EASTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

Institutional Mission, Planning and Budgeting Coordination
Policy and Process
2-9-10

Abstract
The 2008 Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities visit unearthed serious concerns about Eastern's ability to connect mission, planning, budgeting, and evaluation in a meaningful and open process. The purpose of this document and associated templates is to layout the processes by which the university will review the mission, select themes and goals, set benchmarks or indicators, develop a strategic plan, select institutional priorities, distribute support for university functions and fund initiatives, and to create evaluation loops that determine the effectiveness of the mission.

Introduction
The accreditation visit in fall of 2008 and subsequent findings of the visiting committee and, thereafter the Commission, created a significant challenge for EOU. The visiting team's report, recommendation three, was stated as follows:

> "The committee recommends the University coordinate its planning, budgeting, and evaluation processes in a systematic and clearly defined manner that is effectively communicated to all stake holders to help assure the University's mission fulfillment and the institution's sustainability."
> (Standard 1 B Standard 7A)

Further, the Commission, in its letter to the University concerning the disposition of accreditation status, stated:

> "In imposing Probation, the Commission expressed serious concerns regarding the clarity of the institution's mission; the governing board's oversight responsibility of the University; the lack of coordination of institutional planning, budgeting and evaluations processes to ensure mission fulfillment; and the impact of fiscal instability on the institution's planning effectiveness."

Based on the feedback from the chair of the visiting team during the visit and from others at the Commission subsequent to the visit and letter to the institution, the core problem can be narrowed to the lack of linkage between the University mission and the methods used to determine how to apply and budget resources. There was no overt policy, procedure, or clear linkage that the visiting team could see, and further, there was no corroboration of those at the University that there was such a connection. As a result, the consensus of the reviewers was that we had a disarticulated set of activities and that these were conducted outside the umbrella of shared governance.

Although Eastern had developed a mission that was approved by the State Board of

Higher Education, that we had a set list of goals that were arrived upon by an open consensus model of governance, that we had developed a revised implementation (strategic) plan based on a decade of strategic plans, that we had developed a portfolio process for program assessment and efficacy, the view was that these elements were disarticulated and not obvious to the reviewer or even internal audiences that there was a "big picture."

As a result of this knowledge, a model for University Planning, Budget, and Evaluation was developed to accommodate the need for an overall plan for linkage between mission and, ultimately, assessment and evaluation. The Deans in Academic Affairs deliberated in a retreat to discuss this issue and developed, under the Office of the Provost, a model for University Planning. These initial ideas were presented to the President's Cabinet. After some revisions to the initial plan, the Provost conducted 12 meetings with different constituencies around campus. The College of Arts and Sciences three divisions, the College of Education, the Budget and Planning Committee, the College of Business, the Division of Student Affairs, the Division of Information Technology, the University Council, the Faculty Senate, the Administrative Faculty Executive Committee, the Division of Enrollment Services were all consulted about the general plans in this document.

Each group made specific recommendations about how the specific processes might be modified. The Provost collected the input and pledged that a final draft would be distributed to all constituencies by the end of May or early June. The understanding of all constituencies was that the incorporated modifications and procedures would be offered to the Cabinet and President and that after deliberation and further modification, if any, a final draft would be issued to the campus as the "plan." It was agreed that because this draft planning process may encounter needs for modification as it is implemented, that there would be ample opportunity to modify the plan as time proceeds. Although some elements of the plan will need to be developed prior to implementation in fall of 2009, these will not present delays to the overall process.

Key Point: Ultimately, what the University must adopt, support, and act on is a model of planning that translates mission into major themes and goals, drives specific aims and activities .from articulated goals, and then budgets resources to support these aims and activities directly. All of this must occur through a transparent set of processes that capitalizes on a shared governance environment.

The Proposed Policy

Mission

The University is rooted in mission and vision. All accreditation standards will ultimately point to a connection to mission. It is essential that we have a minimum of four things that corroborate our mission:

• Our mission must be reconfirmed by our campus on a periodic basis. A mission should be reviewed every five years to insure that it adequately describes the aspirations of the University. Although the Repositioning Plan suggested review of mission and proposed a minor modification in January of 2008, Eastern's current mission reflects a campus-wide discovery from 2004. Eastern's mission should be reviewed periodically and, if needed, modified. See "Guidelines and Process for Institutional Mission Statements."

• The process to affirm mission must be supported by a review of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and barriers the University may realize. In addition to a SWOT analysis, the University should engage in a "promise" activity that sets a vision of the University through the eyes of students. A promise activity may occur as often as needed, but should be reviewed along with the review of the mission statement. A promise activity simply asks, "What do we promise an Eastern student? What will students have, as advantages, at EOU versus another campus? What makes EOU unique?"

• In addition to a promise activity, the University should engage in articulating "strategic priorities." The President sets these priorities after an environmental/political/social scan of the university. Strategic Priorities are assumptions or givens about the position of the University in relation to sustainability. Strategic Priorities may influence the mission or may influence the interpretation of the mission.

• In order to change or modify a mission, a university-wide process is required. The University must elect methods that allow all within the academic community as well as the general community to contribute ideas toward the synthesis of a new mission.

• Generally, a mission change requires a full year of deliberation with a submission to the Chancellor and OUS Board on the following year. Again, see "Guidelines and Process for Institutional Mission Statements" that describes OUS' requirements for mission change and approval processes.

Themes

The revised accreditation standards assert boldly that the university mission is central to everything a campus does. The future standards are keyed to and linked to mission in a very deliberate way. To translate from the mission to the major initiatives, goals and day-to-day operations, themes are now required to carefully articulate the mission of the University. (See Standard 1. B Core Themes from the Northwest Accreditation Handbook.) While the mission has general language, themes of the mission are more precise collectors. For example, EOU's current mission is:

> EOU guides student inquiry through integrated, high-quality liberal arts and professional programs that lead to responsible and reflective action in a diverse and interconnected world.

> As an educational, cultural and scholarly center, EOU connects the
> rural regions of Oregon to a wider world. Our beautiful setting and
> small size enhance the personal attention our students receive, while
> partnerships with colleges, universities, agencies and communities
> add to the educational possibilities of our region and state.

While the mission generally states that EOU connects the rural regions of Oregon to a wider world, the translation or theme of this is better stated as: "Eastern is a regional University with a deep sense of commitment to students wherever they are." Similarly, the mission can be parsed into several theme statements that give a clear vision of the mission and which help focus attention on the major directions for the organization.

Themes are developed by the President through a consultative process with campus constituents. The President suggests language and promulgates the language to all constituencies. Input received is used to develop a final form of the working themes.

Key Point: Themes generally are in place for a number of years but may be revisited as necessary. Themes become the major rallying points for the University.

Goals/Objectives

In past years, Eastern has engaged in processes to establish goals for the University. Sometimes these processes were driven by a connection to the mission; other time goals were derived from personal interests. Currently, the University has a has a set of operational goals derived from the Repositioning Plan and subsequent semi-collaborative processes that have aim the University towards addressing key issues. Institutional goals should be informed by the mission and themes of the University and should be updated and adjusted as necessary to fit the current realities, to realign to adjusted priorities, and to establish new foci.

Goals are general statements of institutional desire that "pin-down" the themes into domains. Goals are broad, yet, with analysis of subsuming specific aims and their indicators, can be assessed.

Key Point: Although goals may change through time, most are stated in general enough terms to last several years. There is no assumption in this policy that goals should be "overhauled" each year are replaced with new goals.

The process that establishes goals is collaborative, guided by the President and informed by the campus community. As goals are established it is essential that indicators of

success are established at the same time. As the University meets the demands for the future, the setting of goals becomes an essential activity. The President should lead the effort to develop the goals and indicators for the University as a collaborative process. For 2009-10 goals have been established by the President to address the need to move expeditiously forward. These goals will be promulgated to the EOU community and will be adjusted as necessary from feedback received.

For successive years, goals are revisited at the end and beginning of each academic year. Starting with the previous goals, the president moves forward a slate of working goals in the spring.

Key Point: Unless there are compelling reasons for modification, deletion or addition of goals, the previous slate will remain in place for the following year. In this sense goals are not recreated each year, they are affirmed and modified if absolutely necessary.

Specific Aims or Objectives

While goals are somewhat more general in nature, specific aims are narrow. We might have a general goal to have a strong faculty, for example, but that general statement requires some specific support. Specific aims related to how we intend to achieve a strong faculty would include improving salary, increasing diversity, supporting scholarship, and encouraging professional development. From year-to-year these aims may change in terms of need.

Key Point: Specific aims are often temporary—installed to fulfill a specific need. They should be asserted every year in response to the Mission, Themes, Goals and Strategic Priorities of the University.

Each University unit should develop the aims that support the goals. The Vice Presidents, will propose specific aims in consultation with their constituents and in relation to the interests of the President. The matrix of mission/themes/aims are collected by the Provost and promulgated to the EOU community each fall.

Key Point: Note that this process is a top-down and bottom-up approach. While mission/themes/goals are top-down directives that guide the University, individuals and collective units must determine how these aspirations can be met and what we can do specifically to achieve the mission.

Indicators/Benchmarks/Targets

Each aim is measurable. An indicator/benchmark/target is assigned to each aim as a way to determine a level of achievement. Current EOU Indicators include enrollment, retention, numbers of students of a certain class, salary comparisons, graduation rates, matriculation rates from of various groups of potential students, reserve dollars, assessment of academic program information, survey results, OUS measurables, updated policies and procedures, etc.

University Strategic Plan/Action Plans

The next step in the chain is to implement the University Strategic Plan. The University Strategic Plan lists the goals and aims and then details specific activities, time frames, and resources necessary. The details arise from the Action Plans generated at the local unit level. The University Strategic Plan summarizes the most important activities of the University whereas the more local Action Plan addresses all the issues of the unit.

The Strategic Plan is generated as follows:

     1. Each Fall, divisions and units are assigned the task to review their own Action plans. If units do not have an Action plan, then the Provost will work with the unit to provide the parameters and model for development.

     2. The Division/Unit will modify the plan by removing those items that were accomplished transferring some aims to a managerial plan (to be discussed later in this document.) The Division/unit leader will have already noted this accomplishment in the year-end annual report as part of the assessment cycle (again, to be discussed later in this report).

     3. The Division/Unit will add any new items to the new Action plan paying attention to the needs of the unit, the mission, themes, goals, and previous aims of the University.

     4. The highest priorities from each unit will be excerpted from each Action Plan in order to develop the University Strategic Plan. The Provost will collect the Action Plans, glean the aims and activities that are most connected to the overarching goals of the University and coalesce a University Strategic Plan. The Provost will provide the University Strategic Plan to the President, Cabinet, and President's Council for review. After revision, the University Council and Faculty Senate will review the plan.

     5. Each Unit's/division's Action Plan as well as the University Strategic Plan will be posted on the EOU Web site under the Provost's Office.

     6. Units/divisions will then follow the strategic plan to implement those areas that they can as supported by the resources of the University.

Developing Priorities

What becomes difficult at this juncture is the ability of the University to accomplish all of its aspirations through planning because of lack of sufficient resources. There are far more ideas, requests, and needs than the University has people, time and money to accomplish. It requires, therefore, a careful set of processes to determine what the University can do to accomplish its goals.

There are several considerations in solving this problem. A strategic plan may offer new initiatives--those ideas that will require substantial time, money and human resources to accomplish. Others may be no-cost options.   For those initiatives or activities that will require new or repurposed resources, the University must decide if it can support the proposition.

There are two basic categories of resource investment that are worthy of discussion. 1) Those new initiatives that require sustained resources such as new programs, and 2) those expenditures that are crucial to the operations of the University ensuring safety or security such as roof repair, and those required assuring an acceptable level of continued quality.

New Initiatives Process

As the University considers new programs, whether academic or non-academic in nature, especially if it entails the expenditure of new revenues or reserves, it should undergo a process to determine which of many options are most viable. As units/divisions boil-up new plans for majors, programs, athletic teams, delivery sites, or other initiatives, and offer them in their strategic plans, the University must decide which of these initiatives are most appropriate investments.

A process is required to thoroughly air, vet and prioritize each of these proposals. The New Initiatives Process Template details the process for developing significant new initiatives. Although there is no particular threshold for "significant" it should be considered that both capital and human resources are variables that determine a tipping point for consideration as a new initiative.

Key Point: The New Initiatives Process Template outlines each step of the Initiative Process. The overarching concept of this planning process is to allow the campus community to propose, discuss, and recommend initiatives to the President in an open manner. Although the President has the responsibility of deciding how the University will invest its resources, the shared governance methodology allows constituents to view proposals in the light of mission, themes, goals, and intended outcomes. The process drives all back to the mission and thereby creates a tension away from expediency, complacency, or simple disregard for the set directions of the University.

The President may elect to set a budget for initiatives, or may delay setting any expectations until such point as an investment sum is known. In any one-year cycle, however, the planning for investment is for the following year. The planning process normally falls between October and February with decisions in March. Implementation of any program may occur as early as decisions are announced.

The process requires four basic steps:

1. Units develop Action Plans. Within the plans they may propose significant initiatives. Using guidelines established by the Provost as informed by the Budget and Planning Committee, proposals are written to conform to certain standards.

2. Proposals are then vetted for costs and interactions by the VP for Finance, Provost, and Budget Director. The proposals are viewed by the Cabinet and President to detect any potential interactions or unseen conflicts.

3a. The President then shares the Proposals to the Budget and Planning Committee for review and evaluation. Based on set criteria and a scoring rubric guided by the priorities given by the President, the committee examines the impact of the proposal, costs, overall cost efficiencies, the degree of congruence to mission and goals, and overall benefit to the University. The B&P committee will then prioritize the proposals and present recommendations to the President.

3b. At the same time the proposals are presented to B&P, they are also given to the Faculty Senate and University Council for review. These bodies may consider the proposals and may offer their own recommendations if desired.

4. The President will receive recommendations and will make decisions on what order and whether proposals will be funded. If the President departs significantly from the recommendations of the B&P committee then he/she will respond in writing to the committee and give a rationale for the alternatives.

Superintendence of Maintenance of Effort

It should be made clear that not all University initiatives, investments or budgetary alterations are a function of a shared governance process. Personnel costs are largely born out of statewide mandates, bargaining outcomes, or external rate changes on personnel costs. The University manages these sums, as it must as directed by the President.

Similarly, many University budgetary decisions are functions of fixed costs related to the operations of the University. Such functions as physical plant, information technology, and maintenance of equipment and materials are the responsibility of the management. Planning and budgetary modifications are directed by the President to the Cabinet to ensure a safe and maintained campus.

Some budgetary analysis is required to determine the degree of support needed to maintain effort in academic and non-academic areas, however. As an example, consider an athletic program that that is assessed to have fewer than necessary trainers as required by convention or rule. Oversight is necessary to monitor the needs of the divisions/units to ensure that programs are properly supported. Programs must be able to evaluate operations and request additional support as needed to ensure quality.

A process is required to ensure that each unit/division has opportunity of declaring their needs in each budget cycle. Each year, divisions/units will do a careful analysis of needs and develop a budget request based on a previous allocation. Increase requests must be accompanied with specific rationale. Data gleaned from the B&P Committee cost history of a unit may be helpful in establishing an accounting of past support for an area.

Requests are collected by each VP area and are forwarded to the Cabinet. The President will make a final decision on budgetary adjustments for all units/divisions based on needs and other information including program evaluation summaries.

Maintenance of Effort--The Managerial Plan

Although Strategic Plans are helpful in conquering new objectives and aims, they are not useful as soon as the goal is accomplished. Once we develop a program at Mount Hood, for example, there is no need to have this aim in our Strategic Plan. Instead we must watch Mt. Hood in a way that ensures continued quality. A maintenance or managerial plan requires that units routinely monitor and assess their programs to ensure quality. This monitoring process often yields issues that need attention and may even require a budgetary adjustment as noted above.

The primary Maintenance of Effort Plans are found in program evaluation in the academic areas and in non-academic program evaluation. Academic Program evaluation is a separate process that is somewhat distant to the purposes of this proposal, but it is connected insofar as how its outcomes lead to recommendations about the efficacy or needs of a particular major or minor. Academic Program Evaluation informs planning as a feedback loop because it determines the cost effectiveness of a program, the degree of congruence with mission, program quality indicators, and the accomplishments of the faculty. These data provide administration with fodder to recommend continuance, modification, or deletion of any particular academic program.

Similar processes must be developed for non-academic programs.

The University Assessment Plan: Assessment Cycles and Feedback Loops for Meeting University Goals and Mission

At the conclusion of each academic year, unit/division directors are tasked to take account of the strategic plan and to report accomplishments. These reports are summaries specifically indicating progress made in each line of the unit/division and

University Plan. Unit/division leaders write summaries of the accomplishments in light of the University goals and mission to link outcomes with intents.

Academic Program and non-academic program assessments are done on a cyclic basis. Each academic program in review will provide an updated portfolio of assessment to be reviewed by the dean and Provost. Each non-academic program will provide an analysis of accomplishments for the academic year.

The Provost will collect these inputs and provide an Annual University Assessment Report that summarizes the University's accomplishments and makes statements about the congruence with mission and the overall impact of activities and strategies on moving the University forward.

In addition to each unit's perspective, data informing each aim/indicator is collected and maintained in a central database. An overall management system of data in an assessment matrix collects and records where the University stands with regards to progress on all fronts.

This data is used not only to assess the progress of any one academic year, but also to guide the development of mission/theme/goal/aim/action plan development.