LASC’s Planning Process Challenges and Solutions

The College’s Faculty, Staff, Administrators and Students Perspective

August 2012

Los Angeles Southwest College
Rationale for the Strategic Planning Retreat's Focus Groups.

Here is the Accreditation recommendation related to strategic planning:

- “The team recommends that the College validate the current planning model by formally assessing the effectiveness of the process with qualitative and quantitative data. Further the team recommends the College be attentive to the regular and consecutive implementation of the annual process and document the results for dissemination to the college constituency for the purpose of program improvement.”

- Within the report it also says “LASC is aware that further improvements in the evaluation process are needed. The areas of focus include: the sustainability of practices, the evaluation of outcomes at the institutional level, the improvement of the use of data for measuring short and long-term goals, and communication to the campus community about the status of student learning outcomes.”
Focus Group Questions

Goals of Focus Groups:
- identify what's wrong
- identify how many possibly agree with what's wrong
- provide actions/strategies on how to fix what's wrong
- identify what's right
- describe an ideal college

Focus Group Questions

1. What are the challenges or barriers that LASC faculty, staff, administrators face when they have no meaningful and ongoing involvement in the development, implementation and evaluation of the college's strategic plan?

2. What are the challenges or barriers that LASC faculty, staff, administrators face when the strategic planning process is not efficient nor effective in integrating unit and department plans?

3. What are the challenges or barriers that LASC faculty, staff, administrators face when they do not receive adequate information to prepare for the planning process?

4. What are the challenges or barriers that LASC faculty, staff, administrators face when the college does not use data to measure short and long-term goals?

5. What are the challenges or barriers that LASC faculty, staff, administrators face when there is limited or no access to the criteria, tools, and procedures in place to modify the strategic plan as it progresses?
Overview of SPC Focus Groups

• Facilitators - ATD Data Team
• August 21, 2012
• LASC Faculty, Staff, Administrators, and ASO students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>#</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
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Overview of SPC Focus Groups

The Process of Evaluating the data gathered from the 5 Focus Groups.

• Strengths and Weaknesses of the strategic planning process were derived from the overarching comment from the Accreditation Site Visit:

“The Team recommends that the College validate the current planning mode by formally assessing the effectiveness of the process with qualitative and quantitative data.”
The Process of Evaluating the data gathered from the 5 Focus Groups (cont.)

As the Data Team reviewed the “Challenges/Barriers (Identify what’s wrong)”, from the questions for each Focus Group, there were themes throughout which pointed towards strengths and weaknesses in the strategic planning process.

Following are the results....
Planning Process Challenges
(Weaknesses)

- Lack of Communication
  (Gr 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

- Prevalent Resource Depletion
  (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

- Lack of Motivation
  (Gr 1, 2, 3, 4)

- FeelingDisconnected
  (Gr 1, 2, 3)

- Not Sharing Same Goals
  (Gr 2, 3, 4)

- Breakdown in Communication
  (Gr 2, 3, 5)

Legend:
- Green Boxes = 5 out of 5 Focus Group Responses
- Blue Boxes = 4 out of 5 Focus Group Responses
- Orange Boxes = 3 out of 5 Focus Group Responses
## Planning Process Challenges *(Weaknesses)* cont.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Campus Morale</th>
<th>Plans Not Implemented</th>
<th>Lack of Understanding How Data Is Used</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Gr 1, 4)</td>
<td>(Gr 2, 5)</td>
<td>(Gr 4, 5)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Website</th>
<th>Transparency</th>
<th>Campus Culture and Attitude</th>
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<tr>
<td>(Gr 2)</td>
<td>(Gr 4)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Active Attendance in Committees</th>
<th>Lack of Accountability</th>
<th>Lack of Training</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Gr 5)</td>
<td>(Gr 4)</td>
<td>(Gr 5)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Legend:**
- Green Boxes = 2 out of 5 Focus Group Responses
- Blue Boxes = 1 out of 5 Focus Group Responses
Planning Process Strengths

- Strategic Plan looks good on Paper (5 groups)
- Positive Contributions (4 groups)
- Cohort of Dedicated People (3 groups)
- Acknowledgement of Weaknesses (3 groups)
- ATD (2 groups)
- SPC Retreats (2 groups)
- Motivational Speakers (2 groups)
- Program Review Data (2 groups)
Overcoming the Weaknesses in the SP Process

The Lack of Communication
(Specifically: ineffective communication; breakdown in communication between faculty, staff, administrators, and student; misinformation; poor communication; and lack of clear communication processes and channels)

**Knowledge:**
Actions/strategies on how to fix what’s wrong

- We need to communicate (regular updates)
- Better delivery methods
- Improve flow of information
- Training on how to get information (getting correct information)
- Know source of information (misinformation)
- Website, campus newsletter
- Ask questions, read email, Attend Senate and Department meetings
- Read your contract

**Changes:**

- Lead by example and own errors
- Conduct survey of delivery methods (what we offer)
- Online resources up-to-date
- Regular cross-training
- Improve communication to community via mass media
- Bring back journalism'/web-master
- Improve communication (At a glance)
- Get a website that is user friendly
- Identify important items
- FLEX mandatory for all with activities for classified and staff
- Daily digest of important campus announcements
- Committee minutes and agendas posted on website in a timely manner
- Use of voice mail for campus activities

**What Works**

- Increasing participation from constituency groups (i.e. classified staff)
- Positive contributions
- FLEX Day
- Some department meetings
Overcoming the Weaknesses in the SP Process

Prevalent Resource Depletion
(Specifically: loss of resources; prevalent resource depletion; resources not allocated properly; allocation of resources; improper/inefficient management of resources)

Knowledge:
Actions/strategies on how to fix what’s wrong

- Pass tax initiative (11-12)
- Know the process
- Seek out more information
- How decisions are made
- Review resource requirements regularly
- Plan resource usage

Changes:

- Provide all resources needed by prioritization and consultation
- Clean school (appearance) – change culture
- Ongoing training
- Resource accountability

What Works

- CTE model of acquiring alternative resources: Budget allocation plan
- We are starting conversations
- Acknowledging we need to change and taking the steps toward change
- “Can Do!” attitude
Aligning Challenges with Interventions

The following are suggestions from the Data Team:

- Develop a process flowchart (not only for the SPC – should include how SPC works with institutional Plans)
- Process Improvement function (use positives)
- Incentives
- Campus Culture Improvement
- Video Training via Online/YouTube