



August 27, 2007

TO: Council of Deans

FROM: Joseph A. Alutto, Interim Executive Vice President and Provost

SUBJECT: College Strategic Planning and Evolution of Biennial Dialogues

We have now had a year of experience with the biennial college dialogue process. I have talked with the vice provosts and a number of deans about the process. I have also considered comments from the external reviewers from our recent regional reaccreditation. Their comments focused on the unevenness of strategic planning at the college and department levels. As discussed at the June Council of Deans meeting, the time has come to move to a next stage of development in both the college dialogues and in college strategic planning.

In academic year 2007-08, the college dialogue process will evolve into a year-end discussion that coincides with a dean's annual performance review.

A primary focus of that one-on-one meeting with the provost will be the college's strategic plan, which should be finalized by the end of the spring quarter 2008.

We know that some colleges have well articulated strategic plans, while other plans are still emerging. All of the college plans, whatever their stage of development, should contain the planning elements outlined in Attachment A to this memorandum. To assist those units for which strategic planning is a new activity, OAA is planning a workshop this autumn that will include best practice examples. OAA will be in touch shortly with additional details about the workshop, but let me share some ideas here about the strategic planning process.

First, I would note that the success of any college strategic plan hinges on the compatibility of that plan with the strategic plans of the academic units within the college. As deans devise or refine their college-level plans, their chairs and directors must be doing likewise to ensure the seamless alignment of department and school strategic plans with the college's umbrella plan. Program reviews are an important vehicle for deans, as well as chairs and directors, to ensure that academic units are moving forward in concert with college and university goals.

College, department, and school plans must be shaped, in turn, by overarching university strategic plans. President-designate Gee has reaffirmed that Ohio State's Academic Plan will remain the touchstone for all strategic planning university-wide. He has also said that, in collaboration with members of the university community, he will develop a leadership agenda with targeted areas of focus that will build on the Academic Plan and give it direction during his presidency. We can anticipate that these targeted areas of focus will include expanding Ohio State's international visibility and extending the influence of the TIE investments in order to strengthen college collaboration and create additional interdisciplinary opportunities.

We will also need to be ready to respond to the coming agendas of the Ohio Board of Regents, which has identified Ohio State as a flagship university within a Universities of Ohio System.

As you refine or develop your college strategic plan over the coming months, you should use the Academic Plan as its basis, along with President Gee's emerging areas of focus and perhaps the Regents' agendas. You should ask department chairs and school directors to use these same planning elements as they consider parallel development or modification of their unit-level strategic plans. As a unit's goals and their implementation steps are formalized into a strategic plan, it may be necessary to refocus energies and efforts and redirect human and financial resources unit-wide. The deliberate and selective placement of all such investment will determine, in large measure, the success of any strategic plan.

As noted above, our goal is to have all college strategic plans in hand by the end of spring quarter, 2008. To maximize the value of the discussion of the plan during the deans' annual performance reviews, we will ask for a draft of their college's strategic plans in late winter quarter. The Office of Academic Affairs will review the plans and provide feed-back for their final iteration, which, as also noted above, will be the focal point of each dean's performance review. One outcome of the review will be agreement on the college's strategic plan, its implementation, and commitments by both the college and OAA. The provost will ensure that all vice provosts are aware of issues identified during the dialogue and that any special support needs or best practices are identified.

During that performance review, the dean and provost will also:

- Consider college performance based on previously agreed upon metrics;
- Develop mutually agreed-to performance assessments;
- Develop short-term goals for the college and the dean and align these goals with longer range university and college objectives;
- Consider how to create greater certainty in resource availability and accountability in attaining the goals of the strategic plan.

For the purposes of this discussion, we need to ensure that each college uses data common to the college and the Office of Academic Affairs. Julie Carpenter-Hubin, director of the Office of Institutional Research and Planning, will be in touch with each dean to discuss the college's quality indicators and the data available to colleges that will be used in this process.

Let me add a final word about strategic plans. They are not an end in themselves. Nor is their implementation a static process. There will be always be events that alter the efficacy of specific tactics. Continuity in objectives is essential, regardless of any short-term adjustments in implementation. The need for discussion, review, and examination of alternatives will be on-going. Indeed, it will be key to achieving the goals of a college's strategic plan and the university's Academic Plan.

cc: Gordon Gee, President-Designate
Vice Presidents
Vice Provosts
Chairs and Directors

Appendix A: Strategic Planning and Plan Elements

General Guidelines

A strategic plan is at once general, tactical, and specific. Its purpose is to provide clear guidelines for all interested parties about aligning the overarching goals of the university, its colleges, and their departments.

Each college should post its strategic plan on its website to ensure transparency. The website will also serve as an archive as the plan is adjusted over time.

In order to coincide with the initial appointments and reappointments of deans, a college strategic plan should be developed within the first year of any appointment, except in circumstances agreed to by a dean and the provost. The success of the plan will be used as an input to the reappointment process and thus will provide a partial basis for reappointment. Accordingly, a rolling four-year strategic planning horizon would be appropriate for all deans.

Strategic Plan Elements

A college strategic plan should contain the following elements:

- a. Identification of the general process used to develop plans.
- b. Goal statements and tactical implementation steps tied to key Academic Plan dimensions, including:
 1. Developing and sustaining world-class faculty whose teaching, research, and service re-energize the approach to solving today's pressing problems;
 2. Developing top 10 and top 20 departments/programs;
 3. Improving the quality of teaching and learning environments;
 4. Enhancing and serving more effectively the student body;
 5. Creating a more diverse university community;
 6. Building Ohio's economic future;
 7. Positioning the university as a world resource for education and research.
- c. College and center/department goal statements that are integrated and reinforce each other;
- d. An overview of resource needs and income streams, including:
 1. Identification of financial requirements believed essential to achieve goals, including new resources distribution or current resources redistribution;
 2. Identification of human resources believed necessary to achieve goals;
 3. Identification of college centric incremental funding sources and levels providing the foundation for achieving goals (e.g., anticipated marginal income from enrollment, IDC projections);
 4. Identification of incremental external college funding sources and levels required for success (e.g., development funding, OAA support);
- e. Identification of unique facilities and technology requirements needed for success;
- f. Time period specific metrics for assessing progress;
- g. Periodic (e.g., annual) assessments of college and decanal progress towards plan goals.