

Standard Two

Planning and Evaluation

Description of Planning

At Granite State College, institutional effectiveness is a function of sound planning followed by resource allocation, implementation, and evaluation. Our current Strategic Plan for 2006–2009 has five major goals that emphasize (1) the quality and delivery of our academic programs and services, (2) increased visibility for the college, (3) achieving fiscal integrity, (4) addressing facilities issues, and (5) effective administration*. The Plan is a reflection of the mission and vision of the college and is grounded in our core values*.

* Strategic Plan <http://www.granite.edu/about/strategicplan.htm>

* Granite State College Mission Statement <http://www.granite.edu/about/mission.htm>

There are several factors that contribute to the creation of this plan and to its endorsement by the college community. While it replaces the previous Strategic Plan 2003–2005 (Exhibit 2.1), it does include certain objectives that were not fully achieved such as increased enrollments and financial stability. However, it also excludes other objectives that were not deemed to be viable at this time. The development of graduate programs and increasing the number of undergraduate program options are two examples of goals that are not part of the current Strategic Plan (Exhibit 2.2).

Exhibit 2.1 CLL Strategic Plan 2003–2005

Exhibit 2.2 Evaluation of Progress Made with 2003–2005 Strategic Plan

The current Strategic Plan is also in response to a call by the Board of Trustees for the University System as a whole to play a stronger role in responding to the needs of adult learners who are seeking alternatives to the traditional campus-based experience (Exhibit 2.3). A report entitled *A Concept that Defines a New Responsibility for the University System, a New Role for the College for Lifelong Learning, and a New Relationship Among PSU, UNH, KSC, and CLL*, was endorsed by the Trustees in October 2004 and was instrumental in shaping the current Strategic Plan of Granite State College (Exhibit 2.4). The Concept Paper calls for Granite State College to play a leadership role in expanding access by using technology, facilitating the delivery of programs from other USNH institutions when there is a defined need, and managing a Call Center and Web Site to provide a single source of information for all off-campus and online USNH programs.

Exhibit 2.3 Report of Findings and Recommendations of Due Diligence Subcommittee of Board of Trustees

Exhibit 2.4 Discussing the Concept: A New Role for CLL

The Strategic Plan provides the institutional framework for departmental plans that are being updated and revised. Most notable are the Academic Plan, Enrollment Management Plan, Business Plan, Marketing Plan, Student Services Plan, Technology Plan, and Facilities Plan.

Appraisal of Planning

The Granite State College Strategic Plan is consistent with the goals of the University System of New Hampshire Strategic Plan*. At Granite State College, planning has been an effective process and served as the basis for making key decisions and allocating resources to support those decisions. For example, the implementation of the BOLD

program (Exhibit 2.5) was deemed to be a priority in the Strategic Plan. The college and the University System both allocated resources prior to its implementation (Exhibit 2.6). Proper planning was followed by the allocation of adequate resources. They were key elements in the decision by NEASC to approve the plan by Granite State College to offer degree programs through distance education technologies (Exhibit 2.7).

* USNH Strategic Plan www.usnh.unh.edu/trustees_chancellors/index.html

Exhibit 2.5 BOLD Proposal

Exhibit 2.6 Granite State College Business Plan

Exhibit 2.7 Approval Letter from NEASC

The decision by the college to increase online and hybrid courses was grounded in the planning process and the information that was generated. In the fall of 2004, MGT of America was commissioned by the University System of New Hampshire to conduct a market analysis of the work force and educational needs of adult learners in the state. The goal was to determine how well USNH institutions, and especially Granite State College, were doing in responding to their needs. MGT of America administered written and telephone surveys and held a number of focus groups. Participants included business leaders, Granite State College students, NH Community Technical College students, NH Community Technical College advisors, and adults not enrolled in college. A key question in the study focused on the preferred mode of delivery for courses and programs. The results indicated that a significant number of students liked the flexibility of online learning, but also enjoyed the socialization and interpersonal relationships that come with the traditional classroom experience. As a result, the GSC Strategic Plan reflected this information and the college added new staff positions to support more online and hybrid classes (Exhibit 2.8).

Exhibit 2.8 Executive Summary of MGT Report

The last major example of the college's planning activities is in the student services area. In discussions with students and staff in our nine centers located throughout the state, it became apparent that there were major problems in our financial aid and business office practices. This led to a full investigation of our processes by a college committee led by the USNH Associate Vice Chancellor of Finance and culminated in what is known as the SRAP Report (Exhibits 2.9 and 2.10). SRAP stands for Student Registration, Aid and Payments. As a result of recommendations of the report, staffing in Financial Aid was increased from 2.8 full-time-equivalents to 5.0 full-time-equivalents and in the Bursar's Office from 0.6 full-time-equivalents to 2.0 full-time-equivalents. Another recommendation was to centralize all business office functions to create greater efficiencies and a better system of financial controls. This recommendation was also implemented. Now all Granite State College business transactions are under the direction of the USNH Controller's Office. The change has led to improved financial operations for the college. It has also given staff in the nine centers more time to spend on student related issues as opposed to business matters. A more comprehensive discussion of these and additional changes in the student service area will be presented under Standard Six.

Exhibit 2.9 Membership of SRAP Committee

Exhibit 2.10 SRAP Report

The three examples demonstrate that the impetus for change was the information that was gathered and analyzed in the planning process by college staff. Once these issues

“One of the reasons why I enjoy being a degree student at GSC is the flexibility of class schedules. I have enjoyed a variety of course formats. The online classes are convenient, but I still like the face-to-face contact with the instructor and other students.”

—GSC student

became part of the Strategic Plan, appropriate resources were allocated (Exhibit 2.6). Resource allocation was followed by implementation. At the end of the academic year, a formal assessment of the projects described will be conducted.

The Executive Committee of the college is the body that approves plans and is responsible for creating policies that may evolve from the planning process (Exhibit 2.11). The Deans Council focuses on operational procedures and is charged with adding, eliminating or changing practices that may result from our planning exercises (Exhibit 2.12). Institutional plans are also shared with the Board of Trustees. The Board and the Chancellor's Office provide guidance and oversight when appropriate (See Standard Three).

Exhibit 2.11 Purpose and Membership of the Executive Committee

Exhibit 2.12 Purpose and Membership of the Deans Council

Efforts have been made to be inclusive in developing, implementing and evaluating our institutional plans. Staff members have been involved at many levels and have played a major role in the success of our planning. Soon after her arrival in August 2004, the President and the Executive Committee established five major goals that would be integral to the Strategic Plan. Staff were asked to comment on the goals and to offer strategies for achieving them (Exhibit 2.13). As the Strategic Plan has evolved, staff has been asked to provide further input (Exhibit 2.14).

Exhibit 2.13 Summary of staff input for achieving college goals

Exhibit 2.14 Executive Committee minutes

The college has not done well in formally engaging faculty, students, and alumni in the planning process. Our multiple locations throughout the state, coupled with the part-time nature of our faculty and student body, makes this more of a challenge when compared to the traditional campus based institution. However, it is no less important and needs to be a priority for the future. Also, most of our planning has been of a short-term nature thus limiting our vision and understanding of the long term impact of our decisions.

Projections for Planning

- Implement a process to routinely involve our students, faculty and alumni in our planning activities. *(FY 07-FY 10 Executive Committee)*
- Develop, implement, and evaluate a long-term plan that complements the short-term plans that are in effect. *(FY 07-FY 09 Executive Committee, Presidential Appointed Task Force)*

Description of Evaluation

Granite State College has been involved in evaluations and reviews at various levels. This includes our role as an institution within the University System, our success in achieving our mission and vision as an independent college within USNH, and the ongoing processes that occur within our departments and centers. At the USNH level, each of the four institutions has been involved in a process with the Board of Trustees to utilize strategic indicators that measure our progress in achieving certain targets. In some cases, benchmark data from comparator institutions is included. To date there are 18 different indicators that have been identified (Exhibit 2.15). The indicators are tied directly to the goals of the University System of New Hampshire*. Each institution within USNH has had representation in establishing the appropriate indicators and defining the

type of information that would be routinely collected. The expectation by the Board of Trustees is that Strategic Indicators will be utilized for evaluative purposes in the fall of 2006 on a System-wide basis.

* USNH Strategic Indicators http://usnh.unh.edu/research_planning/

Exhibit 2.15 GSC Strategic Indicators

At the level of the college, the mission statement and vision statement were recently reviewed and updated to reflect the new directions that Granite State College is taking. The revised mission, vision and statement of core values were approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2005 (Exhibit 2.16).

Exhibit 2.16 Minutes of the Board of Trustee Meeting

Other evaluations take place within the college on a regular basis. Prior to securing grant funds or offering contract courses to external groups and agencies, the Deans Council ranks each proposal relative to the positive or negative impact on the institution's goals before it is approved and submitted. The Council also determines if the proposal is consistent with the college's mission. There is a provision for the Dean of External Programs or the Principal Investigator (PI) to conduct a formal evaluation at the conclusion of the grant or contract. This information is shared with the Deans Council and is useful in determining the likely success of future submissions (Exhibit 2.17).

Exhibit 2.17 Log for Evaluating Grants and Contracts

Academic Program Reviews are completed on a regular basis and are the responsibility of the Academic Planning Committee (Exhibit 2.18). The results are used to make recommendations to the President that fall under three categories; (1) the program should be continued as is; (2) there are substantive changes that should be made to the curriculum or the delivery of the program; or (3) it should be discontinued (Exhibit 2.19). The reviews and recommendations are shared with the Systems Academic Planning Council which is made up of the Chief Academic Officers of the four USNH institutions and with the Programs and Services Committee of the Board of Trustees. Other evaluations done on a routine basis include student and graduate satisfaction surveys (Exhibit 2.20), course evaluations, and faculty performance (Exhibit 2.21).

Exhibit 2.18 Schedule of Academic Program Reviews

Exhibit 2.19 Academic Program Review Policies and Procedures

Exhibit 2.20 Samples of student and graduate satisfaction surveys

Exhibit 2.21 Sample of course evaluations

Appraisal of Evaluation

The college has effectively integrated evaluative processes into its academic programming. For a very long period of time, it has emphasized the achievement of learning outcomes that are clearly stated in the course syllabi (Exhibit 2.22). There is a major initiative underway to assess the progress made by learners in achieving learning outcomes in writing and to follow their progress as they continue their academic careers (Exhibit 2.23). Another project is being developed that will compare the achievements of learning outcomes in core courses being taught in the traditional classroom venue, the hybrid format, and in the totally online courses (Exhibit 2.24).

Exhibit 2.22 Sample of course syllabus

Exhibit 2.23 Sample of Writing Rubric

Exhibit 2.24 Proposal to Evaluate and Compare Online to Classroom Based Instruction in Achieving Learning Outcomes

We remain concerned that we do not collect enough information from our students and our graduates. The Strategic Indicators represent a good beginning but more data needs to be collected and analyzed from alumni and from businesses and organizations that hire our graduates.

This year we have begun analyzing our nine centers with regard to their revenues and expenses that will guide us in our future decisions regarding facilities. A more systematic assessment of each center relating to students services and academic programming is also taking place. Currently we have little information to evaluate the effectiveness of our marketing and public relations strategies as they relate to our goal of making the college more visible.

In the past, personnel evaluations were not done in a routine and timely manner throughout the college. Last year, the President and the Director of Human Resources jointly communicated the importance of personnel evaluations and enforced an existing policy that required all supervisors to submit their evaluations by a specific date. There was compliance by all supervisors. This same approach will be continued.

Projection of Evaluation

- Evaluate all aspects of the college to determine the degree to which we are achieving our institutional goals and realizing our mission of expanded access. *(FY 07-FY 10 Executive Committee, Institutional Research , Appointed Sub Committees)*
- Engage members of the communities in which we are located to effectively determine the impact that we are making. *(FY 07-FY 10 Center Liaisons, Outreach Director and staff, Communication and Marketing, Alumni and Student Advocates)*

Institutional Effectiveness

Planning and evaluation are embedded in the policies and practices of the college. The goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan guide our decision making at many levels. Departments incorporate specific objectives of the Strategic Plan into their unit plans*. The President has asked Deans to incorporate their departmental plans into their annual reports (Exhibit 2.25 Executive Committee Minutes). Next year and after, the performance of each Dean will be determined in part by the progress made in achieving the goals of their plans along with the contributions they have made to institution's overall plan.

- * Strategic Plan <http://www.granite.edu/about/strategicplan.htm>
- Exhibit 2.25 Executive Committee Minutes

In her 2004-2005 annual report to the Chancellor, the President used the established goals of the Strategic Plan as the framework for assessing the past year and making projections for the coming year (Exhibit 2.26). Her 2005-2006 annual report evaluates the progress made towards each goal and predicts activities related to the goals for the 2006-2007 academic year (Exhibit 2.27). Thus, the Strategic Plan is closely tied to personnel, departmental, and institutional evaluations.

- Exhibit 2.26 2004-2005 Annual Report to the Chancellor
- Exhibit 2.27 2005-2006 Annual Report to the Chancellor

The Strategic Plan also guides our decisions in securing grants, budgetary allocations, and offering contract courses. The Deans Council ranks each proposal or new budgetary request against the goals of the Strategic Plan and whether it supports the institutional mission (Exhibit 2.28).

Exhibit 2.28 Grant, contracts, budget log sheet

Assessment is well integrated into the activities and actions of the college. Both our Mission Statement and core values reflect the importance of an ongoing assessment of learning outcomes*. A new functional model for the college has been recently developed (Exhibit 2.29). The model identifies the students, faculty, and the mission as the focal points of our activities. It is based upon a team approach to operations in the academic centers and the administration. As part of the model, there is a designated group that will address accountability throughout the organization. Members of the accountability group include the President, Executive Assistant to the President, Director of Human Resources, Director of Finance and Planning and her staff.

* GSC Mission Statement www.granite.edu/about/mission.htm

Exhibit 2.29 Functional Model for the college

Further examples of the integral role of assessment to the college will be discussed and documented throughout this report. They include course syllabi that have established learning outcomes that are available to all learners, faculty, and the general college community. The curriculum committee is charged with updating the content of courses while the academic planning committee conducts program reviews on an ongoing basis. There is a formal process for learners to evaluate courses at the end of each term.

Memoranda of Understanding that are developed with other institutions include a provision to assess the partnership on an annual basis and make appropriate modifications or changes (Exhibit 2.30). The USNH Strategic Indicators represent both a planning and assessment tool in identifying and achieving specified targets (Exhibit 2.15).

Exhibit 2.30 Memorandum of Understanding between Granite State College and NHCTC Berlin

Throughout the Self Study Report, there will be other examples of how effective planning results in the appropriate allocation of resources to support the implementation of specific programs or activities. This is followed by an ongoing system of assessment that generates information. This information may lead to changes but also feeds into future planning efforts.