STRATEGIC PLANNING AND THE ROLE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES*

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STRUCTURE OF PRESENTATION

- Nature of Strategic Planning
- Strategic Planning at the UWI
- Generic Role of Head of Department
- Role of Heads of Department in UWI’s Strategic Planning
- Concluding Suggestions
NATURE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

- **What is Strategic Planning (SP)?** One definition
  - *“a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organisation is, what it does and why it does it. It is a process through which the leaders of an organisation envision its future and develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future”* [Dalton State College]

- **Key Issues:** long-term/future perspective; a process of change; goal achievement; cause –effect analysis; strategic thinking; organisational alignment; competitive environmental analysis
• Move from a **Strategic Plan** to **Operational/Action Plan** to **Work Plan**.

• **Four phases of planning**: Analysis, Plan Formulation, Implementation, Measurement/Monitoring

• **Elements of a Strategic Plan**
  
  ◦ **Mission Statement** – why does the organisation exist? what is its basic purpose?
  
  ◦ **Vision Statement** – what does the organisation want to be or do in the future (by the end of the planning period)?
  
  ◦ **Value Statement** – what are the organisation’s beliefs? What does it stand for? What are its guiding principles?
  
  ◦ **Strategic Goals/Objectives of the Organisation** – what are the general directions towards which the organisation plans to move?

  **Goals** – high level generally results which the
to achieve; **Objectives** – concrete steps towards achieving the goals

- **Strategic Formulation** – what is the **game plan** for achieving the goals/objectives (i.e., the organisation’s game plan)? What strategic choices will the organisation make to achieve goals? What are the underlying assumptions guiding the strategy?

- **Critical Success Factors** – What are the organisation’s capabilities or competencies that must be in place for the organisation to achieve vision–goals–objectives?

- **Sensitivity Analysis** – how would the strategy change with alternative assumptions? What are the alternative scenarios?
• **Key Features of Strategic Plan**
  ◦ Focused, short, simple, understandable
  ◦ Achievable by stretched goals
  ◦ Represents the core functions/elements of the organisation
  ◦ Provides a set of critical priorities
  ◦ Flexible and responsive to changing conditions
  ◦ Anchors the operational plan

• **Elements of an Operational Plan**
  ◦ A follow-on from the Strategic Plan to ensure proper **execution/implementation** (from Executive management to Mid-management to Supervisory management)
  ◦ Establish **Strategic Initiatives** to achieve Objectives—programs, projects, activities
  ◦ Establish targets, timelines/phasing of initiatives
Assignment of responsibilities/accountabilities
Identification of resource needs (human, physical) and preparation of financial budget
Specification of strategic outcomes
Development of a communication strategy; review and monitoring process, project management framework, employee engagement strategy; incentives system etc

Considerations for Operational Plan
Flexibility, monitoring, review
Training and staff development
Incentives
Behavioural/cultural change
Participation/engagement
Capacity building and resource mobilisation
Governance Structure
• Rationale for Strategic Planning
  ◦ Allows the organisation to focus its resources on achieving long-term goals and improving its performance
  ◦ Forces the organisation to think about future needs and priorities in a changing environment (demographic, technological, economic, political, social, etc)
  ◦ Creates and builds teamwork and ownership of policies, programs and projects (especially the bottom-up approach to planning)
  ◦ Allows the development of creative solutions to organisational challenges
  ◦ Permits the organisation to undertake foresighting/scenario planning/surveillance and identify the critical issues it faces
- Motivates employees to perform at their best with the appropriate incentives structure
- Identifies resource needs and assesses opportunities
- Provides for the continuous improvement and accountability for results
- Engenders alignment and assigns accountabilities
STRATEGIC PLANNING AT THE UWI – AN OVERVIEW

- Development and Planning Unit established in 1968 to assist the Vice Chancellor with the administration and planning of the development of a decentralized university and meeting the long-term development needs of supporting governments (now the UWI-16)

- University founded in 1948 as University College of the West Indies, University of London (UCWI-London) and based at Mona Campus, Jamaica. Independent University in 1962

- Decentralization with St Augustine Campus 1960, Cave Hill Campus in 1963, Open University in 2008
• UWI now has 4 campuses, a central Administration (Vice Chancellery), 47,000 students, 1300 academic, professional and senior administrative staff), several support staff members, covers 16 countries (Bermuda joined in August 2010), operates in a dynamic environment with resource constraints with governments providing between 55-60 percent of funding (most expenditure on wages/salaries as a labour-intensive operation).

• Need to preserve the regionality of the UWI

• **Strategic Plans at UWI**
  ◦ University Development Plan 1990-2000 (with campus-specific development plans) – McIntyre as VC
- Strategic Plan 1997-2002 – McIntyre as VC
- Strategic Plan 2002-2007 – Nettleford as VC
- Strategic Plan 2007-2012 – Harris as VC

- A new system of governance introduced in 1996 with a University Strategy and Planning Committee (the principal policy aim of the University Council which is the top decision-making body of the UWI) being responsible for all matters relating to the long-term planning and development of the UWI and is chaired by the Vice Chancellor. A Pro-Vice Chancellor (Planning and Development) assists the VC in the process and directs the University’s Office of Planning and Development. There are also Campus Planning and Development/Institutional Research/Projects offices.
University Office of Planning and Development (UOPD) responsible for university-wide:

- Strategic planning
- Institutional research
- University development

Mission Statement of the UWI: Why it exists? Its core purpose:

“to propel the economic, social, political and cultural development of the West Indian society through teaching, research, innovation, advisory and community services and intellectual leadership”
• **Critical Values (2007-2012 Plan):** Its beliefs/ideals:
  ◦ Excellence
  ◦ *Independent thought and critical analysis*
  ◦ *Social awareness and responsibility*
  ◦ *Respect for diversity*
  ◦ *Intellectual freedom*
  ◦ *Multi-and Inter-disciplinary collaboration*

• **Vision of the UWI (2007-12 Plan):** what it wants to be by 2012
  ◦ An *innovative, internationally competitive, contemporary university*, deeply rooted in the Caribbean, committed to creating the best possible future for all stakeholders
- **First choice** for all the region’s *students* and academic/support *staff*
- Provision of a *supportive environment* that rewards *excellence*
- *Agile* enough to thrive in a dynamic global environment

- **Key Strategic Focal/Core Areas (2007-12 Plan)**
  - **Teaching and learning (T&L)**
  - **Graduate studies (GS)**
  - **Research and innovation (R&I)**
  - **Outreach (service to UWI-12 and other underserved communities in campus countries) – now Open Campus**
  - Each area led by a Pro Vice-Chancellor
• **Major Enablers (2007-12 Plan)**
  ◦ *Transforming the leadership and administrative culture and processes*
  ◦ *Funding the institution*
  ◦ *Marketing and branding*
  ◦ *Leveraging International Partnership*
    Each area led by a Senior Administrative Person

• **Contextual Elements (2007-12 Plan)**
  ◦ *Strengthening regionalism*
  ◦ *Strengthening National Engagement*
    Vice Chancellor and Campus Principals
**Overall Administrative Structure: By Office**

- Vice Chancellor (Chief Executive Officer/top level manager)
- Pro Vice Chancellors/Principals (executive/top level managers)
- Registrars/Bursars/Other Senior Advisors (executive top level managers/administrators)
- Deans (middle level managers)
- Heads/Directors (frontline managers)

*Operating within University-wide and Campus Bodies/Committees*
GENERIC ROLE OF HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

- The skill set of a Head differs from that of an independent scholar
- Greater emphasis on management/administrative skills and less on technical skills – they are front-line managers

Basic Functions of Management (MGMT 101)
- Planning
- Organising
- Staffing
- Leading/directing/motivating
- Controlling/monitoring
• **Basic Roles of Heads in a University**
  ◦ *Informational* (sharing, generating, analyzing information)
  ◦ *Interpersonal* (counselling, coaching, mediating)
  ◦ *Leadership* (visioning, motivating, problem solving, developing)
  ◦ *Administrative* (budgeting, reporting, supervising, assigning, scheduling, fundraising)
  ◦ *Decisional* (making decisions on a range of matters involving staff, students, peers, etc)
  ◦ *Resource development* (recruiter, mentor, evaluating)

• **Skill Set of a Head:**
  ◦ *Interpersonal* (to communicate, motivate, mentor, delegate)
  ◦ *Diagnostic* (to identify solutions to situations)
- **Conceptual** (to analyze situations which can be complex)
- **Leadership** (to point direction, gain confidence and encourage excellence)
- **Political/diplomatic** (to deal with multiple internal/external stakeholders, to represent the department)
- **Academic/technical** (to inspire others, provide advice, support junior staff in teaching/research, mentoring students)

- In UWI, Heads are responsible to Academic Board, the Senate and the Council through the Vice Chancellor and Campus Principals for *the general administration of their departments* and through the Dean for *inter-departmental relations within the Faculty*
• Heads are expected to: coordinate activities, recruit staff, manage budget, promote academic standards, counsel students, assist in career development, represent the department in internal/external bodies, advise senior managers, report on activities, assign duties, provide academic leadership, promote excellence in teaching and research, develop a vision for the department, engage in program development/curriculum reform

• Within the University structure, the department is “the most critical organisational unit” and
the Head is among the “most important academic leaders” – front-line of all activities – teaching/learning, research/innovation – serving several constituencies-staff, students, senior administrators, external stakeholders, alumni etc

- Heads are expected to implement University policies and carry forward the mission and initiatives of the University
ROLE OF HEADS OF DEPARTMENT IN UWI’S STRATEGIC PLANNING

• As frontline managers, Heads are critical to the realisation of the UWI mission and vision

• **Role in 2007-12 Plan**
  - *Working with Deans in reporting on progress with core strategic areas* – Teaching/Learning, Research and Innovation, Graduate Studies, Outreach with the Open Campus (curriculum changes, number of certified lecturers, student evaluation of teaching, new courses, enrolment, publications, research output, graduates, international collaboration, distance courses, lectures in Open Campus territories, etc) – *Performance Management and Monitoring System (PMMS)*
  - *Identifying challenges with the implementation of the various strategic initiatives* (resource needs, reporting,
setting targets, coordination of activities, communication of progress, etc)

- Developing initiatives for the final year of the Plan (2011/12)

- **Role in the 2012-17 Plan**
  - **Communicating** the views of the members of the department to various campus teams, involved in the preparation of the Strategic Plan
  - **Encouraging** staff to contribute their views to the website being developed to solicit views on the Strategic Plan (mission – vision – goals/objectives– strategies of the overall University Plan)
  - **Contributing** to the environmental analysis
- **Working** with other departments to develop strategic initiatives for the new Plan

- **Ensuring** that the Strategic Plan is properly executed/implemented by becoming familiar with the **basic planning tools** (i.e., Balanced Scorecard and Strategy Mapping, Performance Measurement and Monitoring, Project Management)

- **Working** with colleagues in developing performance measures, targets and timelines and determining accountabilities

- **Reporting** on progress with strategic initiatives (developing a departmental database) and **assisting** with institutional research

- **Developing** departmental plans within the context of the University-wide plan
- **Assisting** with the enabling of the strategic initiatives (seeking funds, marketing programs, promoting research, building international linkages etc)
- **Communicating** developments with the Strategic and Operational Plans to staff (and students where relevant)
- **Liaising** with the Planning Offices to supply/obtain information for decision making
CONCLUDING SUGGESTIONS

- Develop a managerial mindset – *leadership focus*
- Become familiar with the principles of strategic planning and general management and strategic thinking
- Become familiar with the statutes and ordinances, rules and regulations of the University
- **Communicate** regularly with members of the department and attend statutory university meetings
- Emphasize **excellence** in teaching, research, publications and outreach