Strategic Planning Opportunities and Challenges

Empowering Higher Education Institutions through Information Sharing and Improved Governance

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Outline

I- Definition of strategic planning

II- Common techniques used in strategic planning

III- Success of a strategic plan

IV- Strategic planning at LAU
What in general is strategic planning?

- Strategic planning is simply an effort to anticipate, predict, and ideally control future activities or outcomes (Tromp and Ruben, 2004).

- Strategic planning envisions the advancement of the vision and mission for an organization through goals, priorities, and objectives that translate into initiatives in line with outcomes, with strategic resource allocation and commitments to assessment, accountability reporting and planning driving budget not vice versa (Rives, 2009).
Why do we need to plan strategically?

A variety of internal and external factors usually drive institutions to engage in strategic planning.

These include:

• The increase in demand for higher education;

• The need to compete with emerging institutions of diverse academic models and institutional structure.

• The need for well educated individuals with a range of competencies useful across career lines and employers.

• A growing concern for quality and the need to establish standards of performance at the institutional and program level.
Five common elements in a strategic plan

1. Vision, Mission and Values
2. Environmental Analysis
3. Goals and Objectives
4. Action Planning
5. Accountability
Vision, Mission, Values

- Vision is a statement of what the organization wants to become, that is, its future aspirations (Ruben 2003)

- Mission is the basic purpose of an organization, that is, what is it trying to accomplish (Kolter and Murphy 1981)

- Values outline the ideals and behaviors deemed important by the organization.

- Collectively, the vision, mission and values of an institution are interrelated and their importance stems from the fact that they help in informing environmental analysis, setting goals, developing action plans and accountable systems.
Environmental analysis

Every organization operates in an environment that has a variety of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT).

- **Macro-environment**
  - Demographic
  - Economic
  - Political
  - Technological
  - Cultural

- **Micro-environment**
  - Market: Traditional & Non-traditional students, alumni, source of funds, employers
  - Public: financial, media, government
  - Competitive: direct, type

- **Internal Environment**
  - Administrators
  - Faculty
  - Staff
Strategic goals

Strategic goals provide the organization with a clear purpose and a reference point against which to measure and demonstrate institutional progress and accomplishments.
Strategic goals

- Mission
- Values
- Vision

Tangible Outcomes

Measurable vs. Not Measurable

GOALS
# SMART goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific</th>
<th>• Is your goal clearly defined?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measurable</td>
<td>• How will we know if we reached our goal?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attainable</td>
<td>• Can the goal be reached?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant</td>
<td>• Does the goal represent you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timely</td>
<td>• Set a time for when your goal will be finished?</td>
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Action planning

In the action planning phase focus shifts from broad goals to specific strategies and action steps that will facilitate the realization of the set goals.
Action planning

Such plans delineate short-term actions needed to move the institution in the right direction in the immediate future and long-term actions involving more complex, evolutionary changes (Tromp and Ruben 2004).

Action plans detail what will be done, by whom, when and what resources are needed.
Evaluation and accountability

- For a meaningful assessment, level of activity (increase, decrease, constant), extent of impact in intended direction and degree of progress are essential dimensions of accountability reporting and ensuring the realization of the strategic plan.

- The purpose of accountability reporting and assessment is to measure the ongoing results of a plan against the plan’s goals and to take corrective action when deemed necessary.
Basic elements in a strategic plan

- Goals and Objectives
- Continuous Planning and Improvement
- Environmental Analysis
- Vision
- Mission
- Core Values
- Accountability and Evaluation
- Resource Allocation
- Action Planning
Strategic Plan 2011-2016

LAU Vision

LAU Mission

LAU Values

Education
- Engage students in an intellectually challenging and diverse learning environment that integrates rich Liberal Arts education with strong goal driven Sciences and Humanities majors and career-oriented programs.

Students
- Recruit, retain, and graduate diverse students, who will be effective members of their disciplines, professions and communities.

Faculty
- Recruit, retain, and foster the development of distinguished educators and scholars.

Outreach and Civic Engagement
- Extend LAU's academic, professional and social services beyond the confines of its campus.

Areas of Focus
- Identify and target substantive areas of University strength that correspond to national and regional needs and nurture initiatives that are responsive to those needs.

Graduate Studies and Research
- Develop, Sustain and enhance University graduate programs and research capacity.
Development of the mission statement

Mission Statement 2005-2010
- Lebanese American University is committed to academic excellence, student-centeredness, the advancement of scholarship, the education of the whole person, and the formation of students as future leaders in a diverse world (2005).

- Developed by faculty and staff representatives of the LAU community and approved by the Board of Trustees (BOT).

Mission Statement 2011-2016
Lebanese American University is committed to academic excellence, student-centeredness, civic engagement, the advancement of scholarship, the education of the whole person, and the formation of students as future leaders in a diverse world. (2011).

- Developed by faculty, staff, student representatives of the LAU community, BIA and approved by the BOT.

- The BIA and BOT includes representation of the public interest and reflects areas of competence to fulfill its responsibilities such as academicians, medical doctors and financial experts.
Accreditation

Institutional Accreditation
- LAU is accredited by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)

Program Accreditation
- The Doctor of Pharmacy program is fully accredited by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE). This status allows LAU Pharm.D. graduates to sit for the North American Pharmacy Licensure Examination (NAPLEX), and practice in most U.S. states. ACPE first accredited the program in 2002. LAU’s Pharm.D. is the only ACPE-accredited program outside the United States.

- The Civil, Computer, Electrical, Industrial and Mechanical undergraduate engineering degree programs are accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology.

- The Bachelor of Science degree program in Computer Science is accredited by the Computing Accreditation Commission of ABET.

- The baccalaureate program at the Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing, Lebanese American University, is accredited by the Collegiate Commission on Nursing Education (CCNE).
The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) approved the School of Business’ eligibility to begin the Pre-Accreditation Process, an important milestone on the road to success in AACSB accreditation.

The Bachelor of Architecture degree is officially recognized by the French Government, which allows our graduates to practice in France and the European Union. The National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) which accredits all architecture programs in the United States has recently approved the eligibility for candidacy of the Bachelor of Architecture.
Success of a strategic plan

The success of a strategic plan is dependent on three imperative components:

- Leadership,
- Communication, and
- Assessment
Success of a strategic plan

Defining leadership roles and responsibilities is essential to a plan’s effectiveness.

Leadership style has been found to influence collaboration, engagement and commitment to seeing plans through to realization.
A major role of leadership is to encourage dialogue and communication between the participants leading to improved understanding of an institution’s or an academic unit’s vision and mission and fostering a sense of ownership of the strategic plan and belonging to the organization.

Good leadership facilitates the creation of an inclusive, open process that provides opportunities for input and participation from virtually all members of the university community.
Success of a strategic plan

Assessment of a plans outcomes at regular intervals helps monitor progress. Plans, strategies, and activities can then be modified accordingly if needed to ensure that set targets are met. The process is a cycle and it is important to close the loop.
Challenges

Implementation can also be negatively impacted:

- In certain areas where the champion of the action step is a body
- Areas new to the institution or where the institution does not have extensive experience or expertise
- Action steps where there has been a change in leadership.
- Areas where it has been difficult to maintain unity of purpose, consistency, compatibility of results, and continuity of flow in strategic initiatives.
- Resources – human, financial and facilities are not sufficient
Wisely employed strategic planning can be a powerful tool to help universities and academic units listen to its constituencies, encourage the emergence of ideas from all levels, recognize opportunities, make decisions supported by evidence and strive to actualize a shared vision (Doris, Kelley and Trainer, 2002).
References


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