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STRATEGIC
PLANNING IN HIGHER
EDUCATION

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Preface

This booklet is one of a series produced by the Education Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The series intends to provide an orientation to major issues in higher education and is written primarily for administrators working in the tertiary education sector.

One of the functions of the Education Department of the General Conference is to arrange for the accreditation of all education institutions operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (AAA) fulfills this responsibility and identifies in its handbook its expectations for institutional operation. The booklets in this series are designed to help administrators improve institutional quality in line with AAA expectations and international best practice.

Each booklet is written by one major author, with an international team of readers providing advice and feedback. Booklets are available only through the Department of Education, General Conference.

Garland Dulan, PhD

Director of Education

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

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Introduction

Texts on strategic planning are numerous, particularly in relation to the business sector, and higher education has often largely employed a business model in its own approaches to developing strategy. However, in more recent years writers have focused on the specific needs of the higher education environment in planning. This booklet seeks to capture the essence of the debates on strategy in planning, in order to provide a framework for higher education planning that will meet the best standards of practice internationally.

Strategic Planning in Higher Education will be in two parts, with a number of practical appendices.

Part I will provide a context for strategic planning by considering definitions, issues, the individuals and groups involved in planning, and the institutional structure and environment conducive to making the planning process effective.

Part II will provide a guide to a traditional planning process, discussing each element and process an institution will face in developing and implementing a strategic plan. **For individuals inexperienced in planning, it would be helpful to read this section through first before returning to consider the concepts outlined in Part I.**

The **appendices** will include tables and outline reports that support the traditional planning approach outlined in Part II, an alternative planning procedure, and further references for readers who wish to explore the issue further.

It should be noted that there is no one correct format for a strategic plan, or one right process for developing and managing strategy. Decisions in both these areas will reflect the nature of the institution, its administrative structure and most likely the academic environment of the country. It is important that a local institution modifies any recommended plan to fit its particular situation. What follows provides general parameters of a traditional strategic planning process with some particular examples of application that may guide an institution in developing its own processes.

For those who want to explore less traditional alternatives, Appendix C and some of the texts in the Further References section of the booklet will provide some direction.

PART I STRATEGIC PLANNING: THE CONTEXTS

Definitions and Limitations

Strategic planning usually refers to the process which results in the development of a strategic plan. This plan identifies the future direction of an institution and maps the way the direction will be reached.¹ Strategic planning is this, but it is also much more.

If an effective strategic planning process is in place in an institution, the following should be evidenced:

- A clearly defined and articulated institutional direction.
- Institutional ability to choose priorities based on self-evaluation and understanding.
- Knowledge and ownership of the institutional direction by all major institutional constituencies.
- Clearly identified placement of the institution within the local and church environments (including the educational environment).
- Institutional openness to growth and change.
- Institutional ability to respond thoughtfully, but quickly, to new challenges.
- Unified plans and actions, with clear lines of accountability.
- Strong financial and resourcing plans to back identified strategic directions.
- Institutional leader's constant focus on the plan with all constituent groups.
- An efficient but effective assessment and reporting strategy.

If this is the profile of an institution, the benefits of strategic planning will be immense. The process will not only provide focus to the institution, but will be an excellent public relations tool for external constituencies. It can assist in the effective management and prioritization of limited resources, encourage institutional unity around agreed strategies and give a clearly defined path of action.

Three main tasks direct an effective strategic planning process.

Strategic thinking best describes the part of the process that considers the broad picture of an institution and identifies main strategies that will pro-

¹ The difference between strategic planning and long-term planning is important to note. Long-term planning tends toward making future plans and projections, based on history. Strategic planning is more concerned with analysis of the environment in order to make choices for planning.

vide institutional strength and focus. This will include consideration of the internal and external factors inhibiting and encouraging success, change and growth. It will take into account institutional mission, the communication needs of various constituents and map a pathway to enable planning to take place effectively. It may include identification of desired institutional outcomes, such as key performance indicators. Overall it is concerned with the “best fit between the institution, its resources, and the environment.”²

Master planning is the part of the process that moves broad strategies into detailed objectives and action plans. It identifies what has to happen when and by whom. It considers options to realize identified goals and selects those most appropriate. Planning is also concerned with refining outcomes, so accountability and evaluation of the plan are possible. The details of planning may lead to a rethinking of strategies, but generally the planning process supports the strategic thinking process.

Strategic management ensures that the thinking and planning processes impact on institutional actions. It ensures that plans move forward, that both external and internal constituencies remain aware of institutional direction and are updated on progress, and that if change needs to be managed, it is done sensitively and effectively. Strategic management also involves evaluation of the plan’s effectiveness and ensuring needed re-evaluations of strategies occur. Basically, strategic management ensures the strategic plan first happens and then remains a “live” flexible process (not a fixed unchanged document).

In practice, the strategic planning process does not separate out these three tasks. Often the same individuals are engaged in all three processes and sometimes at the same time. However, the total planning process will be weakened if any one of these three areas is not strong.

The Issues

As strategic planning has evolved, the reasons for its success in some places and failure in others has been well discussed and a few writers have considered this in particular relation to higher education. The further reading section of this document identifies some of these texts. However, in general terms, a successful strategic thinking, planning and management process will recognize at least the following.

² Daniel James Rowley, Herman Lujan and Michael Dolence, *Strategic Change in Colleges and Universities: Planning to Survive and Prosper* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1997), p. 15.

The process will recognize that strategy and planning in business and in higher education are different in several important ways.

In general, business strategy and planning take place in an environment that is more tightly coupled than in higher education. Also decision-making tends to be more top-down than in most higher education environments. These differences generally mean that in a business setting change can take place more quickly. For strategic planning to be effective in higher education a campus needs to know its dynamics, decision-making styles and barriers to change. A strategic planning process will not be effective unless it works within the normative operating style of the campus. This does not mean that a campus should accept its present decision-making process as correct—a priority strategy may be to reevaluate institutional processes. However, it is important that individuals implementing a strategic planning process recognize that if the plans involve asking individuals to think and operate in any unaccustomed way, careful management of change will be vital to avoid unnecessary obstacles.

Planning and strategic thinking are not the same; but both need to be present for a total process to be successful.

Planning demands preciseness and detail. An institution can have a plan which outlines the best organization of time and personnel to reach institutional objectives. This has value, but by itself does not necessarily include strategic thinking. As identified above, strategic thinking focuses on the larger picture, recognizes the external and internal factors that impact on a campus, and identifies shifts of direction that better place the institution within that larger picture. The best plans will have been developed only after considerable strategic thinking has identified potential future directions, and careful analysis has prioritized which of these should be the focal points for the next few years. Since both strategic thinking and detailed planning are important, a good strategic planning team (committee) will include individuals with complementary skills.

It is crucial to find the balance in the strategic planning process between inclusiveness and good management of time.

Most academic institutions are structured so that decision making, especially in the academic sector, is made by each department, school or academic committee. While it is important to ensure that any strategic planning process maintains the principle of academic autonomy, and while the greater level of inclusiveness in planning both on-campus and with external constituencies will mean more wide-ranging ownership, the agreed process does need to allow movement and ensure that decisions can be made. An institution must be able to change directions in response

to markets without being hampered by too complex a process. However, in institutions where faculty hold traditionally strong roles in decision-making, it is important to negotiate a good process with the campus community first.

The institution must develop a climate that is open to change and responsiveness to the external environment, while still maintaining a clear sense of mission.

Being responsive to the external environment does not mean that the external market should control an institution's strategic direction. It does mean that an institution that relies too heavily on its traditional forms and types of programs may discover it loses its ability to operate effectively in the market place of the church and society. This may occasionally result in a rethinking of mission; however, change should not be a reactive response to the environment. The agreed mission of the institution should always drive decisions.

Once a plan has been developed, it should be presented in a clear manner to all stakeholders in a comprehensible form.

Despite all the work that goes into developing a strategic plan, its effectiveness will remain limited unless it is communicated to all stakeholders in a simple, yet convincing manner. This will not mean just one presentation, but an initial presentation and then regular reports to identify progress. This helps provide confidence in the institution—that it knows where it is going and is actively moving towards its goals.

The institutional plan needs to synchronize with planning in the wider educational community of the country and the planning of the church.

No institution can plan in a vacuum. A careful analysis will assist an institution in identifying the expectations and opportunities of the local educational environment that could impact the success of its planned strategy. The church environment also provides an important context, particularly where the church has a strong planning process of its own. Ideally there will be an open flow of communication between the institution and the administering church organization, so that planning is coordinated, with the church recognizing and supporting institutional strategy, and the institution supporting the focus of the church in its plans. Even when the church does not have a clear focus in its planning, the institution remains vital to the mission of the church and the support of the church is needed for the institution to succeed in its strategies. So while institutional autonomy can be prized, the priorities of the church in the relevant area of the world should remain central to planning.

All planning processes need to be backed by financial plans, though not necessarily limited by the present financial situation.

No strategic plan is going to work unless it is grounded in financial reality and supported by a financial plan. However, plans can and often should look beyond the present financial situation of an institution. Income generation will in that case become an important part of the strategic thinking process and will inform decisions at all levels.

The overall institutional plan needs to guide and inform unit plans.

Since creative thinking and development of strategy should be happening at many levels in an institution, it is often advisable for individual units to have their own strategic or master plans in higher education institutions. However, unless unit plans are developed within some framework, the institution is likely to lose its central direction. Therefore, the central organizational strategy and plan (voted by the Board of Trustees) should be developed first and should provide the main impetus for institutional development, change and growth. This places the institutional plan at the center of strategic development and rightly confirms the role of the chief executive officer of the institution (president, principal, rector, vice-chancellor) as the key individual responsible for visioning and strategic thinking (even though he or she may not be the individual to develop the details of the plan). Units and departments should then be encouraged (or expected) to respond to the wider plan, by developing strategies and plans focused on their areas, but in line with the central thrusts of the total institution.

The strategic plan and planning process must be flexible and allow for changes and quick responses to external and internal opportunities and challenges.

The traditional collegial approach to decision-making in higher education has definite advantages in encouraging inclusiveness and providing stability to the academic program of institutions. However, there are times when an institution will need to respond to challenges or capitalize on opportunities quickly. The form of any strategic plan and the process of developing strategy should allow for these eventualities. This means a flexible plan and some openness to a variety of approaches in developing strategy.

The Personnel

Before the process of strategic planning begins, it is important to identify who will be involved and how. The three principles to keep in mind are (a) that leadership of strategic planning needs to come from the top admin-

istration and be supported fully by the Board of Trustees, (b) that inclusiveness is important, but not to the exclusion of moving the plan and process forward, and (c) that the overall institutional plan should take precedence and give guidance to any unit plans.

In brief, the institutional head (chief executive officer) should be the individual seen to lead out, communicate and facilitate the development and implementation of institutional strategy. The Board of Trustees should be actively involved at key points in development of strategy and in asking for accountability. Overall, involvement in planning should be wide-spread, but the processes streamlined and efficient.

The Role of the Institutional Head

By being the chief spokesperson for institutional strategy, the chief executive officer gives credibility to agreed plans. Although other individuals may lead out at key points in development and implementation of the process, the chief executive officer is understood to speak for the whole institution. He or she should instill confidence in all constituent groups that there is a clear direction for the institution and that there will be follow through to ensure the agreed objectives to meet strategic goals will be met. As the individual who speaks on behalf of the institution to the Board of Trustees, the institutional head is also responsible for involving them in the planning processes, ensuring their ownership of the plan, and providing them with regular feedback on progress.

The Main Players

Beyond the institutional head and the Board of Trustees, all major constituencies of an institution need to be involved in some way in the strategic planning process. This does not mean all groups should sit on a planning committee. It does mean that in some identifiable manner information and ideas will be regularly collected from important groups and that these will feed into the planning process. The key groups other than the Board of Trustees are the alumni, the local geographical community, the church constituency for the individual campus, the faculty, staff and students. Government agencies that make specific demands on an institution will not directly be involved in the process; however, their policies and expectations may also impact on decisions regarding the strategic process and the nature of the final document.

Of all of these groups, the ones most involved in the process will inevitably be those on the campus, and particularly administration, faculty and staff. Students also need to have an active role in the planning process. While there is often lack of continuity in student representation, their voice should find a relevant outlet.

Some institutions choose to invite an external consultant to help them with their planning process and/or to write the plan. Where the administration remains uncertain about their skills in developing strategy, or where the campus is facing particularly difficulties, external objective input may be of great assistance. However, it is important that the individual or individuals selected are thoroughly acquainted with the dynamics of higher education (not just strategy in business settings), are willing to facilitate a process that will truly reflect the thinking of the institution and its Board, and will develop a plan that the institutional leadership can monitor and manage themselves after the initial planning is over. The most helpful external input may be for particular areas of planning (such as capital development), rather than for the whole plan. However, another useful result of using external consultants is that they can help an institution think outside their usual parameters and routines.

The Central Planning Committee

Whatever the size of the institution and whoever the major players in the strategic process will be, a central planning committee is needed to drive and coordinate the planning.

Normally this will be chaired by the chief executive officer. However, the chief executive officer may choose to play to the strengths of other members of the administrative team and invite one of them to take responsibility for the committee process. If so, this process should be such that any communicated document should still reflect clearly the chief executive officer's vision for the institution, a vision that may have been moderated by the work of the committee, and as identified above, that institutional head should still be the main communicator of the plan.

The membership of the central strategic planning committee should seek to reflect the different units and constituencies of the campus. However, if the committee is going to be active and effective it will be even more important to select individuals who can provide the right skills to the committee, than choose members who are representative of different groups. This means the members should be a mixture of strategic thinkers and planners. They will also need to carry the confidence of their peer groups, and be good communicators, as one important role of each will be to listen to colleagues and provide good feedback. The central planning committee also needs to include individuals who can keep the group aware of the financial implications and limitations of their emerging plans.

The function of the central strategic planning committee will be to identify the main directions for institutional strategy, to ensure a financial plan is developed to support any recommended strategy, to facilitate the total

strategic planning process and to ensure good management processes are in place to keep plans updated and an active part of institutional life. In a small campus the central committee may be the only committee. In larger institutions it may ask sub-committees to work on various aspects of the plan and provide reports to the central group. It will also decide how the institutional plan will relate to unit plans and how all planning decisions will be communicated. The central committee will be an ongoing standing committee, receiving updated information from various constituencies and recommending shifts in the direction of the plan as this becomes necessary.

The following list identifies the possible role of the central committee in relation to the planning functions discussed in Part II of this booklet:

- Institution profile and the mission statement (central committee facilitate and recommend to administration and Board).
- Internal and external evaluation and scanning (central committee on total institutional issues, with possible advice from specialist sub-committees. Unit plans may do their own).]
- Key Performance Indicators (central committee, with possible advice from specialist sub-committees. Recommendation to administration and Board).
- Broad strategies (central committee recommend to administration and Board).
- Developing more detailed objectives, identifying actions and writing the plan (central committee or recommendation of sub-committees to central committee).
- Financial plan (central committee or specialist sub-committee; recommends to administration and Board).
- Unit plans (developed at unit level; reported to central committee).
- Communication of the plan (facilitated by central committee).
- Operation and management of the plan (facilitated by central committee).
- Changes to the plan (central committee, with possible advice from specialist sub-committees. Recommendations as appropriate to administration and Board).

Sub-committees of the Central Planning Committee

Where an institution asks sub-committees to advise on areas of strategic planning, these will normally be related to major areas of the plan. For example, the following sub-committees could operate:

- Academic sub-committee—advising on all academic and faculty issues.
- Student life sub-committee—reflecting particularly the focus that Seventh-day Adventist institutions place on the student experience.
- Spiritual life sub-committee—this group could develop the spiritual

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master-plan for the campus and ensure it is embedded into the total institutional plan.

- Enrollment management sub-committee—focusing on retention, recruitment and marketing.
- Resources sub-committee—responsible for finance and capital issues and ensuring that there is a financial plan to support the strategic directions voted for the institution.

Where such committees exist their responsibility would be to recommend refinements to the main institutional strategies and key performance indicators identified by the main committee, and develop the more detailed plans for putting the broad strategies into operation.

For example, the central committee may identify a strategy that expects a 50% increase of students over the next 5 years. It may set a performance indicator (see Part II) in addition that, in line with institutional mission focus, 80% of all students on campus should be Seventh-day Adventist. The enrollment management committee would then be responsible for identifying how those targets can be met, or if it feels the target is impossible, feeding that information back to the central committee with recommendations for change. Strategies may include raising scholarship funding for targeted groups, and refocusing marketing and recruitment strategies to look at newly identified markets. The group might discover that with the level of desired student increase, housing of younger single students will present a problem. Therefore, the committee may recommend a strategy to give particular focus to the mature student market.

The resource sub-committee could be given a completely different challenge. One of the strategic thrusts selected by the central committee might be to increase the use of technology on campus. This might be supported by a key performance indicator to raise the ratio of computers to students in student laboratories from 1:20 to 1:10 over a five year period. The resource committee will be responsible for identifying for the central committee the cost to the campus of voting such a strategy and recommend the actions needed to get the desired result. This could impact use of resources in other areas, may demand the development of one or more new computer centers and might impact on the projects chosen for fund-raising. All of these issues would fall under the responsibilities of the resources sub-committee.

If sub-committees are used and are to be helpful there will need to be good dialogue between the central committee and the sub-committees. The advantage of this process will be to avoid duplication of personnel on the central committee. The sub-committee can focus on its area of expertise, while the central committee can remain concerned with the big picture.

The central committee may also invite the sub-committees to be responsible for the primary management of certain sections of the plan once the total plan has been approved and for recommending updates and changes as appropriate.

Unit Strategic Planning

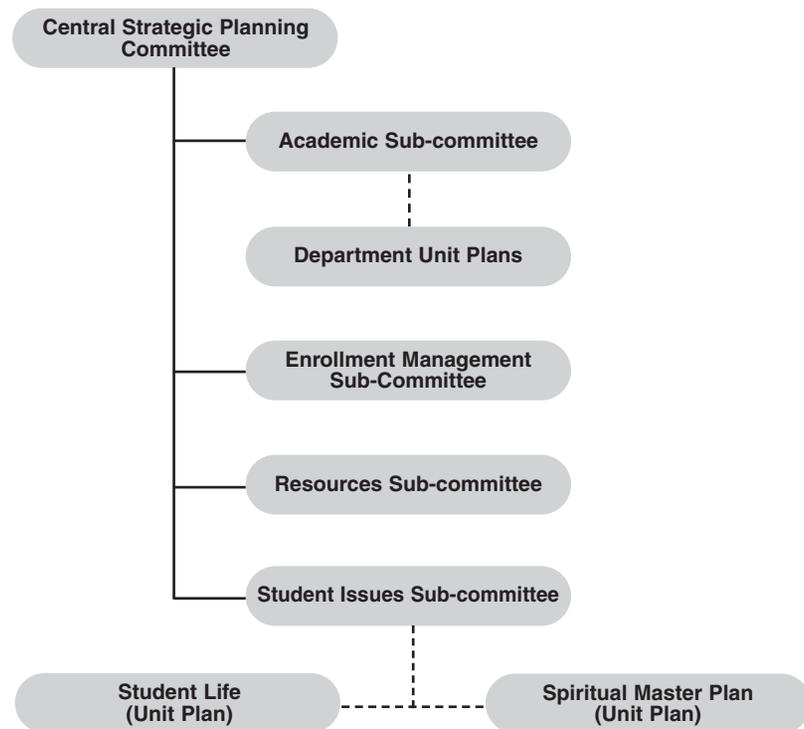
Another approach to delegating responsibility for planning is to involve units of the institution in more localized planning. While sub-committees are more tightly linked to the central committee, unit planning can have more direct ownership at unit levels.

The decision on what unit plans (if any) will be developed will to a large degree depend on the size of the institution and the organizational structure. The most obvious areas for unit planning will be academic divisions, schools or departments. This will allow the expected autonomy for faculty as they decide strategy for their areas and for the academic program more generally. The institution may want one academic master-plan, which is developed by the same academic sub-committee that relates to the central committee. In that case, departments and other academic units would still identify goals and means of achieving those goals. However, the total academic unit plan would aim to unite the major foci and ensure that the major strategic thrusts of the organization and the plans of the departments are headed in the same direction. This would provide a well focused and comparatively tightly coupled process, while giving room for initiative and creativity at all levels. Some institutions, however, may find such a process too controlling of departments, and would want to tie the planning processes more loosely. In small institutions also the process recommended here might be too complex. The planning in that case could be one academic committee, or where few programs are offered, at just the central planning level. Once again the process selected must work for the individual institution.

Other areas where unit plans might be very important are fund-raising and campus development, and where there is no sub-committee covering the areas, marketing and enrollment, and plant services and capital development.

Wherever unit planning takes place, however, one factor remains vital. While a unit plan will have a level of autonomy, it should always support, and certainly not act counter to, the central plan.

The following provides an example of how a structure might work:



In this plan the following would be the case:

- This institution is a large one that wants to use the skills of its faculty, staff and students by delegating responsibility for parts of the central plan to a number of sub-committees. However, all these still report directly (heavy line) to the Central Planning Committee and that committee has final right to act.
- A few unit plans are also envisaged. These will be developed by groups that have some individual autonomy, although the plans will still be linked loosely to the total plan (dotted lines). In this case the planning groups will develop unit plans for academic departments, student life, and spiritual life.

The planning outline will be different for every institution, but what will decide if the agreed structure will work?

Overall, if the use of personnel and committees in planning ensures a process that is strategic, inclusive, streamlined and detailed enough to allow healthy growth and change to take place, then the structure will work.

What environment then will ensure a strategic planning process is effective? Very simply what is needed is an environment characterized by inclusiveness, transparency, accountability, clear lines of communication, and decisiveness. Add to that the vision of top leadership and there is every chance that the strategic planning process will be successful.

In general terms, the process of strategic planning can be split into the areas of institutional profiling, environmental scanning, strategy development, and plan implementation. Together these fulfill the three areas of strategic planning identified in Part I: strategic thinking, master planning and strategic management. While the exact means of managing the process will vary from institution to institution, the following outlines a generic approach that can be adapted as necessary to specific situations.

Institutional Profiling

Three of the most important questions in any strategic planning process are: “Who are we?” “Who are our customers?” and “Who do we want to be?” The answers to these questions enable basic decisions to be made about an institutional profile. They also lead to the development of mission statements, vision statements, institutional objectives and statements of institutional values, all of which help define institutional profile.

All institutional profiling operates in the present and looks to the future. So an institution can say who it is now, and will normally have a mission statement and institutional objectives of some form to support that profile (vision statements and statements of institutional values are irregularly present). Together these should answer the questions, “Who are we?” and “Who are our customers *now*?” The first step in strategic planning then is to ask if the resulting profile and supporting statements are adequate. If the questions change to “Who do we want to be?” and “Who should our future customers be?” will the answers still be the same? If so, the planning process can move on to its next stage. If not, conscious decisions need to be made about how to express the desires of the future and then use those as the basis for setting institutional strategies. This is the process of institutional profiling.

Deciding on a Profile

An institutional profile is basically descriptive. Some elements of a profile are fixed—where an institution is situated, for example, or its affiliation to the Seventh-day Adventist church. Other characteristics are often fixed traditionally—such as the primary role of an institution for preparing students to serve within the Seventh-day Adventist church, or to prepare students for service in medicine, or business, or a wide range of professions. These characteristics are open to change, although only after considerable dialogue with different constituent groups.

There are other descriptions though that are also important in institutional profiling. Who does the institution see as its market? Who are its

students (cultural mix, age mix, gender ratio, denominational affiliation, marital status)? Who are its faculty (cultural mix, gender ratio, qualifications, age balance)? What size is the institution? Does it plan to keep the same profile of students and faculty? What is the optimum size for the institution? And what about the level at which the institution operates? Is it an undergraduate institution only? Is it graduate and undergraduate? Does it see itself as a liberal arts college? Is it concerned with professional qualifications? Does it want to change its level of operation? Is it solely a teaching institution, with a little research on the side? Does it see itself as a research institution? Is any change desired between the balance of teaching and research?

An institution can have then a present descriptive profile, but plan for a somewhat different (but also descriptive) future profile.

The conscious profiling of an institution should precede all other planning activities. Later strategic analysis may suggest a rethinking of the agreed profile is necessary. However, whatever the agreed profile is (both present and future), it should control the remainder of the planning process, and because of the central importance of profiling, the Board, and ideally the administering church organization, should be actively involved in this process

Why is profiling so important? To take one example: suppose institution A presently has 700 students. That is a very different type of campus to one that has 2000 students. If institution A decides that it thinks the market and environment is such that its campus could expand to 2000 students, while maintaining the other elements of its profile it considers important (e.g. the profiles of its students and faculty), then it can make a planned shift to the larger number. This will immediately impact on the institutional strategy in all areas, but if planned carefully the shift can be made successfully. However, if institution B desires to make the same shift but no conscious profiling has taken place, it may allow itself to grow without managing the change. Other important aspects of institutional profile may then be impacted by default and the mission of the campus seriously compromised.

Mission Statements

Mission statements deal with the present identity of an institution and are usually broad enough in their focus that planned changes in institutional profile may not mean a mission statement needs rewriting. Even if changes are significant but lie in the future, a mission statement will usually remain the same, while a vision statement (see below) can identify the future direction.

A mission statement does **not** have to be changed very often. However, it is good to review it regularly to ensure that it does accurately identify the heart and focus of an institution, and is memorable. Changes to mission

statements are often to make them sharper, rather than because the mission itself has changed.

What then makes a good mission statement?³

It will be succinct. An effective mission statement is easily remembered and repeatable. It does not have to say everything—institutional objectives will provide more detail. One or two sentences are all that is needed.

It focuses on *what* the institution is, *who* it serves and *how* the institution achieves its ends. In other words, a mission statement is concerned with *identity, context* and *process*.

It will be built on the present institutional profile.

For example, when reviewing or rewriting a mission statement based on the agreed institutional profile, the planning group may conclude that the following are the core elements that need to be included:

- The institution is Seventh-day Adventist, serving largely the church constituency.
- Its primary intention is to prepare ministers for church employment.
- The characteristics of its education process are quality, practical relevance and personal interaction.

Or in another situation, the group may decide the core elements are:

- It is a Seventh-day Adventist institution, serving all constituencies.
- Its primary intention is to provide an undergraduate education in the arts and sciences and encourage personal spiritual commitment.
- Its education focus is to prepare students for the workplace that are skilled and have a positive attitude to work and service to others.
- The education process focuses on quality, service and the development of spiritual maturity.

Once the core elements are decided, these need to be combined together and written in a coherent, simple manner. Students should be able to know it and repeat it. So should members of the Board of Trustees.⁴

All mission statements should be approved and voted by the Board of Trustees.

³ Institutions of higher education have been developing mission statements for a lot longer than they have been developing strategic plans. This means there are many good examples of mission statements around. These can most easily be accessed by looking at the web-sites of colleges and universities world wide. A discussion on some selected statements from other institutions can be a useful beginning to a discussion on developing or changing a mission statement.

⁴ In some settings, “branding” is now becoming common, and in the future such statements may be considered more important to an institution than having an effective mission statement. Branding encourages a very brief statement of identity, more of a slogan, and is easily memorable. For example Loma Linda University’s “mission statement” of “To Make Men Whole” is an effective branding statement.

Statement of Objectives

The institutional statement of objectives also responds to the present institutional profile and should provide more detail than can be given in the mission statement. Because the objectives do provide more detail, they will need reviewing and adjusting more regularly than the mission statement. Reviews should also consider whether the categorization and presentation of objectives is effective in both helping others understand the institution and providing a broad framework within which an institution can make decisions and evaluate itself.

For example, objectives can be stated in terms of desired outcomes for students, phrased under the usual headings of physical, mental, social and spiritual, but other categories can be developed, such as aesthetic. They can also be developed by looking at the institution's various constituencies. In this case, the headings may be the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the local community, the students, the faculty and staff, and the alumni.

Vision Statement

A vision statement differs from a mission statement in giving a brief encapsulation of what the institution *wishes* to be, who it *wishes* to serve and how it *intends* to get there. In other words, its focus is on desired future institutional profiling. As with a mission statement, the concern is still with identity, context and process. The process will encapsulate the intentions for the present and the next few years, but the identity and context will be future. In reality, that desired identity and context may not be greatly different from the present, but there may be key differences. For example, an institution may presently be focusing on undergraduate professional education. It may intend to place itself as a "different" institution, by offering a wider range of undergraduate programs and graduate programs to a broader constituent group. This will have some significant impact on identity and context.

Not all institutions have vision statements. If developing a vision statement helps the institution communicate and focus on its intended future, then it is a useful process and the resulting statement will be helpful. It may be particularly helpful at times of greatest expected change.

Statement of Values

The final element to consider under institutional profiling is the institutional statement of values. This differs from mission, vision and statements of objectives in that it is not about what an institution does, or plans to do, but is about what an institution is or **plans to be**. A statement of values will identify the key values that reflect desired institutional culture. Examples of such values might be service, safety, compassion, commitment, inclusiveness, honesty and excellence. Identifying key values and how these will be

seen in practice is in itself a useful exercise. It helps those involved in the discussion move away from "what we do" to "who we are." This dialogue is a good one to begin with faculty and staff, with other constituent groups involved later. Both student and external input can be particularly helpful in reflecting on how well the institution is "being" what the key values suggest it should be.

Where does a statement of values fit into strategic planning? Perhaps its most useful role is in helping both internal and external constituencies evaluate the present institution, a tool to feed into the analysis discussed in the next section of this document.

Identification of institutional values may also be helpful in recruitment, in institutional marketing material and in public relations in general.

In general terms, all aspects of institutional profiling provide an agreed context for planning. While changes may not often be made, a regular review of all the elements identified above by all key groups and individuals in an institution ensures that the assumptions on which strategy will be built are agreed and widely owned.

Environmental Scanning

In addition to profiling the institution, another vital early task for any planning group is to evaluate where the institution is in relation to its environment and its ideals for itself.⁵ This requires an honest and thorough evaluation of both the internal operation and the external pressures on the institution. A SWOT analysis remains one of the most effective ways of managing this evaluation process. Such an analysis can be helpful at a number of times throughout the strategic planning process, and if there are sub-committees or unit strategic planning committees, these groups can be invited to do much of the analysis for the central committee. This is also an area where the Board of Trustees and other constituencies can be asked for input. The decision of who is involved in the evaluation will be an institutional decision. However the process takes place, the results should be available early on in the planning process.

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Normally "Strengths" and "Weaknesses" are considered in relation to the internal environment and "Opportunities" and "Threats" respond to the realities of the external environment.

⁵ It is artificial to suggest that a planning process is precisely linear. In practice institutional profiling and environmental scanning impact each other more immediately than this outline suggests. However, in general terms profiling precedes scanning.

Internal Evaluation and Scanning

Internal evaluation and scanning is generally easier to manage than the external processes, although the institution needs to be honest with itself. What are its strengths? What are its weaknesses? The broader the input, the better. Students can help effectively in this process. Although not all the answers will be immediately useful to planning, asking staff, faculty and students to identify the five top strengths and the five top weaknesses of the campus as they see it will give a wide range of opinions. Of all the responses submitted, the most repeated 15 to 20 items can be sent through to planning. Or alternatively, focus groups of students, faculty and staff can be asked to brainstorm together on the strengths and weaknesses. Then as groups they can prioritize their responses. There are many ways of getting the information; the strategic planning committee needs to decide how best to ensure responses are honest and thoughtful.

External Evaluation and Scanning

Gathering the information necessary to identify externally influenced opportunities and threats to an institution will require some additional time and effort. The most likely external influences will be the local church and wider church situation; sister Seventh-day Adventist institutions; the local educational environment and potential for competition in the country; the local/country financial and political environment (and potential environment); the job market needs and restrictions, and the international political and financial situation (if the institution relies on an international market, or for financial support internationally). In individual situations, other factors may be identified as important in addition to these.

This is where using expertise of different individuals or groups both on campus and off campus will be helpful. It will be important that the central strategic planning committee has a good grasp on the real situations that are influencing and will be likely to influence the institution. Only then can that group decide what are the most important external opportunities and threats that the institution will face. Once again, selecting 15 to 20 of the most important in each category will be plenty for the planning process.

This information is largely for committee use—the SWOT analysis does not need to become part of any final document.

Strategy Development

Institutional profiling and environmental scanning together provide the foundation for making specific decisions about strategies and planning. What comes next? Some would argue choosing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs); others suggest that broad strategies should be chosen first. In real-

ity the two next identified processes will interface with each other, whichever is begun first. Together they lead to identifying detailed objectives and actions, the third section of “Strategy Development.” Unit plans and the financial plans will then respond both directly to KPIs and broad strategies, as well as to the more detailed objectives and actions that will be in the central strategic plan.

Deciding on Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) identify institutional targets that if met would indicate institutional strength. They are by definition both quantifiable and measurable.

Not all strategic plans or planning processes use key performance indicators as a basis for strategy and planning. However, identifying such indicators can help the whole strategic planning process in the following ways:

- They provide strategic thinkers a list of concrete outcomes, which can help ground new strategies.
- They provide the planning process with measurable criteria that will allow for clear evaluation of strategies and plans.
- Where governments also ask institutions to meet and respond to performance indicators, the government KPIs and the institutional KPIs can function together to give uniformity in planning and recording procedures.

KPIs should not control the strategic planning process; however they do provide a baseline of expectations and should be as precise as possible to ensure the plan’s integrity. Some KPIs will be identified through institutional profiling, such as the percentage of Seventh-day Adventist students and faculty. Some will be developed in response to external and internal scanning. For example, external scanning will identify government expectations, such as that 60% of all university courses should be in the science areas, and church expectations, such as the church needs to have a minimum of 20 new graduates in education and 15 in ministry annually to meet current needs. On the other hand, internal evaluation of institutional strengths and weaknesses may identify that while some departments are gaining good results in external professional examinations, others are not. A KPI could identify the desired percentage of passes (or distinctions) in external examinations. The percentage of faculty with doctorates could be another KPI; the amount of donations averaged per alumni might be another, or perhaps the percentage of fees that can be met through scholarships. Faculty-student ratio would be another useful KPI, as would be average class size. Student learning outcomes and educational effectiveness should be a particular focus of KPIs. This could include numbers admitted into graduate school, or the percentage of graduates hired within one year

of program completion.

Some KPIs may already be regularly met. That is good and they still should be listed. Others may not be being met. These will be the ones to focus on when future strategy is decided. And strategy to meet KPI expectations can be quite far ranging. For example, financial KPIs, such as scholarship percentages, faculty-student ratios and even external results all link to marketing and enrolment issues. To meet the KPIs, therefore, considerable thought will need to go into enrolment management strategies.

Development of KPIs is not always easy. Some may be set by policy expectations within the church or the government. However, often these will be decided by benchmarking averages of other similar institutions.

KPIs normally have a clear measurement attached to them—percentages, total figures etc. However, it may not always be easy to attach a measurement to all issues, particularly those relating to quality. For example, it may be an institutional desire to improve the variety of spiritual programming or raise the perceived quality of teaching in the languages program. These are in themselves too general to be KPIs. However, a KPI could identify the average desired satisfaction rating of students filling in faculty evaluation questionnaires in all disciplines, and could identify a desired percentage of positive responses to each area of an annual spiritual life survey.

Other alternative models can also be developed to help give institutions a strong planning and assessment framework. However, this will not give the same level of specificity in measurement, which in turn makes it harder to set future goals to improve institutional performance.

Choosing Broad Strategies

As already identified, choice of broad strategies and decisions on KPIs will be closely interrelated. However, while the institutional profile, institutional statements of identity (mission statements, etc.) and the KPIs will largely remain the same over time, the institution will see more changes in the identification of key strategies. They may remain the same for a period of, say, five years, but even that may not be the case. Put simply, the strategies should respond to the gap between the present situation of the institution and the desired outcomes for the institution (identified in KPIs or another form).

Developing and choosing key strategies requires a high level of creativity. One important reality to remember is that there may be many strategies that could respond to a particular institutional need or desire, and some may respond to more than one identified area.

The other important point to remember is that focus is only on “broad strategies” at this point in the process. In total this should only come to five or six. For example a typical strategy may just simply state: “To raise the

professional profile of the faculty.” In practice this may refer to a combination of identified needs for growth: faculty qualifications, research record, teaching skills, faculty salaries, integration of faith and learning. The more detailed strategies will target the particular areas of concern. Initially, however, the desire is to identify merely the major area of focus. Even so, for discussion purposes with the Board and other constituencies, it is important to identify why a strategy has been selected and the areas of identified need to which it might respond.

Why should one strategy eventually be chosen over another? Some writers on strategy recommend a variety of tables that can be used to weigh up the comparative strengths of various strategies. (See the recommendations for further reading). In general, however, the decisions can be made effectively with less formality. The three most important questions are: what areas of need can be met by focusing on this strategy? What is the likelihood of us succeeding in implementing this strategy? Can we meet the cost (financial and human) of the strategy? A discussion of this nature should lead to a consensus on which five or so strategies should be the ones for immediate focus. This of course does not mean that other ongoing administrative changes and developments cannot be made in other areas. These are just going to be the areas of institutional focus.

At this point, the Board of Trustees should again be asked to take a formal action. They will have been actively involved in the institutional profiling and development of institutional statements of identity. Now the institution will want them to support the decision on KPIs and major strategies. From this point onwards it will largely be the responsibility of the institutional administration to ensure the development of the more detailed plan and its management. However, it is the responsibility of the Board to be actively involved in the decisions taken to this point.

Identifying Detailed Objectives and Actions

Once the main strategies (goals) have been identified and agreed the more detailed work begins.

The questions that need to be answered now are:

- What needs to happen to realize each main strategic goal?
- How can the conclusions be expressed in terms of objectives?
- How will the objectives be translated into actions?
- Who will do the actions and when?
- How will the results be measured? (And how can these measurements be linked to the KPIs where applicable?)

In significant ways this part of the process may be the most demanding and creative of all. The main strategies have in broad terms defined that the institution wants to move from A to B. The challenge now is to find the best

path or paths to make that movement happen. There will usually be a number of choices, and it will be important to articulate what those are. Once again the relevant individuals will need to find a way of selecting the best choices, using wide input where necessary.

For example, a main strategy might have identified that enrolment growth is going to be a major institutional focus. Does this mean, new programs need to be added? Does it mean the revitalization of present programs? Does it mean putting more money into scholarships? Does it mean cutting some programs to give way for new ones? Does it mean improving student facilities? And which of these are going to be prioritized when it comes to funding?

The choices will once again need to be based on an analysis of the anticipated level of impact of each of these objectives on achieving the main strategy, the likelihood of success and the ability of the institution to meet projected costs. Using enrollment growth again as an example, three approaches could be selected to meet the strategy. These could be reworded in objectives, such as:

- To add three new degree programs in the Science area within the next three years.
- To increase scholarship funding by 30% for focused support of students into new programs.
- To prioritize the building of family housing units.

Then come the action steps and the details of accountability and timing for each objective.

Wherever these more detailed plans are discussed and developed, the central strategic planning committee should have the decision-making power to act and vote on the full plan. This is still the central institutional plan.

Unit Planning and Plans

Meanwhile, what happens to any unit planning that has taken place (see Part I)? How does this fit into the processes outlined above for developing strategy?

In practice, however formal the institution wants to make unit planning, development of strategy, along with implementation and evaluation, should be a regular part of the decision-making process for every major unit. In academic departments, schools or divisions this is vital. It ensures that practice does not “continue as usual,” at least not unless there is clear evidence and agreement that this is what is best for that area of campus.

Decisions should be taken on two levels in unit planning. Each unit should have power to act over decisions that will not impact other areas of

the campus and are in alignment with the total strategic plan. This might include management issues such as restructuring an individual course or running a training program for all staff in a particular area of identified need. However, unit planning should also consider the wider more strategic issues that impact on the total campus. For example, one of the identified main strategies may be to significantly improve the use of technology at all levels of campus operation. A unit planning meeting may decide how that end can best be achieved in that particular department.

Unit planning may also include responding proactively to the total institutional plan. That may mean recommendations of changes or additions to the plan. In fact, there is no fixed timeline on when unit planning should take place compared with total institutional planning. While there may be specific times of the year when feedback and recommendations are specifically requested centrally, unit planning should be an ongoing process that provides direction and focus to the unit and “talks to” the central committee through whatever structures the institution puts in place.

A unit plan can be a full formally written and presented document; at times of particular change and growth in a unit that may be an advantage. However, it is not always necessary. What is needed is some form of clear documentation outlining strategies, implementation plans and evidence of accountability.

Developing a Financial Plan

There is one final important note to add to this section on strategy development. Throughout this document there has been reference to the need to ensure plans are financially viable. It is vital that at each step of the process a financial analysis is made and that the total analysis of implementing the plan is included as backing to the total plan. This may be included as part of the plan itself, or it may exist as a separate document. However, before the final vote is taken to approve any strategy, this analysis should be in place.

Plan Implementation

Writing the Plan

The plan is now ready to be written. Different advice is available on what should be included. Eventually this will need to be decided institutionally, depending on how the plan will later be used and communicated. The overriding principle, however, is that only information helpful to those implementing the plan should be included (i.e. details on SWOT analyses and information gained through external scanning do not normally need to be in any published plan).

One suggestion of a plan outline follows:

- Statement of institutional profile, mission, institutional objectives (and vision statement and institutional values if they are available).
- KPIs or alternative statement of desired institutional outcomes.
- Statement of main strategies.
- Details of objectives, actions and accountability information (either unified under each strategy, or in sections that reflect the work of the various sub-committees, which will also manage the implementation of these sections of the report).
- Financial plan to support decisions and priorities.
- Statement on updating of the plan (see section below on “Changes to the Plan”).

In addition to the full plan, a short version of the plan (executive summary) should be written. This should be no more than two pages in length and should be written for easy communication of the plan. This will be the public relations tool and some institutions develop it as an attractive brochure. The summary document or brochure will be for both internal and external communication. It may finally be the most read and important document of the whole process.

Unit plans may exist separately, or be attached to the main plan. Once again, the important decision is: how to present the plan so it most effectively leads to action and promotes support for its directions.

Operation and Management of Plan

Once the main strategic plan, along with any unit plans, is voted, it needs to be operated and managed. Individuals accountable for actions have been agreed but which person or group keeps in connection with those individuals and reports the progress of the plan, and to whom? The answers will vary according to the structures set up the institution.

However, the following suggestions provide a working framework of accountability.

The Board of Trustees: While the Board of Trustees will not want to spend its time assessing the details of implementation, it will be concerned with the way the institution is responding to the main voted strategic directions. The chief executive officer will be responsible for developing a reporting process to this group (see Appendix C.3).

The central planning committee: The central planning committee has overall responsibility for ensuring the plan happens. Therefore its chair should ensure that the committee receives regular reports from its sub-committees and or units and that where progress is not being made recommendations should be made to appropriate administrators to ensure action happens. The sub-committees (where they exist) may be given major

responsibility for implementation. However, the central committee still holds overall responsibility.

Unit/department administrators: It is at unit and department level where most of the actions happen. The administrators of those areas become very important individuals in ensuring the successful implementation of the plans (both unit and total institutional objectives that impact at that level). Once the plans are voted, these administrators should be held responsible for encouraging and reporting on implementation among their faculty and staff.

However, there is more to the implementation of the plan than deciding who will ensure the plan happens. There may be elements of the plan that will bring uncomfortable change to the institution. Although he or she may delegate responsibility in some areas, where employees, external constituencies or students are asked to deal with substantial change, the chief executive officer needs to be seen to be in charge. It is important to remember here also that “substantial change” needs to be defined as change that is considered substantial in the minds of those **facing** the change, not those **making** the change. (Management of change is an important issue in its own right—it will not be discussed further in this document.)

Communication of the Plan

Successful implementation of the plan will also rely on effective communication, at every stage of the planning process. To a large degree these communication needs have been identified in earlier sections of this document. However, as good communication is so vital to ensuring plan implementation, the main expectations are summarized here:

- There needs to be inclusiveness, with all constituencies having some recognizable voice in the strategic process.
- All ideas need to be welcomed from sub-committees, unit committees and other constituent groups, even though not all will be included as strategies or plans.
- At every level of the process, information should be disseminated clearly and widely, where possible with invitation for ongoing feedback.
- Within the campus responsibility for communication goes in both directions. Units and sub-committees should report and reflect back to the central committee as much as that group, or the administration speaking for that group, should report and invite input.
- When the institutional plan is written, a short 2-page summary of the major directions and decisions needs to be written and widely explained and distributed.
- Progress on agreed plans needs to be clearly identified and widely reported.

How can an institution make sure all of this communication happens? It is very unlikely to occur unless it is managed intentionally and the process to do so decided from the beginning.

When it comes to communication between groups throughout the process, the central planning committee should identify how good communication will be achieved. However, when it comes to the main strategies, any statements about institutional identity and the total institutional plan, and ensuring the communication is happening, the chief executive officer is again accountable.

Changes to the Plan

One final question remains: once a plan is in place, how does an institution ensure that it remains relevant and focused on the optimum opportunities for the future? The answer lies in a realistic assessment of how far ahead an institution can decide its future and in an organized process of regular review and updating of all strategies.

Because of the nature of higher education, which needs constantly to respond to its environment, a *fixed* 10 or even 5 year plan is not usually advisable. At a minimum plans should be reviewed and adjusted every two years, and probably every year is best, especially in smaller campuses. With a five year plan, this update would move the term of the plan along another one or two years at the time of each revision. For example, if the first plan was 2005-10 and the update was after 2 years, the resulting plan would then be 2007-12. Some actions that were completed would fall off the plan, while new ones that extended further into the future would be added. With that pattern, it is still important that at regular intervals (maybe 5 or 7 years, or 10 years for capital development sections of plans) the institution step back and completely reevaluate itself. This may be the only time that the major strategies are changed. The existing plan does not have to have “expired” in order for a new strategic process to be initiated.

Higher education institutions and their Boards also need to account for the reality that unexpected events or significant changes in environmental situations can impact on campuses quickly. While the strategic planning process, because of its inclusive nature, usually provides good time for new ideas to mature before actions are taken, sometimes the process needs to be much more rapid. Although this should not be the normal pattern of action, the agreed institutional strategic process should allow for such exigencies. This would include opportunities for positive change that arise that need to be responded to with speed. It is advisable to write this need into the terms of reference for the central committee, or that the Board gives this right to action to the chief executive officer, through the Board.

Conclusion

As identified at different points throughout this document, it is not possible to have a single correct approach to strategic planning. What is important is that those driving and later guiding the strategic planning process understand both the issues important to having a successful process and their own institution. The first will provide them with a variety of tools to use to make the process work for them. The second allows them to make the best selection of approaches and processes to achieve a successful result in their particular setting.

The intention of this booklet is to provide an outline of concepts and some examples of tools that may help institutional leaders understand the issues and options open to them. It also seeks to provide some ideas of how an institution can get to know itself better and work with itself more effectively. It may take a while before an institution finds the process working for them as it should. Meanwhile, two important tips to administrators: don't give up on the ideal and don't tie the institution up in too much bureaucracy to get there!

There has been little mention of timelines through the document. In practice, a good planning process for major institutional re-evaluation will probably take 12 to 18 months. Updates will be ongoing in one-year or two-year cycles. However, even when major re-evaluations are underway, existing plans should still be driving institutional decisions.

Following this conclusion is a series of appendices. These provide a quick evaluation tool for an institution to consider the effectiveness of its present strategic planning policies (Appendix A), give some timelines and outline reports that support ideas in this booklet (Appendix B), identify an alternative approach to planning (Appendix C) and recommend further resources that may prove useful for individuals who want to look into this issue in more depth (Appendix D).

Strategic planning can be of immense benefit to an institution. It provides administrators opportunity for creative re-examination of the direction of their institution. It provides all constituencies opportunity to be part of positive change. And it provides a unifying vision that can ideally encourage both loyalty and enthusiasm for the campus and its likely future. It takes time and imagination, but the benefits far outweigh the costs.

Appendix A
Strategic Planning Checklist

The following checklist identifies important elements of a strategic planning process. Consider the effectiveness of your process and plan by evaluating how far your institution meets the ideals identified below. Give yourself a mark of 1-5, where 5 means you are very satisfied that the statement is true. Use the results to re-evaluate how you undertake strategic planning.

1. Your planning process provides opportunity for input from:
 - Faculty ()
 - Staff ()
 - Students ()
 - Board of Trustees ()
 - Alumni ()
 - Constituency ()
2. You have a central planning committee that is representative ()
3. Your central committee has both strategic thinkers and planners ()
4. There are clear terms of reference for the central committee and all sub-committees ()
5. The planning process is streamlined and efficient ()
6. You have a clearly identified ideal institutional profile ()
7. You have a mission statement that is succinct ()
8. Your mission statement provides information on identity, context and process ()
9. You have a clearly articulated set of institutional objectives ()
10. You regularly undertake internal evaluation and scanning ()
11. You regularly undertake external evaluation and scanning ()
12. You have clearly defined KPIs or equivalent statements of desired institutional outcomes ()

13. Your KPIs are linked to student learning outcomes and educational effectiveness ()
14. KPIs or the equivalent provide focus to strategic planning decisions ()
15. The strategic plan is guided by a few broad but clear strategies ()
16. Detailed objectives and action plans support the broad strategies ()
17. You have a written and published institutional strategic plan ()
18. You have an executive summary that can be used for PR ()
19. All unit planning responds to the central plan effectively ()
20. You have articulated plans for ensuring good communication throughout planning ()
21. You have plans for ensuring good communication and dissemination of the final plan ()
22. You have evidence that the communication has been effective ()
23. There are clearly identified lines of accountability in your planning process ()
24. You have processes in place for management of the strategic plan ()
25. The administration have skills in managing change ()
26. Processes are in place for updating the plan ()
27. Your plan provides effective institutional focus ()
28. There is wide institutional ownership of both process and the plan ()
29. Your strategic processes allow for quick responses, when needed ()
30. You have financial plans to support all voted strategic directions ()
31. The agreed institutional strategy places the institution effectively in:
 - (a) the church environment ()
 - (b) the academic environment ()

Appendix B
Timelines and Report Outlines

1. Timeline: New Strategic Planning Process

The following plan is a 24-month plan. The time can be compressed into as little as 12 months, depending on the administrative structures and the amount of time that can be invested into this project.

May-June	Set up processes Choose committees and agree terms of reference (both central committee and any sub-committees or unit committees)
June-September	Environmental scanning (internal and external)
October-February	Decide on mission and objectives (and vision statement and values where applicable) Start development of KPIs/major strategies Involve Board of Trustees
February to May	KPIs and major strategies passed on to units/departments Units/departments work on major objectives. Give feedback
June to December	Plan detail developed. First draft of central plan written and distributed to units/departments
December to March	Get feedback from constituency groups Units complete their draft plans Dialogue with units over plans
April to June	Finalize central plan and unit plans Publicize Start to implement

2. Timeline: Annual Strategic Planning

The following is an example of how a plan can be kept active, relevant and updated by an annual review process. Individual institutions may have to adopt different timeframes to ensure that the strategic planning process is in line with deadlines for budget preparation and submissions to the Board of Trustees.

a) The Central Committee

Summer	Start implementing latest approved plan Communicate new initiatives to all major constituency groups
September-November	Time to re-evaluate major strategies/KPIs if changes needed for the next year Send requests for further study and recommendations to relevant sub-committees
December-February	Review plan progress Invite input for changes/updates from units and departments
March-May	Revise and update plan Ensure financial support is in place
May-June	Vote on new plan Decide on communication process

b) Units and Departments

Summer	Start to implement voted plan Communicate
September to November	Review basic mission issues and department goals Dialogue on suggested changes with central committee
December to February	Receive any new directions from central committee Start planning and send on new plans
March-May	Revise, update and vote unit plan

3. Report to Board of Trustees

Strategic Plan (Sample for Strategic Goal One only)

Strategic Goal One: To increase the professional level of faculty

Implementation Objectives	Person(s) Responsible	Time for completion	Actions for 20__	Success level
To raise % of doctorates to 50% (KPI: 50% of faculty to have doctorates)	Academic Council	4 years	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> _____ supported for PhD program on 50% load Two retired faculty with MAs in Education replaced with PhD holders 	<p>Increase from 35% to 40%. Staged plan to 50% on target</p>
To increase teaching skills of faculty (KPI: For the average student evaluation score on “total learning experience” to be a minimum of 8/10)	Academic VP; teaching skills sub-committee	2 years	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Five faculty chosen to take online course on using web in the classroom In-house mentoring program of new faculty begun Three in a series of six seminars for all faculty on approaches to learning completed (Evaluation by faculty at 9/10) 	<p>Latest student evaluations average at 7.3/10, an increase of 0.5%</p>
To have all faculty attend at least one professional meeting annually (KPI: 100% of faculty involved in professional development)	Academic Council	2 years	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Professional funding to each department increased by 50% Professional attendance now reported on annual faculty reports. 	<p>70% attendance in last 12 months. No increase.</p>
To increase research record of faculty to benchmark favorably with national expectations (KPI: University listed at 65 th percentile on national research register)	Academic Council; research coordinator	4 years	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Two faculty given a one-term sabbatical to write up research in book form Faculty loading reduced by 20% for those with approved research funding . Four approved. Networking with the University of ____ has resulted in two faculty joining a research team for ____. 	<p>Rating 20__ at 40th percentile. Objective on track for completion.</p>

This booklet has presented a planning process that is still the generally accepted norm for higher education planning. Done well, it produces immense benefits to the institution and gives a unified direction for its future. However, it is possible for an institution to spend so much time in the process of developing a plan that little happens in implementation. So while the process in itself may be useful for developing an inclusive institutional culture, the institution does little to effectively position itself for future success. At times of rapid change, it may also be necessary for a strategy to be put in place quickly and it is not possible to go through a full planning process to decide on the immediate strategic directions. What can institutional leadership do in cases such as this?

The further references section includes two texts in particular that invite alternative methods for looking at strategic planning. These are:

Robert Sevier, *Thinking Outside the Box. Think Strategically, Act Audaciously, Communicate Aggressively*. (Hiawatha, Iowa: Strategy Publishing Inc., 2001).

Robert Birnbaum, *Management Fads in Higher Education*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001).

In general terms, it is better to have a plan that is less than “perfect” than to have no plan. A quick start to a process for an institutional head could be as follows:

- Meet with a selected group (senior administration, representatives of the Board, faculty, other institutional representatives) and do some brainstorming to identify possible future strategies. This session could include a SWOT analysis and a simplified identification of institutional profile.
- Categorize strategies with the same group, identifying first those that are both good and doable.
- Write a short strategic statement for the institution, approximately 3 pages in length, identifying no more than 5 major strategic directions and several measurable objectives that would support each one.
- Discuss the strategic statement widely with the institutional Board, administration, faculty and staff.
- Refine the statement and use it as a working document. Also use it for public relations and as the basis for further planning at unit levels.

This quick start approach to strategic planning does not include the level of careful environmental analysis that a regular approach has. Neither does it have the same level of inclusiveness. However, in some situations this may be a good place to start.

Birnbaum, Robert. *Management Fads in Higher Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.

Robert Birnbaum considers fads in higher education management, including strategic planning. He identifies how slavish adherence to any management technique has pitfalls. He suggests that there are great organizational gains from such fads as strategic planning, but institutional administrators need to consciously decide on how to maximize these.

Bradford, Robert W. and J. Peter Duncan. *Simplified Strategic Planning. A No-Nonsense Guide for Busy People Who Want Results Fast*. Worcester, Mass: Chandler House Press, 2000.

This book lives up to its title—it focuses on how to ensure planning gets transferred into action quickly. A useful text for those who find the strategic planning process daunting and bureaucratic.

Bruce, Andy and Ken Langdon. *Strategic Thinking*. London: New York: A Dorling Kindersley Book, 2000.

This 72-page well illustrated book focuses on understanding strategy, analyzing your position, planning a strategy, and implementing a strategy. Including 101 tips on strategic planning, the book is very practical with easy-to-understand steps in the strategic planning process.

Dolence, Michael, Daniel James Rowley and Herman Lujan. *Working Toward Strategic Change: A Step-by-Step Guide to the Planning Process*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1997.

A thorough and detailed workbook for step-by-step development of a strategic plan. Each section explains the process, and then gives exercises and work-sheets for implementation. This workbook supports the text *Strategic Change in Universities and Colleges* by the same authors.

Fullan, Michael. *Leading in a Culture of Change*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2001.

This text is a useful supplement to reading on strategic management, as it provides insights into managing the process of change that inevitably arises out of any constructive planning exercise. Fullan focuses on five main competencies for leadership: attending to a broader moral purpose, understanding change, nurturing positive relationships, building knowledge and understanding and providing a context for coherence.

Keller, George. *Academic Strategy: The Management Revolution in American Higher Education*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1983.

A core resource, Keller's book considers how moving strategic planning processes into higher education has changed the nature of higher education and its management. He focuses on the specific needs of higher education institutions and how these can be met through effectively managing the strategic development process.

Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Program (www.quality.nist.gov)

A good site to check for up to date information on issues such as organizational profiling and where strategy interfaces with issues of quality improvement..

Mintzberg, Henry. *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning*. New York: The Free Press, 1994.

Mintzberg explores some of the dangers and fallacies of strategic planning, showing how it can prevent institutional growth and limit vision. He focuses particularly on the importance of strategic thinking in bringing balance to any planning process. He does not suggest the demise of strategic planning, but rather the development of a maturing approach to planning that truly acts for the future of the institution.

Rowley, Daniel James, Herman Lujan and Michael Dolence. *Strategic Change in Colleges and Universities: Planning to Survive and Prosper*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1997.

A helpful and practical exploration of how the strategic planning processes used in business can be adapted constructively to the higher education environment. Focus is on using strategic planning and the resulting change process to ensure an institution is constantly positioning itself for future success within the educational environment. The companion workbook, *Working toward Strategic Change* (see above), supplements this text by helping administrators as they develop their own strategic processes.

Sevier, Robert A. *Thinking Outside the Box. Think Strategically, Act Audaciously, Communicate Aggressively*. Hiawatha, Iowa: Strategy Publishing, Inc., 2001.

Sevier turns the traditional views of strategic planning upside down. The text includes sections on change, visioning, marketing, branding and communication among other key planning areas. This book can be ordered from <http://www.StrategyPublishing.com>.

Steiner, George A. *Strategic Planning. What Every Manager Must Know*. New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1979, rev. ed. 1997.

This classic work known as the "bible" of business planning provides a comprehensive guide to the strategic planning process for a general business audience, with implications for higher education.

