Synthesis of Calkins Model

Q1. What was the purpose of the Calkins model?

Generally, those interviewed agreed that the purpose of the Calkins model was to create a strategic plan meant to drive the budget. Some believed that the model was intended to get the college to not only articulate but also to live by its vision and values, while others felt that the model was little more than a mandate to document on paper all college activities. A number of interviewees recognized that one of the goals of the model was to set institutional priorities, and that doing so meant long-range planning. However, there was also a good deal of confusion among those interviewed as to exactly what these long-range plans were meant to accomplish.

Q2. What was the process used in the Calkins model?

Many felt that the process used was confusing. Most remembered that large groups, representing all employee categories, met at the beginning of the process to discuss the general direction of the college. These groups developed a number of strategic objectives. After the initial meetings, the campuses identified their own objectives and developed the budget to support them. Beyond this, most were not able to provide a detailed account of the process, suggesting a lack of understanding.

Among some of those interviewed, there was a sense that "nonbelievers" or those who did not support the process were weeded out, leaving the planning to those who agreed on the future directions the college should take. Others disagreed, saying that those who did not support the plan left of their own accord.

Q3. What do you feel the model accomplished?

Most felt that the primary accomplishment of this model was that more people were brought into the planning process. As a result, more members of the college community learned to think systemically, and the college as a whole moved toward clarifying its goals. However, there are also those who feel that the process accomplished nothing except additional paperwork.

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

Most people felt that the strategic directions were not particularly helpful or meaningful in accomplishing their daily responsibilities, noting that since the directions were so broad it was possible to make almost any activity fit them. Some felt that while the plan did bring some focus into their jobs, it never became fully operational. A few, however, did feel that the objectives outlined in the plan were integral to the work they did everyday.

Others felt that campus-level accountability was missing, and that individual staff members on the campuses were often left to figure out for themselves how the strategic directions should be integrated into their work.

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

In general, there was agreement that the model was a step in the right direction, although most people felt that the plan was never fully implemented. Some of those interviewed felt that the executive team charged with moving the plan ahead did not "walk the talk", and that this limited the success of the model. A few felt that the plan was a complete failure, although this seemed to be the minority opinion.

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

Limited buy-in at all levels of the institution was the most common response. In addition, some people felt that the process was far too labor-intensive to succeed. Others felt that the model clashed with OCC's organizational culture, and that it failed because it required for too many changes too fast. Finally, some noted that at OCC, plans or initiatives tend to get associated with an individual, and that when the individual departs the plan goes with them.

Another factor limiting the model's success was that it was cut short. Most felt that a planning process is likely to go through a few cycles before it is running smoothly, and this model did not last long enough to get all the problems ironed out.

How could the model have been more successful at OCC?

Most agreed that the model would likely have been more successful had it been given more time. Others felt that more involvement on the part of faculty would have increased the level of buy-in, and that with more support, the plan might have lasted longer. Some believed that the plan was incompatible with organizational culture, and that this would have to change in order for the model to work at OCC.

"Calkins" Planning Process
Interview summary

1. **In your opinion, what was the purpose of the process?**
   - Bring a system to the planning process
   - To plan for a millage or a reengineering of the College
   - Document everything - lots of paper
   - To get a working document to guide the College
   - Getting us moving in the right direction
   - Trying to get the College to identify vision and values; getting us to live what we were about; tying everything to the Vision/Value statement
   - Plan with greater longer range thinking than previously
   - Creating an end to end process: planning, strategy, solution, feedback
   - Creating a strategic plan to drive the budget, prepare for the millage and reorganize the College
   - Set mission and strategic plan for district
   - Identify an institutional agenda - current operations with future positioning
   - To curtail other operations to achieve her goals

2. **In your own words, can you explain the process?**
   - All the processes/models were similar
   - Started with summer planning sessions, large groups met and discussed directions and goals, established seven or eight strategic objectives, then smaller groups met to establish individual campus directions
   - Process wasn't clear, lacked direction, frustrating
   - Marked by diminishing participation, lack of follow through
   - Not an open process, there was a party line; dictatorial; if you were a "non-believer" you were weeded out; process belonged to the "insiders"
   - All employee groups participated; a change from past approaches
   - Accountability for implementation was the biggest differentiating feature
   - Campus identified objectives and then developed a budget to support

3. **What do you believe the model accomplished?**
   - Involvement by many people, more that just faculty and administration; other people got a voice
   - Clarified directions for the community - everyone knew what the objectives were
   - Got people thinking systemically; realizing that it was one institution; more global thinking
   - Started to focus the institution on being student centered; living its values and vision
   - More concrete action items were accomplished

- Resulted in improvement in curriculum process
- Millage was passed
- Heightened awareness of how work should fit together with the strategic directions
- Campus process helped focus priorities; that assisted in budget planning
- Nothing; no actual changes, just more paperwork

4. Process helped in accomplishing day-to-day responsibilities?

- Yes, implementing the objectives was integral to my work and the work of my subordinates, appraisal process heightened awareness
- Focused my personal and campus planning
- Not a lot, it was just planning and not fully implemented
- Too broad, almost anything I did would fit
- Drove me crazy - intense pressure to produce while maintaining day to day operations; micromanaging by Dr. Calkins
- It didn't seem connected; lots of last minute rushing around to accomplish goals
- Just added more paperwork

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

- Resulted in focused, obtainable objectives; action taken to support directions; validated change in the organization
- United the campus, and all employee groups
- General agreement about validity of direction
- About a 2 on a scale of 10; people didn't stick to it
- About an 8; resulted in stronger work ethic at College
- Marginal, not enough time for process to really work; needed several cycles to really become integral to College; implementation flawed
- Presidents held accountable, but not rest of community
- Wasn't practiced at the top; lack of executive leadership and breakdown of executive team
- Diversity in hiring practice more prominent

6. What was not successful?

- No money to implement objectives
- Too labor intensive
- Limited buy-in; negative attitudes; no passion
- Hard to keep people on track; daily demands of job too overwhelming and hard to draw on the collective thinking of the planning sessions
- Measurement was too difficult
- Limited or no follow-through; campuses didn't do the necessary work
- Not really participative; too top down
- College refocused its energies on millage

- People had unrealistic expectations of how quickly OCC could change and what it could accomplish
- When difficulty with Board and Chancellor started, process lost momentum
- Chancellor was too open door, people had too much access, didn't try to work on things before going to top

7. How could it have been more successful at OCC?

- Better and more buy-in; more faculty involvement
- Less time talking and more time doing
- More time to implement; needed several cycles to work into culture
- Chancellor needed to understand institution better
- Getting everyone to participate at the district level; there was too much protection of turf and jockeying for position

Comments:

A couple of things struck me as significant in the interview. One was the polarization of views—people either liked the process and thought it had value or they thought it was a failure. There was very little middle ground. Another observation is how much the process was personally identified with Dr. Calkins—it was not seen as an extension or revision of an ongoing process by very many people, but rather a very personally driven process. Lots of the comments about "outsiders" and "weeding out the non-believers" seem reflective of a belief that the planning process was an extension of the Chancellor's agenda. I was particularly interested in the fact that almost none of the commentaries talked about the role of the Board in the strategic planning process or their role in setting an agenda for the institution. It was if people didn't think they had a role or they didn't know what that role was supposed to be.

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Synthesis of Calkins Planning

1. Purpose

Individual Interviews

- Try and set into motion the idea of a strategic plan, to drive the budget.
- Build up to the millage.
- Look at the institution in a reorganization mode. Prepare the college for the future.
- Wake the College up for the need to change.
- Set Vision/Values then set Strategic Directions. But Strategic Directions were too broad, everything fit into them. Hence, no real priority setting took place.
- Generally, the majority of people did not understand the need for planning. There was no way to objectively remove a Strategic Direction without "offending" a group of people.
- Ensure we had an end-to-end process that was circular and repetitive.
- Move the college to truly be a comprehensive community college.
- Brought people into the planning process
- Develop a working document the college could use. What we were doing and how we were doing it.
- It was a means of getting at institutional effectiveness.
- Identify the institutional agenda. Setting organizational priorities. However, it is difficult given the organizational structure to create synergy throughout the college e.g. between campuses, departments, etc. Consensus at the district level often falls apart or is weakened once it arrives on the campus. Suddenly, we stop working together to develop coherent operational plans, budgets, etc. This causes huge inefficiencies and wasted effort. It weakens the process.
- Gave campuses more control over setting their plans
- Some did not think that there was a model. Rather Patsy set the mission and strategic directions.
- Purpose was similar to other models e.g. align resources to accomplish goals.

Focus Group

- Little understanding of the whole picture of the planning process. Perspective is on individual components of the overall process e.g. scanning subcommittee, retreat, summer sessions on developing Mission/Purposes.
- As with personal interviews, the focus group made it clear that the purpose and process are directly tied and inseparable from the person (Patsy). The larger context of the purpose and process belonging to the college does not exist. There is a general perception that once Patsy left the college everything that was done while she was here (planning, mission development) ended. Nothing carried forward e.g. all wasted.

2. Process

Individual Interviews

- Continuous quality improvement (CQI) to improve understanding of processes.
- The calendar was out of sync.
- Bring some system to the process.
- Identifying objectives, goals, the action plans, accountability.
- More action oriented than the other model.
- I don't know that it got fully implemented to get to that stage.
- Large groups of people came together to talk about what the college could be, what we wanted it to be.
- Develop campus objectives then build budget around them.
- Patsy became too visible in the process. Her personality did not allow for others to catch up. This may have been interpreted as unwillingness to cooperate, but in reality, people needed more time to understand the process and the overall direction the college was headed.
- The process involved getting the campus plan in sync with the District plan.
- Timing of the process was better than Saunders model.

Focus Group

- Confusion over purpose of various meetings in time, where a given meeting fits into the larger picture of the "College's Planning Process".
- Lack of understanding about "give and take" in developing a plan e.g. reaching group consensus. People bow out once their specific idea is not accepted.
- As the process filters down through the college e.g. on the campus, level of understanding fades. Clarity of what is to be done and why diminishes. Were there people on these campus based committees who were highly involved in the College meetings? We lost a lot of the synergy as soon as it hit the campus level.
- Committees were formed, but had little or no authority to implement mainly due to the reporting structure and organization of the college.
- The process needs to have a way to remove Directions/Objectives as time passes without causing turmoil in the college. Predetermined outcomes e.g. levels of attainment can be used to objectively determine when a Strategic Direction should be replaced or removed. Otherwise, nothing ever goes away.
- Findings suggest that every employee needs training in group dynamics. Being hired at the campus level and not at the college promotes "we versus them" perspective. This causes more energy and resources to be spent on trying to cooperate. Built into the system are these barriers.
- Training is needed in how to run and organize a meeting. To get all opinions out on the table and discuss each one, then reach consensus. Not just one time training, but on-going.
- There is a level of skepticism over how employees are asked to serve on committees. Why and how people are chosen. Are there hidden agendas, stacking the deck, etc.

3. Accomplish

Individual Interviews

- Passed the millage.
- Began the process of setting individual priorities, however, the decision making process at the college level could not choose among these priorities.
- It brought to the table more concrete action items.
- Making the institution understand that it was one entity.
- Moved the institution to be student centered. Wake up to the idea of being more consumer oriented.
- Brought parts of the organization into the planning process that were not really involved before.
- Got people thinking systematically.
- Accomplished a little more unity.
- The organization knew what direction it was going and at any time we could determine where we were along the continuum.
- Don't think the process accomplished anything.
- Identified issues that needed to be addressed.
- As a public relations device it worked great, however, there was not total buy in within the institution.
- Cut operational costs in some areas.
- Got the community much more aware of what OCC was all about and the direction it was headed.

Focus Group

- Despite some of the criticism, people did view the Strategic Directions as providing focus, understanding of the direction the college was headed. They helped employees to think of the whole picture. This appears to be once the Directions were set (perhaps not so much in developing the Directions).

4. Day-To-Day

Individual Interviews

- Set your own action plans (expectations).
- Everyone was more aware of what was expected of them since they were involved e.g. developing goals, performance appraisals, etc.
- It brought some focus, but not really sure.
- It was a planning cycle.
- It didn't get fully implemented
- Feeling that planning affected the institution not the person and what they do.
- The process helped me to see things differently.
- It almost appears as if faculty and staff are unwilling, hesitant to accept the vision or leadership of someone else. Either they don't want to be associated with someone if they have a chance to fail or there is no reason to accept the vision e.g. no implications for not following. There is no formal nor informal reward system nor any real accountability system within the organization. The college has never defined what accountability means, nor what responsibility means.
- Provided focus. However, Patsy was too personally involved.
- On a day-to-day basis the Strategic Plan had less impact in comparison to a longer time frame e.g. terms, years.

Focus Group

- Thinking on a day-to-day basis of the Strategic Directions is not as prevalent as overall activities eventually fell in line with supporting Strategic Directions.
- Raised level of awareness e.g. being student centered, overall direction of the college.
- The Vision/Values and Strategic Directions did not become the "corporate" attitude for everyone. Perhaps this is linked to the issue of "staying the course" e.g. sticking with it. Continuing to discuss Vision/Values and Strategic Directions indicates that they are still relevant, we can't forget them.
- Ownership of a particular problem (issue). If it is a college wide matter the ability of any one person to influence is hindered due to differing campus perspectives and structures. This impacts overall accomplishment of objectives and strategies.
- Objectives are more likely to be accomplished if employees are held accountable for them.
- Patsy held Presidents accountable, but the Presidents did not hold their staff to the same level of accountability. Staff were left to their own devises to get things done, what to do and how to do it. They received little help, coaching in getting the job done. Perhaps too many things going on (objectives) takes away from the quality time that is needed to fully design and implement any one objective. A matter of priority.
- There are no real repercussions for what we do or don't do. There is no reward system in place for what you do and don't do.

5. Compare Purpose to Results:

Individual Interviews

- Began to show signs of putting the plan first.
- Marginally successful.. didn't get fully implemented. Large scale models take many years to gain value out of them.
- Didn't get implemented because Patsy left and the college then focused on millage. Lack of funding to support plan.
- Planning has always been presented as new, add on, etc. We never actually focus on right sizing, cutting out the old stuff that no longer works. The institution lacks the decision making capability to eliminate and refocus energies. As a business we would fail in less than two years.
- The process created a greater awareness of responsibility. Individual employees can't just do what ever they want, when they want. Focus shifted away from the individual and to the organization. After all, this is a job and not a volunteer organization. Either you accept the process, work within the system to change it if you don't like it, or you get out.
- Didn't work because we didn't stick to it.
- People's intentions were good, but we never truly committed to it. All the other things we have responsibility for remained. No one said, x is no longer going to be done.
- Significant progress was made on each of the Directions. However, they are the kinds of things that will never be fully accomplished e.g. we can never ignore them.
- The process moved too fast. Too fast for the Board and for most employees.
- Significant staff turnover negatively impacted the momentum of the process.
- People were focused on objectives that were attainable.
- A general feeling that things were accomplished, but there is still a lot more to do.
- The size of it was too big. Seven Directions which were then turned into operational plans by each campus and department. The number of strategies was huge. No one ever provided feedback to say if a strategy was appropriate or if it contradicted someone else's strategy. Although it was more streamlined than the Saunders model, there were still far too many strategies. A lot of time was spent on too many different things. Amazingly, things were accomplished. Just think of what could have been accomplished if we were more focused.

Focus Group

- The plan looked good on paper, but the institution did not walk the talk. Especially Patsy.
- Patsy lacked a true team of leaders e.g. Chancellor's Council was not fully on board.
- If the institutions decides to continue in a decentralized manner then more stringent policies and procedures must be adhered too. Significant consequences and rewards must then be attached. This will keep the whole institution on track, otherwise you have chaos.
- Remain focused on a strategic objective, follow through on its implementation. Follow through by councils and supervisors. Without it staff eventually interpret that it is no longer a priority of the college/campus. And is slowly fades. In part, follow through is hindered due to the large number of initiatives which are undertaken all at the same time e.g. trying to do everything, lack of real priority. There doesn't seem to be a realization that we only have so much time, so many resources, etc. When we initiate several objectives at the same time the quality of what gets implemented diminishes since not enough time can be devoted to implementing the best.
- The Calkins model was generally well founded, however, it was the style of implementation that hurt its implementation. Mainly Patsy's style.

6. Not Successful

Individual Interviews

- Mentality there is an attitude of "me" not us.
- Institution is not ready for the "give-and-take" to build a budget on a plan.
- It held people accountable which was not part of the culture, it shocked people.
- The openness and level of involvement raised expectations of what the college could do.
- The model caused great change. We basically did not know how to deal with change without ripping ourselves apart. As a result the messenger was shot, not the message.
- The model was very much like Patsy's personality.
- Very labor intensive.
- People really didn't buy into it.
- Patsy was unable to delegate which hurt the process.
- Getting buy-in and consistent communication throughout the district. Differing levels of commitment to any one specific Direction and campus political environment inhibit coherent and effective implementation.

Focus Group

- The Executive Officers did not truly accept (buy into) the Strategic Directions. They simply passed it along to their staff. They didn't take a leadership role in implementing the strategic plan. They needed to become more involved, demonstrate on a regular basis their commitment to the objectives.

7. More Successful

Individual Interviews

- Sticking with it longer. We keep starting and stopping and we try to build on what we've done.
- A culture change on the institutions part to look at the institution as a whole versus campus by campus.
- Put the strategic plan first and the budget second.
- There is no easy way to change the culture of an organization. The model depended on an environment that did not exist.
- Must understand the context under which planning exists. Presidents are hired to be leaders of their campus, however, styles, view points and outcomes tend to differ. This causes great amounts of energy to be spent on "trying" to cooperate rather than focusing on a single goal. The system (organizational structure, reporting relationships, replication of roles and responsibilities result in poor decision making. This also causes people to spend a lot of time and energy trying to cooperate, trying to work together, trying to make things work. This takes away from actually being able to accomplish a goal.
- The institution needs to develop a longer attention span. Greater college wide input and commitment to any process will enhance its chances of success. Unfortunately, nearly all major initiatives get associated with an individual. The ultimate success of the imitative is dependent on the popularity of the person leading the charge. We have difficulty institutionalizing, gaining college commitment to a cause. The millage was an exception.
- Planning cycle should be three to five years to give it enough time to be implemented.
- Large group discussion helped to focus our collective attention. However, when we go back to our desks, it is very difficult if not impossible to act upon our discussions. Most of us are not in a position to take such actions.
- Spend less time talking about it and spending more time on doing what we're suppose to.

Focus Group

- Employees need to be collectively inspired by a common goal, not by a Chancellor or President. Chancellors and Presidents come and go. A common goal can out live people if it is part of the fabric of the institution. Unfortunately, we have not been able to reach this level. Perhaps the mission and purpose will turn into this.

Perspective

- It appears that there was not an agreed upon understanding of the whole planning process and its purpose. This was true among Executive Officers as well as administrative, management and faculty. The end result is ineffective implementation. Synergy can not be established when differing levels of understanding and commitment exist within the organization.
- People tended to like the notion that everyone was held accountable for their actions. Follow through by supervisors can keep things on track, remind everyone that it is a priority, that it is important, provides feedback to employees on a regular basis, accountable for what their doing or not doing. In addition, this provides the institutional focus that people appreciated.