Sustainable Academic Innovation: Degree Program Prioritization as a Catalyst for Positive Change

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Placing Academic Programs at the Heart of Higher Education Planning

- Technology Plan
- Capital Plan
- Workforce Plan
- Enrollment Plan
- Development Plan
- Financial Plan

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS
Current Planning Issues

- Multiple plans
- Plans don’t speak to each other
- Which plan is primary?
- Should there be a hierarchy of plans?
- If plans conflict with each other, which plan holds sway?

- SOLUTION: Integrated Planning with Academic Programs as the Centrifugal Force
Seven Essential Elements:

• 1. Operationalize the Mission
• 2. Confront the Real Issues
• 3. Integrate Resources into the Plan
• 4. Stay Within the Scope
• 5. Quit Doing Some Things
• 6. Focus on Implementation and Assessment
• 7. Maintain a Planning Database for Management Purposes
Program Prioritization:
A Fifteen-Year Analysis

ROBERT C. DICKESON

Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services
Reallocating Resources to Achieve Strategic Balance

REvised AND UPDATED
1. The Need for Prioritization Continues

- Institutions are under increasing pressure to achieve strategic goals while enduring fiscal stress

- Colleges and universities have to re-think both the sustainability of financial resources and the efficacy of academic and support programs

- The most likely source of resources will come from reallocating existing resources, from lower to higher priorities

- There is no more acceptable alternative
2. Eleven Reasons Why Institutions Undertake Prioritization

- 1. To balance the budget (yield ranges from 2 to 10%)
- 2. To inform future budget decisions
- 3. To improve overall efficiency and effectiveness
- 4. To respond to accreditation demands
- 5. To dovetail with strategic planning efforts
- 6. To respond to demands from boards/public entities
- 7. To achieve strategic initiatives
- 8. To tackle specific shortfalls (unfunded liabilities, e.g.)
- 9. To reinvest in new programs to strengthen the institution for the future
- 10. To create a contingency and reserve fund
- 11. To create a database that can be used as a management tool for the future
3. There are Seven Phases of Prioritization

- 1. Preparation and Readiness
- 2. Organizational Structures and Processes
- 3. Data Collection
- 4. Analysis and Assessment
- 5. Decision Making
- 6. Implementation
- 7. Evaluation
4. Checking for Readiness (Not All Institutions Should Undertake Prioritization)

- 1. Why is the project being initiated? Impetus?
- 2. What is the overall goal of the project?
- 3. Is there a dollar target or percent of budget target?
- 4. What are anticipated positives to come out?
- 5. What are potential pitfalls?
- 6. Is mission statement too vague to be helpful?
- 7. Can institution provide sufficient data for the project?
- 8. What is status of RIF policies, if needed?
- 9. How will this process dovetail with governance?
Checking for Readiness (Continued)

10. What are the likely campus dynamics/forces?
   Board, Leadership Team, Faculty, Other

11. What has been done to date with respect to:
    Strategic planning, Agendas, Criteria, Legal

12. Who are the key players/groups responsible for:
    Budgeting, Fiscal Planning, Program Reviews

13. Have there been any efforts to integrate plans and planning?

14. What other concerns or issues about the process are there?
5. Selecting Criteria and Assigning Weights (500 Administrative Leaders)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Program Outcomes</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Demand for the Program</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs &amp; Other Expenses of the Program</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenues &amp; Other Resources Generated</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size, Scope &amp; Productivity of the Program</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Demand for the Program</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Program Inputs and Processes</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity Analysis of the Program</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact, Justification and Overall Essentiality</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History, Development and Expectations</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Alternative Criteria for Administrative Programs

- 1. **Purpose and Performance** — What is the purpose of the program? Key objectives/mission? How is performance measured? What is the current performance to objectives?

- 2. **Internal Demand** — What are the services provided to internal customers? Who are the internal customers? How many customers are served by this program? Is there any unmet demand?

- 3. **External Demand** — What are the services provided to external customers? Who are the external customers? How many customers are served by this program? Is there any unmet demand? What external requirements does this program meet?

- 4. **Quality of Inputs/Processes** — What is the quality of the resources that provide the services of this program? People, processes, technology, facilities? Are special credentials present or required to mount this program? How do the quality of inputs metrics for this program compare to other programs at comparable institutions?

- 5. **Quality of Outputs** — How is program quality measured? How does program perform to those measures? What are the valuable contributions of this program to the Institution? How do the quality of outputs metrics for this program compare to other programs at comparable institutions?

- 6. **Size, scope and productivity** — How is productivity measured? How does program perform to those measures? How large is the program? How has the program expanded or contracted over the last 5 years? How integrated is it into other programs at the Institution? Are there duplications with other programs? How well do the available resources service customers and the Institution? How do the productivity metrics for this program compare to other programs at comparable institutions?

- 7. **Cost/Revenue or Net Investment** — What is the ratio of cost to revenue? How does the program effectively manage costs? Do program outcomes match or outweigh investment in the program? How do the cost metrics for this program compare to other programs at comparable institutions?

- 8. **Impact, Justification and Essentiality** — What is the impact of this program on the Institution? In what ways is the program essential to the mission of the Institution?

- 9. **Process Improvement** — Has the program gone through any process improvements? Have streamlining, outsourcing, or new technology been considered or implemented? Have any improvements been completed with measureable improvements?

- 10. **Opportunity Analysis and Exploration** — Are there opportunities for collaboration and/or restructuring? Are there opportunities for cross-training or to share skill sets or resources with other units or to break down Institutional silos? Given additional resources from reallocation, what possibilities exist for improving service or better fulfilling mission?
7. Three Key Pitfalls

- Lack of Alignment: Board, President, Chief Academic Officer, Chief Financial Officer

- Lack of Adequate Data or Databases to Sustain This Data-Driven Process

- Lack of Courage or Will to Act Once the Data and Recommendations Are In
8. Recent Developments That Improve the Process and Its Effectiveness

- Individual Program Plans
- General Education Reform
- Intercollegiate Athletics Analysis
- Scoring Rubrics
- Prioritization Plus™ Software
What’s Next for Academic Sustainability?

• ANSWER: Significant Changes in Metrics

• Sources of this Shift:

  • Public Policymakers
  • Accreditation Agencies
  • Governing Boards
  • Donors
  • Higher Education Managers
Eight Key Changes We Need to Anticipate:

1. From Budgeting as Objects of Expenditures TO... Budgeting as Programs

2. From Seat Time TO... Competencies Acquired

3. From Quality as Inputs TO... Quality as Outcomes
Eight Key Changes (Continued):

- **4.** From Internal Validation (Grades) TO... **External Validation** (National Norms)

- **5.** From Curriculum as Closely-held TO... **Curriculum as Open and Shared**

- **6.** From Enrollment Success TO... **Student Success**
Eight Key Changes (Continued)

- **7. From Management Around Administrative Structure TO...**
  **Management Around Program Effectiveness**

- **8. From Funding Needs TO...**
  **Funding Opportunities**
Implications for the Future

1. Building and Maintaining New Databases
2. Shifting Accountability Through Cost Accounting, by Program
3. Focusing on IT and IR
4. Strengthening the Nexus: CAO and CFO
5. Anticipating, Not Reacting, to New Demands
Conclusion

• Program Prioritization is Fully Engaged in Higher Education in Several Countries

• The Process is Customized to the Unique Mission, Aspirations and Culture of Any Institution

• Reallocation of Resources is the “New Normal” in Higher Education
Resources


Lehman College’s Prioritization Voyage
(http://lehman.edu/program-prioritization)

Lehman – Public Masters Comprehensive, Bronx, NY
CUNY – 11 Colleges + 7 CC + 5 Grad/Prof Schools

Anticipated Changes, Coming Events (June 2013)
• Budget Agreement (COMPACT) for new $’s expires FY16
• New System Chancellor (transitioning Summer 2013)
• Mayoral (NYC) Election (November 2013)
• Decreasing state support, tuition-driven, ↑ transfers, ↓ FTS, new and ↑ competition for students
• PSC-CUNY contract (expired 2010, under discussion?)
• MSCHE (PRR 2014, Self-Study 2018-2019)
• 50th in 2018

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Process
(influenced by institutional culture)

- Preparation & Readiness Assessment (Sept ➔ Dec 2013)
- Organizational Assessment (Jan ➔ Jun 2014)
- Data Collection & Verification (Jun ➔ Oct 2014)
- Assessment & Reporting (Nov 2014 ➔ Jan 2015)
- UPDATE
  - Rating Analysis (Jan ➔ Apr 2015)
  - Decision-Making (May 2015)
  - Action Plan Development (June ➔ Sept 2015)
  - Final Report (October 2015)
  - Process Evaluation (Oct ➔ Dec 2015)
  - Implementation (2016 ➔ 2018 ?)

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The University of Hartford’s “Foundation of the Future”

Adapting the Dickeson Model:

- Phase I. Prepare, review/rank programs, share report

- Phase II. Comment period, Officers and Deans analyze new information, Officer Implementation Plan, program meetings, staff and program actions

- Phase III. Faculty retirement incentive, teach out plans, progress reports, more progress reports, reallocation dollars built into five-year budget
The University of Hartford

Lessons Learned and Advice from the Trenches:

- Adapt the planning model to reflect your campus culture and your resources (time, people, data)
- Define the President’s and Board’s role
- Assess the political dynamics of shared governance
- Clarify and constantly reinforce the importance of leadership and effective project management
- Good data is essential
- Continually close the loop and consider midcourse corrections
- Assess results and create a repeatable process
- Communicate, communicate, communicate
The University of Hartford: Overall Successes

- Acted proactively prior to a crisis
- Identified areas for integrated institutional planning
- Advanced a culture of program responsibility, and evidence-based decision making
- Identified redundancies and enhanced cross divisional cooperation
- Created a framework for periodic program review
- Reallocated first year savings into priority areas: faculty salaries and a branding campaign
- Prepared for Strategic Planning (SWOT analysis, themes identified, resources secured)

Questions?? provost@Hartford.edu
Program Improvement Plan Highlights

- By September 2012, increase enrollments in general education courses

- Increase the number of majors by 10 per cent over the next five years.

- By September 2013, increase scholarship and professional growth of program faculty.

- By September 2014, at least 50% of part-time and full time faculty members teaching in the program will have terminal degrees.