8 TIPS FOR CREATING A COMMENDATION-WORTHY PLANNING PROCESS

SHORTEN STRATEGIC PLANS

Create a strategic plan with fewer goals.

Moorpark recently cut its strategic plan down from 73 goals to 14 goals.
There were a variety of issues with 73 goals. For example, each program is required to map its program goals to one of the strategic plan goals, and that task is a lot easier with 14 than 73 goals.

SIMPLIFY PROGRAM REVIEWS

Go old school with program review technology like Word and Excel so the program spends more time analyzing data and less time figuring out the program review software.

Moorpark had built a bespoke customized program review software, but when IE met with programs to help them review data, we realized that 90% of the meeting time was spent explaining the software. Furthermore, whenever our planning committee requested changes to the software it would take months of development time to make simple changes. Now that we've moved the whole process to Word and Excel it takes minutes to train instead of hours, and making revisions to the programs is as simple as updating any Word or Excel file.

ENSURE ALL IDEAS ARE CONSIDERED

After a brainstorming session, ensure folks see how their ideas are used so they know that their time, effort, and contributions are valued.

Sometimes, when colleges do a brainstorming session at a planning retreat it feels like all those ideas disappear into a black hole. This makes participants feel like the exercise was performative. At Moorpark to ensure folks know their ideas are considered we feature all of the brainstormed ideas for each strategic goal prominently next to the goal. We then give program leads explicit instructions to ensure they at least consider the brainstormed ideas. We also publicly highlight when ideas from brainstorming sessions end up getting implemented.

MANDATE SLOs FOR ALL

Require all faculty to submit SLO data each semester to build a habit, and then require programs to meet annually with IE to complete the analyses.

While it seems counterintuitive at first, the best way to reach SLO compliance is to require all faculty to submit SLO data at the same time as grades each year. That way, while it may feel like extra work the first time around it builds a habit which then just becomes a normal part of the process. Furthermore, by ensuring 100% of SLO data is provided, it makes the analysis more meaningful, especially for smaller programs with fewer students. Additionally, when it comes time to analyze the data we now require programs to meet with IE to help them analyze their results. That way we ensure we get 100% compliance, and programs in turn complete the analysis in a fraction of the time since IE is there to assist.

MOORPARK COLLEGE

SPOTLIGHT EACH PROGRAM

Have program review meetings every few years with each program and the college's VPs and Academic Senate President so that every program gets a moment to shine.

Programs put a lot of effort into their program reviews and that effort needs to be recognized. At least every three years, each program meets with a panel that includes all three vice presidents and the academic senate president to present their program. These meetings reduce silos by ensuring all VPs are well versed in the programs and services the college offers, and also provide an opportunity for the program to brainstorm ideas with VPs outside their area. In particular, it's been great to have the VP of Business Services there because sometimes a program is stuck because of some minor budget issue that the VP can solve instantly on the spot, especially since the VPs have a big-picture overview of the entire organization. Other times, the VPs can suggest programs connect with other programs for synergy. These connections would be missed were it not for these meetings.

ELEVATE CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES

Create an inclusive planning committee with a tri-chair model and ensure a classified employee is one of the tri-chairs.

Most planning committees include classified representation, but not necessarily classified tri-chairs. By adding a classified tri-chair the college signals the importance of classified leadership in the planning process.

CREATE TASK-FOCUSED GROUPS

Use small workgroups instead of the whole planning committee when substantial work needs to be done (e.g., creating a draft enrollment management plan).

While it's great to have a large planning committee, a large group is not effective when it comes to efficiently getting work done. Rather than having the entire committee do the work, create a representative workgroup that can bring the final product back to the larger committee. Some recent projects that were tackled by a workgroup included updating the strategic plan, creating an enrollment management plan, and revising the program review process.

ENSURE GOALS ARE FUNDED

Do an annual gap analysis to see if prioritized funds allocated supported the college's strategic plan goals. If there are goals the college did not achieve see if there's money left over to fund those goals.

During the gap analysis, participants review dashboards for the strategic plan with a special focus on goals marked as yellow or red (somewhat or significantly behind on meeting goals). The gap analysis participants then discuss whether the goals were performing poorly due to a lack of resources, either because those resources were not originally requested, or they ranked too low during the prioritization process. This gap analysis is then shared with the college President. If additional funds are available, the college President then considers funding high-impact resource requests that have the potential to convert a goal from yellow/red status to green status.

Recent items funded through this gap analysis process include hiring a counselor assistant position for the PACE program which was growing rapidly and urgently needed counseling support. The hiring of this position led to the related goal status indicator turning from yellow to green.

While the College's established resource allocation processes account for most funding decisions and strongly support the integration of planning and resource allocation, the gap analysis serves as an added mechanism to ensure the College is agile and can respond on a case-by-case basis to urgent needs that may arise after the prioritization process is completed.

MOORPARK COLLEGE