. In this example, it has become accepted that this approach is the way it has been done in the past, and it has typically led to success. However, making decisions based on long-standing assumptions and beliefs that are deeply held by leading members of the institution will make it difficult for alternate assumptions or approaches to be considered. This may be more of an issue when a new approach is required or would be optimal, such as using the accreditation process to open a greater discussion of issues of importance to students and faculty like better advisement or improvement in the institution's four-year graduation rate. Long-held culturally accepted ways of proceeding might not even allow new approaches to be considered or such discussions to take place. As a result, the culture can impede new strategy and limit the potential of the institution to operate more efficiently.

Given the nature of their business, one would hope that higher education institutions would model learning organizations and be more progressive in adopting new ideas and learning from past unsuccessful practices. A learning organization promotes and encourages learning as part of its culture, thereby allowing it to transform and adapt to its environment (Birchall and Lyons 1995; Lynch, Leo, and Downing 2006). A learning organization has developed the capacity to adapt and change continuously (Senge 1990), in part by allowing newer ideas to be freely shared and replacing older ways of proceeding that would get in the way of allowing the organization to transform itself. In chapter 1, the concept of viewing a higher education institution as an open system was introduced. The open-system concept can apply to all institutions. Unfortunately, however, not all higher education institutions can be considered learning organizations. Some can be viewed as having a learning disability due to their inability to address problems in a systematic way (Senge 1990).

Lewin's (1951) three-phase model of organizational change is consistent with a systems theory perspective of organizational change and may provide some insight as to why some organizations do not easily adapt to the change that may be required as part of a strategic planning process. The three phases of Lewin's model of organizational change are unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. In the unfreezing phase, current organizational practices are released or unfrozen so they can be changed. In a learning organization, this first phase, unfreezing current organizational practices, is rather easy. Once changes are made, they need to be refrozen so that the new practices are adopted by the organization. In Lewin's model, forces that promote change and forces that promote the status quo are at work simultaneously within the institution to maintain equilibrium. Change will only occur when the forces of change trump the forces that maintain the status quo. For example, an influential group of faculty who are nearing retirement may be opposed to revamping the curriculum to address market needs for graduates who are more proficient in the use of technology. They may prefer to maintain the status quo as they end their days at the institution. However, the demands of students, potential employers, and accrediting agencies, to name a few, may require the adoption of a strategic approach to improving students' mastery in this area. While Lewin's model may offer a simplified view of how change occurs in organizations, the concept of force field analysis does provide a framework

for organizational members (students, staff, and faculty) to easily understand the factors that may offer support or resistance to a strategic planning process. Also, the concept of force fields can provide a tool to reassure institutional members that while tension between different forces on campus may be uncomfortable, it is part of a process that can lead to a positive outcome.

Given the premise that there are forces promoting change and forces promoting the status quo, it would be useful to measure the strength of those forces. Some form of organizational assessment to identify an institution's capacity to engage in a strategic planning process would be helpful. The organizational capacity for change (OCC) presented by Judge and Blocker (2008) is a precursor of an organization's ability to exploit existing markets while exploring strategies to enhance organizational effectiveness. OCC can be defined as a dynamic capability that allows the organization to respond to new threats while at the same time realizing potential opportunities. In strategic planning, OCC may refer to an institution's ability to simultaneously address the day-to-day concerns of stakeholders such as course availability while also preparing for a number of possible future realities such as the development of new competitive degree programs.

Conducting a diagnosis of the institution will identify its current situation and potentially set the stage for members to take action. As Nadler (1977) notes, good data collection generates information about organizational functioning, effectiveness, and health. At any given time an institution may not have the capacity to engage in a strategic planning process to the degree desired. External constraints such as a forecast of shrinking budgets over a period of years or internal constraints such as a vote of no confidence for the campus president by the faculty senate should make an institution reconsider the timing of introducing any significant change on campus.

Regardless of the approach used to identify the institution's current capacity to carry out a strategic planning process, gathering information as part of an organizational assessment in general has three potential benefits (Anderson 2012) that can be directly related to strategic planning. First, data collection makes clear the problems that exist in the institution and can identify how such problems can potentially hinder the strategic planning process. Second, data collection can spark an interest in change among members of the institution and identify those who have skills that can be useful in developing the plan. Third, a thoughtful data collection process can build relationships throughout the organization, which will be critical in marketing the strategic plan and developing the trust that will promote the individual and organizational changes that may be required. Data used to assess the institution's readiness for strategic planning can be collected through a variety of means such as interviews, focus groups, surveys, and analysis of existing organizational reports. Most colleges and universities have members with some expertise in organizational assessment techniques who could assist in the development of a data gathering strategy and organize the data into a practical application.

Taking the time to investigate the institution's capacity for participating in the strategic planning process will allow resources to be applied where they can have a greater effect. Also, such an assessment can result in a better understanding of the forces that may be holding back the process and how to manage them. For example, if it is determined through assessment that the institution's human resources are a force that limits its capacity to carry out the strategic planning process, then a human resources management approach would be most appropriate to address the problem. A human resources management approach can be taken to select, reward, socialize, and develop individuals to contribute to achieving the institutional goal of strategic planning. Changes in socialization, reward,

and appraisal systems will affect employees' accepted norms and values and thereby have the potential to influence the institution's corporate culture (Eneroth and Larsson 1996).

THE ADMINISTRATION

The role of the institution's key administrators is obviously very important to the success of the strategic plan. Given the complexity of the institution it may be safe to conclude that few institutional members have as clear an understanding of the overall status of the organization as key administrators such as the chancellor, president, or provost. Their necessary interactions with deans, department chairs, staff, faculty, students, internal and external governing boards, the community, and legislators, provide them with a unique perspective on the strengths and weaknesses of the institution. Their position provides a comprehensive viewpoint and understanding of the institution that a faculty member in the classroom or a director of student housing cannot possess. Regardless of their level of interest in strategic planning, faculty and staff by the nature of their jobs are typically not as informed or involved to the same degree as key administrators.

Given their position and institutional knowledge, there may be an expectation that key administrators will or should run the strategic planning process. However, key administrators may better serve the process from development to implementation by leading from afar. Their role should be oversight of the macro areas of the planning process and assessment of progress from a managerial perspective (Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence 1997). Too much oversight of the process by a key administrator would not be politically wise. A perception of the plan as the sole product of a key administrator such as the college president would minimize the plan's legitimacy and result in diminished genuine involvement in the process by the various institutional constituencies. As a result, the institution may have a strategic plan, but any buy-in from constituents will be shallow, and the behaviors needed to support the plan will only occur as long as the administrator is at the institution. The strategic plan needs to be written by informed faculty, staff, and students working together and not by just a few key administrators. If all groups are not involved in the process, then plans to transform the institution to some sustained higher vision will not be realized.

In their study of visionary leaders, Neumann and Neumann (2000) conclude that an "integrator leader," one who effectively integrates vision, focus, and implementation, is a truly visionary, strategic, and transformational leader. The role of key administrators may be to integrate the vision, focus, and implementation of the process for various institutional members to show how the strategic plan is an integral part of their job function and essential to both their success and the success of the institution. In a way, key administrators need to provide the sound bites that can provide clarification and inspire others to participate in the strategic planning process.

If key administrators are interested in developing and implementing a strategic plan that will be accepted by many and obtain desired results, then their energies may best be used in developing a foundation on which the strategic plan can flourish. This will include setting the tone for how the strategic plan will be viewed, which may require altering the institution's culture. Their role and level of involvement will vary based on the culture of the institution regarding change and the current stage of the strategic planning process. The early stages of institutional strategic planning will require more guidance from and public participation of key administrators such as the president. However, as the institution matures in its use of strategic planning, key administrators may be able to take less of a public role. Regardless of the familiarity of an institution and its members with strategic planning, an essential administrative role

is to nurture a culture that promotes a context in which the strategic planning process can take place. This is not an easy endeavor, but it is feasible and necessary.

As Shugart (2013) notes, changing culture in higher education requires a different kind of leadership and an intentional effort at making a new culture to displace the old. Shugart suggests that cultural change begins with courageous conversations that touch the heart and free members from the illusion of institutional status quo. These conversations can direct members to new ideas that can lead to redesigned processes, systems, and habits. Key administrators can allow and encourage such conversations to happen.

Clearly, leaders play a critical role in shaping and reinforcing culture. By using Schein's (1985) five explanations of how culture is embedded in organizations, key administrators can promote an institutional strategic planning culture. Such a culture can be reinforced by:

1. WHAT MANAGERS PAY ATTENTION TO, MEASURE, AND CONTROL

Values, beliefs, and priorities are communicated through the themes key administrators communicate. A consistent focus on the strategic planning process communicated through public addresses, newsletters, and discussions with various campus groups provides a very clear signal as to the importance of the strategic planning process to the institution.

2. HOW LEADERS REACT TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS AND ORGANIZATIONAL CRISES

The heightened emotional arousal during a crisis increases the intensity of learning. Institutional members may perceive that the administration will show its true intentions during a crisis and therefore pay careful attention to the reactions of key administrators. How the administration deals with the crisis will create new norms and procedures and reveal underlying assumptions. Responding in a way that is consistent with the proposed institutional values, mission, and vision can communicate the commitment of the administration to a strategic direction. For example, a strategic direction may be a commitment to increase the number of full-time faculty rather than relying on the hiring of adjunct faculty. How the administration proceeds in hiring faculty during a difficult economic time will be viewed by members as a gauge of the administration's sincerity in achieving strategic goals.

3. DELIBERATE ROLE MODELING, TEACHING, AND COACHING

Through their actions key administrators can reinforce behaviors that support the strategic plan. Members look to leaders for cues as to appropriate behavior and emulate these behaviors. If key administrators consistently examine and monitor their work products in relation to the strategic plan and publicly report how their achieved outcomes contribute to the plan, then others will mimic such behaviors.

4. HOW REWARDS AND STATUS ARE ALLOCATED

The priority of the strategic planning process can be made clear by connecting rewards to behaviors concerned with it. Behaviors that endorse the strategic planning process can be linked to performance appraisal, promotion, or public recognition. Faculty, staff, and students who participate in the development of the institution's strategic plan can be publicly recognized in campus publications. College service related to the strategic plan can be taken

into consideration as part of the faculty promotion and tenure process. Staff members who develop innovative ways to address action steps of the strategic plan can have such behaviors linked to their performance appraisal and merit pay.

5. PERSONNEL RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, AND DISMISSAL DECISIONS

Schein suggests that a potent way to embed and perpetuate a desired culture is through the selection of new members. Hiring individuals who embrace or have had successful experiences with strategic planning is a sure way to accelerate and perpetuate an institutional culture that promotes the use of planning. Developing a culture of planning is further reinforced by who is dismissed or how they may be reassigned. Dismissal or reassignment may be a challenge on a campus that is highly unionized or for members who are tenured or vested in a position. However, clearly communicating that an individual was denied a promotion or dismissed for not achieving goals related to the strategic plan sends a clear message to others of the seriousness with which the administration upholds the institution's strategic planning process.

Applying the concepts offered by Schein makes it clear that if a strong strategic planning culture is to be advanced in a meaningful way, then it needs to be at the core of every leadership action.

THE STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

In addition to securing the support of key administrators, all potential stakeholders need to be identified and how they may support the strategic planning process determined. A stakeholder can be broadly identified as any individual or organization that has a vested interest in the success of the institution's strategic plan. In higher education, internal stakeholders typically include students and their families, staff, faculty, administrators, alumni, and employee unions. External stakeholders include vendors, the surrounding business community, potential employers, professional and accrediting associations, and legislators (table 2.1). From an organizational viewpoint, greater influence can be exerted over internal stakeholders; however, consideration needs to be given to how to best manage these various groups so that they contribute appropriately to strategic plan development, implementation, and evaluation. All groups will not be involved to the same degree nor do they need to be. For example, it would not be productive to have input from business community stakeholders on a strategic direction related to increasing the number of tenured faculty lines, but their input on a strategic direction related to professional program development would be appropriate.

Table 2.1 **Stakeholders**

Internal Stakeholders	External Stakeholders
Students	Vendors who do business with the institution
Student family members	Business community members who indirectly support the institution
Staff	
Faculty	Legislators
Administrators	Future students and employees
Alumni	Potential employers
Unions	Professional associations
	Accrediting agencies

Part of properly managing stakeholder groups is providing them with a sense that their contributions are consequential, which they can be. The potential value of involving stakeholders is enhanced by developing a systematic approach and process for listening to them, providing appropriate feedback, and strategically engaging them so that their voices are heard and their opinions are applied to the planning process in a meaningful way (Dew 2009).

There are a number of group techniques that can aid in gathering and sharing information from the various stakeholder groups (see chapter 4 for a more detail discussion of group techniques). The nominal group technique is a useful way to manage focus group discussions and have all participants' opinions heard and considered. Scenario building exercises allow participants to conceptualize possible future realities. With scenario building tools, groups can develop a clearer vision of the future, plan for various contingencies, and agree on what scenarios to work toward to create the desired future. The survey feedback technique allows stakeholder groups to share information of importance to them through intensive interviews or structured surveys and then have the summarized information shared back. Based on the feedback provided, stakeholder groups can then develop action plans to address strategic objectives.

In addition to clarifying the approach that will be used to solicit stakeholder groups' contributions to the strategic planning process, it can be beneficial to clarify the role and limits of the stakeholder groups' decision-making power. The decision-making process under which the stakeholder groups will operate must be visible to all participants. Transparency regarding how final decisions will be made (for example, by group consensus or individually after consultation) can avoid any confusion or concern about the degree to which stakeholders' contributions are used in a meaningful way.

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

As with most endeavors in higher education, at some point a committee will be formed to oversee the strategic planning process. Some may argue that the problem with committees is that they exist, but most organizations seem to be unable to conduct work without some formal committee structure. While decision making by a committee can have its limitations, especially in situations that require quick decisions, there are a number of benefits that result from forming a strategic planning committee. The establishment of a planning committee can give legitimacy to the process by providing oversight and a level of accountability (Harrison 1987). A planning committee can enhance trust and improve satisfaction with actions taken. The use of a committee can also bring more knowledge, information, abilities, and skills to bear on the process.

On campus, the strategic planning committee holds the primary responsibility for the plan and provides the venue for formal constituent representation. The true value of the planning committee will depend on those who are selected as members and how well the committee's role is clarified. Obviously, the committee needs to be representative of the various constituencies on campus and involve different levels of the institution's membership. Some may be appointed to the committee out of political correctness or because their job title necessitates inclusion. When committee members can be chosen, a few qualities should be considered in the selection process. Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (1997) suggest the avoidance of committee surfers. These individuals typically make limited contributions but feel the need to be on every key committee as a means of protecting their interests or the interests of those they may represent.

The authors also stress the importance of including members who are motivated and of taking care to fulfill members' needs to feel that their committee work is important and valued.

Beyond their willingness to serve, consideration should be given to including members who possess skills that may be key in the distribution and collection of information related to the strategic planning process. An important part of the execution of the strategic plan involves assigning specific activities and behaviors related to strategic goals to employees who have the competencies, skills, and training that will allow them to achieve desired outcomes.

In his book *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, Gladwell (2002) presents the idea of the law of the few. These few are those individuals who potentially have the ability to create a tipping point, a critical mass, where ideas and messages can spread quickly, almost effortlessly, through the environment. The ideas offered by Gladwell are applicable to spreading the concepts, goals, and potential benefits related to a higher education institution's strategic plan.

Included in the law of the few are individuals who serve as connectors, salesmen, and mavens. The ability to successfully spread ideas and change is dependent on the involvement of these people, these few, who possess a unique set of social skills. The few may be able to get things to tip in favor of the strategic planning process.

Gladwell describes "connectors" as people with a gift for bringing the world together. They know people across an array of social and professional circles and make a habit of introducing people who work or live in different circles. In the field of organizational behavior these people are referred to as "boundary spanners" who connect the organization to external environments. Boundary-spanning roles can be defined as those that act as an interface between the organization and its external customers (Buttle 2004). Gladwell characterizes connectors as having social networks of over 100 people.

Gadde, Huemer, and Håkansson (2003) discuss three strategic issues related to developing industrial networks. The first is the fact that close relationships are at the heart of a company's survival. To address this, a company's strategic issue is to identify and establish appropriate levels of involvement with individual partners. A second issue is related to the understanding that a company's relationships are a key means used to influence others. Here the strategic issue is about balancing the interplay between influencing others and being influenced. Finally, companies attempt to control the network surrounding them and to manage relationships so that their own objectives are achieved. The strategic issue at this point is to identify adequate ambitions regarding control. The appropriate boundary spanner or connector can help address these issues.

Boundary spanning can create direction, alignment, and commitment across groups in service of a greater goal. In their book on boundary-spanning leadership, Ernst and Chrobot-Mason (2011) state that interdependence is an important challenge faced by many organizations today. These authors suggest that boundary spanning is not for the faint of heart. Bringing together diverse groups and crossing the boundaries of human relationships can be a challenge. Connectors may meet some resistance from those who may not want to share ideas or have their boundaries crossed.

Success as a boundary spanner or connector relies on more than just having a robust social network. A boundary spanner must have the ability to be sensitive to the social cues of different groups and adapt his or her behavior according to the requirements of the situation. Individual differences in the ability to self-monitor will determine one's ability to be successful in this role. High self-monitors are more likely to perceive their behavior and adapt it to fit the situation. The ability of high self-monitors to adjust their behavior as boundary spanners was associated with higher performance and was independent of job experience (Caldwell and O'Reilly 1982).

In addition to connectors, it would be valuable to include what Gladwell refers to as "salesmen" on the committee. Salesmen possess powerful negotiation skills that go beyond the obvious eloquence of their words. They give off subtle, hidden, and unspoken messages that influence others and make others want to agree with them. Salesmen can help gain buy-in from stakeholder groups. Hill, Thomas, and Keller (2009) warn that a lack of buy-in from important constituencies can cause many problems, including that some individuals may choose to, in their words, "poison the well" with other faculty members or administrators. These authors also warn about planning weariness. Salesmen can serve an important role in the communication of the plan's progress and in renewing links with stakeholder groups. They can be the mechanism for reporting on progress in a timely fashion and addressing disillusionment among participants and constituencies. It may be necessary to ensure that each stakeholder group has a salesman representative on the committee to maximize the effectiveness of all stakeholder groups.

The final player in Gladwell's trio of the few is the "maven." Gladwell makes it clear that mavens are not persuaders. They are helpers and teachers who can and want to solve problems by sharing what they know. Mavens are collectors of information. They are information specialists and have the potential to connect others with new information. In a way, we are all mavens in our own fields of expertise.

On a college or university campus, mavens are those who possess skills that may be very useful in spreading ideas and concepts related to the strategic plan. For example, dashboards are potentially powerful tools for integrating information from multiple sources into a cohesive display. In higher education they can provide access to data related to key performance indicators such as admission, enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. If a dashboard is desired as a way to keep members informed of the strategic planning process, then a faculty member with the technological skills to develop and maintain a dashboard could be a very beneficial member of the committee. A member of the campus who has expertise in group dynamics could develop a process to obtain information from and provide feedback to stakeholder groups. A member of the college senate who is a diplomat and has extensive knowledge of the history and backstory of the institution can help guide the process.

Mavens are not always established people on campus. Newer faculty and staff may have a skill set or fresher way of viewing situations that can be very useful. On one campus a committee was in a heated discussion over developing a strategy for how to best contact entering freshmen. The debate was over the appropriate mailing address to use to deliver information. While the debate went on, a new staff member left the meeting and returned a few minutes later to inform the group that he had just contacted half of the entering class using Facebook. Every campus possesses mavens with expertise in a variety of fields. To not use mavens is not only a waste of talent but also a missed and wasted opportunity.

A final word on mavens. You may have heard the phrase, "just because it is popular doesn't mean it is good." Just because someone is a maven who has the knowledge needed does not mean he or she is the correct person for a job related to strategic planning. Care should be taken in determining what role mavens play on a strategic planning committee and whether that role should be one of an internal advisor or a consultant. A maven may not share the vision of the strategic plan or be able to see the bigger picture of where the institution is heading. Someone with technological skills may be helpful in developing a dashboard; however, if its development is just technology driven without the user in mind, then the dashboard's value will be diminished and may actually hinder the strategic planning process.

There is no magic number for the size of a strategic planning committee or a specific list of who to include on the committee. The plan for the development of a committee is not one size fits all. The committee may best be developed through an understanding of all the players as well as the complexity of the culture, the administrative structure, the organization's readiness, and the institution's politics.

THE INSTITUTIONAL PLANNER

So, who should lead this endeavor? Given the governance structure of many higher education institutions, the oversight of the strategic planning process will typically be given to some individual. Some institutions make strategic institutional planning an additional job responsibility. For example, the individual overseeing institutional research may also be charged with strategic planning. Also, planning activities on campus are typically divided across the institution among several individuals who may report to different vice presidents or deans based on the type of planning that is being conducted. So, it is possible that academic planning, financial planning, facilities planning, human resources planning, and other types of planning may each be the responsibility of different individuals representing different campus units. All of these separate planning activities could result in what Hill, Thomas, and Keller (2009) refer to as "parallel planning universes." As these authors state, planning does not happen in a vacuum. The authors relate that while their strategic plan was being developed, the university unveiled a separate plan for managing enrollment, an ad hoc committee proposed a change to offering only three-credit courses, and a different committee was at work on a major overhaul of the general education requirements. In their words, the left hand really did not know what the right hand was doing.

Some connection of strategic planning with other priorities such as institutional research and assessment or some division of campus planning activities across different units may make sense and be necessary given the size and structure of the institution. However, if institutional strategic planning is really a priority, then it would be beneficial to have in place an institutional planner who is responsible for (or at least oversees and coordinates) the entire planning process to avoid parallel planning universes. Ideally, such an individual would oversee an office of institutional planning.

The point is that strategic planning cannot be a part-time job. The institutional planner is a key player in the success of the strategic planning process. Successful strategic planning requires an entity that can maintain the course of the strategic direction and align the various strategic activities. An institutional planner can develop a common vocabulary for planning that will be used across the campus. He or she can oversee the stakeholder groups, gauge their

progress, and hold them accountable. The planner can continuously review the ongoing planning process and scan the environment for threats and opportunities.

Having an established position of institutional planner can add to the context in which planning takes place. Gladwell (2002) discusses the importance of context in allowing an idea to tip into widespread popularity. If the environmental context in which the strategic plan is introduced is not supportive, then the trend, the strategic plan, will not tip in the direction of acceptance. The position of institutional planner can provide a foundation for recognizing prior strategic planning efforts and synthesizing the institutional planning history to create an environmental and historical context in which strategic planning can stick. Gladwell refers to "the stickiness factor" as the ability of a trend to stick in the minds of others and influence future behavior. The institutional planner can help ideas and behaviors related to strategic planning stick. This can be achieved by monitoring the entire planning process and the other players to ensure that their connection to strategic direction is maintained. This is by no means an easy task.

An institutional planner needs to some degree to be in everyone's business or at least aware of how others' business influences the strategic planning process. This is especially true as it relates to the other players in the process. The planner needs to watch over how other groups are influencing the process (figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2 **The Planner's/Change Agent's Role as Monitor**

In their discussion of higher education leadership as it relates to conflict, interdependence, and strategic planning, Taylor and Machado (2006) contend that an effective leader must possess the ability to understand situations and challenges from multiple, sometimes conflicting perspectives in order to comprehend the full range of options for decision making and policy development. The same can be said for the institutional planner who is leading the strategic planning process. Beerel (1997) refers to the role of a strategic planner as a modern-day prophet. The planner must balance the complex tensions affecting the institution, understand the relevant questions, and reveal the trade-offs associated with following various courses of action. In a discussion with a planner from a higher education institution, I asked what the date was when classes started for the upcoming semester. The response was, "I don't know, I'm not on the faculty." Well, as a planner for the institution you should know that information. The institutional planner needs to monitor to some degree, either as a job responsibility or informally, the many activities that take place on campus. Maintaining this broader perspective will aid the planner in serving as an effective agent for strategic change and help lead the institution to a desired future reality.

SKILL REQUIREMENTS FOR PLANNERS

The field of organizational development refers to the change agent as the individual or group that introduces and manages change in an organization (Nelson and Quick 2012). Either directly or in the role of a consultant to various groups, this is what an institutional planner is trying to accomplish: bringing about strategic change. While it is important to have a sense of the pulse of the institution, a particular skill set is also beneficial. Successful planners require a combination of technical and interpersonal skills. In their discussion of successful planners, Norris and Poulton (2008) quote Benveniste (1989) as to what a planner is not. Benveniste's description of a deadwood planner deserves to be repeated here:

> Deadwood planners tend to be pompous and often disdain the people or the organization for whom they work. Their main concern is to please the Prince who hires them, and they bask in the proximity of his power. These planners and policy analysts do not create waves nor do they influence change very much. They often tend to write trivial plans—lists of decisions that have already been taken. They defend their professional turf by inventing esoteric languages. They spend their energy in developing planning methodologies that are arcane and difficult to interpret. They often avoid complex choices, preferring to list alternatives and to provide large volumes of data without facing the need for choices. Deadwood planners have found a niche in organizational life. They are protective of their own interests. They invent names and functions for planning and often protect themselves by routinizing planning. Planning becomes bureaucratic, data are collected, analysis takes place routinely, and no one seems to have much to say about the usefulness of these planning efforts except those who carry them out. Deadwood planners have given a bad name to planning because they overemphasize the sanctity of their craft. (Benveniste 1989, p. 128)

Among the skills that Norris and Poulton suggest planners need are the abilities to match their planning strategies to the challenges of the times, develop the capacity to detect new trends, differentiate between fad and substance, understand the role of different stakeholders, and understand the importance of effective communication. These competencies are similar to those suggested in the literature that need to be developed in organizational development practitioners known as change agents.

Huse and Cummings (1985) provided one of the earliest comprehensive lists of core and advanced skills for practitioners. As Anderson (2012) notes, a number of authors and professional organizations have suggested sets of skills and competencies needed to be an effective organizational development practitioner. Anderson notes that while there seems to be no consensus as to the skill set needed, what has been suggested can be summarized as a set of interpersonal skills, a set of behavioral skills, and knowledge in the content area.

While there is almost a 30-year span between Huse and Cummings's list and Anderson's summary of skills needed for a change consultant, there is a great similarity in the authors' lists in terms of the primary categories of competencies identified (table 2.2). Anderson also includes skills in training and development that encompass adult learning, instructional design, training delivery, learning assessment, performance management, and learning technology. These skills are essential for carrying out the strategic planning process. All of the competencies listed are developable, interrelated, and overlapping. They can differentiate effective planners from less effective deadwood planners. While the list presents an optimal set of skills, it may be impractical to expect one individual to possess them all. However, an effective planner will identify those mavens who can assist with providing the skills and services that may be needed or that the institutional planner is lacking.

Table 2.2 **Critical Institutional Planner Skills**
(Skills and Competencies of Organizational Practitioners)

Huse and Cummings (1985)	Anderson (2012)
1. General consultation skills	1. Consulting skills
2. Interpersonal skills	2. Interpersonal skills and personal characteristics
3. Intrapersonal skills	3. Organizational behavior
4. Knowledge of	4. Interventions
• Organizational behavior	5. Data collection and data analysis (including research design)
• Organizational development	6. General professional skills
• Intervention skills	7. Business management knowledge
5. Research and evaluation knowledge and skills/research design	8. Training and development
6. Data collection	
7. Data analysis	
8. Presentation skills	
9. Experience with line managers/ major management knowledge areas	

One important characteristic of the institutional planner that cannot be outsourced is the development of trust and credibility within the institution and among stakeholders. The statement "It's not what you know, it's who you know" implies that one's knowledge and skills are less important than personal contacts. Contacts are important, but success as a planner may depend more on not who you know but who knows you. The degree to which members of the institution trust the person charged with planning and view him or her as credible will affect the quality and usefulness of the information collected as well as the willingness to accept the information presented. How you as a planner are branded by stakeholders will influence your success. As a planner, you and your brand are always on stage,

and someone is always watching, listening, and evaluating. Avrin (2010) suggests that we craft our brand and ensure that a process is in place to deliver the right message to the right audience. Planners leading a strategic planning process need to nurture open relationships with the other players or else they may be leading only themselves.

An open and honest exchange of information depends on trust. To achieve this trust requires face-to-face contact, active listening, and open discussion of all questions and concerns (Huse and Cummings 1985). Collaborative practices require that those involved act in an authentic manner. This requires being straightforward, genuine, honest, and truthful about plans, opinions, and motivations (Anderson 2012). Strategic planning is a collaborative process. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, it is not a solitary activity. Patterson et al. (2002) report in their book on crucial conversations that organizational performance is not improved by changing the structure or policies that drive performance management. In the authors 'opinion, organizational success comes down to how people handle crucial conversations related to specific topics. As part of the strategic planning process, there will be a need for many crucial conversations to foster relationships and address disagreements, concerns, fears, and resistance to change. Leading strategic planning is about leading change and as Moran and Brightman (2001) state, managing that change is about managing people.

Chapter 3: The Challenges of Change as Part of Strategic Planning

If you want to make enemies, try to change something.

—Woodrow Wilson, Address at the Salesmanship Congress, Detroit MI, July 10, 1916.

It is easier to resist at the beginning than at the end.

—Leonardo da Vinci, *Notebooks*, 1508–1518

There may be countless reasons from both an individual and organizational perspective why various groups will resist the strategic planning process on campus and the change it may require. It appears to be just part of the process that cannot be avoided. You will be dammed if you do and dammed if you don't. Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (2001) make this point in reference to the development of a vision statement by the president of an institution. Some will criticize the president for a lack of leadership if no vision is provided. If a vision is provided, it will be criticized unless, as the authors state, it is an "inclusive Christmas tree" (p. 270) on which each constituency gets to hang a glittery ornament that may be more show than substance.

Strategic planning that is more than just a show will challenge the current way of doing things on campus. As indicated in figure 3.1, on one hand, the strategic management process provides an institution with a direction that can lead to a positive outcome but, on the other, propels the institution onto an uncharted and potentially perilous course (Taylor and Machado 2006). Given that perspective, some resistance is inevitable. In strategic planning, the goal may not be to avoid the resistance people have to the process; rather, a more realistic goal may be to anticipate the resistance, identify its source, and manage it the best you can. It can be tricky to get those involved to focus on the potential positive outcomes rather than fixate on the possible negatives.

Figure 3.1 **The Duality of Strategic Planning**
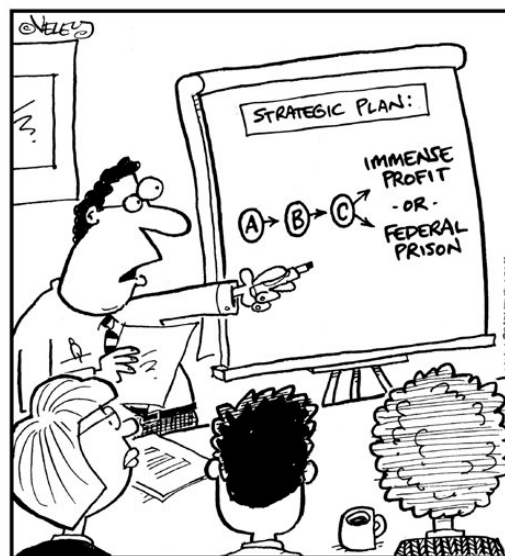
Source: Brad Veley, http://bradveley.com

There may be some unexpected benefits realized and lessons learned from challenges to the strategic planning process, such as exposing the vulnerabilities of the process. Challenges can also clarify issues that different groups may have and foster the process of identifying remedies. A faculty member shared a story of the challenge faced by his institution in refurbishing a central and historical building on campus. The building had a great deal of significant and sentimental value to alumni as well as to faculty who had served on the campus for many years. The building included a beautiful arched walkway that led up to its entrance. However, after many years of neglect, the building was beyond repair. The investment needed to restore it was greater than that to tear it down and just build a new building in its place. Although the building had become an eye sore as well as a potential hazard, there was a great deal of resistance from alumni, faculty, and the current student body to losing such a treasured symbol. This building was part of the character of the institution. Dealing with this challenge resulted in an important lesson for the newer administration as to how powerful traditions were on that campus; although this was a necessary change, it still seemed to displease the majority. The solution developed by the administration and some insightful architects involved integrating parts of the old symbol with a new tradition. The arched walkway could be saved and refinished. While there was much grumbling from stakeholders during the construction process, many members of the college community joined in the procession led by bagpipers as they marched under the arched walkway for the opening of the new building. This procession under the archway has now become a tradition at the opening of each new academic year and at spring commencement. This example demonstrates how even necessary and sensible change can be viewed as a disturbance. Each institution has its own traditions and character. Changes, especially strategic changes, ought to be undertaken with careful consideration given to the institution's strengths, traditions, and character.

The first two chapters make the case for the importance of considering the people side of strategic planning in higher education. Where there are people, there are politics. In strategic planning, as different stakeholder groups vie for control of resources or fight to protect their positions, political behavior may proliferate beyond the already existing campus politics. At some level, strategic planning is a political process, and politics will influence the strategic planning process. Within an organization, creating effective change and helping others adapt to the uncertainty of change depends on the effective use of politics. For those involved, there is value in grasping the realities of the political process as they relate to strategic planning.

THE POLITICS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

While some may argue that politics are neither good nor bad (Hochwarter 2003; McIntyre 2005), they can certainly muck up the process. Organizational politics potentially have both negative and positive effects on strategic planning as well as on organizational life. Zahra (1987) reports that the intensity of organizational politics is associated negatively with consensus on mission but positively with the quality of long-range planning efforts. A study by Hochwarter (2003) finds that those participating in political behavior at work had greater job satisfaction and organizational commitment when the level of politics in the work setting was high. However, those participating in political behavior at work were less satisfied and committed when the work setting possessed a low level of politics, perhaps because they were disappointed that others were not playing along.

Regardless of the research that can offer direction based on the connection between organizational politics and workplace behavior, some may want to avoid considering the politics related to strategic planning altogether. This may be a very noble thought. Like workplace gossip, some would rather avoid politics and the potential perceived

resentments that may lead to the obstruction of effective communication and collaboration. However, politics, like gossip, cannot just be avoided. Knowing about the gossip allows one to deal with the gossiping colleague or address being the target of gossip. Also, workplace gossip may contain information that, on some level, is noteworthy and should be addressed. So while it may not be necessary to be totally immersed in the world of gossip and politics on campus, it may be helpful to at least be aware of what the grapevine and informal networks are saying in relation to the strategic planning process.

Understanding the potential influence of politics on the strategic planning process becomes even more important when there is uncertainty, when there are ambiguous lines of authority (Ralston 1985), or when negative politics come into play. Some level of uncertainty and ambiguity will always be part of the strategic planning process. Negative politics can include attacking the plan or those overseeing it with a variety of accusations and innuendoes. Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (2001) refer to negative politics related to strategic change in higher education as "veto politics" (p. 70). While they have no real ability to create change, some groups may be able to rally enough support to block change with a resounding vote of no.

Eisenhardt and Zbaracki (1992), in an empirical review of the literature on decision making from that time, contend that it is appropriate to view organizations as political systems. In such systems, strategic decision makers must deal with what at times may appear to be conflicting objectives and their own limited cognitive capacity to address all of the issues. Benveniste (1989) contends that planners do not always know what they are doing, not because of ignorance or confusion, but as a result of not thinking through the political dimensions of their role. Planners usually deal with "messy or wicked problems," as Benveniste (1989, pp. 34–35) calls them, where goals are unclear and how to proceed is even less clear. Situations that may seem to be resolved best by a relatively simple technical solution are often more complex politically. For example, if students' inability to graduate in a timely manner was due to a lack of course availability, there would seem to be a simple technical solution. To improve the four-year graduation rate, a greater variety and number of sections of courses could be offered each semester. Courses could also be offered during evening hours to improve access. In addition, a number of introductory courses that are prerequisites for advanced courses could be offered online. This seems like a straightforward technical solution. However, there would be a number of political implications and push back from several fronts. Departments that view themselves as already strapped for resources may resist as they struggle just to maintain their current course offerings. An offer to provide resources to hire adjunct faculty may raise concerns about changing the character of student-faculty interactions. Adjunct faculty may be viewed as having less of an allegiance to students, a department, or the institution. Also, questions may arise as to why not make the investment in more full-time faculty positions. In a unionized setting, a request to increase class size or the number of sections taught by a faculty member to accommodate more students will lead to opposition by union leaders over increased workloads without adequate compensation. An increase in the number of courses offered in the evening can meet with resistance from a faculty that has become accustomed to a teaching schedule that accommodates their lifestyle. As for online courses, there are the costs of start-up technology and ongoing maintenance. Such costs could again lead to the question of why not invest the funds in more full-time faculty positions instead. An increase in online courses may also put more pressure on the staff responsible for updating and maintaining technology on campus. There is also the issue of developing online courses in a way that optimizes student success. Further, how will these courses be evaluated? For those who teach them, how will they be considered in the process of faculty tenure and promotion? So, what may appear to be a rational and simple technical solution has

the potential to create many ripples of discontent with political implications. At some point the possible scenarios need to be considered because each one has the potential to become a reality.

Given this example, thinking through the potential political dimensions of decision making as the institution moves through the strategic planning process may be considered a compulsory activity for planners. Ranker (2008) offers three additional reasons as to why there is value in understanding politics. The first is the value of increasing the probability that one gets what one wants. The second is the value of being able to have an effect at an increasingly greater level as the number of people one influences grows. The third is the value of having a greater number of options and more control over the way things get done. These reasons offered by Ranker seem rather self-serving, and perhaps that is why politics and political behavior are considered distasteful by some. Political behavior has often been considered primarily in terms of personal gain (Mayes and Allen 1977; Vigoda 2003). However, politics does not necessarily have to refer to the dark side of employee behavior. Some authors on the topic view politics as an inherently necessary component of organizational functioning and political behavior as an activity designed to minimize ambiguity and give meaning to what occurs in an organization (Ammeter et al. 2002; Ferris et al. 2002). Not all politics are necessarily bad, and those who engage in politics do not always do so exclusively out of self-interest or to oppose organizational objectives (Ferris et al. 2007). Ranker suggests that wise politicians understand the significance of politics because they appreciate that the method by which an objective is reached can affect how they feel about themselves and the outcome. To add to Ranker's suggestion, politics can also influence how stakeholders will feel about an outcome. Rather than focusing just on the benefits to oneself, the value of understanding politics is in the value they can have to the institution as part of a successful strategic planning process.

To better understand how the politics on campus may influence the strategic planning process, it may be helpful to contemplate the differences between the perceptions and realities of how campus members relate to one another and espoused campus values are actually propagated. Individuals as well as institutions may go to great lengths to protect an image even if it is not an accurate representation. For a number of reasons that may include protecting a power position or maintaining a sense of prestige or self-worth, the perception for some may be more important than the reality. If a strategic process jeopardizes those perceptions, then some may be compelled to act against it. For example, the term "collegiality" may be commonly used to describe relationships among faculty members who supposedly share a unified set of values regarding education. However, the mere use of the word does not necessarily mean that friendly, collegial relationships are the norm for behavior. Similarly, a college that publicly promotes a high degree of interaction between faculty and students may be challenged to provide common examples of such behavior.

The truth is that as part of the initial strategic planning process, it may not be possible to change many of the contradictions between the realities of everyday behaviors and the institution's public relations hype. Burgelman and Grove (as cited in Gummer 1997) use the term "strategic dissonance" to describe the divergence between what the company puts forth as its strategy and the actions taken by its managers. Gummer (1997) contends that managing strategic dissonance requires "strategic recognition," which includes the ability of top managers to appreciate the strategic importance of managerial initiatives after they are implemented but before clear environmental feedback is available. Considering the political implications ahead of time and having an awareness of the contradictions that exist can possibly reduce the development of strategic dissonance and aid in defusing potential political tempests as the strategic planning process proceeds. Dealing with such contradictions can become at some point a strategic goal. The

trick may be to give some thought to which issues are worth fighting over to move the strategic process forward and which are only smoke screens with little substance or ability to actually slow or derail the process.

Perhaps the words of St. Ignatius in his letter to Bishop Polycarp may offer shrewd advice: "In all circumstances, be wise as the serpent, though always harmless as the dove" (Antypas n.d., ¶ 8). In strategic planning, a balance must be struck between commitment to the strategic process and the reality of dealing with political entities that may try to obstruct it. At times this may be a difficult balance to maintain. Dedication and steadfastness to the process may require speaking the truth about the subtle and perhaps blatant hypocrisies that exist on the campus and obstruct change. However, one needs to be cautious. For the sake of speaking the truth, one does not need to be unkind or insensitive. There is a danger that an offense inflicted, even if just perceived, will close the mind of the hearer, a stakeholder, to the truth of the message. Also, there is no need to provide naysayers with a reason to unite. As McClamroch, Byrd, and Sowell (2001) indicate, a goal of strategic planning should be to gain a consensus of commitment to a process and shared goals. Consensus will require compromise and a mindfulness that the intent is not about who is right but what is right. Obtaining the backing needed to implement and support the chosen direction does not require all parties to be passionate about the idea. Rather, it may be enough to have them not mess with it and, as a group, to defer to the greater good of the institution. To achieve this may require the use of political tactics as a means to influence and negotiate with powerful groups on campus (Zahra 1987). So, the use of political tactics may actually benefit the strategic process when such tactics are used to benefit the institution as a whole rather than selfishly for personal interest.

An introductory text on organizational behavior with a chapter devoted to politics and power will provide a detailed discussion of influence and political tactics. A few of the tactics commonly presented include ingratiation (get one in a good mood or to see you in a good light), rational persuasion (use logical arguments or factual evidence), and consultation (seek participation in making a decision). These three influencing tactics have been identified as among the ones most often used (Falbe and Yukl 1992; Steensma 2007; Yukl and Tracey 1992).

In keeping with the premise of this book, the point to be made here is that the success of any tactic may depend less on the tactic itself and more on understanding and matching the relationship between the tactic and the characteristics of the individual or group to be influenced. For example, Ralston (1985) proposes that certain situations are more conducive to ingratiation than others. The use of ingratiation results from a combination of individual and organizational factors. Organizational factors such as role clarity, management style, task clarity, and resource scarcity, when combined with certain individual personality factors, can contribute to a greater use of ingratiation as a tactic to influence others. The success of ingratiation as a tactic will depend on the relationship between the influencer and those to be influenced. Furst and Cable (2008) report that when employees consider the quality of their relationship with their supervisor to be good, they are less likely to resist change when ingratiation is used as a tactic. Conversely, employees who view their relationship with their supervisor as poor are more likely to resist change when ingratiation is used.

On an institutional level, the use of rational persuasion by administration to convince the campus of the cost savings from investing in a new system that will seamlessly merge students' academic and financial information will probably fall on deaf ears, especially if there is a relatively recent history of significant financial and staffing resources having been spent on similar projects that failed. In the same way, it should not be surprising that the use of consultation

to influence strategy implementation will be viewed with skepticism in an institution where decision making has historically been top down. Therefore, it is beneficial to understand individual and organizational issues related to resistance to change. That way, an approach or tactic can be chosen with consideration given to the needs, concerns, and questions of individuals or groups that may incite a resistance to change.

MANAGING INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES OF RESISTANCE

Oreg (2003) makes the point that modern industrial societies value people who are willing and able to initiate and respond positively to change. However, attempts to initiate change are frequently hindered by individuals or groups within the organization who resist the changes. So, why do people and organizations resist change? A significant amount of energy has gone into the study of resistance to change. A quick database search will identify over 100,000 articles on the topic. Erwin and Garman (2010) note that researchers and scholars have been studying and commenting on resistance to organizational change for decades. Dent and Goldberg (1999) attribute the first published reference to research on resistance to change in organizations to Coch and French (1948), who concluded that resistance to change is a combination of an individual's reaction to frustration and strong group-induced forces.

Resistance as well as acceptance to change takes place on intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, and organizational levels. For institutions and their managers, organizational change can pose an enigma that requires a balancing act between dealing with those who resist change while at the same time encouraging those who embrace it. A number of lists have been developed of the individual and organizational reasons for resistance to change. A compilation of a few of the lists developed over the past 20 years is offered in table 3.1. While the reasons for resisting change and their interconnections can be rather complex, without doing an injustice to the research on the topic it might be possible to further summarize the factors that contribute to individual and organizational resistance to change. For individuals, resistance may be due to fear, an inability to comprehend the need for change, or a lack of caring. For organizations, resistance may be the result of organizational processes and structures that inhibit the organization's ability to monitor the need for change or respond to it; it also may be the result of poor and ineffective leadership.

For those leaders who do understand the necessity of responding to change as well as the need to promote change in their institution, the question is how to deal with the resistance and move the organization and its members in the desired strategic direction. As indicated in table 3.1, part of the issue lies with the people who are members of the institution: their fears, their personality traits, their lack of understanding of the need for change. From this perspective, a possible solution may be found in hiring individuals who embrace the strategic planning process. Also, filling strategic planning committees with the appropriate players and surrounding oneself with the few (connectors, salespeople, and mavens) can help resolve some individual resistance issues. However, dealing with resistance to change as part of the strategic planning process can also be viewed as a managerial activity and not just a reaction to personality differences.

Table 3.1 **A Sample from the Literature of Factors That May Contribute to Individual and Organizational Resistance to Change**

A. Individual Resistance to Change *(from Greenberg 2011; Kirkpatrick 1985; Oreg 2003;* *Waddell and Sohal 1998)*	B. Organizational Resistance to Change *(from Appelbaum, St-Pierre, and Glavas 1998; Greenberg 2011;* *Moorhead and Griffin 1992; Nahavandi and Malekzadeh 1999;* *Steers and Black 1994)*
1. **Reluctance to lose control/Fear of the unknown/Personal loss.** People may feel a loss of control over their life when a change is imposed on them rather than self-initiated. There is a sense of security in doing things the same way, knowing who your coworkers are, and knowing to whom you answer. Altering well-established, comfortable patterns creates unfamiliar conditions and rejection of the change.	1. **Leadership.** The organizational leader or top administrators neither see the need for change nor have the skills and ability to lead a successful change process.
2. **Cognitive rigidity/Negative attitude/Objectionable manner.** There are some people who will resist change no matter what it is. They may have some form of cognitive rigidity or do not like to be told what to do.	2. **Organizational design/Structural inertia/Rigidity.** Structures are in place to ensure that employees and systems behave as expected to maintain stability. These structures make it difficult to overcome the forces that created the stability or to react quickly to external forces.
3. **Lack of psychological resilience.** Change for some is a stressor. An individual's level of resiliency may predict the ability to cope with change.	3. **Reward systems reward the status quo.** There is no incentive or reward for employees to embrace change and no consequences for not adapting to change.
4. **Intolerance to the adjustment period involved in change/ Creates burden/Requires effort.** People resist change because it often involves more work in the short term than they want to do.	4. **Work group inertia.** Group norms act as a brake on attempts to change behavior. Introducing change is viewed as a disruption to established normative expectations.
5. **Preference for low levels of stimulation and novelty.** Those who prefer lower levels of stimulus may resist change and exposure to new and disruptive situations.	5. **Threat to the unit's existing balance of power.** Changes that lead to shifts in the balance of power between organizational subunits may result in the fear that a subunit will lose its advantageous position.
6. **Reluctance to give up old habits.** Well-learned jobs are easy for an individual to perform. Potentially changing the way a job is done will challenge people to develop new job skills. For some, altering from the "same-old, same-old" may be stressful.	6. **Past history of unsuccessful change efforts.** Past unsuccessful change efforts experienced by groups or the entire organization hinder further attempts at introducing change.
7. **Economic insecurity.** Changes in the job can be perceived as a threat to one's livelihood through job loss or reduced pay.	7. **Sunk costs in past decisions and actions.** A significant investment (either financial or in terms of human resources) has been made. To make a change may cost more or result in loss of credibility.
8. **Threats to social relationships.** Organizations are social environments, and workplace relationships provide members with valuable social rewards. Changes may be viewed as threatening the integrity of friendship groups.	8. **Organizational culture.** If the organization's culture is not aligned with the mission and goals of change, organizational members are less inclined to embrace change.
9. **Failure to recognize the need for change.** Employees may view a change as a mistake doing more harm than good. They may not be able to recognize and appreciate the need for change in organizations.	9. **Lack of a clear mission.** A clear organizational mission helps members focus on what matters and provides guidance. It can bind members together by defining the path to take and the values that guide the organization toward its destination.
10. **Political factors/Challenge to authority.** Some may view resistance as a way to test their power and influence or as a means to score points against those initiating the change effort.	
11. **Management factors/No input.** Inappropriate or poor management styles also contribute to resistance. For example, not asking individuals for their ideas concerning the change, or not properly informing them about the change or letting them find out from a secondhand source.	

Methods for dealing with resistance to the strategic planning process are similar to those for dealing with resistance to any organizational change. It appears that the consensus regarding strategies for dealing with resistance offered by writers on the topic (Boomer 2010; Dent and Goldberg 1999; Erwin and Garman 2010; Greenberg 2011; Harlan-Evans 1994; Kazemek 1990; Kotter and Schlesinger 1979; Lenz and Lyles 1986; Maurer 1996; Moorhead and Griffin 1992; Rousseau 1997; Sullivan 1995) can be condensed to the following: (1) understand the resistance and sensitivity, (2) provide communication and education, (3) facilitate participation, and (4) offer and encourage support.

1. UNDERSTAND THE RESISTANCE AND SENSITIVITY

Some explanations for resistance to the strategic planning process have been offered above, but first the resistance and fears have to be uncovered. Active listening or expressing concern about institutional members' fears can provide valuable feedback. Also, understanding what members may experience as they adapt to the changes associated with the strategic planning process makes it possible to support those whose fears will lead to resistance and keep their concerns from becoming contagious.

Bovey and Hede (2001) explain resistance to organizational change as the maladaptive use of defense mechanisms by employees in response to their fear of the change. It has been suggested that an institutional member's negative behavior, such as lack of involvement, procrastination, or avoidance, can be addressed with clear, direct, and assertive statements as to why the person is being spoken with coupled with a genuine attempt to understand and appreciate the person's perspective (McIlduff and Coghlan 2000).

Another way to understand the resistance is through the concept of workplace psychological contracts. Employees may feel that their psychological contract with the institution has been broken. A psychological contract goes beyond a formal contract and includes the expectations between the employee and employer. It is built upon the implied beliefs, values, and aspirations of both the employee and the employer (Smithson and Lewis 2000). Psychological contracts are mental models that shape understanding about what employees can expect to receive in exchange for their contribution. The psychological contract is a useful concept for understanding the employment relationship and the potential negative behaviors that result when the contract is perceived to have been breached.

It is possible that members of an institution may view changes associated with the strategic plan as a breach of their perceived psychological contract. For example, a faculty member may have chosen an employment opportunity with a college in part due to the institution's focus on teaching and student development. That faculty member may have worked diligently over years of employment to enhance student learning by developing courses and other applied experiences for students. The faculty member may even have gained tenure based in part on that work. Over the years of this faculty member's employment, a strategic decision may have been made to refocus the institution on research and the pursuit of funded grants. Now, such behaviors are given greater weight in hiring practices and in tenure and promotion decisions. The faculty member who dedicated years of his/her work life to—and who was previously rewarded for— fulfilling the institution's goals may now see the opportunity for promotion to the next level reduced and his/her status at the institution diminished. The psychological contract, the beliefs this faculty member had about work and rewards, can be viewed as having been breached. A person in such a position cannot be expected to be enthusiastic about or supportive of the strategic planning process. Cantisano, Domínguez, and Depolo (2008) studied the relationship between a breach of the psychological contract and outcomes in areas such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and citizenship behavior. Perceived breach of the psychological contract was

associated with an increase in negative outcomes related to organizational behaviors and a decrease in positive ones. Understanding how strategic changes may influence members' perceptions of their psychological contract may provide an opportunity to limit any perceived breach and the potential negative outcomes for both the individual and the institution.

Building upon the concept of psychological contracts, Nalbandian (1985) notes that organizational members become attached to their work in a way that goes beyond a mere economic explanation of the employment contract. For some members, work provides meaning, stability, and predictability. These attachments can explain why some view change as a psychological loss rather than an opportunity. As a result, some members of the institution may require more time than others to successfully make the transition. Zell (2003) explains the way individuals and groups work through their resistance to change as a process of death, dying, and rebirth. Bridges (1980) identifies these stages of transition as ending, the neutral zone, and new beginnings. All transitions begin with an ending. This may include the ending of relationships, ways of working, or other familiarities of the workplace. Endings are experiences of loss. According to Nalbandian (1985), resistance may be a marker of this initial state of transition. During the neutral zone, neither old nor new ways work properly. This can be a confusing and frustrating time as members feel that change is taking forever with no clear sense of when the confusion will end. The new beginnings phase is the period in which members attempt to change but find it difficult and experience setbacks and frustrations. Nalbandian suggests that time and responsible guidance will gradually lead to a new sense of competence and psychological security. An organizational strategy designed to facilitate the transition process needs to consider individual differences in the motivation and ability to adjust to change among the members of the institution.

Kirkpatrick (1985) notes that to accurately analyze and respond to the degree of resistance, it is necessary to consider each person's individual concerns related to change and identify their individual level of resistance. While this may not be practical for all institutions, some form of this can offer clues on how to proceed with the other strategies for dealing with resistance: communication, participation, and support.

2. PROVIDE COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

Communication is vital if members of the institution are to have an opportunity to adjust to and accept change. While it can be time consuming and costly, proper communication can build trust and diminish resistance. Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (2001) note that the way the campus community is informed about the strategic plan and how members' opinions and concerns are heard are vital issues. These authors further advise that if planners take communication lightly, then the strategic plan is destined to fail.

Messages from key administrators that detail the rationale for the change as well as the consequences of the change and what it means for various stakeholder groups can reduce unfounded fears. Without this communication, there is the possibility that any gaps in information will be filled with rumor and other inappropriate information.

It is not enough to just present the information to selected groups and assume it will trickle down to the masses. At one college, in an effort to create a flow of communication across the campus and keep everyone informed, a newly hired provost held separate monthly group meetings with all deans and department chairs and heads to share and discuss matters of importance to the institution. The idea was that by regularly sharing information with these groups, the information would also be shared with others both informally and formally as part of department meetings. However,

at this institution where information was equated with power, department chairs and heads did not disseminate the information shared with them to the members of their departments. Instead, they held it for their own use or shared it with a select few. Communication strategies need to be monitored to ensure that the information conveyed is reaching its target.

Another concern is that if the information does get to the masses, will they be able to integrate it into their work in a meaningful way and feel that their concerns have been addressed? From the information provided it may not be apparent how the changes will benefit them or how the information eases their transition from the old to the new. This does not mean that the message needs to be diluted, but there does need to be awareness that even simple phrases or terms can be misinterpreted. Each discipline, work group, and stakeholder group has vocabulary and phrases that are unique to or uniquely interpreted by their group. For an academic, "NSF" commonly refers to the National Science Foundation; for a facilities person, it refers to net square feet; and in finance, not sufficient funds. So strategic planning terms like "goals" and "objectives" or "action step" and "strategy" may need to be clarified as to what they mean for all groups and the institution as a whole. This may be an opportunity to make use of "connectors" for their suggestions on how to best craft the message for specific groups.

Consideration also needs to be given to the use of statistics and other analytics included in reports or presentations. Such information can be very valuable in justifying the need for change and communicating accomplishments. While some may say that numbers don't lie, they can mislead, so quality does matter. Poor use of statistics or claims made on inadequate sampling will not be well received by audience members who make their living on data analysis. While the audience might listen politely, such a presentation may be more a source of irritation than information and may result in distrust of current and future messages related to the strategic plan.

Communication is not meant to be a one-time occurrence at the beginning of the strategic planning process. To be effective, clear and consistent communication must be continually provided throughout the process and as results become known or significant accomplishments are reached. Accomplishments can include the development of mission and vision statements, identification of committee memberships, status of specific action steps, or information gained from key indicators. Consideration also must be given to presenting the information in a way that allows stakeholders to provide feedback.

Welch and Jackson (2007) suggest that two-way communication can contribute to stakeholder engagement throughout the organization. Communication between an organization's strategic managers and its internal stakeholders can help create relationships characterized by employee commitment, promote a positive sense of belonging in employees, and develop stakeholders' understanding of the need for the organization to respond to and anticipate change.

While two-way communication may seem like a logical approach for gaining useful feedback as part of a communications process, its use is lacking in many organizations. Waters and Lemanski (2011) discovered that strategic communication for many Fortune 500 and Philanthropy 400 organizations primarily relied on one-way communications models to convey information online. These authors report that a large number of studies have shown that organizations are not using the conversational and interactive elements of the Web. Some organizations have moved toward the inclusion of two-way communications models to communicate with their stakeholders, but most just have a Web site that serves as a virtual brochure. The authors report that true indicators of stakeholder engagement,

including online forums, discussion boards, social media, polls, and surveys, are used by less than one-quarter of the nation's top nonprofits or corporations. The use of interactive Web sites in addition to what may be considered more traditional methods of collecting information (e.g., focus groups, stakeholder surveys, open forums) should all be considered as means to inform stakeholders about the strategic planning process and allow them to communicate their opinions and concerns. Methods should also be provided to allow those who may have reservations about publicly sharing their ideas and opinions to contribute.

Clampitt and Berk (1996) suggest that the following need to be considered as part of developing a strategic communications process to introduce organizational change:

» CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS—an attempt to anticipate possible points of resistance to overcoming the status quo. This includes considering if the change is congruent with the culture, is perceived as manageable, will be viewed as advantageous over past practices, has readily observable benefits, and impacts key relationships. This should also assess whether management is prepared for employee reaction to the change.

» AUDIENCE ANALYSIS—identification of key groups and consideration of how specific changes will affect these groups. A change in benefits or a union contract may entice employees with greater institutional longevity to consider retirement rather than face any loss in benefits. The audience analysis should include identification of the major groups of employees that will be affected, how they will be affected, the most likely points of resistance, and the communication preferences of each group.

» STRATEGY—the strategy to be used must be based on the audience analysis, address major objectives, spend resources wisely, and include a unifying vision.

» TACTICS—these are the operational plans. They include the number and types of channels to use (e.g., e-mail, face-to-face, newsletter, etc.); creation of a key message that can be easily comprehended and that identifies both positive and negative aspects, considers the timing of introducing information (perhaps related to the transition phases of ending, the neutral zone, and new beginnings), and seeks out concerns by harvesting dissent; and selection of who communicates the change and monitors the process.

In summary, the considerations presented can aid in the development of an effective strategic planning communications process. Effective communications are vital in allowing institutional members to gain a deeper understanding of the strategic planning process and how their involvement in the process is tied to the institution's and their personal success.

3. FACILITATE PARTICIPATION

Although you may start with the premise that everyone at the institution will be involved or have a clearly evident opportunity to be involved, you cannot expect all contributions to offer great insight or wisdom or all members to make a meaningful difference in the strategic planning process. An acquaintance once said to me after listening to what I thought was a pretty good presentation of a position on my part, "Well, we are all entitled to our own stupid opinions." Regardless of the perceived value of what they say, a number of stakeholders will want to be heard and be a

part of the process. Part of participation, of hearing what others have to say, begins with the communications process discussed above.

Stanislao and Stanislao (1983) state that facilitating participation, or at least the feeling of participation, is one way to deal with resistance to change. In their opinion, this works because people are concerned about making their own ideas and recommendations successful. It is interesting that these authors seem to suggest that the perception of participation can be as powerful as real participation in reducing resistance. While to some degree this is true and can be a strategy, there are potential downfalls to this approach and way of thinking. To achieve better buy-in, there is value in making a person's communication a real part of the process by using his/her advice. Participation should be more than just a superficial sense of contributing to the process.

It makes good sense to assume that participation in the planning process by institutional members would allow them to develop a sense of ownership in the change and avoid the resentment that may be created when they are just informed that change will happen. While some literature supports employee participation as one of the best ways to reduce resistance to change (Giangreco and Peccei 2005; Lines 2004), just involving others or giving them the perception of participation does not mean there will be more success or less resistance. In fact, Elbanna (2008) found no significant relationship between management participation and strategic planning effectiveness. An explanation offered for this surprising finding was that the influence of participation on strategic planning effectiveness may be moderated by other variables. In an earlier study, Lines (2004) reports that the effects of participation on change are moderated by the change's compatibility with the organization's culture and the personal goals of the recipients of the change. So, participation alone may not be the issue; rather, the effectiveness of participation in reducing resistance may be moderated by how others are involved and allowed to participate.

Truly integrating members' participation into the process can be time-consuming, but it can also be effective if managed properly. To gain the most from member participation in the process, it may be useful for an institution to consider a large-scale intervention that includes multiple organizational levels and a large variety of stakeholders. Mellow and Talmadge (2005) conducted an organizational change initiative at a community college that included over 150 participants. Much of the campus and many external stakeholders were included in a process of identifying themes to develop a foundation for an integrated strategic plan. The technique of Whole-Scale Change (Dannemiller Tyson Associates 2000) was used to design a three-day summit. Whole-Scale Change, which is similar to real-time strategic change intervention, is a highly participative approach that helps organizations bring about change by involving the ideas and commitment of multiple stakeholders. Through a series of interactive group sessions, participants develop a common understanding of the current reality, a vision of the future, and the action steps to get there. Solutions are created in real time and implemented within days or months instead of years (Eggers, James, and Johnson 2002). Arena (2004) reports using this technique with over 1,000 employees to enhance organizational awareness, including an understanding of organizational strategy, clarity regarding common group struggles, a unified view of the need for change, and appreciation of the various roles across the organization. It provides a forum for initiating and mobilizing systemwide solutions versus using a more traditional piecemeal approach.

Comprehensive approaches to facilitating participation on a large scale are challenging to implement successfully. They require careful planning. The approach must fit the realities of the relationships among organizational members. Use of a comprehensive approach assumes that the institution is a whole system and allows for the engagement of that

system at a single point in time with large numbers of stakeholders sharing information and planning. Because they are based on collaboration, comprehensive interventions can help reduce resistance and build strategy ownership across the entire system.

4. OFFER AND ENCOURAGE SUPPORT

Successful strategic planning is dependent upon the broad-based support and participation of members of the institution. Welsh, Nunez, and Petrosko (2005) compared faculty and administrative support for strategic planning at two-year and four-year institutions of higher education on several dimensions that included organizational level and involvement. They found that administrators at both types of institutions were more likely to support strategic planning than were faculty. No doubt, administration's support of the change will provide the foundation needed to build a critical mass of support among other members of the institution. However, verbal praise and encouragement will only go so far. The kind of support that commits enough resources to make the change easier on those affected by it is also required. For example, if enhancing faculty, staff, and student competency with the most current computer technology is a goal, then resources have to be available to purchase the technology and provide appropriate training. Also, a process would be needed to replace the equipment on a regular cycle. Similarly, a strategic goal to increase scholarly activity will not be met if funds to support travel to conference presentations or provide research incentives are cut. So, administrative support must be clear and consistent if others are to be encouraged to join the process in a meaningful way. Erwin and Garman (2010) identify management inconsistency as a factor that will influence resistance to change. Any inconsistencies between the change message and management behavior will give members of the institution a justification for resisting the change. Organizational policies may have to be altered to align better with proposed changes. Without clear support from faculty and administrators, the strategic planning process may be viewed and rejected as just another unsuccessful managerial fad (Welsh, Nunez, and Petrosko 2005).

LEADING STRATEGIC CHANGE

Knowing about the issues associated with change, the influence of organizational politics, and the possibility of resistance is helpful in understanding the challenges of bringing about change associated with a strategic plan. However, at some point, the ability to actually bring about the change required as part of the strategic planning process will be determined by one's ability to influence the politics, others, and the system. Joan Welsh referred to influence as "What you think you have until you try to use it" (thinkexist.com n.d., ¶ 3). Knowledge of the issues is only part of the process. To successfully lead change requires understanding one's bases for power and influence in the institution, using them appropriately, and perhaps having a willingness to share them with others. Those responsible for the strategic planning process may find it beneficial to conduct a personal audit of their power and influence on campus.

Lines (2007) examined the impact of power on the influence tactics used in the course of implementing change. Change agents with different power bases tended to choose different tactics in their attempts to bring about change. Change agents with high levels of power stemming from their position or expertise in the organization were more likely to use tactics of participation and providing meaning to the recipients of change compared to change agents with low levels of position or expert power. Based on the study's results, it was concluded that power, either earned or given, plays a role in predicting the success of strategy implementation.

Beyond any formal authority and power, consideration must be given as to how to influence others so that they want to and freely follow the change. This may be accomplished in part by the actions of a leader. Change leadership plays a pivotal role in promoting and sustaining the change agenda. Graetz (2000) reports that change leadership involves operational know-how and strong interpersonal skills. The role of senior management is to pinpoint well-defined institutional challenges that matter to all members on an individual level. One of the specifically identified characteristics of leaders that enable them to promote and foster organizational change is their support for efforts that expand skills, insights, and conceptual abilities across a much wider range of individuals within the organization (Nielsen, Saccoman, and Nykodym 1995). This leadership practice can allow individuals and units to develop and become more active players in the strategic planning process.

Kouzes and Posner (1993) define leadership as a reciprocal relationship between those who elect to lead and those who choose to follow. In their opinion, discussions of strategies and practices are hollow unless the fundamental aspirations that connect leaders to their constituents and the dynamics of that relationship are examined. Followers are the essence of leadership. Without them, the promoter of strategic planning is a lone voice. Planning for oneself and by oneself is not a pretty picture. Those who are leading change can promote the process by empowering and nurturing others, the followers. They can develop leadership in others by sharing their power through delegation and allowing themselves to be influenced by followers (Hollander and Offermann 1990). The followers' role can be viewed as active rather than passive with the potential for the development of self-leadership. In strategic planning, this can mean that members of the institution will successfully manage and lead themselves as part of the change process. They will require less supervision to maintain attention on strategic objectives and will have the drive to reach them. Self-leading employees have more positive effects at work. They also tend to have higher productivity and more fulfilling careers (Stewart, Courtright, and Manz 2011). Given this perspective, leading successful change may be viewed as more about the followers than the leaders.

As part of a 2010 TED presentation (www.ted.com/talks/derek_sivers_how_to_start_a_movement.html), Derek Sivers (http://sivers.org) presented a humorous yet insightful discussion of the importance of followers in any movement. Sivers is a very successful entrepreneur and a self-proclaimed avid student of life. TED (www.ted.com/) is a nonprofit organization started in 1984 as a conference bringing together people from the worlds of technology, entertainment, and design. TED is devoted to spreading ideas to change attitudes, lives, and the world. In this short yet powerful presentation, Sivers narrates a video on how to start a movement and provides an example of the importance of first followers in igniting a movement and attracting others to join. The point made by Sivers is that while a leader may need the fortitude to stand alone and endure ridicule, it is the followers who actually transform this individual into a leader. The first followers show others how to follow. There is no movement without the first followers. Embracing others as equals, making the movement public and about others, will cause more people will join in. Future followers will emulate earlier followers. As more join in, the perceived risk of participating is reduced. At some point, others will view it as risky to stand out by not joining in.

In strategic planning, as in all change initiatives, it is important to nurture the followers from the various stakeholder groups. It may be necessary in the early phases of the strategic planning process to connect the dots for others to show them how the strategic process will be of benefit to them, the stakeholders, and the institution. This can contribute to the ultimate goal of facilitating change and influencing those who are to move the plan forward. Will Rogers was quoted as saying, "We can't all be heroes, for someone has to sit on the curb and clap as they go by" (Braude 1967,

p. 16). One thing about clapping is that it can be contagious. Just a few people have to get started and an entire group joins in. This is what is hoped for during the strategic planning process, to have others spontaneously join in. Benveniste (1989) refers to this as the multiplier effect in planning. This is similar to the idea presented by Sivers that as the number of followers increases, it is easier for others to join in because they want to avoid standing out. The multiplier effect occurs in strategic planning as a result of the perception by stakeholders that there is a high probability that the plan will be implemented. A large number of stakeholders who have not committed to the plan commit to implementing it. This does not necessarily mean they are in favor of it, but indecision fades away and individuals and groups decide to support it. When it comes to accepting change, there may be truth in the quote by Leonardo da Vinci offered at the beginning of this chapter: "It is easier to resist at the beginning than at the end." As momentum for the strategic plan builds and the forces maintaining inertia are weakened, staying in one's comfort zone becomes risky and uncomfortable. The multiplier effect is the moment in the strategic planning process when the idea catches on. As the shared generalized belief in the strategic plan gains momentum, members of the institution will act accordingly when faced with the inevitable. It is to be hoped that over time the motivation for joining in on the change process, the strategic planning process, will be not only about not wanting to stand out and miss joining what is popular, but also about doing what is best for the institution and its members.

Chapter 4: Tools for Getting Others Involved in the Strategic Planning Process

"If you give people tools and they use their natural ability and their curiosity, they will develop things in ways that will surprise you very much beyond what you might have expected."

—Bill Gates (Martins n.d., ¶ 43)

"Bringing together the right information with the right people will dramatically improve a company's ability to develop and act on strategic business opportunities."

—Bill Gates (Martins n.d., ¶ 10)

There are a number of very useful tools that are frequently presented as part of a discussion of strategic planning (Trainer 2004), including gap analysis, SWOT analysis, TOWS analysis, and PEST analysis. While these tools can be used to foster discussion among institutional members, they are typically used to evaluate the environment or monitor progress. For example, gap analysis identifies gaps between the institution's current state and its vision of potential performance (Chevalier 2010; Jackson, Helms, and Ahmadi 2011).

With SWOT analysis, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats are identified and plotted on a simple two-by-two matrix (Fathi and Wilson 2009; Piercy and Giles 1989; Simoneaux and Stroud 2011). Strengths and weaknesses are viewed as internal and inherent to the organization, while opportunities and threats are viewed as part of the external environment of the organization. Usually, the focus of SWOT analysis is on a specific project or level of business rather than the overall organization.

TOWS analysis is a variant of the classic SWOT analysis; the TOWS acronym is just a different arrangement of the words strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. TOWS analysis can be considered more involved and more dynamic than SWOT analysis. TOWS analysis considers the interaction of internal and external factors. External opportunities and threats are matched with internal strengths and weaknesses. The elements are examined in pairs (Proctor 1997; Ruocco and Proctor 1994) so that consideration can be given to how internal strengths can be used to capitalize on external opportunities or soften external threats. Similarly, consideration can be given to improving internal weaknesses by taking advantage of external opportunities or working to mitigate external threats.

PEST analysis helps to analyze the political, economic, socio-cultural, and technological changes that can affect the institution (Thomas 2007). PEST analysis can assist the institution in understanding the forces of change to which it may be exposed from a broader perspective. Also, it allows the institution to examine potential opportunities and the advantages they present.

Based on interviews with a small sample of practicing managers, Knott (2008) found that managers use strategy tools to stimulate new ideas, collaboration, and communication rather than to facilitate analysis, decision making, or implementation. This group of managers took the components of the tools that fit their needs and used them as a source of inspiration and a catalyst for change. Presented in this chapter is a sample of tools that are intended to

engage institutional members, provide them with an opportunity to have their ideas and views heard, and perhaps offer them some insight into the process. This is not meant to be a comprehensive list by any means. Also, there are variations as to how the tools presented here can be used. They are offered as techniques that seem to resonate well with groups. Having said that, no one tool by itself is meant to be a panacea, and consideration must be given to the institutional environment in which it will be used. No two groups or institutions are the same, and just because a tool worked well in one situation does not mean it will always have the same effect in others. Laughlin, Shockley, and Wilson (2003) make the point that choosing an appropriate tool must consider the context of the organization.

Knott (2006) notes that strategy tools need to be used in different ways based on the problem they are trying to address. To improve the likelihood of a quality outcome, the application for which the tool will be used must be considered. For example, an analytical application will examine in detail a specific aspect of a problem and seek to produce specific results using a defined method. A facilitative application will aid a strategy activity by fostering creativity and structuring communication.

A final thought on the use of tools is that they need to be thoroughly understood and practiced before they are used. To paraphrase a line from a character in a popular children's book, the use of strategic tools can be considered a subtle science and an exacting art (Rowling 2001). Mastery of and comfort with a strategic tool will come with time and repeated use. Laughlin, Shockley, and Wilson (2003) note that using a tool for the first time can be unnerving. The approach may seem straightforward when presented as a written description, but a live audience provides an added dimension that affects its use—and success. An analogy may be made to learning a subject as opposed to teaching it to others for the first time.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS FACILITATION TOOLS

Some of the tools presented in this chapter were initially developed as means to improve decision making, enhance creativity, or increase the pace of change. They are presented here as ways to facilitate the strategic planning process by engaging others and collecting information that can benefit the process. The examples presented are not meant to be strictly followed, but with thoughtful consideration they can be modified to better accommodate the unique requirements of a group or institution. After the description of each tool, a few references are offered to provide the reader with additional background information about its technique and application. The tools described are:

» NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE—an opportunity to be heard.

» SCENARIO PLANNING—sharing in a future reality.

» HOLLOW SQUARE—a lesson in the challenge of application. Maybe you don't know it all.

» SURVEY FEEDBACK—keeping everyone informed.

» REAL-TIME STRATEGIC CHANGE—getting the whole system in the room.

While the first three tools are intended for use with smaller groups, the last two (survey feedback and real-time strategic change) are meant to include a wider audience. Real-time strategic change attempts to include all members of the institution and to increase the pace at which change occurs. The idea of getting the "whole system in the room"

is not new (French and Bell 1995; Nixon 1998a), and such large-scale approaches have their challenges. However, they also provide the ability to bring about change by creating a broader understanding of the strategic planning process and the people dynamics involved. Beyond getting a large number of people involved in the process, there are additional benefits to using large-scale interventions. These include drawing on others' wisdom, experiences, successes, and failures; generating a high degree of involvement and engagement by members; fostering greater commitment, improved collaborative behavior, and creation of a shared vision; building coalitions for politically viable change; and producing a massive wave of intelligence and energy that can be used to bring about change (Bryson and Anderson 2000; Nixon 1998a).

NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE—AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD

Nominal group technique (NGT) is a popular tool for gaining group consensus without some of the challenges typically experienced with the use of focus groups. The word "nominal" is used because those involved are a group in name only. Members do not attempt to agree; each person works independently to respond to questions and votes independently on ideas presented.

There are a number of benefits to using this technique as a means to gain information from others. NGT can be completed in a relatively short time, typically a few hours, depending on the number of issues being addressed. Many times in group discussions a few people dominate the conversation; others are too timid to express their views. NGT limits the influence of dominant personalities in the group as well as the pressure to conform.

As part of the strategic planning process, this technique offers an efficient way to collect the thoughts, concerns, and ideas of different stakeholder groups. This is meant to be a small-group activity that works well with groups of about 10. It is beneficial to keep the groups homogeneous based on stakeholder group affiliation or some other classification that makes sense in terms of the information you are trying to gain. Having a group that contains members from several different stakeholder groups may not allow concerns to be clearly understood.

NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE STEPS (FIGURE 4.1):

1. Identify general areas to be examined. This needs to be focused. It would not be appropriate to try to cover a great deal of information or many topics in one two-hour session.

   Example:

   Areas of interest:

   » Challenges related to the strategic planning process.

   » How to best involve stakeholders in the strategic planning process.

2. Identify a facilitator and a scribe. The facilitator is vital for NGT to work effectively. The facilitator's role is to clarify responses from the group and build rapport with the group. The scribe's role is to record the responses of participants.

3. Develop specific questions related to the areas of interest. It is important to keep the list of questions short and the questions themselves focused. The quality of the information gained will only be as good as the questions asked to elicit the information. Time should be taken to develop questions that are specific but not so direct as to limit the type and number of responses. Care must be taken to be sure the questions asked are clear to group members. As part of a multi-group NGT study, I once included a question about concerns members had regarding their leave policy in order to identify issues related to employee benefits. One member of the first group to go through the process asked me to clarify what I meant by leave: sick leave, personal leave, vacation leave, family leave, etc. If that one person in the first group had not asked for clarification, the results I would have obtained from all the groups would not have been very useful.

Example:

Area of interest:

» Challenges related to strategic planning.

Group questions:

» What concerns do you have related to the strategic planning process?

» In what way can the institution best address these concerns?

» What do you think are the potential benefits of the strategic planning process?

These questions are intended to elicit specific concerns, identify whether participants see value in the process, suggest how the institution could go about addressing concerns, and gauge the need to promote the benefits of the strategic planning process.

The questions are presented to the group in a form that will allow participants to privately write their responses. It may be useful to collect additional data along with the responses to the questions. This can include participant demographic information as well as responses to standardized scales. For example, if one of the NGT questions was about commitment to the institution as it relates to the strategic plan, a standardized scale that quantifies the level of overall organizational commitment among group participants would complement the qualitative information provided by the group and help better explain the group's responses.

4. Identify group participants. As indicated above, it is best to keep the number of participants in any one group to about 10. NGT requires recording participants' responses, and a large number of participants in any one group can make recording unwieldy. NGT can be conducted with multiple stakeholder groups. Conducting NGT with members of a specific stakeholder group spread across multiple NGT groups can determine whether that stakeholder group's responses are consistent. Also, conducting NGT with multiple groups, each made up of a specific stakeholder group, will allow responses to be compared between the different stakeholder groups on campus.

5. The group process. Once the group members, facilitator, scribe, and questions have been determined, NGT can be applied. Begin with the rules:

A. Reflect alone on the focus questions. Write your thoughts and feelings on the form provided.

B. Once all participants have completed the form, begin a round-robin sharing of the ideas that they wrote in response to each question. This is done one question at a time. Remind participants of the rules:

» One person at a time shares one idea at a time.
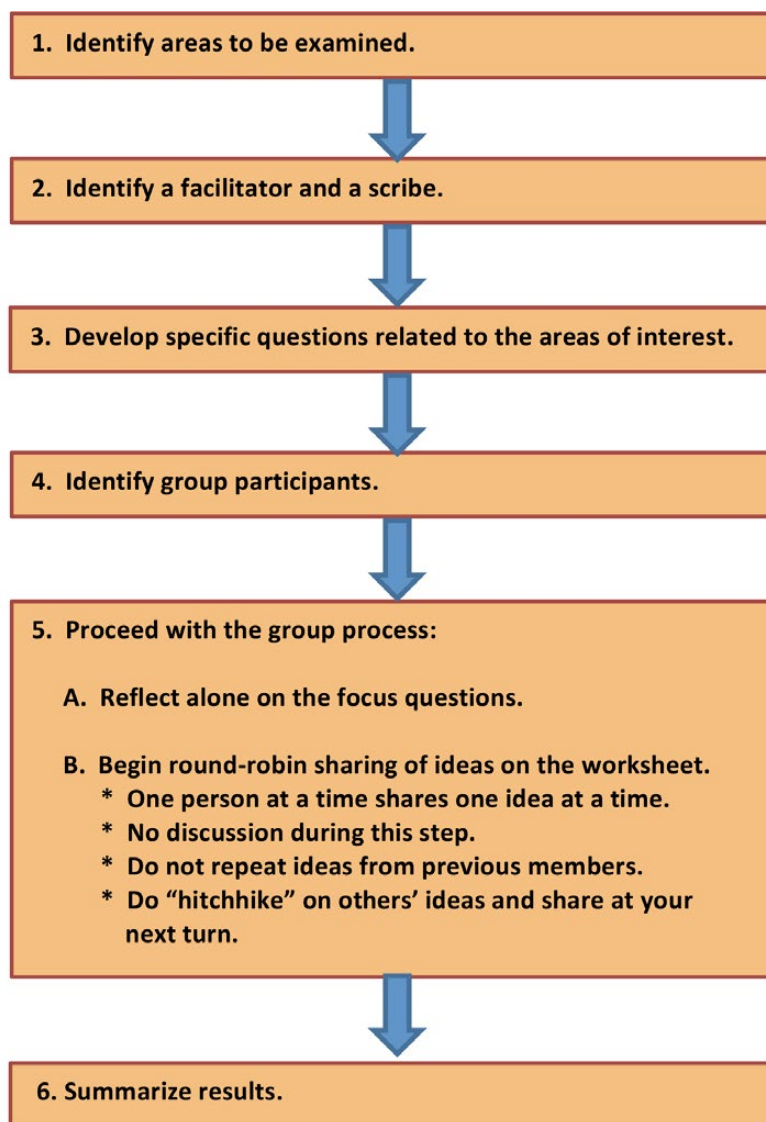
» No discussion during this step.

> » Do not repeat ideas from previous members.

> » Do "hitchhike" on others' ideas and share at your next turn.

Once this process has been completed for the first question, it is repeated for each of the remaining questions. The facilitator's role is to manage the group process and clarify the ideas presented by group members; the scribe's role is to record the ideas as accurately as possible. The process is repeated until all ideas related to a question are shared and listed for all to see.

C. Once all ideas are listed for a single question, each group participant votes individually to identify those ideas that he/she believes best reflect the question or are most important for that question. The method for voting can vary. Each participant can be asked to rank order all of the responses to a question from the one he/she believes most true to the least true. If the number of ideas generated for a question is quite large, this will be very awkward and time consuming. Another voting procedure could have participants identify their top five choices. This could be accomplished by providing each participant with self-adhesive stickers. The participants will be instructed to get out of their seats as a group and silently review all of the responses that have been listed by all of the group members. Having the scribe use large easel pads to record responses that can be placed for all to see will facilitate this process. Each group member will place one sticker next to each one of their top five recorded responses. With some planning, participants' votes could be recorded with the use of a wireless interactive voting system, sometimes also known as a clicker. Clickers can allow participants to vote and be provided with immediate feedback. The results can be displayed as a graph and the data would be available for later analysis.

6. Summarize the results. The group's preferences will be indicated by the ideas that receive the highest ranking or largest number of votes. It is not uncommon for some ideas to receive an equal number of votes. In this approach, the purpose of NGT is not to identify one idea that might be desirable in a decision-making process; rather, the goal is to get a sense of the general concerns or issues.

If several groups complete the NGT, then comparisons of the top responses can be made among them. Also, individual responses as well as any scale scores can be used to further clarify the results of the voting process. By using NGT, participants at all levels of the institution can have a tangible experience in which their thoughts and feelings are heard and recorded. Further, the institution and its planners will gain information to better guide the strategic planning process.

Figure 4.1 **Nominal Group Technique**

1. **Identify areas to be examined.**

2. **Identify a facilitator and a scribe.**

3. **Develop specific questions related to the areas of interest.**

4. **Identify group participants.**

5. **Proceed with the group process:**

   A. **Reflect alone on the focus questions.**

   B. **Begin round-robin sharing of ideas on the worksheet.**
      * **One person at a time shares one idea at a time.**
      * **No discussion during this step.**
      * **Do not repeat ideas from previous members.**
      * **Do "hitchhike" on others' ideas and share at your next turn.**

6. **Summarize results.**

For more detail on nominal group technique, see

» Fox, W. M. 1989. The Improved Nominal Group Technique (INGT). *Journal of Management Development* 8 (1): 20–27.

» Harvey, N., and C. A. Holmes. 2012. Nominal Group Technique: An Effective Method for Obtaining Group Consensus. *International Journal of Nursing Practice* 18 (2): 188–94.

» Van de Ven, A., and A. L. Delbecq. 1971. Nominal Versus Interacting Group Process for Committee Decision-Making Effectiveness. *Academy of Management Journal* 14 (2): 203–12.

SCENARIO PLANNING—SHARING IN A FUTURE REALITY

In a way we have all participated in scenario planning, trying to predict the future based on a series of "what ifs." What if the upcoming contract results in a rise in health insurance costs for my family and a reduction in other future benefits? Should I retire now or delay retirement in hopes of a better contract in the future? What if my child takes five years to graduate college instead of four? Will there be enough funds to pay for the extra year of expenses?

From an organizational perspective, scenario planning allows institutional members to engage in strategic thinking by responding to environmental pressures and preparing for a future reality. Members can explore plausible futures by considering specific trends and how they may impact the institution. Scenario planning is not about predicting the future, but about exploring it so that the institution can better adapt to potential realities. Scenario planning can make institutional members more resilient in the face of sudden change because they have already considered different approaches to potential situations. There is not one best solution to a problem but many depending on what forces are in play and how they are moving. The process of scenario planning can provide participants with a guide to a desired future and identify possible strategic routes to attain that future for themselves, their work group, or the institution.

SCENARIO PLANNING STEPS:

1. Identify driving forces that could impact the institution in the next three to five years. This may require the use of environmental scanning reports that describe the internal and external factors influencing the institution. If such reports are not available, participants in the scenario planning process can as a group identify driving forces. A number of these forces are listed and discussed in Chapter 1 (e.g., technology, competition, location, characteristics of entering students, the economy, leadership).

2. For each driving force, identify how important it is to the institution and how likely it is that the force will have an impact (figure 4.2.A).

3. There are a number of trends and driving forces that can impact the institution at any one time. To make the exercise manageable, have the group identify two major driving forces. For the example here, the driving forces to be examined are student enrollment and the development of online courses and degree programs. These two driving forces form the axes for the scenario planning grid (figure 4.2.B), with the end of each axis representing a direction of the driving force. Each resulting quadrant represents a possible future given the direction of the driving force.

4. Given the two trends, scenarios are developed of what the future might look like. The goal is to make each as concise as possible (figure 4.2.C). Have group members identify which scenarios are most likely to occur and therefore are those for which they must prepare. Also identify the most desirable scenario for the institution. In the example,

SCENARIO A (HIGH ENROLLMENT—GROWTH IN ONLINE COURSES AND DEGREE PROGRAMS)

As enrollments are increasing, students are using online courses as a means to complete prerequisite courses that would otherwise be closed due to enrollment caps. By taking prerequisite courses online, more students are able to register for advanced courses required for their major. As a result, more students are able to achieve graduation in four years. Not all faculty members fully embrace the use of online courses and degree programs. The administration needs to keep in its ranks a continuous flow of faculty who will develop and deliver online courses.

SCENARIO B (LOW ENROLLMENT—GROWTH IN ONLINE COURSES AND DEGREE PROGRAMS)

While the popularity of and demand for online courses and degree programs have grown, there is not strong overall student enrollment at the institution. As a result, the resources needed to maintain online courses and degree programs make them unaffordable. Reduced revenues also add to the challenge of keeping these courses and programs competitive with what other institutions can offer.

SCENARIO C (HIGH ENROLLMENT—GREATER DESIRE FOR TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION)

With increasing enrollments, departments are challenged to keep up with student demands for courses. To meet the demand, more adjunct faculty will need to be hired in the short term, but this comes with opposition from the faculty who have concerns about what an over-reliance on adjunct faculty will mean for quality education and faculty-student interaction. Higher enrollment also puts pressure on student services such as housing and adds to the parking issues on campus for commuter students as well as faculty and staff.

SCENARIO D (LOW ENROLLMENT—GREATER DESIRE FOR TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION)

With declining enrollments, class sizes are shrinking. Academic departments are not able to offer the variety of courses that are listed in the course catalogue and that reflect specialty areas of their faculty. Due to low enrollments, some faculty contracts may not be renewed and the number of adjunct faculty will be reduced. Also the number of sections offered for a course will be reduced, forcing the existing sections to increase in size and increasing the student-to-faculty ratio for those sections. Both students and faculty are not satisfied in terms of what this will mean for quality classroom instruction. With fewer courses and sections available, it is difficult for students to develop course schedules that fit their work and family demands as well as move them toward graduation in a timely manner.

5. Each quadrant represents a possible future that shows the interplay of the driving forces. For each scenario, have the group identify how the institution will need to respond if that scenario becomes reality. Also, what would have to be done to translate the desired future scenario into a strategic direction?

6. As a final step, have the group identify the indicators that will need to be tracked to recognize toward which scenario the institution may be gravitating. For example, other than enrollment data offered by the institution's registrar, are there sources of information such as local high school graduation rates or changes in the region's population that can point to potential changes in student enrollment? Tracking the indicators will allow the institution to make adjustments in response to the future as it emerges and modifications needed to attain the desired future.

A value of scenario planning is that it sensitizes members of the institution to future possibilities and allows them to consider alternative futures by changing the way they think about environmental factors. The process brings people together to communicate their concerns about those factors that create uncertainty for the institution. Engaging in conversations about environmental factors enhances the likelihood that a strategic advantage will be achieved. This tool is not limited to larger institutional issues. It can also be used at a department level or on a personal level to consider possible future realities and provide direction.

For more detail on scenario planning, see

» Burt, G., and T. J. Chermack. 2008. Learning with Scenarios: Summary and Critical Issues. *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 10 (2): 285–95.

» Chermack, T. J. 2011. *Scenario Planning in Organizations: How to Create, Use, and Assess Scenarios.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

» McLean, G. N., and T. M. Egan. 2008. Applying Organization Development Tools in Scenario Planning. *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 10 (2): 240–57.

» Miesing, P., and R. K. Van Ness. 2007. Exercise: Scenario Planning. *Organization Management Journal* 4 (2): 148–67.

» O'Brien, F. A. 2004. Scenario Planning—Lessons for Practice from Teaching and Learning. *European Journal of Operational Research* 152 (3): 709–22.

Figure 4.2.A **Scenario Building: Step 2**

Driving Forces	Importance to the Institution			Likelihood Will Have an Impact		
	1 **Not at all**	**3** **Somewhat important**	**5** **Very important**	**1** **None**	**3** **Somewhat**	**5** **High**
Driving Force 1						
Driving Force 2						
Driving Force 3						
Driving Force 4						
Driving Force 5						
Driving Force 6						

Figure 4.2.B **Scenario Building: Step 3**

Driving Force 1: Student enrollment
Driving Force 2: Online courses and degree programs

Driving Force 2: There is a growth in the number and popularity of online courses and degree programs at the institution

Scenario A

Scenario B

Driving Force 1: Student enrollment increases

Driving Force 1: Student enrollment declines

Scenario C

Scenario D

Driving Force 2: There is move toward more traditional classroom instruction by faculty and students.
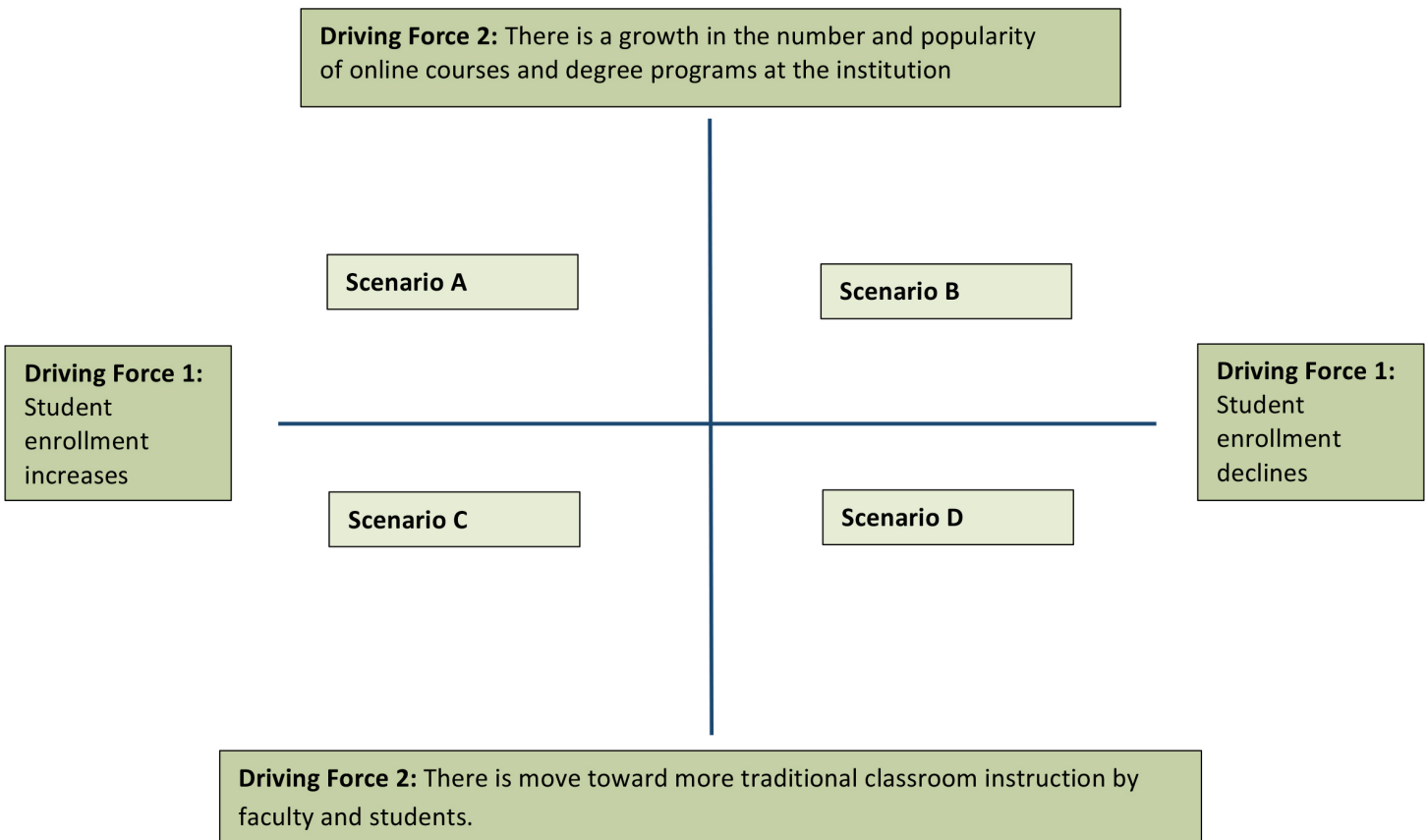
Figure 4.2.C **Scenario Building: Step 4**

Driving Force 1: Student enrollment
Driving Force 2: Online courses and degree programs

Driving Force 2: There is a growth in the number and popularity of online courses and degree programs at the institution

Scenario A (high enrollment – growth in online courses and degree programs)
As enrollments are increasing, students are using on line course as a means to complete prerequisite courses that would otherwise be closed due to enrollment caps for each course. By taking pre-requisite courses on line, more students are able to register for advanced courses required for their major. As a result more students are able to achieve graduation in four years. Not all faculty members fully embrace the use of on line courses and degree programs. The administration needs to keep in its ranks a continuous flow of faculty who will develop and deliver on line courses.

Scenario B (low enrollment – growth in online course and degree programs)
While the popularity and demand for online courses and degree programs have grown, there is not a strong enough overall student enrollment at the institution. As a result, the resources needed to maintain online courses and degree programs make them unaffordable to the institution. Reduced revenues also add to the challenge to keep these courses and programs competitive with what other competitor institutions can offer.

Driving Force 1: Student enrollment increases

Driving Force 1: Student enrollment declines

Scenario C (high enrollment – greater desire for traditional classroom instruction)
With increasing enrollments departments are challenged to keep up with student demands for courses. To meet the demand more adjunct faculty will need to be hired in the short term, but this comes with opposition from the faculty who have concerns about what an over reliance on adjunct faculty means for quality education and faculty student interaction. Higher enrollment also puts pressure on student services such as housing and adds to the parking issues on campus for commuter students as well as faculty and staff.

Scenario D (low enrollment - greater desire for traditional classroom instruction)
With declining enrollments, class sizes are shrinking. Academic departments are not able to offer the variety of courses listed in the course catalogue and that reflect specialty areas of their faculty. Due to low enrollments some faculty contracts may not be renewed and the number of adjunct faculty will be reduced. Also the number of sections offered for a course will be reduced forcing the existing sections to increase in class size and increasing the student to faculty ratio for that section. Both students and faculty are not satisfied in terms of what this mean for quality classroom instruction. With fewer courses and sections available, it difficult for students to develop course schedules that fit their work and family demands as well as move them towards graduation in a timely manner.

Driving Force 2: There is move toward more traditional classroom instruction by faculty and students.

HOLLOW SQUARE—A LESSON IN THE CHALLENGE OF APPLICATION; MAYBE YOU DON'T KNOW IT ALL

This is a problem-solving exercise that is typically used in leadership development. Finding a direct reference to the exercise in the literature can be challenging, but the references provided at the end of this section include some guidance in the application and use of the hollow square tool. Schmuck and University of Oregon Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration (1972) provide a detailed explanation of the exercise that was used as the basis for the explanation provided below.

The value of this tool in relation to strategic planning is that it identifies the dynamics that can occur when one group plans something that another group is to carry out. In this exercise, each participant, as a member of the planning group, operation group, or observer group, has the opportunity to experience how communication, assumptions, and group dynamics can help or hinder when carrying out a task. A lesson to be learned from this exercise is that the assumptions often made by planners, the people in the know, about the implementation of the strategic plan may be wrong. Also, one's style of interacting with others can get in the way of achieving success. While one group may see the bigger vision and have a sense of the final product, those who are to carry it out may not share the vision, have a clue as to what the vision is, or understand what they are supposed to do. Any plan has to be managed with consideration for those who will be asked to carry it out.

HOLLOW SQUARE EXERCISE STEPS:

1. Three groups are formed, the Planning Group, the Operation Group, and the Observer Group. The Planning Group and the Operation Group should consist of about four to seven members each. All the remaining participants can make up the Observer Group. The Observer Group is divided equally so that half of the members are assigned to observe the Planning Group and half are assigned to observe the Operation Group. The exercise involves the Planning Group providing instructions to the Operation Group on how to complete a puzzle (figure 4.3.A). To prepare for the exercise, the puzzle presented in figure 4.3.A. is cut up and the 17 pieces divided into four sections. Each section is put into a separate envelope. The lettering on the puzzle key is provided for preparation only to avoid including all pieces from any one quadrant of the puzzle together in one envelope. The puzzle pieces used should have no markings of any kind.

2. Members of the Operation Group are sent to a separate room with a facilitator. The members of the group are not informed of the specifics of what will be asked of them until they rejoin the Planning Group. One half of the observers follow the Operation Group with an instruction sheet that they are to read to themselves when they get to the location (figure 4.3.B.I). Observers assigned to the Planning Group are provided with the same instructions. The Operation Group is also provided with instructions (figure 4.3.B.II) that are read to group members by the facilitator.

3. The four to seven participants that make up the Planning Group are asked to sit together at a table. The envelopes containing the puzzle pieces are placed in front of them along with the puzzle key. They are provided with written instructions (figure 4.3.B.III) that are read to them by the facilitator. As noted, it is best if the puzzle key provided to the Planning Group has no lettering or markings. The Planning Group develops a set of instructions that will be used by the Operation Group to put the puzzle together. After 20 minutes all puzzle pieces are returned to the envelopes and the puzzle key is removed.

4. Next, the Operation Group and its observers rejoin the Planning Group and its observers in the same room. The Operation Group members take the seats of the Planning Group members. The Operation Group is given the instructions left by the Planning Group and begins to try to assemble the puzzle. All others remain quiet and just observe. You may have to remind Planning Group members not to offer advice or talk to the Operation Group.

5. The time it takes the Operation Group to solve the puzzle will vary. In some cases the group may just give up. What follows will be a discussion of how the groups worked as teams, the different roles members played, the communication process, and the group dynamics. It is hoped that the participants gain a greater realization of the challenges involved in applying the planning process and a greater consideration for the people who are to implement the plan. Some questions that can be used to facilitate the discussion include:

OBSERVER GROUP:

» What did you observe?

» What helped or hindered the groups' success?

OPERATION GROUP:

» What did you feel as you were waiting to be called?

» Are there any lessons learned as to how to prepare oneself or a group for an upcoming project or task?

PLANNING GROUP:

» What did you feel as you watched the Operation Group work on the puzzle?

» What would have helped the Operation Group be more successful?
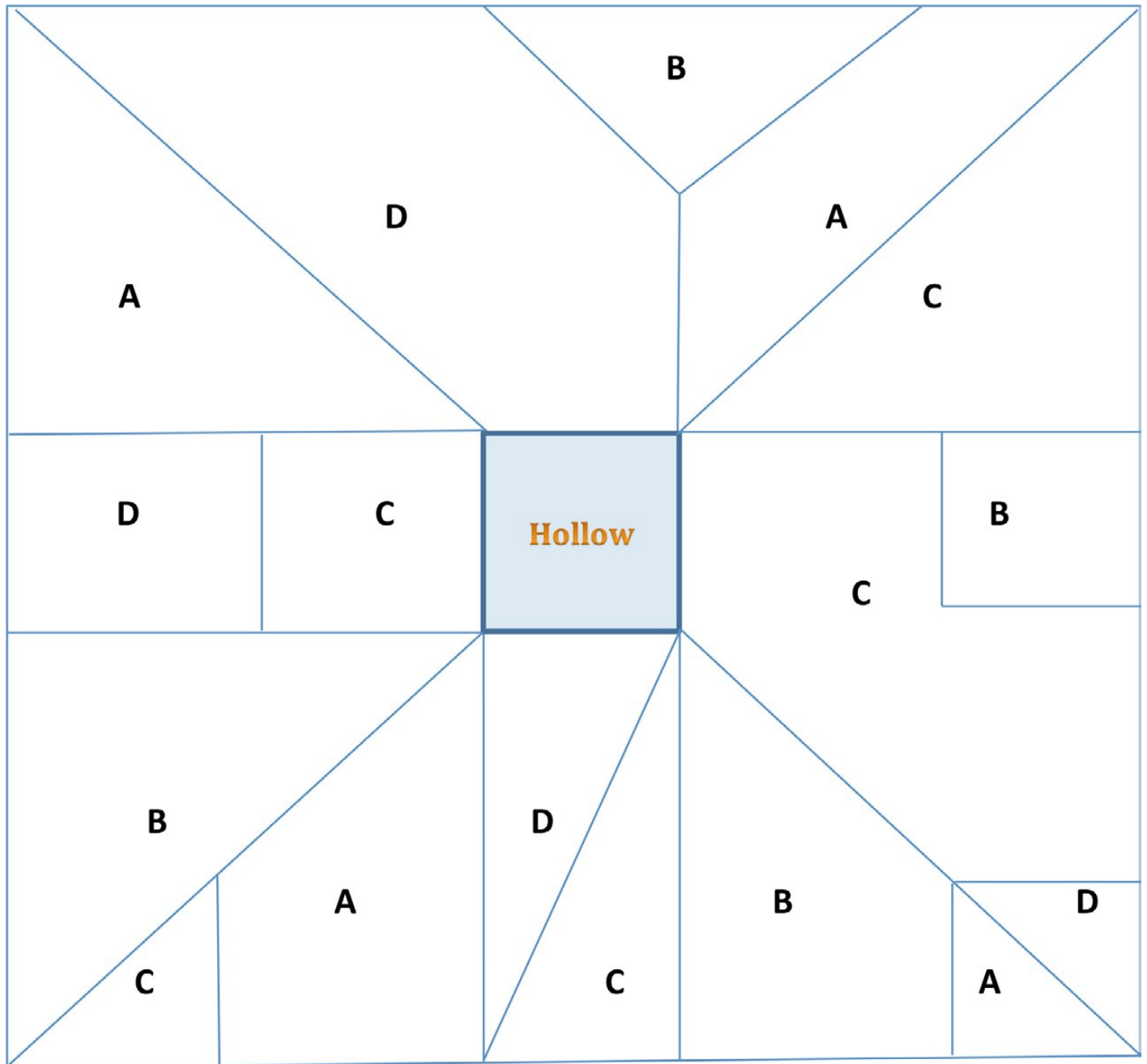
Figure 4.3.A **Hollow Square Key**

Figure 4.3.B.I **Observer Group Instructions**

You will be observing an exercise in which a Planning Group gives instructions on how to solve a problem to an Operation Group. **You are to be silent throughout this whole process.**

The problem is to assemble a 17-piece puzzle that forms a square with a hollow square at its center.

The Planning Group has the key to the solution and will instruct the Operation Group on how to assemble the puzzle.

1. Watch the general pattern of communication.
    A. Give special attention to one member of the Planning Group (during the planning period) and to one member of the Operation Group (during the assembly period).
    B. What did you see?
    C. What helped the teams to be successful?
    D. What got in the way of success?

2. During the planning period, watch for the following behaviors:
    A. Is there balanced participation among Planning Group members?
    B. What kinds of behavior block or facilitate the process?
    C. How does the Planning Group divide its time between planning and instruction for the 20-minute time period?
    D. Does the Planning Group impose upon itself to direct members' behavior?
    E. What strategy is used to instruct the Operation Group about the task?

3. During the assembly period, watch for the following behaviors:
    A. What assumptions made by the Planning Group were not communicated to the Operation Group?
    B. How effective are the instructions?
    C. What evidence is there that the Operation Group members understand or misunderstand the instructions?
    D. What nonverbal reactions do Planning Group members exhibit as they watch their plans being implemented?

Figure 4.3.B.II **Operation Group Instructions**

1. You have the responsibility of carrying out a task according to instructions given by your Planning Group. You will begin this task in 20 minutes. The Planning Group may call you in for instructions at any time. If you are not summoned, you are to report anyway at the end of this period. No further instructions will be permitted after the 20-minute period has elapsed.

2. You are to finish the assigned task as rapidly as possible.

3. While you are waiting for a call from your Planning Group, discuss and make notes on the following questions:
   A. What feelings and concerns are you experiencing while waiting for instructions for the unknown task?
   B. How can your group organize as a team?

Figure 4.3.B.III **Planning Group Instructions**

You have in front of you four envelopes containing cardboard pieces that, when properly assembled, will make a "hollow square" design. You also have a sheet that shows the hollow square key and how the puzzle pieces fit to form the hollow square.

In the next 20 minutes you are to do the following:

1. Plan to tell the Operation Group how the pieces distributed among you can be assembled to make the design.

2. Instruct the Operation Group on how to implement your plan. The Operation Group will begin assembly in 20 minutes.

3. Rules:
   A. You must keep all your puzzle pieces in front of you at all times.
   B. You may not touch other members' pieces or trade pieces.
   C. You may not show the hollow square key to the Operation Group at any time.
   D. You may not assemble the entire square at any time. (This is to be done only by the Operation Group.)
   E. You may not mark any of the pieces.
   F. When it is time for your Operation Group to begin assembling the pieces, you may not give any further instructions, but you are to observe the group's behavior.

For more detail on the hollow square, see

» Hammerschmidt, P. K. 1996. The Kirton Adaption Innovation Inventory and Group Problem Solving Success Rates. *Journal of Creative Behavior* 30 (1): 61–74.

» Johnson, D. W., and F. P. Johnson. 2006. *Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills.* 9th ed. Boston: Pearson Allyn and Bacon.

» Langmeyer, D., R. Schmuck, and P. Runkel. 1971. Technology for Organizational Training in Schools. *Sociological Inquiry* 41 (2): 193–204.

» Schmuck, R. A., and University of Oregon Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration. 1972. *Handbook of Organization Development in Schools.* Palo Alto, CA: National Press Books.

» Shapiro, S. 2002. Innovation: Your Stealth Weapon against Global Competition. *Journal of Corporate Accounting & Finance* 13 (6): 9–15.

SURVEY FEEDBACK—KEEPING EVERYONE INFORMED

Surveys are one of the most common ways to gather information from organizational members. The use of survey research and feedback dates back to the 1940s with its use at the Detroit Edison Company by the Survey Research Center (Anderson 2012; Huse and Cummings 1985).

A survey can be used as an exploratory tool to identify employees' beliefs, attitudes, and concerns related to the strategic planning process. However, a survey should not be viewed only as a way to collect information. The process of survey feedback is meant to form the basis for change. The process includes both systematically collecting information about the institution and its members and feeding back the information collected to all individuals and groups at all levels of the institution. Data are gathered, analyzed, and summarized and then returned to those from whom they were collected. It is the individuals and groups who will discuss the information, interpret its meaning, and develop action plans to address the issues identified. This is how the survey feedback process differs from traditional survey research. Typically, surveys are distributed to the rank and file. Data are reported back to top administrators and managers who consider the implications of the results and decide on a course of action. In survey feedback, the goal is to include all members of the institution in data collection and analysis to address issues and concerns. The ultimate goal is to improve the chance that change will be successful. Survey feedback can be an effective tool because members of the institution are given ownership of the process. They develop an understanding of the issues and strategies involved in change based on the concerns and beliefs they identify in the survey.
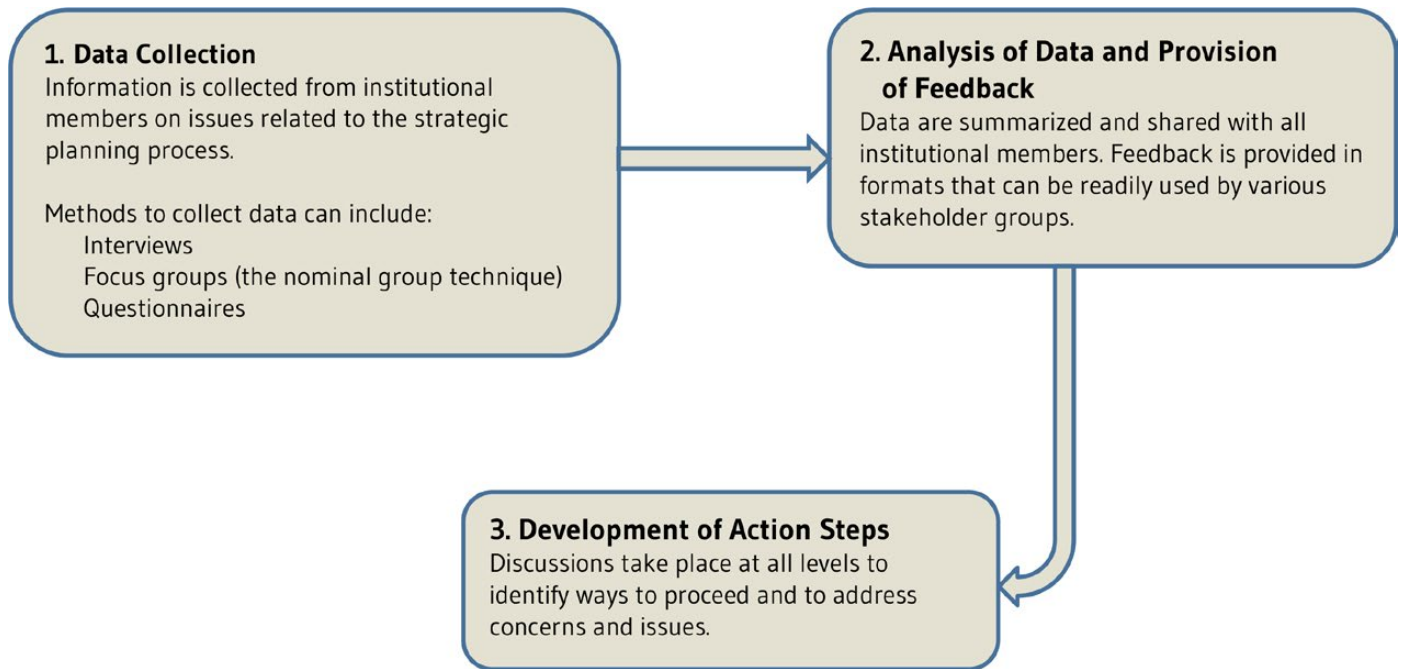
Survey feedback can be considered a three-step process (figure 4.4) of data collection, data analysis and provision of feedback, and development of action steps in response. For survey feedback to be successful, it is important to follow up in a timely manner and not allow significant periods of time to pass between steps. Doing so can result in a loss of momentum and credibility for the process.

SURVEY FEEDBACK STEPS:

1. Include all institutional members in the planning stage. Make the process, goals, and purpose of the survey public. Interviews and group discussions may be necessary to determine what items to focus on in the survey. Nominal group technique could be used to identify issues to be addressed in the survey. To provide greater credibility, it may be appropriate to have an outside consultant lead the process.

2. Develop a survey that addresses the issues identified. The information collected will only be as good as what is asked. Consideration must be given to the clarity of the items as well as the length of the survey to avoid respondent fatigue. Another consideration is the use of scaled items as well as open-ended questions.

3. It is good practice to pilot test the survey instrument with a small group to identify any problems before it is sent out to the various stakeholder groups that make up the institution. All members of the institution should have an opportunity to respond to the survey. If this is not practical or if it is decided that only a sample of members will be surveyed, then great care must be taken to ensure that the sample is representative of the population as a whole in order to minimize errors that could occur when generalizing the results to the greater population of all stakeholders.

4. There are options for how the survey instrument will be distributed, and a decision has to be made on the method used to get it to members. The method used should fit the institution. Will a paper version be mailed or will it be available electronically (or both)? Regardless of the method used, participants need to be guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity and encouraged to participate. A low response rate will not provide any useful information.

5. The analyses of the results are to be shared with all members of the institution. Consideration must be given to presenting the information so that it can be used by everyone. Presenting the data analysis in terms of a regression analysis, path analysis, or some other multivariate statistical technique may impress a few and annoy many. The goal is to present the information in a way that allows for discussion among members.

6. Feedback sessions can be held in sequence, first with top administrators and then with department heads and group leaders followed by meetings with stakeholders throughout the institution. To transfer the ownership of the information to the members of the institution, it may be best to have the feedback session led by an institutional member, preferably one from the group involved in the session, rather than an outside consultant. During feedback sessions questions are answered and the information is further clarified as needed.

7. Decide on a course of action. This is a very important step because this is where actions are identified to address the issues raised. For example, results of the survey may identify that members of the institution fear that the strategic plan will result in a reduction in certain positions on campus, or they may show that a particular group does not have confidence in the assessments that will be used to measure the progress of specific aspects of the strategic plan. The end result of the survey feedback process should be the identification of specific steps that can be taken—and developed with members' input—to address and resolve these concerns. It may be necessary to carefully manage this stage so that groups do not get stuck on the problems identified during feedback sessions.

Figure 4.4 **Survey Feedback Process**

1. Data Collection
Information is collected from institutional members on issues related to the strategic planning process.

Methods to collect data can include:
    Interviews
    Focus groups (the nominal group technique)
    Questionnaires

2. Analysis of Data and Provision of Feedback
Data are summarized and shared with all institutional members. Feedback is provided in formats that can be readily used by various stakeholder groups.

3. Development of Action Steps
Discussions take place at all levels to identify ways to proceed and to address concerns and issues.

For more detail on survey feedback, see

» Aplin, J. C., and D. E. Thompson. 1974. Successful Organizational Change. *Business Horizons* 17 (4): 61–66.

» Church, A. H., A. Margiloff, and C. Coruzzi. 1995. Using Surveys for Change: An Applied Example in a Pharmaceuticals Organization. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* 16 (4): 3–11.

» Pasmore, W., and F. Friedlander. 1982. An Action-Research Program for Increasing Employee Involvement in Problem Solving. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 27 (3): 343–62.

» Rothwell, W. J., and H. C. Kazanas. 1986. The Attitude Survey as an Approach to Human Resource Strategic Planning. *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 1 (2): 15–18.

REAL-TIME STRATEGIC CHANGE—GETTING THE WHOLE SYSTEM IN THE ROOM

Real-time strategic change emphasizes the inclusion of the total organization. Large-group, multi-day events are at the foundation of this approach and serve as a catalyst for change. Jacobs (1997) reports conducting this process with groups as large as 2,200 people. With real-time strategic change, people are engaged to develop a collective future at a faster pace. All members are meaningfully involved in deciding and delivering the change. Widespread involvement allows a clear picture of the organization to emerge as people share their insights and perspectives. Results are possible because a critical mass of people from all levels of the organization come together at the same time and place with a shared understanding that they are to plan and implement the change they shape.

Nixon (1998b) provides a summary of the principles behind real-time strategic change (figure 4.5). They include making reality the key driver; thinking and acting in real time, creating a common understanding, clarifying the preferred future, creating community, and fostering empowerment through engagement.

Real-time strategic change events typically occur over a three-day period. While each event is tailored to the characteristics and desired goals of the organization, there are some commonalities (Anderson 2012; Bryson and Anderson 2000; Nixon 1998b). Participants sit and work in groups that represent a diverse mix of functions, roles, and departments throughout the organization. These mixed groups allow participants to hear about the challenges faced in working in the organization from different perspectives. Group members also identify their dissatisfactions with the current state. Participants hear from key stakeholders, who can include those external to the organization such as customers, what they need now and will need in the future. This information is added to reports of current trends and organizational analyses to create a more complete picture of the present reality. Mission, vision, values, and strategy are clarified, and leaders honestly discuss their views of the organization. These activities move participants toward a commonly shared view of the present state of the organization. With this shared knowledge of the current reality, participants identify changes that need to be made to allow the new vision and strategic goals to become the successful future reality. Through an iterative process of small group discussion and after hearing the ideas and beliefs of the larger group, key issues that need to be addressed as well as necessary changes to policies and procedures are identified. With this feedback, intact work teams explore key issues and develop action plans to make the vision a reality. Teams commit to following up and accomplishing the identified activities in support of the strategic plan.

Nixon (1998b) notes that real-time strategic change is more than just an event. There is a great deal of additional work that takes place within the many levels of formal and informal leadership to support and sustain the change. The ability of leaders to take in what they are told as members of the work groups and to demonstrate that they are sincere about creating change will either empower or undermine the change process. Leaders need to be educated and supported throughout the process so that they are in a position to lead and support the preferred future. While the entire organization is involved in this activity, leadership plays a defining role in the process and its success.

Therefore, real-time strategic change works well when leaders are aligned in their thinking and actions. This includes developing a vision and strategy action plan prior to the event and allowing it to be enriched by the input of others; modeling behaviors that reflect the new organizational culture; and managing the change process by providing resources, removing barriers, and adjusting the strategy as needed (Dannemiller Tyson Associates 2000).

In a comparison of large-group change interventions, Leith (1996) acknowledges that real-time strategic change meets six conditions he identified as necessary for success: real-time strategic change is self-managed, includes broad stakeholder involvement, involves a comprehensive awareness of current reality, creates a shared vision of the future, employs systems thinking, and is based on cooperation. Given this, real-time strategic change appears to be a powerful approach for creating fast and lasting change. However, as with many whole-system approaches, it has a few shortcomings. It requires highly skilled facilitators and a good deal of logistical support; it can also be costly in terms of the time required from participants (Bryson and Anderson 2000). As Anderson (2012) notes, real-time strategic change is not clearly a strategy development process. Its true value may be more in helping with the human dynamics involved in the process of strategic plan implementation by increasing stakeholders' awareness of and commitment to the plan.

Figure 4.5 **Principles of Real-Time Strategic Change**

1. MAKE REALITY THE KEY DRIVER.

   The ability to respond to change and make informed decisions comes from an awareness of the realties that exist in the external and internal environments of the organization.

2. THINK AND ACT IN REAL TIME.

   Live in and plan for your future at the same time by working through real issues that involve real people.

3. CREATE COMMON UNDERSTANDING.

   Provide a common understanding of strategic issues to people at all levels of the organization so that they can make wise decisions individually and collectively see how their work is related to the bigger organizational picture.

4. CLARIFY WHAT THE PREFERRED FUTURE IS.

   Members should have a collective image of the future. The collective image energizes members to work to make it a reality and forms the basis for action.

5. CREATE COMMUNITY.

   Foster an environment where individuals have an allegiance to their part of the organization and also to something larger than themselves: the organization as a whole.

6. FOSTER EMPOWERMENT AND INCLUSION.

   Engage the entire organization in ways that foster ownership of the process, content, and outcomes.

For more detail on real-time strategic change, see

» Bryson, J. M., and S. R. Anderson. 2000. Applying Large-Group Interaction Methods in the Planning and Implementation of Major Change Efforts. *Public Administration Review* 60 (2): 143–62.

» Dannemiller Tyson Associates. 2000. *Whole-Scale Change: Unleashing the Magic in Organizations*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

» Jacobs, R. W. 1997. *Real Time Strategic Change: How to Involve an Entire Organization in Fast and Far-Reaching Change*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

» Nixon, B. 1998b. Creating the Futures We Desire—Getting the Whole System into the Room: Part II. *Industrial and Commercial Training* 30 (2): 71–76.

Chapter 5: Getting Real About Strategic Planning

"For every complex problem there is a simple solution; . . . and it is wrong."

 H. L. Mencken (Petrie n.d., ¶ 1)

"Strategic planning is worthless—unless there is first a strategic vision."

John Naisbitt (Goodreads 2013)

The potential advantages of strategic planning are somewhat apparent. A strategic plan can provide a framework that guides an institution in its pursuit of future opportunities. In higher education, strategic planning can advance an institution toward an innovative direction and help it achieve a competitive edge. In addition to these potential positive outcomes, there are other pragmatic reasons that drive institutions of higher education to engage in strategic planning. Some accrediting agencies include a review of the institution's strategic plan as a requirement for reaccreditation. Also, some governmental and funding agencies require institutions to demonstrate accountability in order to receive financial support, such as showing that essential services can be provided to their current and future stakeholder groups. For some higher education institutions, an interest in strategic planning is in response to the recent period of uncertainty (Shah 2013), with its decrease in public funding, increased use of technology in learning, greater competition from different kinds of providers, and changing needs and expectations of entering students and other university stakeholders.

Despite the potential benefits of strategic planning, it has not always lived up to expectations. Lauenstein (1986) attributes a lack of success with strategic planning to a company's lack of a coherent vision. This is due in part to the executives, the leadership, having only a vague notion of the functions of strategy design and long-range planning. In this situation, what is installed as a strategic process may not only be ineffective, but also, in Lauenstein's view, worse than a waste of time because it can lead to misallocating resources, misdirecting attention, and overlooking major risks and opportunities. Other more recent commentary lamenting the strategic planning process (Beinhocker and Kaplan 2002) contends that few executives think that the time consumed by strategic planning is justified by the resulting payoff. The process is seen as one that provides few new ideas and is very political. Moore (2008) attributes the failure of CEOs to achieve their organization's growth targets to a gap between the leaders who create strategic plans and the people who execute them, despite the massive amount of time and resources that are often spent to create the "perfect" plan. For organizations in general, the failure of a strategic plan has been attributed to problems at the implementation phase (O'Regan and Ghobadian 2002).

Fathi and Wilson (2009) write that historically strategic planning in universities has been only moderately successful with little clarity regarding the major determining factors of success. Ruben, Immordino, and Tromp (2009) attribute the failure of strategic planning in higher education to the manner in which a plan is developed and implemented. Reasons given by these authors for why a plan that is impressive on paper fails to achieve its goals include overlooking critical internal and external factors, not consulting with key people who possess vision and knowledge, and not creating buy-in. In this case, more attention is given to the plan than to the process of planning.

Liedtka (2006) proposes that some organizations create strategic plans that function as symbols rather than road maps. In this situation, the strategic plan presented to organizational members and the external community gives the organization the appearance of being strategic. The strategic plan has all the bells and whistles that make it appealing and get people's attention, but in reality the plan is of little or no use to anyone. So, while such a plan may appease certain groups such as accrediting associations, it is not strategic nor is it meant to be. The strategic plan becomes a high-level abstraction that sounds good but does not move beyond its role as a symbol. Some higher education institutions and their members may be very used to and comfortable in dealing with the abstract. The strategic plan, however, needs to be grounded so that institutional members appreciate it and connect it with their day-to-day work activities. Only then will it have any value in contributing to and bringing about meaningful change. The strategic plan needs to be presented in a language that is common to all members and authenticated as to how it can be used in a practical way to make a tangible difference in what people do.

The value of having a clear message to which institutional members can connect is also true for college and university mission statements, which are important components of the strategic planning process. A well-designed mission statement can serve as a cornerstone for strategic planning (Bart and Hupfer 2004) and a critical starting point for major strategic initiatives (Bart, Bontis, and Taggar 2001). Preferably, a mission statement informs the members of their purpose, describes the essence of what the institution is about, and provides a message that sticks. You would be hard pressed to find an institution of higher education without one. If you read enough mission statements from a variety of colleges and universities, they all begin to sound alike or seem to refer to similar ideals. From reading them, it seems that all colleges and universities exist for the same reasons. Despite these similarities, it is a challenge to find many people who can recite their institution's mission statement. In higher education, few institutions have a mission statement as precise as the one developed by the University of Rochester in Rochester, New York: "Learn, Discover, Heal, Create—and Make the World Ever Better." It is easy to remember and simply reflects the ideals of the institution. Similarly, the strategic plan needs to stick in members' consciousness and clearly reflect the ideas and ideals that drive the institution. Unfortunately, for some institutions of higher education the strategic planning process has served as a reactionary symbol rather than as a proactive approach to identifying and pursuing future opportunities. Such institutions would have to put forth a great deal of effort to even begin to realize the potential benefits that a genuine strategic planning process can offer. They would need to start by undoing the damage done to the members of the institution, who have justifiably become critical and cynical of any strategic planning process.
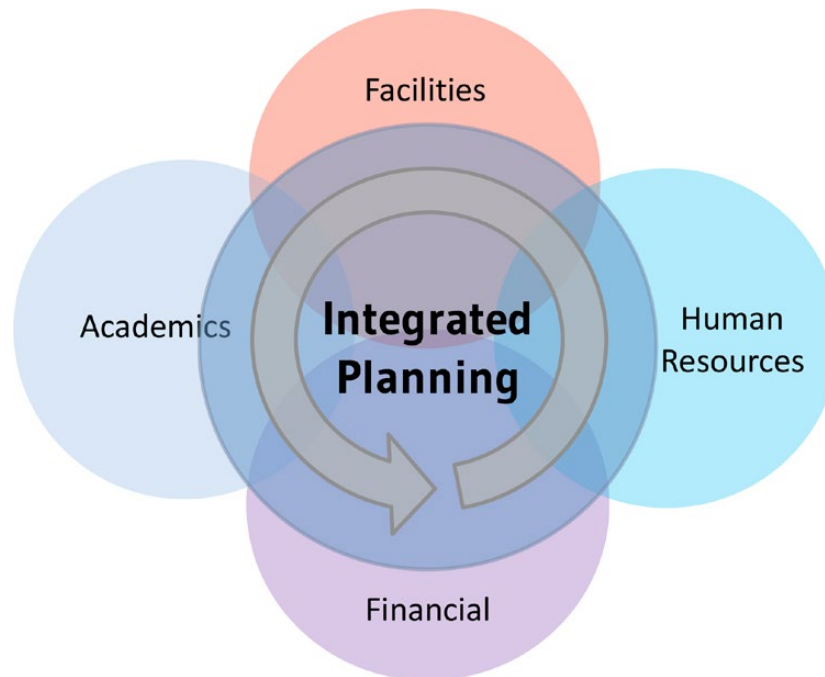
INTEGRATED STRATEGIC PLANNING

Integrated planning is one aspect of strategic planning that could have many institutional members questioning the process. There appears to be increasing conversation in the field of strategic planning about integrated strategic planning, and in some cases the terms are used interchangeably. However, just because the term is used does not mean that what is taking place is integrated. Integration is a process that coordinates the different sections of an organization. A goal of integration is to achieve harmony between organizational groups in order to attain organizational goals. Ideally, integrated strategic planning is a collaborative process that focuses on the factors that contribute to an institution's viability with consideration of its unique internal and external environmental context. Truly integrated strategic planning, while driven in part by data, cannot minimize the human side of the process. It depends on the alignment of the institution's human assets, its members, with the institution's mission, values, and vision. An integrated strategic planning process recognizes and addresses the impact that difficult choices made as

part of the planning process will have on all institutional members. Ideally, the process will integrate the institution and its members in the development of a culture of planning.

Despite that not all planning that takes place at institutions is integrated or considers the human side of the process, integrated planning has gained popularity as a concept. The phrase "integrated strategic planning" is now commonly included as part of the title of books, articles, conferences, and workshops related to planning. Many institutions include the phrase in presentations and reports on their strategy programs. Integrated planning may be a concept that is easier to discuss than to actually practice. In practice it often falls short due to deficiencies in the planning process.

There are numerous diagrams that depict what integrated strategic planning might look like. Figure 5.1 is a simple addition to those that represent integrated planning in higher education. In integrated planning, all institutional areas are supposed to be interconnected, interrelated, and aligned. More circles representing other planning areas on campus, such as student services, accreditation, and community relations, could easily be added to the diagram.

Figure 5.1 **Integrated Strategic Planning in Higher Education**

As an area of research and application, integrated strategic planning should and must be pursued. There is little value to the greater institution if quality strategic planning only takes place in isolated pockets on campus. The knowledge and planning must be accumulated and shared across the institution. However, given the difficulties related to the successful implementation and use of strategic planning identified previously, some institutions of higher education may be trying to pursue integrated planning while not being adequately prepared for it. In doing so they may cause more harm than good. Getting to the point where all planning on campus is integrated requires having the appropriate people in place, an organizational structure that supports integration, and time for the institution to evolve in its use of strategic planning. Also, there must be a realistic expectation of what the institution can achieve as it begins a strategic planning process.

REACHING FOR THE "BRASS RING"

For some institutions, integrated strategic planning may be characterized as "reaching for the brass ring." It can be considered the highest prize in strategic planning; something to strive for but challenging to achieve. For some institutions, it may not ever be fully achievable. However, if integrated strategic planning is to be considered as the ultimate in successful planning, then the obstacles that keep institutions and professional planners from achieving integration need to be identified and examined.

For institutions new to strategic planning, not achieving full integration may not be a problem. It takes time to develop to a point where strategic planning can be truly integrated. There are some institutions of higher education that, despite having existed for over 100 years, have only introduced a formal strategic planning process in the last 10 years. It will take time and perhaps a few planning cycles to develop a process that is a good fit for such institutions.

Problems with integrated strategic planning may arise from believing and claiming to stakeholders that the planning being conducted is integrated when it is not, or from continuously putting resources toward achieving an integrated process without adequately recognizing the issues or areas (e.g., people, organizational structure, time) that need to be addressed and understood to reach that goal.

Achieving real integrated planning—or recognizing if it is being achieved—is not an easy task. A comparison can be made to conducting research in the field of psychology. Research in psychology often involves trying to measure things that by their very nature cannot be easily measured, including concepts such as intelligence, motivation, leadership ability, job performance, and creativity. No matter how well we think we are moving toward measuring a concept such as intelligence, we may come up short in getting a complete measure. For example, if we use the amount of formal education or number of degrees as a measure of intelligence and job performance potential, we may be way off the mark in what we are ultimately trying to measure. Some of the smartest and most successful people do not have degrees or formal education. Steve Jobs attended college formally for six months; Mark Twain and Thomas Edison had little formal education. So in this case the criteria identified for measurement may be deficient.

Given all the different types of planning activity that can take place on campus—and there are many—the reality may be that they are not all as interconnected as is hoped and desired. As an institution tries to move toward integrated planning, it may focus on activities that do not promote integration or that miss the mark altogether (figure 5.2). For example, focusing on the development of the strategic plan is an important activity. However, if that activity becomes the main or only focus, it will not contribute to integrated planning and could in fact contaminate the hopes of integrating the strategic plan across campus. Some of the activities conducted as part of a planning process, while called strategic, may add nothing to the bigger picture of planning across the institution. On the other hand, fostering the development of relationships between members of different planning groups is an activity that could promote integration. It is these people who will need to work together to integrate the strategic plan and reduce any conflict that may exist between the planning silos on campus. A plan that is deficient in developing such relationships will be missing opportunities to potentially achieve integrated planning.

When planning is truly integrated, there is a greater overlapping of all the planning processes and activities that take place on campus, as indicated in figure 5.3. Each unit or department on campus participates in strategic planning with a greater awareness of how its activities are interconnected to the activities of others and the overall institution.

Figure 5.2 **Planning Activities' Relation to Achieving Integrated Planning**
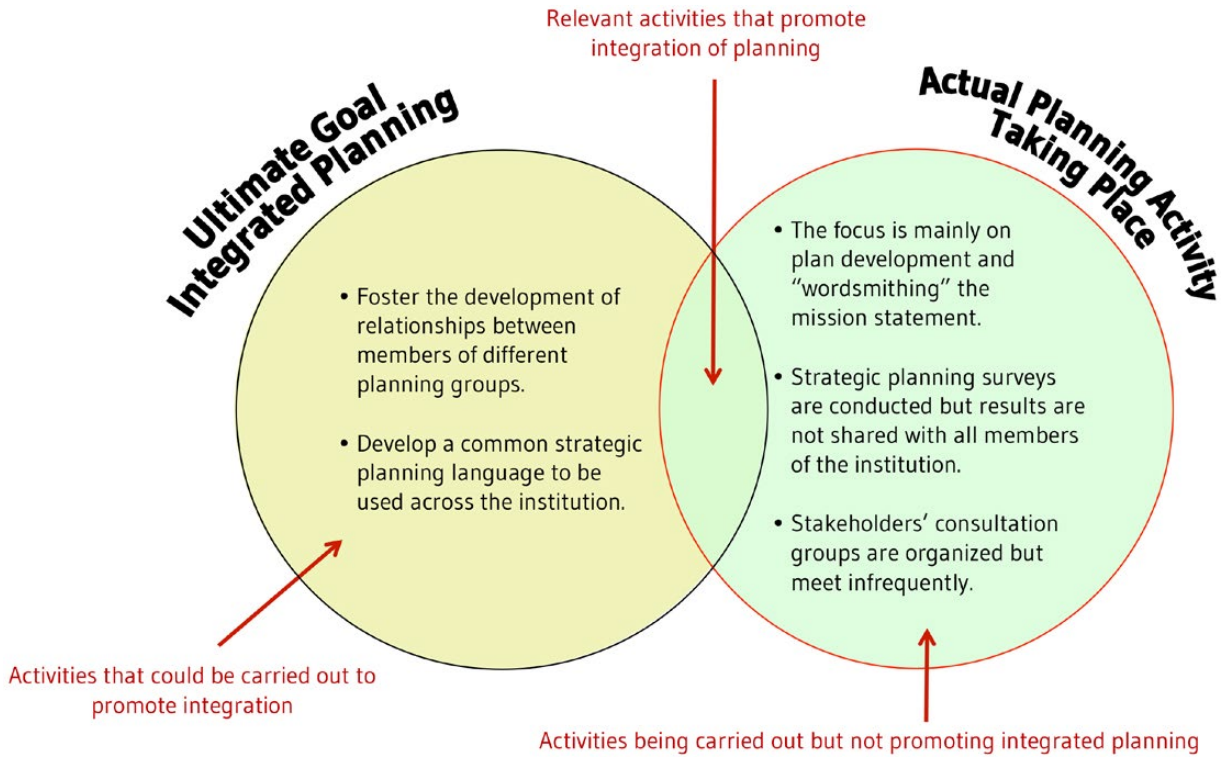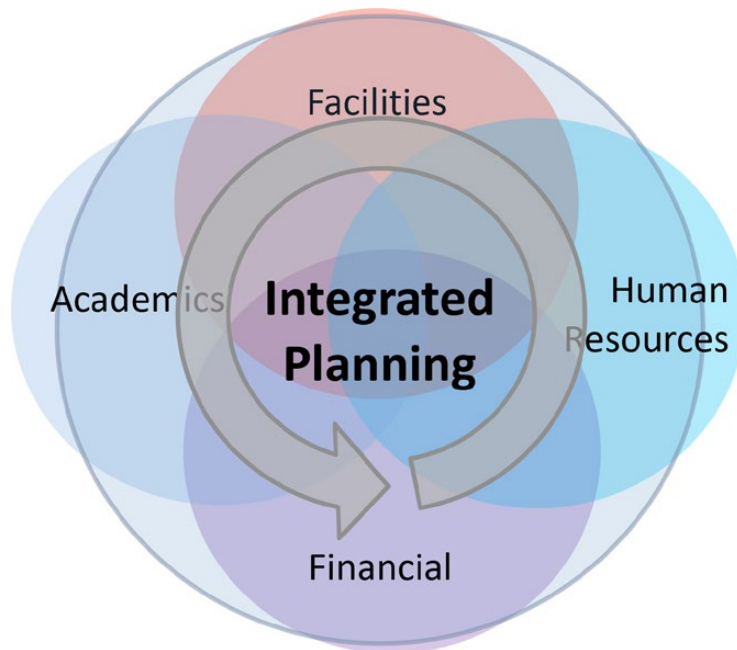

Figure 5.3 **A More Fully Integrated Strategic Plan**

THE IMPORTANCE OF PEOPLE, ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, AND TIME IN REALIZING AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

Freeman and Wilmes (2009) describe integrated planning as setting out and making a commitment to develop the best possible plan by integrating aspects of other planning efforts, such as strategic planning and assessment planning. These other plans are evaluated based on their alignment with institutional beliefs, mission, and values as well as their outcome and performance expectations.

For Norris and Poulton (2008), integrated strategic planning reflects the impact of academic, financial, and facilities planning factors. Planning activities across campus must ensure that the resulting plans, strategies, and decisions include an integrated perspective. As part of its Planning Institute, the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) describes integrated planning as a process in which all planning and budgeting activities throughout every level of the organization are linked, coordinated, and driven by the institution's vision, mission, and academic priorities and communicated to the organization's stakeholders.

While the SCUP definition mentions stakeholders, none of these three descriptions of integrated planning includes reference to the importance of institutional members in the integrated strategic planning process. While it may be implied, if people are that important to the integration of strategic planning—and they are—then it would be appropriate to mention in a description of integrated planning that the members and stakeholders of the institution are the only ones who can make integrated planning a reality. Individuals, not organizations, think strategically (Liedtka 1998).

Integrated strategic planning from a people perspective means that how a professor interacts with students in and out of the classroom, how a member of the registrar's office deals with a student's questions about transfer credits and eligibility for graduation, or how a campus police officer responds to a student's or staff member's concerns for safety should all be done with the strategic plan in mind. This implies that all members of the institution know what the strategic plan is about and how it is translated into their responsibilities and functions on campus.

The human element is the key to achieving integration. In their review of why CEOs fail or succeed, Charan and Colvin (1999) attribute CEOs' failures to not putting the right people in the right jobs and not fixing people problems in time. Based on their review of CEO performance, the authors state that the motto of successful CEOs includes the statement, "People first, strategy second." Related to this, the success of strategy making depends less on developing brilliant strategies and more on focusing on the demands of execution (Beaudan 2001). Beaudan believes that what brings down unsuccessful CEOs is not a failure of strategy but a failure of execution. A premise of this book has been that what takes place in an organization happens by and through people, its members. The members of the institution will carry out the execution of the strategic plan. To be successful, there must be a clear link between strategy and tactics. Strategy has to be translated into a meaningful dialogue among institutional members. People have to be helped as they prepare to carry out the strategy, and a supportive environment can assist members in thinking strategically. The strategic plan must be transformed from a dog-and-pony show to a series of honest conversations that will prepare the minds of those who are to execute the plan (Beinhocker and Kaplan 2002). When there is a clear link between strategy and the management of people, the likelihood of success is significantly increased (Pickett 2000). If managed correctly, institutional members provide a competitive advantage in the strategic planning process.

In addition to the actions of institutional members, there are other organizational forces that contribute to building or eroding the foundation for successful integrated strategic planning. Included in these forces is the institutional structure that exists to support the work of the strategic planning process. In higher education, those in the institution responsible for strategic planning would ideally report directly to the president or CEO. Such a reporting mechanism would help ensure that strategic planning is at the forefront of institutional decision making.

A review of the organizational charts of colleges and universities shows that this is not always the case. There are instances where this does occur, but such a reporting structure may be more of an outlier. Typically, those responsible for strategic planning report to an administrator farther down the organizational chart. In some cases, it takes much digging to find where the planning activity is housed. In others, planning functions are not clearly defined anywhere.

To gain some insight into who does the planning and how it takes place, 628 members of SCUP, 95 percent of whom represented institutions of higher education, participated in a short survey (Delprino and Avalone 2011). The survey (figure 5.4) asked participants to identify to whom the person in charge of planning at their institution reports. Only a little less than a third of the participants responded that the person in charge of planning reported directly to the CEO or president (table 5.1, item #4). Based on the definition of integrated planning offered by SCUP, participants also identified the degree to which they believed integrated planning occurred as part of their institution's decision-making process. Again, a little less than a third reported that integrated planning was consistently practiced, and the rest noted that integrated planning was either not practiced or only occasionally practiced at their institution. Considering that the majority of participants reported that there is a designated person for planning at their institution (72.9 percent) and that the term "planning" is part of that person's job title (80.6 percent), it might be expected that integrated planning would occur to a greater degree.

Figure 5.4 **SCUP Members' Survey**

The purpose of this short survey is to gain information about planning in institutions and the individuals who coordinate that planning. All information gained will remain confidential and your participation will be anonymous. The goal is to identify general trends. A summary of the results will be provided at the annual SCUP conference in July.

(If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Robert Delprino at delprirp@buffaostate.edu, 716-878-6669)

1. Integrated planning has been defined as:

    . . . the process whereby all planning and budget activities, throughout every level of the organization, are effectively linked and coordinated, and are driven by the institution's vision, mission, and academic priorities. (SCUP–42 Pre-conference Workshop: Doug Dawson, Art Quinney, and Philip Stack)

    Based on the definition above, to what degree do you believe that this occurs as part of your institution's decision-making process?
    1. Unsure if this is considered as part of institutional decision making.
    2. Not practiced as part of institutional decision making.
    3. Occasionally practiced as part of institutional decision making.
    4. Consistently practiced as part of institutional decision making.

2. Is there a designated person for planning at your institution?
    1. Yes.
    2. No.

If you answered no to item #2, skip to item #6.

3. Is the term "planning" part of the job title for the designated person in charge of planning at your institution?
    1. Yes.
    2. No.

4. To whom does the person in charge of planning at your institution directly report?

    1. CEO/President.

    2. CFO.

    3. Provost.

    4. Other VP.

    5. Dean.

    6. Other.

5. Are you the designated person responsible for planning at your institution?

    1. Yes.

    2. No.

6. Whether or not you are the designated person in charge of planning, what training have you received in planning? (Check all that apply.)

    1. SCUP Planning Institute.

    2. Attendance at professional conferences such as SCUP regional conference, SCUP annual, international conference, or other professional conferences.

    3. Academic training (course or degree earned).

    4. On-the-job training.

    5. Other.

7. Which of the following best describes your institution?

    1. Community college.

    2. 4-year undergraduate college.

    3. College or university that offers graduate programs.

    4. Consultant group.

    5. Other.

Source: Delprino and Avalone 2011.

The survey presented here is not meant to be the quintessential analysis of integrated planning in higher education. Obviously, a more comprehensive survey would provide greater insight into the planning and integrated strategic planning taking place at institutions of higher education. However, the results of this simple survey seem to imply that there may be a disconnection between institutions of higher education "talking the talk" about integrated strategic planning and "walking the walk." It appears that many institutions have individuals in place responsible for planning on campus. Also, there is a good deal of discussion in the literature as well as among accrediting agencies regarding the importance and value of strategic planning and the integration of such planning across the institution. So why does there appear to be a disconnection?

Part of the disconnection could be explained by the structure of the institution. This goes beyond the previous discussion of where planning is placed on the institution's organizational chart. Institutions of higher education can be considered integrated networks. By necessity, they are compartmentalized internally into departments, schools, divisions, specialty areas, centers of excellence, undergraduate and graduate programs, research versus teaching units, associations (staff, faculty, and students), union memberships, etc. As a result, silos of knowledge and expertise exist. In such an environment, it is a challenge to have information flow freely across the institution. It is also a challenge to completely comprehend and coordinate the planning that takes place across the institution, let alone to integrate that planning. At the majority of institutions, planning occurs simultaneously in many areas. The major planning activities taking place at most institutions include financial planning, facilities planning, events planning, academic planning, and human resource planning.

To allow all of this planning activity to become more integrated and strategic, it would make sense to have it coordinated by a central office for institutional planning. Such an office would not need to control planning activities. The details of specific planning activities are best left up to the expertise of individuals in their respective areas. There are some areas of planning where an attempt to coordinate in detail a group's involvement in the process may be akin to herding cats (Cheevy 2011); it may be more effective to leave those groups to their own devices. One role of a centralized planning office could be to support those responsible for specific planning activities in a more general way, such as assisting with a scan of the environment for threats and opportunities as part of the planning process. An advantage of having a centralized planning office is that a central officer for institutional planning could provide an overall perspective on the planning that is taking place across the institution that includes how the multiple planning activities fit together. It is important that such an office and the person in charge of it are not given a great deal of responsibility with no authority. If the goal is to have an institutional entity designed to promote integration, then that entity must have the authority, ability, and clout to get people together to resolve their differences in light of the institution's strategic goals.

Table 5.1 **Responses to Survey Items 1, 2, 3, and 4**

Item #1. To what degree do you believe that integrated planning occurs as part of your institution's decision-making process? (627 responses to item)

		Percentage	Frequency
1.	Unsure	2.7	17
2.	Not practiced	8.5	53
3.	Occasionally practiced	57.6	361
4.	Consistently practiced	31.3	196

Item #2. Is there a designated person for planning? (628 responses to item)

	Percentage	Frequency
Yes	72.9	458
No	27.15	170

Item #3. Is the term "planning" part of the job title? (458 responses to item)

	Percentage	Frequency
Yes	80.6	375
No	19.4	83

Item #4. To whom does the person in charge of planning at your institution directly report? (427 responses to item)

		Percentage	Frequency
1.	CEO/President	31.6	135
2.	CFO	13.8	59
3.	Provost	15.0	64
4.	Other VP	25.3	108
5.	Dean	1.6	7
6.	Other	12.6	54

Perhaps a lesson in how to raise the status of such an office can be taken from the field of human resources (HR). In many organizations, the HR office was historically called the personnel office with responsibility for simple filing, housekeeping, and record keeping. The functions of HR were not linked to the organization's bottom-line success. HR has changed considerably from its inception, largely as a maintenance function, to the present day, where its activities are considered to have strategic importance and bottom-line consequences for the organization (Ferris et al. 2007). With an organizational appreciation of the value that members of the institution provide, HR has evolved and moved up the organizational chart to have a more direct link to top administrators. Professional groups such as the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), formerly known as the American Society for Personnel Administration, have contributed to the enhanced status of HR in organizations. SHRM is the world's largest professional association devoted to human resource management. Its mission is to serve the needs of HR professionals by providing the most current and comprehensive resources and to advance the profession by promoting HR's essential, strategic role (SHRM 2008). Perhaps the field of planning needs to experience a similar evolution in order for organizational leaders to better recognize its value.

In addition to its strategic role, HR is typically the central place in the organization where all matters related to employment, such as staffing, benefits, performance, employee development, and conflict resolution, are addressed. HR also plays a supportive role in helping management deal with employee issues. The functions of HR typically take place in one office. Most organizations do not have several people or offices with HR titles/responsibilities spread across different parts of the organization performing the same HR functions. Similarly, most organizations have a central office that deals with finances. So, if planning on campus is to become better coordinated and integrated, then there would be value in having a single office, location, and group that oversees all of the planning activity taking place. It may take time for the role of the institutional planner to be viewed in a similar manner to that of a vice president or director of human resources. This may come as strategic planning further develops as a field and a profession.

Time is also a factor in the successful application of strategic planning and in the realization of the value of strategic planning to the institution. Strategic development is an evolutionary process (Wilbon 2012). True strategic change is not something an organization can implement quickly (Head 2006). Beinhocker and Kaplan (2002) advise that we should resign ourselves to the fact that an in-depth discussion of strategy takes time. You cannot rush maturity. It will take time for an institution and its members to mature in their strategic thinking and behaviors. It will take time for the strategic process to move from confusion to comfort and to develop from a series of what seem to be unrelated activities to an integrated process that is instinctive to the members of the institution.

According to Moncrieff (1999), part of the essence of strategy is that it is a learning process. It challenges assumptions and beliefs and shifts paradigms to create a vision of the future. It is to be hoped that the institution and its members will learn over time the need to continually challenge assumptions and be open to change. Part of that learning will, with any luck, include an appreciation that the complex and dynamic nature of organizations, their environments, and their members may hinder the ability to have deliberate control of the strategic process. Those involved will need to learn that the process is one of evolution (Wilbon 2012).

Strategic planning is meant to be a means to respond to a changing environment that at times seems to be changing at an ever-increasing pace. Successful long-term strategic planning requires the ability to focus on long-term objectives while juggling short-term responses to the changing environment. Successful planning also requires an appreciation of the institution's past, present, and future as well as an appreciation of its members, who are the ones who will make the strategic plan a living document that works.

Some of the issues and concepts in strategic planning may be easier to write and talk about than to apply, but it is in the application of strategic planning that the rubber meets the road. You can plan all you want, but the true effectiveness and value of a strategic plan will be realized in how the members of the institution, the human side, use and are transformed by it.

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CHAPTER 5

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