
NIU College of Business
STRATEGIC PLANNING COUNCIL VIII MEETING MINUTES
Second Meeting (Academic Year: 2004-05) ~ Friday, February 25, 2005, Noon – 2:00 p.m.

In Attendance:

Madan Annavarjula (MGMT), Tim Aurand (MKTG), Greg Carnes (ACCY), Ann Carrel (MBA Program), Bill Cummings (ACCY), Michelle De Jean (COB Marketing Director), Diane Docking (FINA), David Graf (Dean), Barbara Fox (ACCY), Chuck Gowen (MGMT), Mike Heath (FINA Undergraduate Student), Brian Mackie (OMIS), Roman Nowacki (MGMT), Charles Petersen (OMIS), Mona Salmon (MBA Program), Wayne Smith (iTest Quality Partners Inc.), Bill Tallon (Associate Dean), Sally Wakefield (Strategic Planning & Assessment Coordinator), Jay Wagle (MKTG), Dan Wunsch (MGMT), and Phyllis Zerull (OMIS)

Unable to Attend:

John Banko (FINA), Kara Bourbon (ACCY Graduate Student), Virginia Cassidy (Associate Vice Provost), Sue Goad (OMIS), Jim Johnson (FINA), and David Sinason (ACCY)

Guests:

Sue Braffet (Director – COB Alumni Relations) and Lori Marcellus (Director – Undergraduate Studies in Business)

SPC ACTION TEAM PRESENTATIONS

**Strategic Objective #1: Learner Recruitment –
Coordinated Program for Recruiting Graduate Students**

Ann Carrel, Presenter

Revised Charge: Develop a *Coordinated Graduate Program Communication Plan* proposal for consideration by the Strategic Planning Council.

Team Members: Ann Carrel (Assistant Director – Executive MBA Program) – Team Leader, Tim Aurand, Greg Carnes, Jay Wagle, Phyllis Zerull, and Sally Wakefield (Dean’s Office) – Assessment Advisory Capacity.

Presently, the Team is focusing its efforts on developing a *Communication Plan* proposal for consideration by the Strategic Planning Council. Ann Carrel summarized the current status of promotional activities conducted by the various programs:

- The MBA program undertakes a number of promotional activities.
- The other programs either do not have a person to devote to these efforts, or they do not have the money to allocate to them.

As a result of their deliberations, Team members concluded that a coordinated, integrated *Communications Plan* would likely enhance all programs, with the first step being formation of a visual design. A question was raised as to whether any market analysis has been done in anticipation of the Communication Plan, specifically, are there plans to analyze the market? It was acknowledged that, ideally, a more comprehensive marketing/advertising campaign would be beneficial but, in the short term, only a *Communication Plan* has been discussed. Greg Carnes related the example of the recent approval of the Department of Accountancy’s MAS off-campus program delivery. For his department’s purposes, Greg feels it is a more pressing need to apprise potential students, etc., of this new delivery option than it is to develop a full-scale marketing plan.

It was suggested that the *Communication Plan* seems to have an internal, rather than external, focus, and that differentiating between external competitors would be an important part of the marketing analysis process; thus, it was posed that reviewing rankings in publications (like USNWR) might be helpful. In response, both Mona Salmon and Ann Carrel noted that, given the structure of NIU's graduate programs and the targeting of part-time students, rankings have *limited* usefulness since they are directed more toward full-time than part-time programs. Still, perhaps there are some "learnings" which could be fleshed out about the external market by looking at recruiting information in rankings publications.

As a COB Marketing process and structure already are in place, Dean Graf recommended that Michelle De Jean be added to this Team since she is charged with the responsibility of coordinating COB-wide marketing activities. The Dean also referred to the uniform undergraduate programs image campaign/materials as an example of successful implementation of just such a visual design campaign.

All graduate degree and certificate (i.e., the MIS Certificate) programs would be included in the *Communication Plan*. One essential element of the plan is the need for a central collection point for interested prospects to call or email for program information, as it could be confusing if all of the graduate programs' phone numbers/e-mail addresses were listed. This also will enable better tracking and assessment of the effectiveness of those activities implemented (such as, annual mailings, open house attendance, etc.).

A motion was approved unanimously to proceed with implementing a *Coordinated Graduate Program Communication Plan*.

**Strategic Objective #1: Student Retention – Building Academic Tradition
History Wall ~ Barsema Hall**

Barb Fox, Presenter

Charge: Finalize the formal plan for the History Wall in keeping with the overall theme of *Building Academic Tradition in Barsema Hall*.

Team Members: Sue Braffet (Director – COB Alumni Relations) – Team Leader, Kara Bourbon, Mike Heath, Barb Fox, and Jim Johnson.

Barb Fox described the process for the History Wall plaque designs, photo selections, and accompanying narrative. The physical location will be the north wall, second floor, over the Three Sons Café. The visual display is also adaptable for future decades, with panel placements able to be expanded and reconfigured to compensate for any physical barriers on the wall itself. Although no monetary amount was suggested, this initiative should be transferred to Development for naming opportunities once the wall is installed.

Barb Fox moved, Greg Carnes seconded, and the motion passed unanimously that the recommendations cited by the *Building Academic Tradition in Barsema Hall* Action Team be approved. At this point, this Team's charge has been fulfilled and no other action is required. The Dean thanked Sue Braffet for her leadership and the Team members for their exemplary work.

Strategic Objective #1: Technological Expertise
Learning Outcome – Assessment

Brian Mackie, Presenter

Charge: Design an assessment instrument by which to measure *Assurance of Learning* in the area of *Technological Expertise*.¹

Team Members: Brian Mackie (OMIS Faculty Member) – Team Leader, Wayne Smith, Tim Paige (COB Tech Resources Director), and Sally Wakefield (Dean’s Office) – Assessment Advisory Capacity.

Brian Mackie related the history of technological expertise assessment of the Microsoft® Tools (Access/Excel/PowerPoint/Word) via the former, web-based Educational Multimedia Corporation’s Learning Management System. Currently, this Team is exploring ways to handle technological expertise assessment through alternative web-based training/assessment products, such as the Thomson Course Technology’s *Skills Assessment Manager* (http://www.course.com/school/itlink/spring05_SAM2.cfm), or Prentice Hall’s *TrainAssessIT*, in tandem with LiveText™ (<http://college.livetext.com/college/index.html>), which offers a number of features for assessment and data analysis. Importantly, whatever products are selected should have the capability of serving the dual purposes of [1] a training platform for students who need to acquire – or to improve their – technological skills and [2] assessing students’ proficiency in those skills. (Ideally, a pre-test and post-test assessment would allow the college to establish a baseline and to measure improvement, respectively.) It was recommended that Tim Paige, as COB Tech Resources Director, be added to this action team.

The *Undergraduate Student Information Technology Self-Assessment Survey* was reviewed; as suggested, “NIU Computer Labs” was added to the list of Internet access possibilities. Some discussion followed regarding the use of surveys in guiding decisions about students’ technological expertise proficiency. In fact, a survey is not considered a direct assessment technique and cannot stand alone as part of a school’s *Assurance of Learning* efforts. However, surveys do serve the limited purpose of providing anecdotal evidence of the differences between the self-perceived abilities of Freshmen and Transfer cohorts. Thus, direct and authentic assessment,² the objective of the MS Tools project described above, is the only

¹The following outcome statements are those that apply to all College of Business majors, irrespective of track. The outcomes specifically read that, *College of Business undergraduate majors will be expected to demonstrate the ability to:*

- A. Conduct web searches as part of case analysis and projects.
- B. Demonstrate the ability to create and use spreadsheets as part of a decision support system.
- C. Demonstrate the ability to create a database environment and use the database to generate both ad hoc and formal reports.
- D. Demonstrate the ability to produce professional reports using current software packages.
- E. Demonstrate the ability to understand enterprise information systems.

Currently, the Technological Expertise Assessment Action Team is centering its work on Outcomes B-D.

²A good definition of authentic assessment can be found at <http://jonathan.mueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/whatisit.htm#definitions>:

An authentic assessment usually includes a task for students to perform and a rubric by which their performance on the task will be evaluated.

...

...authentic assessment (AA) springs from the following reasoning and practice:

1. A school's mission is to develop productive citizens.
2. To be a productive citizen, an individual must be capable of performing meaningful tasks in the real world.
3. Therefore, schools must help students become proficient at performing the tasks they will encounter when they graduate.
4. To determine if it is successful, the school must then ask students to perform meaningful tasks that replicate real world challenges to see if students are capable of doing so.

credible means by which to evaluate proficiency. In turn, this direct assessment initiative should generate curricular change recommendations if results do not meet targeted baselines. At this point, no project was proposed for adoption, but the Team hopes to present its recommendations at the next meeting.

Strategic Objective #2: Experiential Learning – Outreach

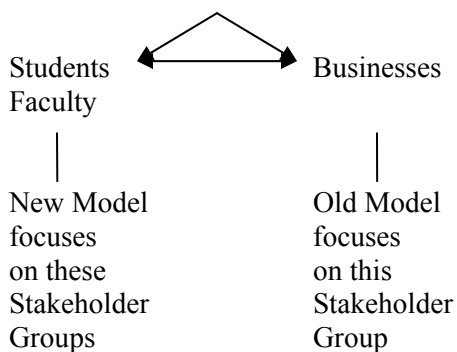
Bill Tallon, Presenter

Charge: Refine the focus of the *Experiential Learning Center (ELC) and Business Outreach activities and develop processes, outcomes, measures, and assessment framework; forward recommendation(s) to Senate for successful implementation.*

Team Members: Bill Tallon (Associate Dean) – Team Leader, Madan Annavarjula, Virginia Cassidy, Bill Cummings, Sue Goad, Tom Haapoja, Jane Mall, Jack Marchewka, Roman Nowacki, and Mona Salmon.

Bill Tallon related that, in its reflections about what Experiential Learning – Outreach (ELO) should be, the Team wondered if this unit is trying to do too much. As pointed out, it is important to determine both what ELO should be *and* what it should not be. Jane Mall, ELO Director, has been working toward modeling this unit after the former BITTC, i.e., creating a learning environment for students and faculty. If ELO is transformed in this manner, it will have implications for how ELO should proceed and how “Experiential Learning” ought to be defined.

As part of this process, ELO is identifying its focus and customers:



NOTE: The new model does not diminish the importance of company sponsorship in ELO projects but, rather, spotlights the learning aspect of projects.

Currently, students work on important, but not mission-critical, projects. Students are graded via a business course elective or independent study (depending upon how a particular department structures its experiential learning projects).

The distinction between direct and indirect assessment techniques can be found at http://www.uwlax.edu/provost/assessment/A_glossary.htm:

Assessment instruments fall into two broad categories—**Direct and Indirect measures of learning**. These terms distinguish between two forms of evidence of student learning. A direct measure is one by which students demonstrate what they have learned. A research project, an examination, an exhibit of creative work direct measures in that they are primary data about what students learned. Indirect measures provide second hand information about student learning. A questionnaire that asks students to estimate how much they have gained in certain areas of the curriculum is an indirect measure of their learning. It is not the primary data itself but an estimate or opinion about their learning.

Bill noted that there is not so much a lack of project prospects – organizations actively seek out such partnerships with the College of Business, but rather recruitment of an adequate number of faculty coaches. As Dan Wunsch indicated, his faculty have enjoyed their experiential learning opportunities but, due to competing demands upon their time, faculty often are unable to participate in them. Therefore, if the COB considers this is an important and viable activity (and the consensus is that it is), then the college will need to find ways to incorporate ELO endeavors into the faculty course load requirements (for example, would 3...4...5 ELO faculty coach assignments equal 1 3-semester-hour course?) and/or merit system in order to provide adequate faculty coverage of projects. To be sure, there are many issues to be ironed out but, without addressing faculty resource constraints, this unit may be hampered in realizing its full potential as a learning venue for students. As a start, Dan requested that ELO document the average number of hours these projects take, etc., so that parameters can be established for course-time equivalency. By way of clarification, there is no policy, nor are there plans, to exclude non-tenured track faculty or instructors from participating in ELO activities. Indeed, their involvement is encouraged.

It is a goal of ELO to find ways to be self-sustaining and identifying grants and business funds by which to accomplish this objective will be an important aspect of its ongoing operations. One win-win option might be to pair a MBA student and Business Careers House student to work on a project, since the latter group may not have an immediate attachment to the College of Business and this would be one way to assimilate new undergraduate students into the college.

Dean Graf noted that ELO has a lot going for it, so it is important to determine what ELO can do well and eliminate the rest. As a parallel goal, it is also essential that a mechanism be in place at the university level so that opportunities for continuing education partnerships with businesses are fulfilled. While such activities conceivably may be outside the COB domain under a reconfigured ELO unit, they do serve the overall mission of the university at-large and should be nurtured.

Strategic Planning Council Governance – Bylaws

Charles Petersen, Presenter

Charge: Review and update SPC Bylaws.

Team Members: Charles Petersen (OMIS Faculty Member) – Team Leader, John Banko, and Michelle De Jean.

Charles Petersen reviewed the recommended changes, which would make the Strategic Planning Council structure *more like* a standing committee with regular meeting times, etc. Some discussion involved the number of meetings held per fall/spring term. It was the Bylaws Team's suggestion that there be two meetings each fall term and a minimum of two, or possibly three, meetings in the spring. The rationale for two meetings in the fall is that, oftentimes, action teams do not begin their deliberations until spring. With the AACSB *Strategic Management Standards* necessitating an annual report as part of the accreditation maintenance reporting process, the second spring meeting is now dominated with finalizing strategic initiatives to be forwarded to the college's standing committees (COB Senate/Council/Curriculum Committee). Thus, in order to advance the various teams' activities, it may require two meetings between the first fall and second spring meetings to adequately resolve unfinished business.

With respect to membership, it was posed that the current President of Staff Council (as an elected representative of the *Operating* and *Supportive Professional* Staffs) and the Director of Tech Resources (since many strategic planning initiatives involve COB technology) be permanent members of SPC. Ann Carrel raised a concern that there is no specific mention of SPS representation on the Strategic Planning Council.

In an effort to generate equal representation by department and professional classification and to ensure participation by those possessing the expertise/interest required for the upcoming SPC activities (i.e., action teams), the SPC Bylaws Action Team recommended that the Dean identify new members meeting those objectives.

Additionally, the SPC discussed continuing membership beyond the now-stated, maximum three-year term. David Graf suggested that, should a member wish to continue to serve on SPC beyond the third year, the member does not have to automatically rotate off for one year; however, David stressed that – given the objectives cited above – the decision to extend any SPC incumbent's membership beyond the third year rests entirely with the Dean.

The Bylaws Team will consider the feedback received at the February 25 meeting and possibly set forth its recommendations at the April 8 SPC meeting.

**Strategic Objective #1: Learner Recruitment –
Undergraduate Students**

Lori Marcellus, Presenter

Charge: **Develop an *Undergraduate Business Student Recruitment Model* that takes into account all NIU College of Business predictors of success (including, but not limited to, ACT scores).**

Team Members: Lori Marcellus (Director – Undergraduate Studies in Business) – Team Leader, Bob Burk (Director – Admissions), Diane Docking, Mike Heath, Charles Gowen, Daniel Wunsch, Phyllis Zerull, and Sally Wakefield (Dean's Office) – Assessment Advisory Capacity.

Lori Marcellus noted that this Team's efforts have centered on two interrelated goals:

1. How do we identify (potentially) successful NIU College of Business students? *And then,*
2. How do we get them to come to NIU?

With regard to the first question, it is no easy matter articulating the traits inherent in successful NIU College of Business students. To this end, Lori has asked all of the undergraduate advisors to identify 5-10 alumni from their respective programs and to look at these alumni's histories – possibly starting with (but not limited to) such characteristics as their high school leadership and academic accomplishments. The more factors that can be assessed, the better equipped the COB will be able to build a model of a successful NIU College of Business student. While it is possible this project may be completed by the next meeting, it is equally possible that it may extend into the next academic year.

Once the above objective is achieved, it then will be *critical* to provide scholarships to attract and retain students, who meet the criteria emerging from this model. It was stressed that this profile may not emphasize ACT score as a component in potential for success (although it could be discovered that ACT is a *factor*). The Dean recommended that, if the COB gets a Development Officer – as is expected to be the case, then that person should be added to this Team, since part of the Development Officer's responsibilities will include scholarship fundraising.

The tipping point for candidates' choosing NIU may be the ability to offer the targeted group comparable financial aid packages as those being proffered by our competitors. NIU Admissions Director Bob Burk shared information with the *Undergraduate Learner Recruitment* Team about some of the other public-sector/in-state institutions, which are awarding a greater absolute number of and more substantially-funded scholarship packages than NIU-at large and the College of Business. Thus, as part of its research, the Team will need to verify how many university-wide scholarships go to COB students. Currently, the overwhelming majority of COB scholarships are earmarked for Junior-level students entering their majors, rather than those entering the university as Freshmen. (This strategy may require another look.)

The Action Team's work is ongoing and recommendations will be forthcoming as more concrete information is gathered. Dean Graf thanked Lori for her leadership of this Team.

After complimenting all of the action teams for their substantive work and reports, the Dean adjourned the meeting. **The next SPC meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 8, 2005, Noon-2 p.m., Dean's Conference Room.**

Respectfully submitted,

Sally A. Wakefield
Coordinator, NIU College of Business Strategic Planning and Assessment