

PRIME

1. What was the purpose of PRIME?

There was some consensus that PRIME was to improve the planning process through the collection and subsequent analysis of agreed upon categories of data regarding academic programs, student and administrative support functions. This was to be accomplished by agreeing on data elements that could be collected by the computer system and other elements collected by the individual departments. Through analysis of this common benchmark data, better decisions could be made in utilizing resources, building budgets, improving services and planning programs for the future. This broad assessment tool would then provide a means to evaluate the effectiveness of efforts made in such areas as the scheduling of classes to meet student needs, utilization of resources, effectiveness of various student service organization and effectiveness of academic programs as measured by identified student outcomes.

PRIME would provide the framework for the systematic interaction of faculty, administration and support personnel in an annual planning process. This process would recommend the initiation of new programs and services and eliminating those programs and services, which would be determined to be ineffective and therefore unnecessary.

2. What process was used in PRIME?

Those interviewed reported on two processes. One process was that used in developing the criterion to be used in the analysis of the effectiveness of programs and services. This process involved committees composed of deans and faculty members that met regularly in an attempt to agree on the definition of terms develop measurement instruments and standard reports. There was some confusion as to the actual committee structure. An oversight committee existed and representation came from the faculty, deans, a president and resource personnel from the ITS and research organizations.

The 2nd process was that to be used in the implementation. A similar committee structure was to be used. Lengthy meetings were held, often weekly, to review data collected, analyze output reports and attempt to refine the instruments. Trial runs were made to produce computer and research reports that departments were given and they were then requested to provide analysis and conclusions that were to be returned to the committees for further deliberations. There was general consensus that the process was not fully developed and never finalized. It was also a very time consuming process.

3. What did PRIME accomplish?

Data was given to academic and administrative departments to be used in planning and decision making for the future. The awareness level in the different departments was increased and people began to objectively discuss and plan together. Focus was given to the student and the many operations of the college. People were made aware of the existence and importance of areas outside their own. The college community began to use data in their decision making!

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People felt that an attempt was being made to involve them in some decision making and planning and it was not all being done at the top. The complexity of the process and the change in administration limited the accomplishments of PRIME, which was still evolving.

4. Did PRIME help in accomplishing day to day responsibilities?

Almost no one felt that PRIME helped him or her with their day to day responsibilities. It was a process that was not complete and its activities were not related to their own specific responsibilities. This was particularly true of the faculty that was interviewed.

Some people in administration and people new to the college felt some benefit in their day to day responsibilities by making them more aware of the college operations and it's effectiveness. Still other deans felt that the discussions with faculty and department chairpersons were better due to data that was objective and formatted for readability and interpretation. Some inaccuracies and limitations of the data available limited the effectiveness of these discussions.

5. How successful was PRIME?

PRIME was not viewed as successful. Most agreed that the only success might have been in getting people to begin to use data to make decisions. Some modest success has to be attributed to PRIME since discussions happened regarding inaccuracy of data provided and what data should be provided next time so that decisions and planning could be done.

But since PRIME went away, any real successes could not be measured; there was no follow up.

6. What about PRIME was not successful?

The PRIME process was far too ambitious and consumed too much time. There was a feeling that PRIME was not made relevant to the faculty as a whole. There was little commitment beyond the specific tasks and committee work assigned because all of the old systems were still in place. It was just extra! The scope of the project was too large. PRIME was not in existence long enough to have been successful. The support went away before any full cycle.

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7. How could PRIME have been more successful?

The project would have been more successful if the scope had been narrowed. There was general consensus that PRIME considered too many factors. Patience and commitment to the process needed to be given in order for it to succeed. The commitment would have been easier to get if the process began from the bottom up. There were too many tasks assigned and done because deans or faculty were told to do them with no understanding of how they fit. Major councils need to be more a part of the process rather than just receiving data or instructions on what to do.

More training of faculty and staff early on in how to utilize the data and reports in their own job function would have made PRIME more successful. The training would need to include information about objectives of the process and how each individual could participate and benefit from it. PRIME was viewed as an excellent idea but it needed time to evolve.

Since PRIME was heavily dependent on data, it would have been more successful if the computer system(s) supported the demands expected from it. In many cases, data was requested that was not available in the current systems.

Summary of focus groups and interviews for PRIME

1. Purpose of PRIME.

Most of the persons present at the focus group were unclear about the purpose of PRIME. Generally they viewed it as a waste of time. The aggregate of individual interviews provided a fairly consistent array of responses. These are summarized as follows. PRIME reviewed all areas of the College. Consistent set of data shared by faculty and deans for mutual understanding and planning. To strengthen the operations of the college and effectiveness of planning. Was a process for feedback to improve programs, create new programs, removed programs/classes. Gathering of information. Realign information about the College, provide comprehensive information about the College. PRIME was a method for evaluating College's services and their delivery. Program evaluation and review. Objective benchmarks against which programs could be compared. Decisions to be made on facts rather than anecdotes. Evaluation process to cover all activities of the College, instructional and supportive. To measure outcomes. A broad assessment tool. Rational, consistent way to look at College programs.

2. Process.

The focus group remarked on how PRIME tried to be all-inclusive. They seemed to concentrate on the manual tasks associated with the process: had to fill out a lot of sheets/forms and plan to improve based on the information generated. The individual interviews were in general were clearer about the actual components and process, as follows. Faculty group developed a series of questions to be answered for each course and program. ITS provided data. Faculty reviewed each year with dean to then tie into planning and budgeting process. Several interviewed didn't know what the process was or were unclear about process or whether the process was even implemented due to memory lapse. Process never firmed up or finalized. Never got off the ground. Series of data questions, computer-generated data reviewed by departments, filled in as needed. Process hardly ever completed as a closed loop. Forms with gathered data to try to understand what had happened, tried to predict future trends. Presentation of data (person felt it was too top-down). Faculty and deans sitting down to look at their programs and curriculum. Definition of terms and outcomes, computer generated data. Data collection and review--time-consuming.

3. PRIME accomplish?

The focus group felt that PRIME accomplished nothing. The individual interviews were more benign in their comments, took a more philosophical, more tolerant point of view, as follows. Set up a college-wide process for a systematic review. Nothing, but showed ourselves that we could identify critical decision-making components, assemble, assess and deliver information. Didn't accomplish much of anything. Began to change a whole college from top-down to more consensus participative decision-making. Brought people across the College together. People developed a wider appreciation for whole College and its issues. Didn't do much to help with

serious planning; people became disillusioned with enormous amount of work involved. Nothing much accomplished, but showed our weaknesses--didn't have needed data, didn't know what to do with data we had, showed lack of computer support. Not sure what it accomplished. New way to look at things, pointed out flaws in our record-keeping and processes. Created an awareness, consciousness-raising among faculty about what they were doing, who their students were and student needs. One person wasn't sure. Focused people's attention on students, what we were doing and how students were affected. Getting people to sit down and discuss objectively their programs based on objective data and make decisions on it. Collected data together for the first time so that people could consistently assess and evaluate for planning. Got people to think in a certain manner, being accountable.

4. Help you?

Focus group didn't see any day-to-day benefit for them. Said that people didn't buy into PRIME. Again, the individual interviews were more accepting of PRIME (or more circumspect), as follows, but a clear difference of personal appreciation. Yes, brought assumptions to surface, answered specific questions, was an avenue to discuss with dean areas of concern, areas where we needed to take action. No. Thought it irrelevant because there was no perceived effect. Yes, it was helpful but never put into full-blown program. Minor help. Hindered rather than helped. Didn't help, but might have helped some deans and department chairs. Gave a quick overview of areas. No, was a pain in the neck. Yes, opportunity to sit down with staff and discuss objective data. Yes, to extent that it gave an opportunity to talk to faculty. No, never got down to teaching level.

5. Purpose to result, how successful?

The focus group did not find PRIME successful, saw no change as a result of PRIME. They did concede that PRIME provided for the first time a sense for longer-range planning. Again, the individual interviews were more forgiving, as follows. Eight on a scale of ten; process worked better than product; data was suspect. Fact it doesn't exist any more addresses its lack of success. Failed not because it was ineffective; failed because it wasn't supported. Didn't have any effect at all among faculty. Didn't change the culture; didn't make a long-term adjustment. Not successful; information wasn't helpful in decision-making. Lot less successful than it could have been had the College followed through on its commitment to PRIME. Difficult to access because it went away; wasn't successful because it did go away. One person couldn't comment. Not very. Six on a scale of ten due to inaccurate data. Modestly successful because it acutally happened, not so because of inconsistencies in data, a growing distrust in the data, changes didn't occur. Four on a scale of ten.

6. What not successful/why?

The focus group stressed lack of buy-in, that it was forced top-down on people, that it was never fully implemented. Individuals interviews provided similar analysis, as follows. PRIME wasn't

given a chance; was a huge undertaking; leadership changed causing it to terminate. Was a pretty decent system. Lack of follow-up. Process so lengthy and cumbersome that pieces never came together. Process got lost. Was top-down; no consensus for doing; key lead administrator at fault. Didn't change the structure or the culture to be successful. Emasculated old structure but didn't free up time for attending to new structure. Viewed as one administrator's pet project. Lack of commitment at all levels. Failure to continue it because of leadership change. Process required negotiation and compromise, but who would accomplish change and fund it was not clear. So time-consuming it overwhelmed people. Was given a premature burial. Failure to stay with it. Lack of agreement about data, lack of confidence in the process as a result; failure to provoke changes. Too cumbersome and ambitious; too big a leap for the College; not enough training of people to carry it out.

7. How more successful?

The focus group believed that it needed to be bottom up rather than top-down; needed grass roots buy-in. Individual interviews shared similar viewpoints, but were more comprehensive, as follows. More buy-in from deans. Nothing, was a pretty decent system as-is. More understanding of the purpose and one's place in the process. More College unanimity. Shouldn't abstract planning from operations--need more integrated planning. Outcomes should be more important than process, consensus more important than process. Greater honesty in declaring that we didn't have the data in some instances rather than filling in data at all costs to have forms completed. Broader base of participation (more people involved). Needed follow-up, was stopped before it could be assessed. One person couldn't say. Try to determine what critical success factors were and focus on those instead of the numerous concerns and topics. Should have stayed with it. Another said the same: should have stayed with it; worked through inconsistencies. Should have slowed the process down; tried control groups.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING

1. Purpose.

Antenna to external world, collect information on social, technological, economic, educational, and political trends. Information that might affect College and ways we do things. To project the direction of the College, new programs needed and how to get them in place. To take a look at curriculum, at business/industry needs, future educational plans, programs, instructional delivery systems. Direction of the job market, the direction of social needs, to develop programs around those things. Longer-range thinking, more global perspective. Intended to create a future context for what we were about, threats and opportunities, positive and negative change agents. Review of the external expectations and review of similar institutions. Literature search to establish what we (particularly faculty) needed to know, to think about.

2. Process.

Cumbersome process using seven areas for scanning; separate groups met to discuss trends, etc., came together in a report to help establish college-wide indicators and where we were on them, if they were changing, the whole futuring idea. Think tank. Get as broad a level of interest across the College with faculty and staff who would periodically come together and share resources and discovered information. Loosely defined: look at everything and find something that might be helpful. Literature search, fed back to faculty; developed set topics for investigation. Committees worked in each of the different areas. College-wide committee looked at information from journals, etc., abstracted and disseminated throughout the College.

3. Accomplish.

Made a few people involved real interested and aware of the future; got people into the mainstream of what was going on in the outside world. Helped break an old concept of budgeting for budgeting; caused to look for possible impacts in the future. Could have led to some re-focusing of our programs, but not sure it did. Drew us closer to the external community. Tough to get a lot of faculty involved; it was saying to faculty, before this hits you over the head, why don't we take a look and do some planning. Set some directions of curriculum. Hard to say; maybe got individuals involved in the process to take some information back to their own jobs and to the people they worked with. Helped create an awareness.

4. Help you?

Sure, helped me think about curriculum. Day to day--no, but did create a more global view of my responsibilities. Felt it did: knew where to nag properly about what we learned from the community, gave ammunition. Yes, some it found its way back into the College, more sense of social responsibility. Outcome for understanding was pretty good; implementation and movement wasn't. Yes, people took information back to their own jobs; its just a part of how I approach my work.

5. Purpose to result, how successful?

Four on a ten point scale, because we never figured out how to systematically work it into the planning process so that we could show that it did affect or did not affect. However, general community probably didn't see it as having any particular effect. Not successful in having a visible impact on planning or budgeting because no process in place that allowed the implications of that dialogue to be baked into planning. Was successful in pockets, certain campuses. Don't think it was very successful because people didn't have a way of implementing what we wer finding out, no way to feed it back into the institution. It motivated some faculty. Put into plain language some facts, provided a lot of information. One person couldn't say what it accomplished.

6. What not successful/why?

We tried to do it just at one level. Needed to be done on a lot of levels; was done on a top-down

basis. Needed to devise a way to feed back to the curriculum planning level. Should have been made a meaningful part of the planning process (both operational and strategic). Not enough direct responsibility to make sure that it was done and that it worked and that the results came back. Lot of faculty didn't see how it would affect them; therefore, they didn't participate. Needed a plan to for accomplishing the insights provided by environmental scanning. Not really hooked into the organization structure of the College, too isolated from structures; no one really owned it.

7. How more successful?

Figure out a better communication process. Needed to help middle management or the dean figure out how to take information back to faculty and make it meaningful. Articulate it with other aspects of strategic planning. Make it a part of people's evaluations. Needed to put down a plan for accomplishing the insights that the environmental scan provided. Should have been links between scanning and the major councils; councils needed to be active participants. Scanning needed to be built into the structure rather than just placed on top of it.

Saunders Model

1. Purpose

Memory somewhat unclear, think it was when indicators came into being; purpose was to determine a broad range of institutional outcomes, bring college together, analyze systematically and establish the College's strategic plan. Intention was to create a broad base of planning, a distributed planning model with a bottom up approach. As with PRIME an attempt to get at a more generic kind of assessment process, institutional assessment. A means by which to do strategic planning.

2. Process

Very broad level to draw components that would undergird strategic planning from across the institution and bring them to gether in an organized fashion. A lot of meetings. Had a short life span when new chancellor took over. Numerous committees were formed; key component areas of strategic planning; sub-grouped then formed. All focused on establishing plans. Process an inclusive one. Came up with critical success factors for effectiveness review

3. Accomplished.

Don't really know. Probably not much. It showed that the College was willing to engage in planning on a comprehensive basis, that it made strides in establishing strategic plans for itself. Was an empowerment piece because of number of people involved. Raised people's awareness,

made them a little more sophisticated about planning; people starting to think more analytically about planning and the need for assessment and measurement.

4. Helped you.

Yes, but it was cumbersome because of some many indices; needlessly complex. It never really had a chance to because of its short life. Yes, on a personal planning level, on a personal learning level.

5. Purpose to result, how successful?

Very successful; did everything we planned to do. It wasn't successful because it wasn't used (i.e., short life span); people were skeptical after PRIME. It was successful on the planning side. About 50% successful because we started off in another direction

6. What not successful/why?

No knowledge of. Failure to implement. Failure on persistence side and measuring of outcomes side. It wasn't a planning model that was highly controllable once it all got articulated. Never let it play out; need to do strategic planning over a long period of time to be able to tell whether you were successful or not--we never gave it a chance.

7. How more successful?

Better buy-in if more simply structured. Concentrating on fewer outcomes and strategies. Letting it play out should have been a part of it. People wrote goals that weren't measureable.

Calkins Model

1. Purpose.

No idea, was out of the loop. Was on the periphery. Was intended as a working document that we could use: identified what it was we were doing and how we were doing it and so on, i.e., institutional effectiveness. Create longer range planning targets, longer ranger vision, clarify directions. To wake up the College to the need for change. Instituted a vision and values statements for the College. How were we going to realize that vision, so strategic directions were set.

2. Process.

All campuses would develop their objectives and put into a report and then base their budgeting on their planning. Every two year cycle, a broad-based group of people from the organization

brought together in a retreat where directions were written. These were then communicated to rest of community and would shape campus planning.

3. Accomplished.

Can't think of anything it accomplished. Clarified for the community what we thought we were about in declaring strategic directions, leadership. Made the institution understand that it was one entity. College needed vision and values statements. Focused the College on being student-centered. Brought parts of the institution into the planning process that hadn't been there before

4. Helped you.

It probably was to some extent, probably a four on a scale of ten. Yes, helped with personal planning and campus planning. Person wasn't sure that it did or didn't.

5. Purpose to result/ how successful?

Too labor intensive. People really hadn't bought into it. Two on a scale of ten because it didn't work, it didn't stick. It was successful in many respects: focused on directions for outcomes. It woke people up; couldn't be on the fence any longer.

6. What not successful/why?

Directions limited in number but campuses went back and created operational plans spanning two years; these were too complex and detailed and did not account for change over the two year cycle. Raised people's expectations, but what amount of change could the College tolerate; that started ripping at the institution.

7. More successful?

Better mentoring in how to drive the directions down to the campus planning model.

PROE

1. Purpose.

To evaluate the vocational programs, developed by the state, standardized assessment techniques. Longitudinal developments in programs: enrollments, trends, etc. Also opportunity to obtain perceptions at all levels both internal and external about the program and its features. A data side and a perceptions side (advisory committees, faculty, students, dean).

2. Process.

Five year cycle for programs. Notice sent to programs up for review. Forms sent out and prepared through department chair, then to dean. Submitted then to College vocational dean who would submit to state for compliance.

3. Accomplished.

Successful in seeking a broad base of input, perceptions, and evaluations regarding the program. It was systematically done. Gave vocational faculty opportunity to look at their programs and assess them based on the data they received.

4. Help you?

Not sure it was helpful to me, but real helpful to the people in the programs, gave them some insight. Probably not much day to day.

5. Purpose to result/ how successful?

6. What not successful/why?

Was handled as a compliance issue rather than as a learning tool or a true planning document. No effort to make it a part of the college planning functions. A lot of it was self-reporting, therefore a certain amount of self-preservation and self-serving rather than objectivity.

7. More successful?

Not baked into the hierarchy of systematic planning at the College. Don't know; don't know that it needed to be made more successful.

Synthesis of PRIME

Q1. What was the purpose of PRIME?

In general, most of those interviewed felt that the purpose of PRIME was to review the performance of the college by collecting and analyzing data from all areas of the institution. Some noted that PRIME was meant to provide benchmark data against which departments could measure their own effectiveness. Although there was general consensus that PRIME was a data collection tool, not everyone noted a connection between the collection of data and the college's planning processes. Some interviewees—faculty in particular—were not at all certain about PRIME's purpose, and felt that it was a waste of their time.

Q2. What was the process used in PRIME?

Many were confused about the process used in PRIME. Several remembered that at the start of the process, there was a complex committee structure designed to set data definitions and develop standard reports. Once this work had been completed, faculty and staff were provided with standardized data from ITS describing their programs and courses. Once faculty had received their data, they were to discuss it with their dean. Nearly all of those interviewed felt that the process never really got off the ground, for a variety of reasons.

Members of the focus group felt that the process depended too heavily on time-consuming paperwork. Several remembered spending long hours completing forms which they were required to submit but which never resulted in any useful information.

Q3. What do you feel PRIME accomplished?

Those interviewed believed that PRIME began to establish a collegewide system for data collection and review. Some believed that this started to create a participative atmosphere in the college, while others felt that it shifted the focus of the institution to the students. Few believed that PRIME actually helped people make decisions which incorporated data, but most felt that it was a step in the right direction as it attempted to involve people at all levels in the decision-making process.

Again, members of the focus group had a different perspective, noting that PRIME accomplished very little.

Did the process help you accomplish your day to day responsibilities?

Few felt that PRIME was helpful on a day-to-day basis. Many mentioned that PRIME never really had a chance to be useful as it was so short-lived. Others felt that the data collected in PRIME did not have a real relationship to their daily work.

Some administrators noted that PRIME was useful as it provided them with information about all areas of the college, and set the stage for more objective discussions of programs and services. Faculty participating in the focus group did not see PRIME as useful to them personally, although they did agree that the concept could have been useful had the process been different.

In comparing purpose to results, to what extent was it successful?

PRIME was viewed as an unsuccessful attempt for a variety of reasons. Many felt that faculty did not buy into the idea of PRIME, and that it therefore had no staying power. Others felt that PRIME's biggest problem was that the model was abandoned before it had a chance to become established, while some believed that problems with the data PRIME provided limited its success.

What about PRIME was not successful? What caused the problems with the model?

Faculty in the focus group felt that PRIME was forced on them and that those behind the effort never got complete buy-in. Others believed that PRIME took on too much, too soon, and that due to its size and complexity the various pieces were never successfully integrated. Some felt that had PRIME would have been more successful had it not been abandoned when top leadership of the college changed.

How could the model have been more successful at OCC?

Most people felt that PRIME was too ambitious, and might have found more success had it narrowed its scope. Some believed that PRIME might have been more successful if those involved had been given more information on the objectives of the project as well as more training on how to use the data. Participants in the focus group argued that if PRIME had been less top-down in its orientation, there would have been more faculty support.