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WP4-WS 1 Implementing internationalisation strategies

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Strategic Planning – the principles



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Why do strategic planning

“Strategic planning in higher education in the current era takes on even greater importance today than it did even a decade ago. The changing needs of higher education and society, the growth of information technology, the communications revolution, the fluctuations in access to financial and human resources, and the rapid pace of change in other aspects of the environment in which higher education operates, give strategic planning an added urgency.

*More than this, however, in the prevailing environment of fierce competition for outstanding staff, students and resources, **strategic planning is about positioning, defining, or discovering the institution’s niche, and seeking to be the best in what it can do.**”*

(Hayward and Ncayiyana 2003)



Strategic planning

- is about positioning (regional, national, international)
- is designed to strengthen and enhance the performance and quality of an institution
- is participative, dynamic and future focused
- results in decisions and actions
- is fundamentally a change process



Benefits of strategic planning

Strategic planning becomes a means to face current challenges, offering the opportunity to:

- Align the university with its environment
- Establish vision
- Create a framework for future direction
- Set clear priorities
- Create a process for implementation and review
- Develop criteria for resource acquisition and distribution
- Benchmark with international good practice
- Build credibility in a competitive environment
- Take greater control of events
- Build a stronger institutional culture

Conscious choices for action

- Strategic planning is about providing a clear basis for consideration, decision and action
- Provides a clear and explicit place for day to day activities in line with academic culture
- Should be as comprehensive and pervasive as possible
- Requires senior leaders to confront issues they might otherwise prefer to avoid
- Compromise may be the appropriate way forward in a particular circumstance
- But it should be a conscious one, made within the wider context of the strategic plan



Leaders must lead

- **Single most important factor is extent to which process is visibly driven and supported by senior leaders**
- A holistic approach to strategic planning
- History, size and operational practices often leads to fragmentation
- Affects every aspect of operations – some will expand, others diminish or stay the same
- For this to happen, senior leaders must be prepared to agree and implement the objectives

Active engagement

- An approach that seeks to ensure that all views are considered in the development, drafting and implementation
- **Critically dependent on active engagement** of staff and students
- Plans developed in isolation, even by most powerful institutional heads, often undermined by those responsible for delivery
- Lack of ownership among responsible leaders, unlikely to commit wholeheartedly to delivery of actions with which they disagree, especially if not consulted in their creation
- Plans developed in isolation often pass unnoticed by those at the coalface of delivery

Nature of strategic plans

- Holistic
- Clear
- Consistent
- Accessible
- A basis for decisions and action

What are the major elements of a strategic plan?

1. Context, vision and mission
2. Academic activities
3. Support activities
4. Resource management
 - Expressed as objectives and actions to realise the vision and mission
 - Within a defined timescale



What that means

- Institutional **mission** and **vision** are derived from an assessment of **context** in which institution operates – its history, location, ethos, and an evaluation of the factors, both internal and external that currently affect it
- The principal **activities** through which it seeks to deliver mission and vision are **academic**
- The primary purpose of **support activities** is to support academic activities
- **Resources** are managed and developed to enable the academic and support activities to operate effectively



Timing

- Cover a period in which longer term objectives can be identified, pursued and delivered
- But not so far reaching as to lose sight of the current position and issues currently faced
- On average a 5 year period with continuous monitoring
- Objectives subject to review, ongoing refinement and redefinition (some less relevant, others unanticipated)



Content

- Content will vary considerably based on particular circumstances
- Clear, simple and concise content
- Chapters/sections comprising
 - Introduction, objectives, actions
 - Clear and positive language: “We will....”
 - Dependent on extent of agreement on detail: able to commit or acknowledge that there is work to be done

Checklist for strategic plan

- Strategy has direct articulation with mission and vision
- Clear objectives to deliver strategy
- Agreed actions designed to articulate objectives
- Infrastructures in place or planned to deliver actions
- Resources provided to enable infrastructure to deliver actions
- Clear monitoring procedures

Strategic Planning – the practicals



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Strategic Planning – the practicals



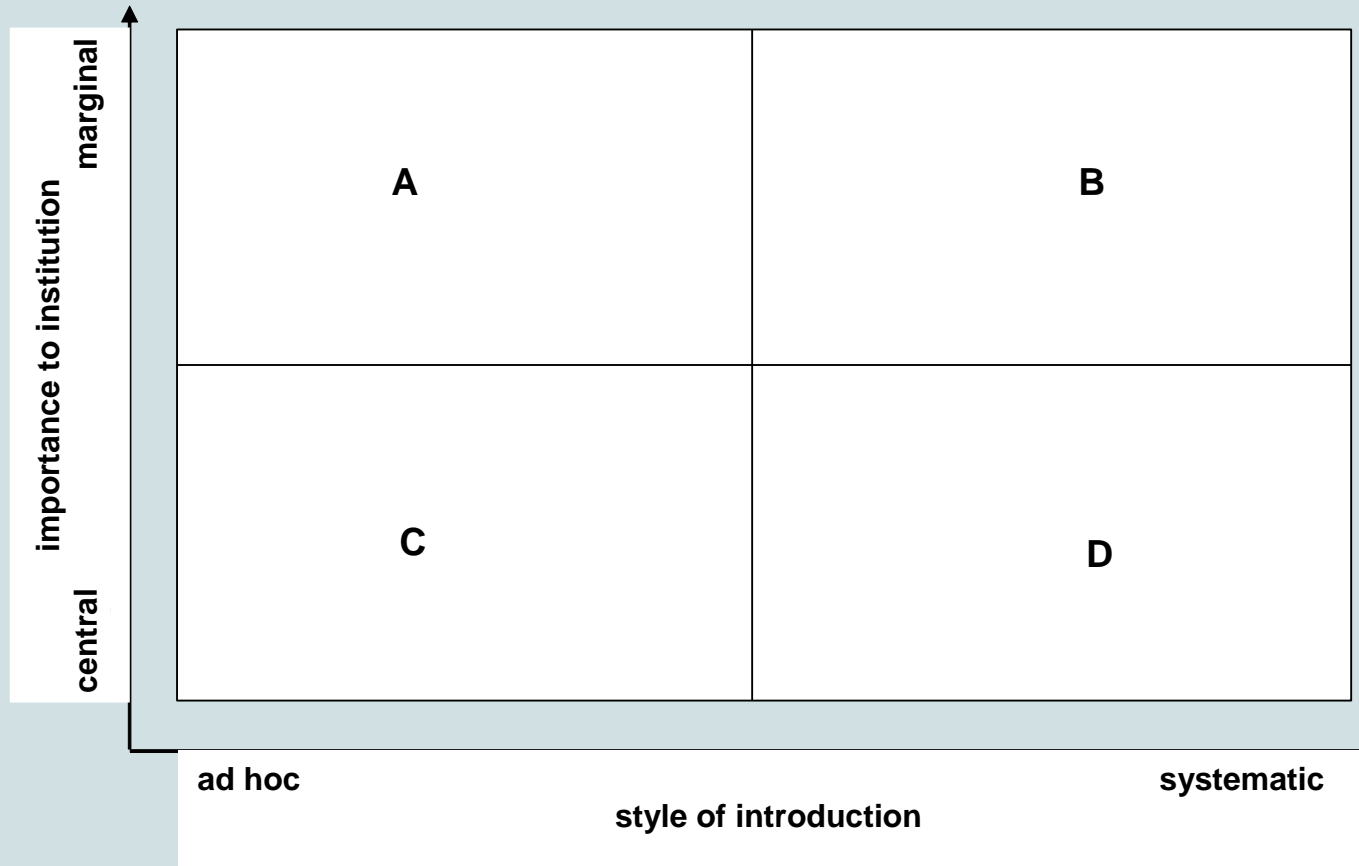
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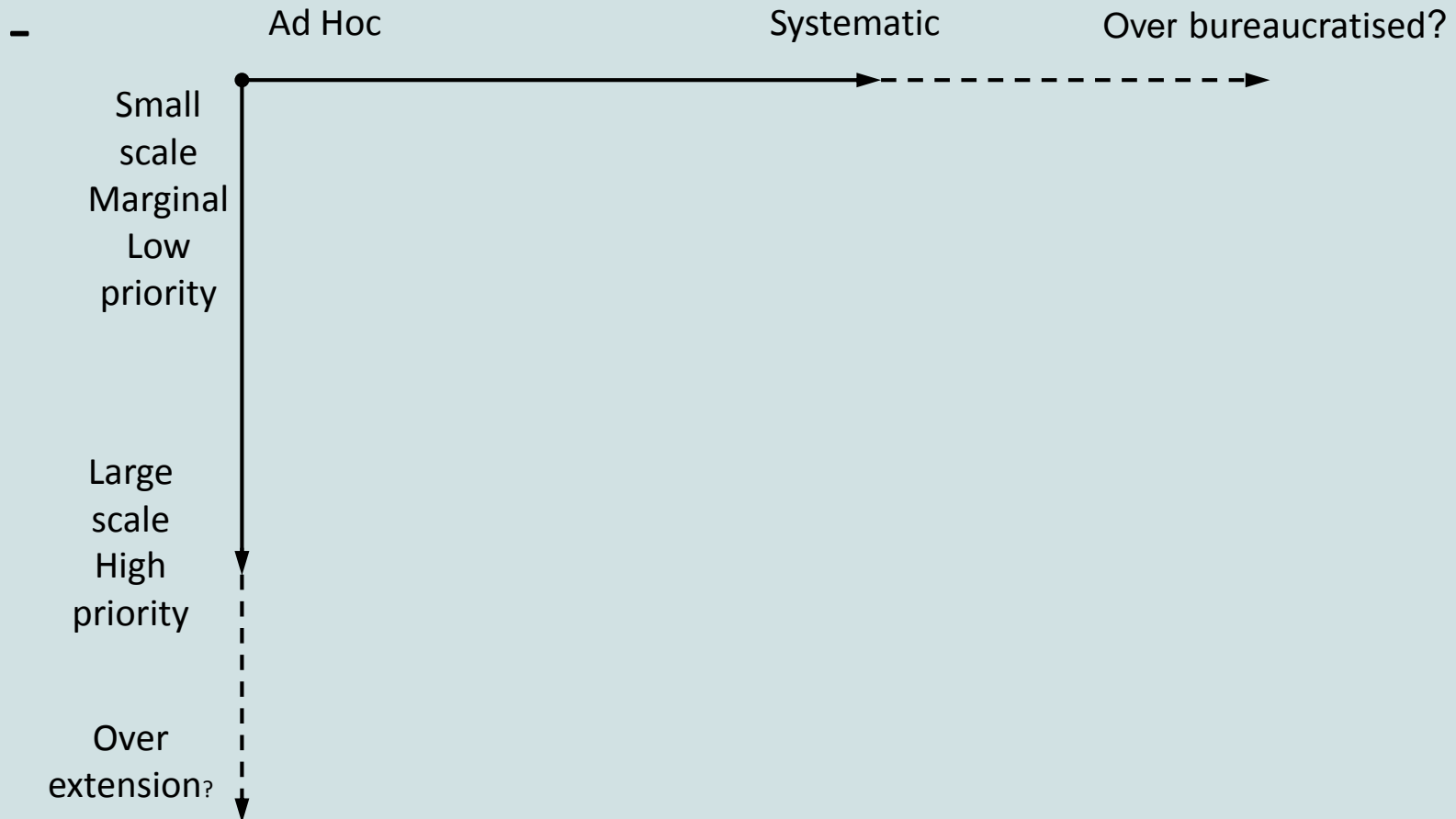
A collection of international activities is not a strategy

- Ad hoc approaches
- Multiple goals
- Myriad of activities and initiatives across faculties and departments
- Lack of vertical and horizontal connections between the parts
- Frustration, failure, chaos ...
- Need for a more systematic framework

Institutionalisation of approaches to internationalisation in universities (Davies 1999)



Institutionalisation and sustainability in the development of international activities (Davies 1999)



Implementation means

- Turning the strategic plan into concrete, strategy-led actions by HEI members
- Initiating and supporting a targeted organisational transformation process

BUT

- Change can only be steered and shaped so far
– leave space for unexpected developments and time for reflection

(Behm and Berthold 2011)



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Implementation planning

(Behm and Berthold 2011)

1. Project planning (transforming the strategy into detailed action programmes)
2. Process planning (coordinating the projects in terms of content and time)
3. Communication planning
4. And possibly bringing organisation in line with strategy requirements
 - structure and responsibilities
 - necessary bureaucracy



Implementing the plan

- Once ratified by governing bodies, comes the vital task of implementation
- Dissemination in advance of operationalisation
- Contents broken down by the appropriate parts for consumption
- Fed into management structures through briefings with those responsible
 - Clear, visible and legitimate manager/facilitator of process
- Consideration at various committees
 - Well prepared, collaborative, high quality dialogue,



Strategic Planning: Action Matrix

Section	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
1. Action 1	x			
Action 2	x			
Action 3		x	x	
2. Action 1	x			
Action 2	x			
Action 3	x	x	x	
3. Action 1	x			
Action 2	x	x	x	x
Action 3		x		
4. Action 1	x	x	x	x
Action 2			x	x
Action 3				x



Annual action plan

- Once the various tasks have been scheduled for delivery, an annual action plan can be developed
- Once completed, the Action Plan forms the basis of institutional action for the first year and should be embedded in management structures and meeting calendars
- First 2 years are heavily populated so some rescheduling might be necessary to ensure these years focus on the building blocks for future actions



Establishing building blocks

- Making diagnostic evaluations
- Setting up infrastructures, processes, professional administration
- Creating objective measures
- Complying with political imperatives
- Obtaining ministerial approvals
- Meeting other preconditions



Annual action plan

- **Key factor of success is extent to which staff accept responsibility for actions and are actively resourced, monitored and held accountable**
- Specific actions identified for each year
- Realistic goals especially for first and second years – building blocks
- Persons responsible, competences
- Embedded as a permanent task in management structures, superseding existing agenda



Annual action plan

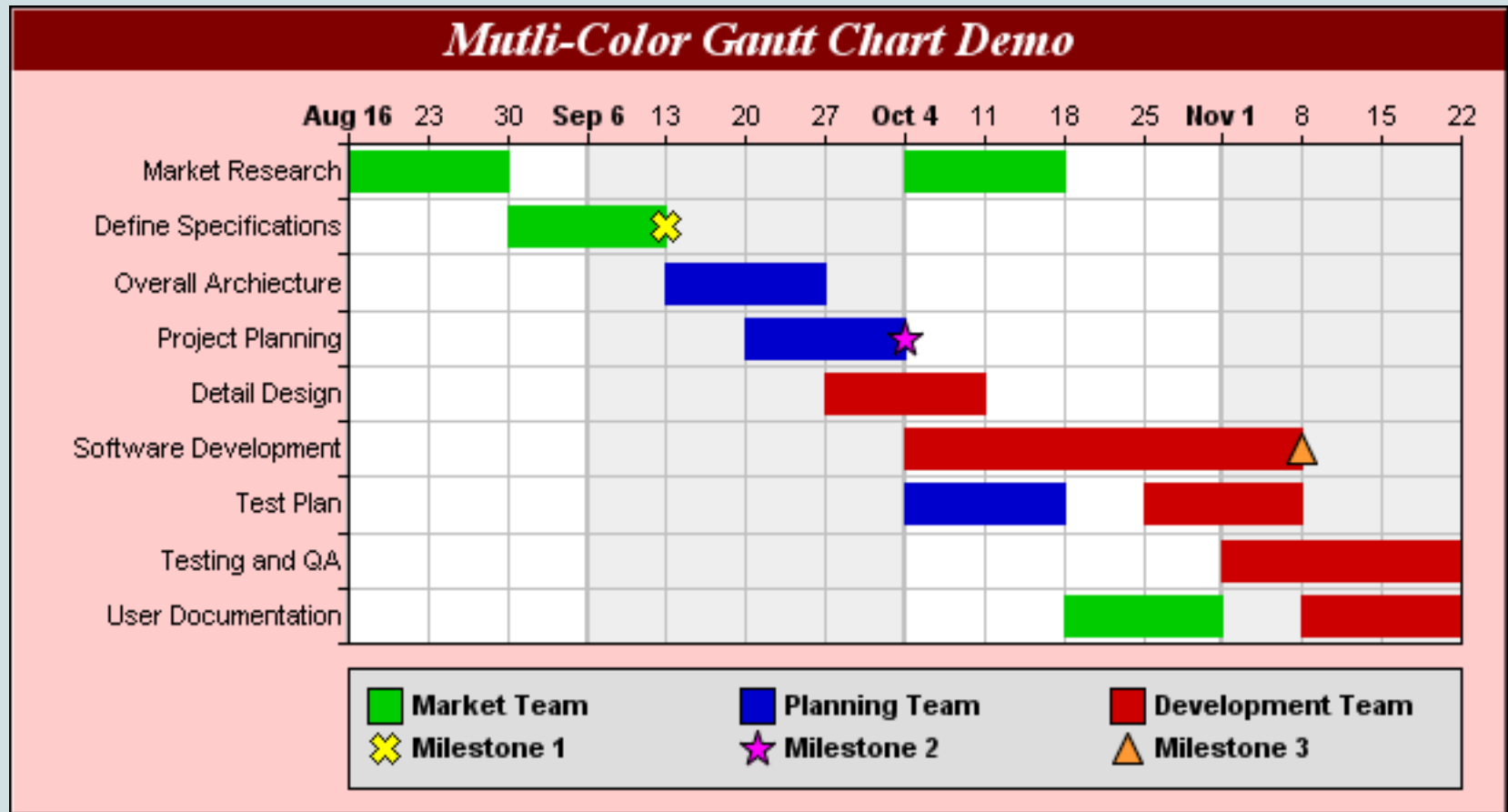
- Realistic priority actions at various levels to prevent personal and system overload
 - Sequencing
 - Project evolution
 - Personal commitments and scheduling
 - Precision of actions (some reformulation of strategic plan actions needed)
 - Cost ramifications



Annual action plan

Section	Objectives	Action	Person Responsible	Evaluated by

Gantt Chart



Monitoring and evaluating the plan

- Built in monitoring dates for university wide priorities
- Accurate monitoring information on action progress and finance
- Periodic review of goals, timetables, benchmarks, performance indicators (progress made vs progress expected)
- Periodic reassessment of the institutional environment
- Regular consultations with the campus community on progress, concerns to resolve issues

Meetings Calendar

Month	SP Committee	Senate	Council	Faculty
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				



Understanding the state of play

- Monitoring, evaluating and adapting throughout the process
- Are we moving in the right direction? Any unintentional side-effects, countermeasures needed?
- Scorecard approaches as controlling methods
- Modified version for HE for implementation and control
- Transposes strategic goals into subunits and determines what is needed
- Agreed by management and sub-unit

Goal and performance card (Zechlin 2010)

Institutional Goal	Services by subunit/department	Success criteria	Service needs	Budgetary need



Dealing with change

- Provides occasion for scheduled talks to evaluate progress and determine modifications
- Not about control but adaptation and responsiveness
- Not about completing a task but an ongoing process of organisational self-formation and renewal
- “frequent and repeated loops of reflection” (Zechlin 2010)
- To develop a “culture of change” whereby HEI members can learn to cope with and shape change

(Behm and Berthold 2011)

Causes of implementation gap

(McNay 2012)

- Product
 - Plan fails to command support
 - Inappropriate model (values, culture)
 - Objectives, too many, too fuzzy
- Process
 - Leaders disengage, no champions
 - Lack of monitoring
 - Poor communication, unclear roles
 - Unrealistic expectations
 - No motivation, poor incentives
 - Lack of openness

Causes of implementation gap

(McNay 2012)

- Context
 - Organisational complexity, commonalities?
 - Resistance and reversion
 - Short term imperatives dominate
 - Lack of involvement
 - Under resourcing
 - Overload and fatigue
- ...and self delusion



Ongoing implementation and monitoring process

- Not a one-off exercise
- Establish a strategic planning cycle
- Review relevance of objectives and actions, new issues
- Also at faculty/unit level for drafting of plans
- All plans considered by senior management team and objectives and actions agreed
- Leads to construction of annual budget, delegated to faculties/units for implementation

Monitoring and evaluating the plan

- Progress monitored by management team
- Outcomes fed into consideration of priorities for following year
- Maintenance of open review process including regular progress reports to community
- Maintaining flexibility, making changes where necessary
- Establishing good management information systems to support reviews and monitoring
- Institutionalising and integrating into the culture

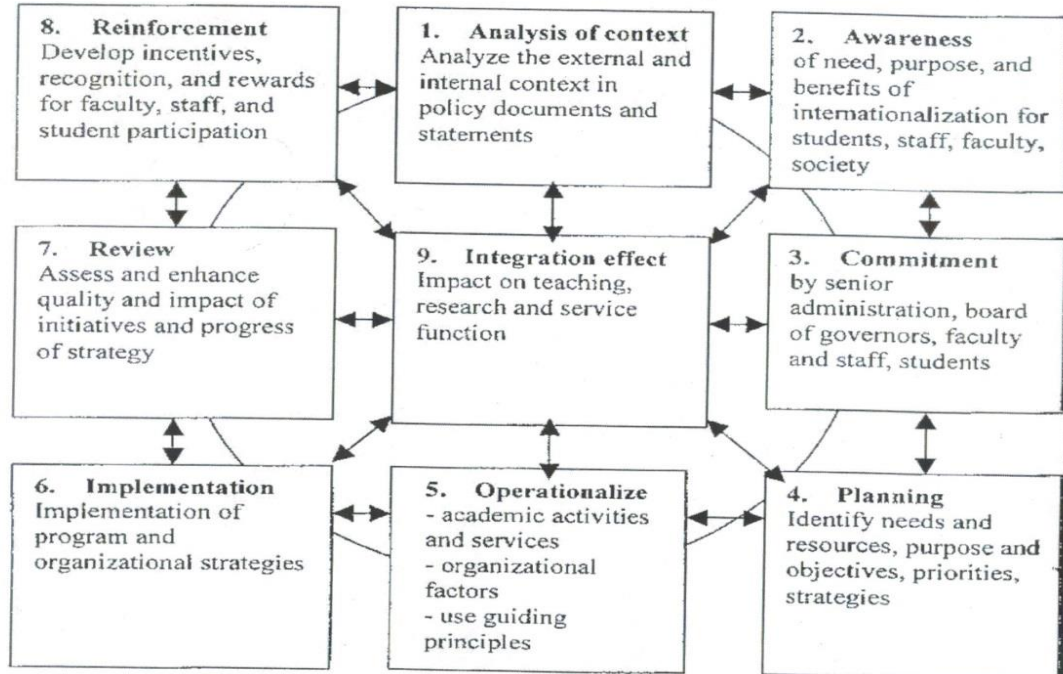
Strategic Planning Steady State

- Strategic Plan in Steady State
 - Multi year rolling plan
 - Stable Planning Cycle
 - Annual Operating Plans
 - Personal Commitment Map
 - Budgetary Interface
 - Monitoring and Performance Data



Internationalisation Circle (Knight 1994)

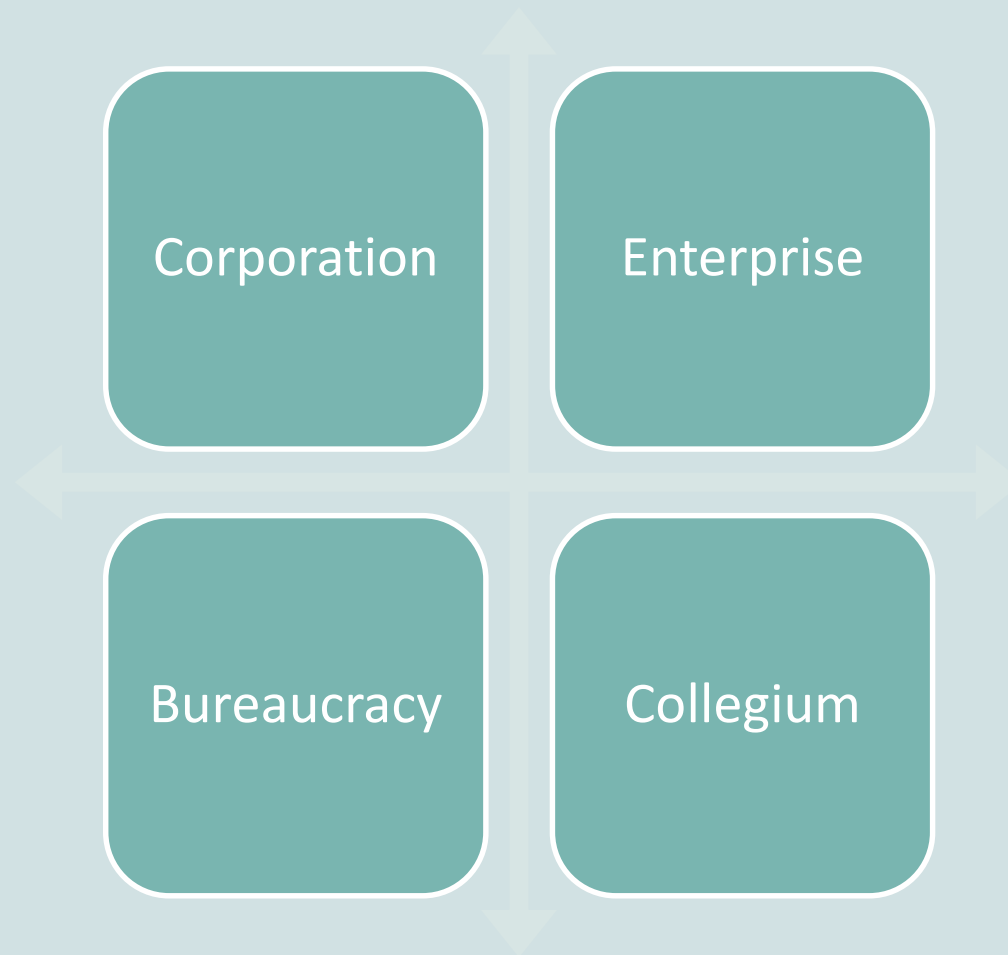
Internationalization Circle, Modified Version



Internationalization Circle



University cultures



Analysing the plans and identifying the objectives arising



Shaped around your needs

- What challenges are inherent in:
 - your international aspirations?
 - the main objectives of your plan?
 - the new activities that will be started?
- What capabilities need to be in place?
- What systems and processes need to be implemented?
- What degree of change is required?



Peer learning

Peer learners:

- Bring own experience and knowledge to the table
- Understand the issues
- Speak the same “language”
- Are interested and motivated
- Perceived as credible, unbiased, trusted
- Learn with and from one another through action and participation



Learning around peer learning

- Thinking differently about familiar questions
- Becoming more inspired, creative, (re)motivated
- Giving concrete meaning to abstract terms
- Moving from ad-hoc, incremental approaches to more strategic thinking
- Creating a group of critical friends who can provide constructive suggestions and “moral support”



Chatham House rule

"When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed."



Concluding thoughts



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Keys to strategic planning success

- Creativity and viability of the vision, mission and goals developed for the future
- Commitment of the institution's leadership to the plan
- Extent to which the vision is communicated, understood and shared by leadership and members
- Care with which plan is developed and implemented
- Relationship of the plan to budget, human capacity and environmental realities
- Commitment to ongoing review, evaluation and adjustment of plan on a regular basis
- Ability to be flexible in the course of implementation
- Early achievement of smaller goals that are noted publicly and celebrated

(Adapted from Hayward and Ncayiyana 2003)

Strategies to maximise chances for successful implementation of plan

- Set up a clear implementation policy
- Set up a realistic timetable with short term and long term goals
- Designate lines of responsibility and accountability for each of the goals
- Outline each of the tasks required of each major goal and create timelines and expectations of performance

(Adapted from Hayward and Ncayiyana 2003)

Strategies to maximise chances for successful implementation of plan

- Work closely with the individuals and units involved to minimise problems and maximise successes
- Listen carefully to individuals who see potential flaws
- Think through potential problem areas and develop contingency plans
- Be prepared to rethink plan if necessary
- Create early successes that can be acknowledged and celebrated
- Continue to publicise and celebrate along the way

(Adapted from Hayward and Ncayiyana 2003)

Key messages

(McNay 2012)

- Do not create an implementation gap. Treat planning and implementation as an integrated process with each informing the other.
- Assess the capacity and commitment to deliver change to avoid developing proposals that cannot be implemented
- Develop strategy through an authentic process of participative decision making, well-informed, flexible in recognising diversity of delivery, championed by change agents with local credibility and allowing evolution of proposals through various stages and continuing dialogue.



In conclusion

- Concept and process of strategic planning relatively straightforward
- Successful development and delivery requires considerable, time, commitment, sustained energy and significant resources from a significant number of people, in particular at senior level
- Embarking on a process that has no natural end
- Affects every aspect of operations
- Potential to unlock latent energy
- Empowers to take control of institution and own destinies
- Makes the effort worthwhile!

Strategic thinking

- University must be able to rethink strategy in response, to transform continuously
 - Unpredicted and unintended events will happen
- Ability to combine formal and opportunistic planning
 - Strict adherence to plan leads to rigidity
 - Purely opportunistic response does not provide sense of direction
- Strategic planning is not an instrument of control but of facilitation
- Strategic thinkers are agile, flexible, creative
- **Engaging in strategic thinking is more important than the plan itself**

Last words

“Establishing and sustaining an outstanding institution of higher education, in whatever niche chosen, results from a combination of many factors, among which are the quality of teaching and research [and management] staff, institutional leadership, financial support, the quality and commitment of the students, and a supportive environment.*

*Yet in the long run, **little of this matters unless it is accompanied by careful, creative, realistic planning.** For most institutions, this will grow out of an **effective strategic planning process**, carried out in a thoughtful, open, participatory manner and resulting in a plan that has the support of the campus community and most, if not all, of the institution’s stakeholders.”*

(Hayward and Ncayiyana 2003)



See you in Milan!



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