NEASC STANDARD TWO
PLANNING AND EVALUATION

Introduction

This section describes the manner in which Franklin Pierce University undertakes planning and evaluation appropriate to its needs to accomplish and improve the achievement of its mission and purposes. It details the process by which institutional priorities are set, and the procedures by which those priorities are accomplished and their outcomes measured. It demonstrates the University's commitment to a structured planning process which involves many University constituencies in the planning process, communicates regularly the results achieved by systematic planning, and effectively allocates appropriate resources to realize its goals.

Description

Franklin Pierce University has made a conscious attempt over the last decade to be more deliberate and focused in its institutional planning and evaluation efforts. The institutional leadership understands that planning and evaluation are interrelated, continuous, and driven by the Mission of the University.

The post-1998 planning and evaluation phase began with a Senior Staff strategic retreat held in early 1999. The March 1999 meeting of the Board endorsed many of the retreat recommendations. The Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs convened a Core Curriculum Review Committee to review the general education framework in April 1999. A Strategic Priority Facilitators group was created that same month to lead the process of further refining the emerging strategic priorities. The Board asked the President "to set in writing a Vision for Franklin Pierce College for the next five to seven years" at the October 1999 meeting. In preparing this statement, the President asked the institution to complete a Community Survey comprising seven fundamental questions (November/December 1999). The President presented a new "Statement of Vision and Institutional Identity" memorandum to the community in February 2000. The Board of Trustees approved the President's Institutional Vision in March 2000. (Exhibit 2.1)

In July 2000, a Presidential Ad Hoc Committee commissioned Dr. Zeddie Bowen to "… conduct an assessment and prepare a report which [would] address the major action items set forth …" by the President. These action items included:

- The determination of a means by which the college, and particularly the faculty, can examine and pursue an appropriate academic vision for the institution;
- The consideration of possible alternative organizational structures for the Academic Division to carry forth the college's mission and meet the administrative needs of the institution;
- The identification of the qualifications for the future academic leadership of the college; and
- The development of the formal search process for filling the position of Chief Academic Officer.

In preparation for his October 2000 report, Dr. Bowen conducted a comprehensive review and survey of the College soliciting answers to the following questions:

- What aspects of our existing academic culture do you value and wish to preserve?
- Over the course of the next five years, how would you like the academic culture to evolve?
- What obstacles, other than financial, do you foresee to improving the academic culture within the College? What recommendations do you have for improving the academic culture?
- What sort of organizational structure in the Academic Division do you think would benefit the College and its future?
- From your perspective, what are the important qualities of an academic leader?

Dr. Bowen presented his findings and recommendations to the Board of Trustees at the October 2000 meeting. (Exhibit 1.1) The report was accepted and Dr. Bowen's final report was widely shared with the community in October 2000, along with the following recommendations:

- That the Board of Trustees clarify the college's mission with regard to the students it intends to serve in the future.
- That the Board of Trustees clarify how the Graduate and Professional Studies Division fits into the mission of the college from the point of view of its educational philosophy.
- That the Board of Trustees actively address its role in program assessment.
- That the President encourage the community to continue discussion of the institutional vision as a way to articulate and affirm the academic ambitions of the faculty and to define its distinctive intellectual signature.
- That the review of the Integrated Core Curriculum be used as a faculty forum to discuss, define and affirm its academic ambition for the college.
- That the community develop a simple statement of its academic ambition that everyone can remember and believe.
- That the Chief Academic Officer be designated the second officer of the college.
- That the college appoint separate Deans for the Rindge and the Graduate & Professional Studies Divisions with both reporting to the Chief Academic Officer.
- That the college recognize the critical role played by the Division Chairs in its academic administration and leadership by providing greater support, rewards and recognition.
- That the college undertake a comprehensive review and assessment of its academic majors and courses as an important step in reducing the very heavy teaching load on the faculty.
- That the college invite the Faculty Federation to become an active partner with the administration in program assessment.

The Strategic Priorities Facilitators Group and the Bowen Report have had a significant impact on guiding the planning efforts over the last decade. The major outcomes that flowed from this initial foundation include the Strategic Plan of 2001-2005; the Substantive Change Petition to Establish Academic Programming Offered through Distance Learning (2003); the review and

revision of the Mission Statement (2005 -2006); the Substantive Change Petition to offer Programs at the Doctoral Level (2006); and the new Vision Statement and accompanying Strategic Plan of 2006 – 2010. The current Strategic Plan built on the prior strategic foundation by including strategies for the transition to University status (2006-2008), planning for the enhancement of global initiatives and diversification, making provision for the ongoing development of the Goodyear, AZ project (2007-), and creating the Office of Strategic Initiatives (2007). (Exhibits 2.2, 2.3, 1.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6)

The most significant evaluation activities at the institutional level since the 1998 self-study include the Core Curriculum Review Committee (1999), used to assess the general education curriculum; the President's Community Survey (1999), used to assess community attitudes about institutional strength, student profile, and campus integration; the Academic Prioritization process (2001-2002) used to review all academic programming for future resource allocation decisions; the Administrative Review process (2002-2003), used to review all administrative areas for future restructuring and resource allocation decisions; the Standard & Poors Report (2004), which required a thorough vetting of the financial viability of the institution; the National Policy Center *Foundations of Excellence* project (2004-2005), which required an exhaustive institutional assessment of all aspects the first-year experience; the Pierce Council Academic Culture Surveys and Facilitated Dialogues (2004-2005), used to assess student and faculty attitudes underlying the institutional academic culture; the internal audit of institutional readiness for the transition to University status; the University's participation as a founding institution in the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) project to test the Collegiate Learning Assessment's effectiveness in measuring critical, analytic, and writing skills; and the ad hoc Faculty Evaluation Planning Committee (2005-2008), used to revise the guidelines and procedures for the evaluation and promotion of full-time Rindge faculty. (Exhibits 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14, 2.15)

The 2004-2005 *Foundations of Excellence* project is a clear example of an evaluation process that helped to better integrate feedback into the overall planning process. The project led to the establishment of the First Year Coordinating Committee which reviews all aspects of first year programming. This Committee is in the process of working with the Core Steering Committee to pilot several new approaches to teaching the Individual and Community introductory course. The First Year Coordinating Committee also established a pilot program, Project Granite, to determine the effectiveness of integrating residential life and academics.

The recent approval of the Faculty Standards for Promotion document (Exhibit 2.16) also represents a good example of a thorough process that will result in a more transparent evaluation schema for faculty evaluation. During the 2004-2005 academic year, the Board of Trustees requested review of the guidelines and procedures used in the evaluation of full-time Rindge faculty, with a particular focus on promotion. In spring 2006 an ad hoc Faculty Evaluation Planning Committee comprised of faculty and administrators passed on its recommendations to an ad hoc Faculty Evaluation Implementation Committee, which forwarded its recommendations to the Faculty Affairs Committee in winter 2007. The Faculty voted approval of the new criteria and procedures in November 2007, and these were subsequently approved by the Board in March 2008.

There are also a number of examples of efforts being made to develop meaningful measurements of student outcomes. The College at Rindge has administered the NSSE survey since 2000 and the CIRP Freshman survey since 2002 (though not every year). The College at Rindge also participates in a CIC-funded study utilizing the CLA (Collegiate Learning Assessment) instrument. The survey has been administered to first-year and fourth-year students at Rindge for three years. The study will continue to be administered for at least three more years. CGPS graduate programs developed a comprehensive assessment plan for academic programs in 2001. All graduate programs have adopted this plan and are at various stages of implementation.

The most prominent planning vehicle guiding the University's overall progress is the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan is framed by the institutional Mission and Vision Statements and the stated Strategic Priorities. Overall institutional planning is initiated by the President and Senior Staff and follows a five-year planning cycle. The planning process begins with the development of a draft by the Senior Staff and the President. This initial process identifies the Strategic Priorities for the next five-year cycle.
The draft is presented to the Board of Trustees for counsel, approval, and direction. Significant changes in strategic direction and major annual updates of the Strategic Plan are also shared with the Board.

The planning process draws from a wide array of institutional sources. Comparative data are used from a variety of organizations such as the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, the Council of Independent Colleges, the New Hampshire College and University Council, the NH Department of Education, the NH Board of Nursing, and the Commission on the Accreditation of Physical Therapy Education. When necessary, the University uses the reports of various consultants to enhance the data and analysis. Within this larger planning process, ad hoc work groups and committees are convened depending upon the specific planning and evaluation activities that need to be undertaken. The process involves a broad cross-section of University leaders, committees, faculty and staff who bring diverse perspectives to the initiatives.

Internally, the final draft version of the Strategic Plan is presented to the Pierce Council for vetting by this broad representative body of University constituencies. The document is then forwarded to the Board of Trustees. There are times when opportunities arise that are not contemplated by the Strategic Plan. Opportunities capable of significantly advancing the University are reviewed by Senior Staff and the President. A proposal is then developed summarizing the senior management's recommendations to the Board.

Final planning documents are published on the intranet (eRaven) following approval by the Board of Trustees. All internal stakeholder communities have access to this information through the internal network. All other community updates are communicated through a combination of internal mechanisms, including the Pierce Council, community-wide memoranda (electronic and paper), public forums, standing committees, faculty meetings, web postings, and staff development seminars. The Academic Affairs website houses standing committee minutes, academic planning documents, and other general academic resources.

The most recent University-wide Strategic Plan (2006-2010) reflects clearly and directly the defined strategic intentions developed by the University since 1998. Its key foci are twofold, (1) to build on the prioritization of the undergraduate and graduate curricula to shape Franklin Pierce into "a premier, small private teaching university recognized among the best Northeastern institutions in the liberal arts tradition," and (2) to frame that positioning within the desire to "advance our hallmark, the preparation of active, engaged, citizens and leaders of conscience able to apply liberal learning and professional knowledge to the solution of practical problems at work and in the world."

Planning in CGPS is closely coordinated through the formal strategic planning process. For example, the 2001-2005 and 2006-2010 Strategic Plans called for increased CGPS focus on graduate education. CGPS was also required to reassess the viability of the undergraduate market. Planning resulted in the development and adoption of several new graduate degrees including a Doctor of Physical Therapy, a Doctor of Arts in Leadership, a Master's in IT Management, a Master's in Education, and a Master's in Sports and Facilities Management. CGPS has also developed a B.S. in Nursing completion program, and is in the process of developing an A.S. in Nursing. The new Arizona center will offer Nursing and Physical Therapy and M.B.A. in Global Management programs starting in 2008-2009. CGPS also successfully negotiated and signed articulation agreements with most New Hampshire community colleges in an effort to increase enrollment in baccalaureate completion degrees.

The 2006-2010 Strategic Planning process resulted in the creation of the position of Vice President for Strategic Initiatives (created in 2007). The primary responsibility of this new position was the development and management of new directions for the University. The position was established to diversify the programming of the University and to develop opportunities for the University to be a part of the global higher education community. A number of successful ventures are already in operation, including *Pierce in Vienna, Pierce in Athens*, the online M.B.A. in Luhansk, Ukraine, and the emerging Goodyear campus. The position will primarily focus on the Goodyear project over the next two years.

The Academic Prioritization (2001-2002), Administrative Review (2002-2003), and Core Curriculum Review processes are excellent examples of ad hoc community mechanisms developed specifically in an effort to inform the strategic planning process. These processes were initiated at the request of the Board of Trustees in response to the 1998 NEASC Report.

The Academic Prioritization Committee consisted of the undergraduate Division Chairs, the Deans of the College at Rindge and CGPS, two at-large faculty members, and was chaired by the Provost. All programs, majors, minors, the Core Curriculum, Certificates, Institutes, and academic support functions prepared and submitted reports responding to questions about internal and external educational environments, present and predicted enrollments, and plans for future enhancement of their programs. Using a SWOT analysis framework, the Committee assigned each program a category ranging from "enhance" to "eliminate." The results of this initial analysis of academic programs were communicated to the Curriculum Committee, a standing committee of the faculty, which made the final determinations of how individual programs were to be advanced, monitored, or eliminated.

The committee concluded that four majors, Sociology, International Business, Economic Theory, and Mathematics, should be eliminated. Sociology and Mathematics were retained as minors. The Women's Studies minor was also eliminated and was subsequently converted into the Women in Leadership Certificate program. The Prioritization Committee also recommended the addition of new faculty lines in Criminal Justice, Public History, and Music Technology which have been subsequently filled, and various minor curricular changes within several other programs were implemented.

The Administrative Review was conducted in 2002-2003. The process was structured very much like the process used in Academic Prioritization. The Provost and Prioritization Committee received reports from each administrative department and area, and used a SWOT analysis as a framework for evaluation and recommendations. These recommendations were presented to the President and the Senior Staff. Major outcomes of this process included the reorganization of the Bursar and Financial Aid functions into a single Student Financial Services department and the reorganization of the Registrar's office. These reorganizations were intended to produce a "one-stop" shopping model for the delivery of student administrative services. Shortly after the reorganization, these new departments added a CGPS Team to focus exclusively on CGPS issues. These team members are invited to attend CGPS Directors meetings six times a year to work with center directors and academic directors on specific issues. The CGPS Director of Student Operations position was created in 2007 to coordinate all student service activities within CGPS centers and to streamline the communications with the CGPS student services team located at Rindge.

The Core Review Committee was appointed in 1999 in response to both the 1998 NEASC Report and ongoing concerns raised by both the faculty and administration. The Core Review Committee was charged with completing a thorough review of the general education curriculum and reporting their findings and recommendations to the undergraduate Curriculum Committee. The final set of recommendations reflected a consensus to retain the Individual and Community theme, but to introduce focused changes in curriculum and assessment. Significant changes included the establishment of a new required course, The Challenge of Business in Society, the elimination of the sophomore Portfolio Assessment Seminar, the Senior Liberal Arts Seminar and Science of Society II, and the decision to incorporate assessment functions and the Senior Capstone core course into the major. Majors were asked to submit plans for incorporating these new requirements by the spring semester of 2007.

In some programs, these Core Review-driven changes resulted in the addition of new courses (e.g., Senior Seminar in Psychology) while in others the changes resulted in more refined senior projects or additions to existing capstone classes. Academic programs are taking individual approaches to assessment. In Psychology, for example, the new Senior Seminar includes a comprehensive examination, which will also be required of incoming majors to establish a "pre and post" comparison; in Anthropology, students will build and maintain portfolios for a required presentation to the department in the senior year. The class of 2008 is the first to graduate under these Core revisions.

Undergraduate Elementary and Secondary Education programs have instituted a student ePortfolio program using the TaskStream software platform as a part of the certification

program. These ePortfolios satisfy expectations of the State of New Hampshire for Education certification. The M.Ed. program has also adopted and developed an ePortfolio system. These initiatives were supported by a grant from the Davis Foundation. In a second phase of the grant, ePortfolios were made available to all undergraduates at the Rindge campus, and departments were encouraged to develop a portfolio process for each major. Programs approached this opportunity in different ways with some developing plans to incorporate ePortfolios into the curriculum or to use them for outcomes assessment. Campus wide deliberations, however, did not result in a consensus on the use of ePortfolios. While ePortfolios are still available for programs that wish to use them, their use remains limited.

Other major planning requirements and strategies are driven by external accrediting bodies. At Rindge, the Education certification programs in Elementary, Secondary, and K-12 Art are approved by the New Hampshire Department of Education.

A number of CGPS programs require planning associated with external accreditation requirements. The Doctor of Physical Therapy program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) which includes both a self-study and site visit. The program was approved for six years following the most recent CAPTE review conducted in 2006. The Physical Therapy Director and faculty are now preparing the CAPTE self-study document for the proposed expansion of the Physical Therapy program in Goodyear, AZ. The program is projected to start in December 2009. The B.S. in Nursing completion program was established in 2007 as part of the strategic initiative to increase health science programs. The National League of Nursing (NLN) was chosen as the accrediting agency for this program, and the self-study document is being prepared for fall 2008 submission. The program is scheduled to graduate its first students in May 2009.

Graduate Teacher Education offers seven Masters in Education programs and six Certification programs. All programs are approved by the New Hampshire Department of Education. The Graduate Teacher Certification programs recently (2007) received a five-year approval from the State of New Hampshire. The Doctor of Arts program successfully completed a NEASC site visit and review in 2008.

Appraisal

The values of the Mission Statement were at the core of the development of the most recent Strategic Plan. Individual planning efforts reference these values and it is clear that they are widely shared and understood. These planning processes engage diverse constituencies across the University and serve as the foundation for the development of Strategic Priorities by the President and the Vice Presidents. However, the process by which planning recommendations are initiated and implemented is not consistent across the Colleges or across departments. The consequence of this is confusion about both how some decisions are made and how and when to move forward with initiatives.

There also remains a strong entrepreneurial tendency at the University that at times ignores formal planning processes when significant opportunities arise. While this ability to respond quickly and effectively to such opportunities is perhaps a hallmark of the University's recent

history, and one that has been demonstrably successful, there remains a need to better integrate this strategy into the formal planning process. There also remains a need to better inform campus communities about these initiatives and how they serve the Mission and contribute to the success of the University.

The process of strategic planning is well understood and practiced by the majority of managers. However, this understanding is still not internalized by all stakeholders responsible for the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Action plans are generally not accompanied by well articulated and measurable goals. This complicates goal evaluation and assessment of individual performance. All strategic initiatives and action plans need to be tied to measurable goals, and their metrics must be widely understood by all levels of the University community if data-informed planning is to be effective. This process will need to be implemented consistently in both the administrative and academic areas.

The University has a number of effective communication systems, including faculty and staff meetings, staff seminar days, community forums, and formal and informal meetings with the President and Senior Staff. In order use these opportunities for planning more effectively, managers and staff will consistently need to share planning, evaluation and assessment developments with their respective groups. These forums should also reinforce the importance of planning for the University's success and provide time for discussion, review and feedback on planning proposals.

The University has made significant progress since 1998 in undertaking and using institutional evaluation in a number of areas. Some of the major initiatives include Academic Prioritization, Administrative Review, Core Curriculum Review, the *Foundations of Excellence* project, and approval of the new Faculty Standards for Promotion by the Faculty Evaluation Planning Committee, along with the ongoing efforts using the NSSE, CLA, and CIRP instruments. The University recognizes that it must design and implement a systematic process of academic assessment at both the program and University level that would allow it to evaluate outcomes for guiding future development and strategic planning. Furthermore, the TaskStream ePortfolio system could play a more significant role in the assessment of student learning.

The Provost and the undergraduate Curriculum Committee recently began the process of developing a more formal program review process that would include external review. The Committee completed its deliberations in spring 2008 and has a draft document for presentation to the faculty in fall 2008 with the intention of implementing ongoing program review the following academic year. A similar program review process has been initiated in CGPS, where each program is expected to review and revise its goals and priorities. The CGPS Assessment Plan calls for data collection and analysis in admissions, student readiness, curriculum, faculty, student performance, and student outcomes, following students for one to five years after graduation. The analyses of these data are then provided to CGPS leadership, standing committees, faculty, staff and students so that programs can be assessed in a data-driven environment on a regular basis.

This program review system is distinctively different from the Academic Prioritization undertaken in 2001-2002. While that process provided the University with useful experience in

comparative program evaluation using a consistent format and common parameters for analysis, the high stakes nature of the review was not well-received by faculty. Nonetheless, the University needs to translate that systematic approach of prioritization into one that can effectively serve individual programs and thus the University as a whole. The University also recognizes that it needs much better coordination between academic assessment and program review processes. Moreover, the University recognizes that it must do a better job of benchmarking its reviews to other institutions, regionally and nationally.

To insure that planning and evaluation have the internal data they require, the University needs to develop a more comprehensive process for data collection and organization. The University has begun a system of long-term preservation of its records through the Library and the College Archives but has not yet developed a centralized location for the storage and retrieval of important planning and evaluation data. Individual offices have effective programs for collection of data and relevant documents, but a central system for documenting and locating such information is not available. While the University has recently hired a new Institutional Research Analyst, this position has experienced considerable turnover (3 people in the last 5 years), further slowing initiatives to systematize data collection and access.

The Office of Strategic Initiatives is an important addition to the University strategic planning function. The initiatives developed by that office have already expanded offerings for students, enhanced the scholarly community of those disciplines involved in each initiative, introduced new stakeholders to the University, identified potential candidates for the Board of Trustees, and enhanced the program offerings in CGPS. The faculty at Rindge recently issued a statement of support for a Summit Committee to develop a fifteen-to-twenty year vision statement and plan for the College at Rindge. This initiative would be coordinated by the Vice President for Strategic Initiatives.

Projection

The Senior Staff will work closely with all department heads to develop a stronger understanding of the elements of data-informed planning. All administrative and academic managers will be trained to create action plans with measurable goals. This training will have to be shared across all levels of the University. Efforts in this regard will begin in the spring of 2010 so as to coincide with preparations for the next Strategic Plan, scheduled for 2011-2015.

The process by which planning recommendations are initiated and implemented is not consistently understood at every level of the University. The Deans of the Colleges will develop a communication plan to better explain the elements of the strategic planning process to the faculties. All Vice Presidents will work with their respective department heads to develop a communication plan for similar purposes customized for the administrative staff. In addition, a Staff Seminar day will be dedicated to this strategic planning process. Managers should be encouraged to involve staff and faculty early in the planning process. Efforts in this regard will begin in the spring of 2010 so as to coincide with preparations for the next Strategic Plan, scheduled for 2011-2015.

The Provost will convene a taskforce to complete an environmental scan of the best practices used by the University's peer and aspirant academic institutions. This scan will focus on best

practices used in the review and assessment of academic programs. The data collected will assist the University in benchmarking internal progress in these areas. The taskforce will be convened in October 2009, and the taskforce report will be due to the Provost by April 2010.

At the direction of the President, the Provost will establish a University Assessment Committee by January 2009, consisting of administrators and faculty from both Rindge and CGPS. This Committee will oversee University assessment initiatives, ensure creation of University-wide data sets, and provide requisite leadership on this issue to all constituencies. The Chair and Vice-Chair positions shall be divided between faculty and administration.

The Deans of the Colleges will work with their respective faculties to develop common reporting templates for all academic programs. Such reporting should include identification of program objectives, desired student learning outcomes, specific measures for assessment, and means for reporting on an annual or bi-annual basis. This work should begin in 2008 and move toward implementation at the start of the 2010 academic year.

The Rindge faculty has become more actively engaged in shared governance in recent years. The recent faculty statement of support for a proposed Summit Committee to develop a fifteen-to-twenty year vision statement and plan for the College at Rindge reflects a renewed sense of trust between faculty and administration. The Vice President for Strategic Initiatives will convene this Summit Committee comprised of both faculty and administration starting in fall 2008. The Committee will present the final vision statement and plan to the President by fall 2009.

The Director of Information Technology, the Director of the Library and the Institutional Research Analyst will develop a detailed plan for University data collection, organization, and storage. This plan will include the development of a more comprehensive Common Data set, identify all parties responsible for ongoing data collection, and make provision for a centralized location for the storage and retrieval of important planning and evaluation data. Planning will begin in February 2010, and the final plan will be presented to the Senior Staff in October 2010.

The Provost will appoint a taskforce to fully review the potential and efficacy of the TaskStream ePortfolio system as a possible vehicle for collecting, organizing, and presenting artifacts and outcomes required of a more systematic approach to the assessment. This taskforce will be constituted in the fall of 2009, and the final recommendations must be presented to the Provost by the fall of 2011.