

1: Mission, Planning, and Assessment

Since the last Self-Study, the College has adopted new mission and vision statements along with a new strategic planning process, applying broad goals to specific, three-year objectives that match the College's mission. Because the strategic planning and institutional assessment processes have evolved dramatically since the last Self-Study, and because they underlie all of the College's operations, this chapter discusses the development of the current mission and vision statements, the new strategic planning process, and the College-wide assessment processes, relative to Middle States standards 1, 2, and 7. Finally, since institutional integrity (Standard 6) is also part of College operations, it is introduced here, but it is also included to some extent in each chapter.

Mission, Goals, and Strategic Planning

With the arrival of College president, Dr. Edna Baehre in 1997, many changes have occurred in the planning and assessment processes for Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC). It began in 1997 when a task force of 40 to 60 people, consisting of classified, faculty, administrators, and students, developed the new Mission Statement:

“In partnership with students, educators, businesses and our diverse communities, Harrisburg Area Community College fosters excellence in the educational, cultural, workforce development and economic growth of the College's service areas.”

In alignment with this new Mission Statement, the College created a Vision statement as well:

“Harrisburg Area Community College is an accessible, affordable, high quality, comprehensive community college. The multi-campus college serves as a premier educational and workforce development institution. The presence of quality instruction and cutting edge technology, business and industry collaboration, and a learner-centered environment provides students the necessary knowledge skills and values to compete and excel in a global community.”

The Mission and Vision Statements continue to guide the College in its long-range planning through the three-year College Strategic Plans. These statements are easily accessible, publicized in the catalog, and are on the College's web page, and in the faculty and student handbooks. In addition, each campus has a poster of the Mission and Vision statement prominently placed at the entrance of their buildings.

The College's Strategic Planning process began in earnest following the Periodic Review process in 2002 when the College established a permanent planning committee, currently called the Strategic Planning Committee. This committee, representing all internal constituencies of the College, is composed of five administrators, five faculty, four classified staff, and four students. The Strategic Planning Committee is permanently chaired by the Executive Assistant to the President. Students hold a one-year term of service on the committee and all other members hold three-year, rotating terms. This committee is charged with developing and overseeing each

three-year strategic plan, approved by the Board of Trustees, which provides a course of action for implementing the College's mission and vision statements.

The current Strategic Plan 2005-2008 was approved by the Board of Trustees in October 2005 (Appendix A). This Plan has five Major Goals, which directly relate to the College's mission statement:

1. Student Achievement and Academic Excellence
2. Excellence in Teaching
3. Effective Communication
4. Collegial, Inclusive College Community and Quality Work Environment
5. Partnerships and Teamwork

Each Major Goal is managed by a Major Goal Executive (a member of the President's Executive Cabinet), who is responsible for assembling and chairing a team of people to implement the goal over the next three years. This team identifies resources and staff needed, develops timelines, and assigns responsibilities, setting measurable milestones and methods of reporting to mark progress.

Each of the five major goals are broken down into a total of thirty Institutional Priority Goals (IP Goals), each with an IP goal coordinator, who assembles a team of colleagues across organizational lines as needed and reports regularly to the appropriate Major Goal Executive. The teams began in Fall 2005 by drafting a project plan, which includes the following:

- IP Goal, project description, expected outcome,
- IP Goal Coordinator, project team members, and outer circle as appropriate,
- Action steps, tasks for the current year, and ongoing tasks.

Semi-annual reports are then used to communicate progress to the College Strategic Plan Chair. Periodic College Strategic Plan Committee meetings are used to track, discuss, and assess progress on goals to date.

The Strategic Planning process described above was new to the College in 2005-06, and it therefore has the potential to correct some of the problems from processes used in the past by improving collaboration, narrowing the scope of the IP projects, and following through on reporting deadlines. The current strategic planning process began with broad-based input as the President held "Teamwork" sessions at each campus throughout the academic year 2003-04. The basis for the Major Goals for 2005-2008 was the result of those sessions the President held with faculty, staff, and administrators in each division and at every campus. Then each IP goal was assigned to an administrator, who assembled a team and developed a project description and list of action steps. However, two problems with the past process continued in the first year of the new process: tracking progress regularly during the three-year plan and making sure all constituencies are appropriately informed. Recently, though, communication has improved. Updates on the current IP goals were presented during Convocation 2006, and an assessment process is being developed and tested in the 2006-07 year.

To help to formalize this process, the College drafted an Administrative Procedure (AP 155, *College Strategic Planning Committee*), which spells out details of the new strategic planning

process, including terms of service for all constituencies, timelines for the development of the multi-year plan and the annual plans, and the connection between unit planning and the College strategic plan. However, the Administrative Procedure has just begun to pass through the governance system in Fall 2006. **Recommendation 1.1: The College should monitor and improve the functionality of the College Strategic Plan Committee and hold managers and the Committee accountable for reporting and updates.**

Strategic Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

The College Strategic Plan is the instrument the College uses to link mission and goals to planning and resource allocation. While linking the College Strategic Plan with day-to-day operations is a challenge for any large organization, the College is making steps in that direction by the following:

- Requiring unit managers to develop objectives linked to the College Strategic Plan;
- Establishing budget priorities that are linked to the College Strategic Plan;
- Linking funding for summer instructional grants, division and campus operational initiatives, and new capital expenses to the College Strategic Plan;
- Awarding Strategic Initiative Grants each year from the HACC Foundation totaling \$400,000 for new initiatives directly connected to the College Strategic Plan.

A more detailed discussion linking operations with the Strategic Plan is included in Chapter 2, which analyzes the allocation of institutional resources. In addition, the institutional assessment activities, described later in this chapter, justify the support and expansion of successful existing programs, point to new needs, and help the College scale back or eliminate unsuccessful programs or processes.

The current strategic planning process is intended to connect the Strategic Plan to the campus, division, or unit operations. From the College Strategic Plan, each of the Vice Presidents work annually with unit managers (deans and directors) to develop unit plans that are connected to the College Strategic Plan. Supervisors at each level (i.e., deans and directors) are supposed to solicit and filter unit goals submitted to them, thus incorporating “bottom-up” strategic goals from individuals into the “top-down” Strategic Plan process. However, the practice of gathering input varies from area to area.

A collaborative approach is used in some areas, including the Gettysburg Campus and the Virtual Campus. According to interviews with faculty and staff who participate in the process, these deans review previous accomplishments, list items that were not completed that should be continued, and brainstorm for new ideas. In larger campuses and divisions, deans tend to develop plans with less input from faculty and staff. Because faculty and staff will work to implement the goals submitted by the dean, more College personnel should be involved in the unit planning process. Perhaps as a result, faculty and staff perceive little connection between strategic planning and day-to-day operations as revealed in a recent governance survey (discussed in more detail in chapter 3). When asked if the current governance structure was effective in strategic planning, almost half of faculty (46%) did not know or were neutral, while 24% agreed or strongly agreed and 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed. A greater percentage of administrators and professionals expressed an opinion wherein 36% agreed or strongly agreed and 38%

disagreed or strongly disagreed. Classified staff members were more positive: 37% agreed or strongly agreed and 21% disagreed or strongly disagreed. **Recommendation 1.2: Deans and other supervisory administrators should actively and consistently encourage their faculty and staff to be more involved in both input and implementation of the College's IP Goals.**

Challenges also arise at the edges of the planning process where external interests have influence over programmatic development. For example, career programs that are accredited by outside agencies, such as Allied Health or Human Services, must meet the objectives of the agency to maintain their accreditation. While the agency pushes the program to improve quality for students, it often comes with additional associated costs, which may be challenging to meet. Thus, faculty and administrators must decide how to set priorities with limited resources by reconciling the goals and objectives of the agency with the divisional goals and objectives and the priorities of the institution.

Program and campus advisory groups, another type of external constituency, have had a generally positive impact on planning and operations. College Advisory Groups, Regional Campus Advisory Boards, Program Advisory Boards and local political leaders comprise our external constituencies. These groups have helped the College focus program development and change to address needs in the local community, as the following examples demonstrate:

- The development of the nursing program at the Gettysburg Campus was the result of a partnership with the local hospital and the Gettysburg Campus Advisory Board; and
- The new GIS program was developed with community participation in an advisory board.

Institutional Integrity

Institutional integrity is central to College operations and, consequently, is addressed in various places throughout this document. Institutional integrity as it pertains to dissemination of information about the College is handled in this chapter, which focuses on institution-wide issues. Area-specific issues have been saved for subsequent chapters. More specifically, catalog information is included here and referred to in appropriate sections of the chapters on Services to Students and Educational Offerings, which discusses the issues of academic freedom, intellectual property rights, and academic programs. Chapter 2 includes a discussion of the hiring, evaluation, and dismissal of employees and the treatment of constituencies in the Human Resources section. This section discusses the availability of information regarding the institution, the mission, goals, policies, practices, and periodic assessment.

Communication of all College information to external constituencies is coordinated through the Office of Public Relations (PR). The College makes information available to the community by the following means:

- Public relations and marketing campaigns,
- The College web-site (www.hacc.edu), and
- Public access to the archives.

Public Relations and Marketing

The College is gradually moving to a more unified image for all campuses in its marketing efforts. In the past, the College has used mass media advertising to communicate its message, but in recent years has begun taking an integrated marketing approach to promote its message, selecting the best tool among all the media choices to communicate to the target audience. The primary vehicle for setting priorities in public relations has recently become the Data Driven Enrollment Management Committee (DDEMC). Using information about market demands, the College makes informed choices about developing new programs or marketing existing ones.

While maintaining a consistent image with the geographically diverse campuses is a challenge, the Office of Public Relations works with the regional campuses in several ways. The Executive Director of Public Relations meets with regional campus deans monthly, and the Coordinator of Advertising and Marketing spends one day a month at each regional campus. In addition, regional campuses are represented on the DDEMC, which helps plan future marketing campaigns and discusses strategies for targeting audiences. To improve the process for regional campuses, campus-based PR liaisons were designated last year to improve turnaround times and to facilitate campus-specific press releases.

In addition, questions have been raised by program coordinators and campus faculty and staff about procedures for publishing information about programs or individuals. It is not always clear which information needs to go to which individual in the PR office or what the timelines are for various types of publications. While the College has an Administrative Procedure addressing general protocol for public relations (AP 131, *Public Information Releases and News Media Contacts*), more details of the process need to be spelled out to various constituencies to improve their working relationships and turnaround times with PR. **Recommendation 1.3: The College Public Relations procedures need to be revised to include what types of requests are handled through the Public Relations office, procedures for making a request, and what timelines are required for which types of Public Relations materials.**

College Website

The College's website is now the primary means for publishing information to the public and is currently being updated. In 2004 a consulting firm, Strata Information Group, worked with College staff in developing a "Blue Ribbon Committee Summary" in reference to the College's official website. The report summarized the mission, goals, features, and a proposed visitor list for the website. Recommendations included the need for an advisory committee along with a three-step process to create the following:

- 1) an effective navigation structure where visitors can get the information they want in just a few mouse clicks,
- 2) a content management structure which allows unit managers to update information in their area, and
- 3) an update to the look and feel of the site, so all pages have a consistent appearance.

Public Relations hired a Senior Web Master in 2005, whose top priority is to revamp the College's website. While the new website was released in Spring 2006, issues have arisen and a

committee has been formed to resolve the concerns of users and improve the functionality of the College's website. **Recommendation 1.4: An Administrative Procedure should be developed to address the College's and the website, providing information on the process for getting information posted on the website, how multi-campus information should be posted, contact information, and timelines.**

Archives

The College has an official procedure (AP 138, *College Archives*) and a committee to collect archival materials. If this Administrative Procedure were followed, archival materials would be easily accessible to a variety of constituencies. However, the archives are far from complete and accessible because of two deficiencies: a lack of dedicated space and no clear procedure for automatically collecting archival material. Archives are stored in plastic boxes on top of filing cabinets in a faculty office in the library; instead, the archives should have a dedicated space that is climate- and pest-controlled. Second, archival material is not routinely sent to the archivist; instead, materials must be tracked down or requested. More seriously, there is no material from the regional campuses in the College archives; instead, campus librarians house some archival materials.

The archives process could be improved if the Archives Committee were tasked with developing a list of contact information for various types of archival materials and a timeline for collection. The College also needs a formal procedure to communicate with the College community about archival material. A digital imaging system would accomplish this for archival materials as it has for student records, both as a back up for the paper copies and to make archival material available to the public. **Recommendation 1.5: The College should establish a secure location and implement a system to collect, account for, display, and promote the availability of archival materials.**

Institutional Assessment

The College has several means of assessing institutional effectiveness, using different methods to assess different areas. For example, program assessment is done regularly in the academic areas, Student Affairs has used process mapping more frequently than other methods of assessment, and the Business Office has used consultants to assess large, complex areas in facilities planning and for a comprehensive compensation review project in Human Resources. The Office of Institutional Research supports all assessment efforts. The College also reviews the effectiveness of all policies and procedures on a cyclical basis.

The shared governance process of the College places responsibility for assessment on various constituencies of the institution. Faculty, staff, and administrators serve on a variety of College-wide committees that guide the planning and assessment process, such as the Strategic Planning Committee, the Budget Advisory Committee, Building and Grounds, and others. (Details of the joint governance process are discussed at greater length in Chapter 3, Governance and Administration.)

The College operates through over two hundred Administrative Procedures (APs), which develop consistent, College-wide processes to enforce the Official College Policies (broad, general outlines), established by the Board of Trustees. All procedures are reviewed by President's Cabinet and referred to the appropriate governing body (Faculty Council, Academic Council, Classified Employees Organization, and/or Student Government Association) for review and comment. AP 111 (*Establishment of Administrative Procedures*) is the procedure governing the procedure process, and a list of all Administrative Procedures is included in Appendix B.

Reviewing these procedures has become an important part of the College's ongoing assessment of institutional effectiveness. Beginning in 2001-2002, the College started reviewing all Administrative Procedures every five years; that cycle has now been completed, and the College has 200 Administrative Procedures either completed or under review. Several new procedures were developed, and 103 procedures were eliminated. The President's Extended Cabinet (with representatives from all internal constituencies) and the shared governance councils have established a system for accomplishing this review cycle. If a procedure only needs to be updated, it is sent to Extended Cabinet for approval. Extended Cabinet has classified, administrative, and faculty representatives. However, if more substantial changes are needed, then it is sent to the appropriate governing body (Academic Council or a Faculty Council standing committee, for example) for change and review.

In addition to the regular review of all procedures and policies, two different Administrative procedures—AP 765, *Assessing Institutional Effectiveness: Academic Program and Service Reviews*; and AP 116, *Assessing Institutional Effectiveness: College Non-Academic Service Reviews*—guide assessment in all major areas of the College.

Academic Program Assessment is the purview of the faculty. The faculty review and approve all credit courses and programs within the institution. According to AP 765, *Assessing Institutional Effectiveness: Academic Program and Services Review* and the College's institutional assessment plan, all programs must be assessed every five years. To accomplish that, program coordinators can choose to do either a program audit or a DACUM (Develop a Curriculum) Review, as detailed in Chapter 6. Assessment timelines as well as final reports are maintained in the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management. The current tracking matrix for all programs is maintained by the Curriculum Coordinator.

Non-Academic Services are also regularly reviewed in order to:

- validate and enhance their quality and efficiency;
- establish needed services;
- develop an action plan to restore those services in decline;
- and/or to discontinue those services no longer meeting an identified institutional and/or educational need.

Assessment of all services must be completed once every five years.

The more widely used process to review non-academic areas in recent years is **Process Mapping**, a systematic approach to assessing all steps in a process, which has been used to

improve processes in different areas of the College. Process mapping analyzes the flow of a process from the beginning to some agreed upon ending point. Employees (staff, faculty, and administration) involved in the process are asked to give input. The goal is to identify breakdowns in the system, duplication or inconsistencies, and missing components (the “Is map”), and then to create a “Should map,” which outlines recommendations for improvement.

Student Affairs has benefited from this type of process analysis to revise systems and procedures in a number of areas: Enrollment Services, Financial Aid, several different orientation programs, records, recruitment, and more. One example is the recent mapping of Student Accounts. The committee found unnecessary duplication between Harrisburg and the other regional campuses. Alterations in the system were necessary in order to accommodate students who took courses at two different campuses during a given semester. The duplication led to problems in billing and accounting. After identifying the problems, a report was filed with the President, alterations were made in the process, and disconnects were identified and adjusted. Details on changes in each specific area in Student Affairs and an assessment of their effectiveness are described in Chapter 4, Services to Students. Other areas, such as non-credit, have also benefited from this type of process analysis to make improvements.

In the areas of Finance and Human Resources, along with process mapping, the College has used consultants for assessment to analyze and recommend changes for complex systems, including the Ten-Year Master Plan, the review of Safety and Security, and the comprehensive job descriptions and compensation review. Recommendations for improvements are gradually implemented, and brief assessments of each are in Chapter 2 (Financial, Human, and Physical Resources).

Assessment by the Office of Institutional Research

The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) supports many of the College’s assessment efforts. The OIR routinely provides enrollment data and other higher education parameters to the funding sources that allow for the comparison of campuses within the institution and other institutions similar to the College.

Currently, the Office of Institutional Research provides annual reports to the Middle States Association, covering the basic functions and activities of the College. The topics included in the College profile are:

- enrollment data
- graduation data
- non-credit activities
- listing of administrative leaders
- faculty and staff data
- program information
- distance education information
- branch campus/off campus data
- financial data
- significant changes in progress and plans

The profile data are frequently used by the College when reporting to any external organization. The College Data Book also contains a wealth of information available to the public from the website. Annual updates are shared with requesting parties and made public on the MSA website.

While institutional research does an excellent job of collecting diverse information about the institution, faculty and staff were often not aware of information available or how to access the data through the website. Awareness of how to access research office information along with other types of internal communication could be improved as well. Currently various types of information are scattered across the College:

- Press releases and media requests are kept in the Office of Public Relations.
- Institutional reports are primarily kept in the Office of Institutional Research and the campus libraries.
- Reports from outside agencies are kept in the area that requested the report.
- Committee notes or agendas are sometimes kept with committee chairs or secretaries or sometimes not at all.

Disseminating information through various network drives is inefficient, access is spotty, and it's often unclear what information is relevant and up-to-date. One solution would be to make all information available to internal constituencies from the College's , giving the appropriate offices the ability to update information. For public information, the redesigned website should help. **Recommendation 1.6: The College needs to develop a way to make information more easily accessible to internal and external constituencies.**

1: Mission, Planning, and Assessment Recommendations

- 1.1: The College should monitor and improve the functionality of the College Strategic Plan Committee and hold managers and the Committee accountable for reporting and updates.
- 1.2: Deans and other supervisory administrators should actively and consistently encourage their faculty and staff to be more involved in both input and implementation of the College's IP Goals.
- 1.3: The College Public Relations procedures need to be revised to include what types of requests are handled through the PR office, procedures for making a request, and what timelines are required for which types of PR materials.
- 1.4: An Administrative Procedure should be developed to address the College's and the website, providing information on the process for getting information posted on the website, how multi-campus information should be posted, contact information, and timelines.
- 1.5: The College should establish a secure location and implement a system to collect, account for, display, and promote the availability of archival materials.
- 1.6: The College needs to develop a way to make information more easily accessible to internal and external constituencies.