

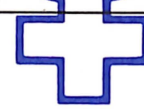
the connection

SPECIAL

November 16, 1984



Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia



In The Beginning . . .

The idea for long-range planning at the Mount is not new.

But the need to utilize and work more closely with the university's various components in creating and carrying out the university's long-range planning is. It had been an agenda item for the Board of Governor's public relations advisory committee since 1980.

In the fall of 1981, university president Dr. E.M. Fulton appointed a special committee to ascertain how the university was perceived by its various publics and what steps could be taken to assist the university to realize its long-term goals. This committee later became responsible to the Senate and a year later made a series of recommendations which, it was felt, could do much to enhance the university's image.

It was generally agreed at the time that the study helped to alert many within the university to the need for a long-range public relations strategy linked directly with the university's long-range goals.

Early in 1983, the Nova Scotia government appointed a Royal Commission on Post-Secondary Education, with the mandate to look into, among other things, "the structures of post-secondary education in Nova Scotia including administrative and institutional government structures, programs and methods of achieving the established aims of post-secondary education in Nova Scotia."

The commission is about to report back shortly.

It was of serious concern to the board's public relations advisory committee that the outcome of the commission could have profound effect on the future of the Mount—that board members should be alerted to the need for developing long-range public relations strategy which could help shape its future, instead of waiting for it to be shaped by others.

Preliminary discussions with members of the board's long-range

planning committee led to a joint meeting at which Professor Jon White, chairman of the university's public relations department, said it was vital university planners establish a planning process which would help administrators make decisions that were informed and sensitive to current and emerging realities.

White, who lectures extensively in public relations management, said success would have to entail a belief that the Mount could to some extent shape its own destiny.

The joint meeting agreed that a strategic planning process should be put in place and requested Dr. Fulton to explore the possibility indicating that time "is of the essence".

Following discussions with committee members present, Dr. Fulton devised a plan of action and representatives from all parts of the university, to participate in a one-day "brain-storming" session.

Along with Professor White, Dr. Norman Uhl of the Mount's education department, was invited to participate as a resource person because of his extensive work in university planning.

Dr. Uhl was responsible for establishing the planning system at North Carolina Central University and is on the board of both the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) and the Association for Institutional Research.

The Planning Day

While most of the university community enjoyed a President's holiday last February 1, a small group of administrators, board and corporation members, faculty and students gathered in the Don McNeill Room to discuss planning at Mount Saint Vincent University.

*I have had
my solutions for a
long time.
But I do not
yet know
how I
am to
arrive
at them.*

*Karl Friedrich Gauss
Mathematician,
1777-1855*



The day's program was put together by Professor Jon White and Dr. Norman Uhl.

After a welcome from the President, the day's activities got underway with a presentation by White on planning in management. He said planning was the central management function from which everything else flowed. He presented several models of planning systems in different organizations and discussed their major features.

He stressed the need for a feedback mechanism in the planning system to ensure that it remained fluid and capable of change.

Dr. Norman Uhl said each institution had to create a planning process which was appropriate for itself. It could not "simply copy"

what worked successfully elsewhere. He cautioned against raising expectations too high, since planning was a long-term process requiring much effort.

The outline of a typical strategic planning system was presented and discussed in detail. In addition, Dr. Uhl stressed the need to match external opportunities and constraints with internal strengths and the educational values of the institution.

"As far as the actual process is concerned, it consists of deciding where we want to be in ten years time and evaluating the alternatives for getting there," he said. He also emphasized that budgeting should be linked to the planning process.

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Participants were then divided into four groups with at least one member from the board, faculty, and administration in each. They were asked to: 1) describe the current planning process at the university as the group understood it, and 2) describe the deficiencies in the current process.

During the afternoon session, White summarized the results which identified problems of information sharing, coordination and integration. "How are the aspirations of top administrators communicated downwards to the community, while at the same time, how do the departments convey their wishes and aspirations upwards to senior administrators and Board?" Planning at the Mount, based on the results of discussions, needed to be both coordinated and communicated, he said.

Uhl recommended the creation of a planning and budgeting committee chaired by the President. This body would incorporate the senior administration and existing planning committees, vice-president academic and both assistants to the president, the deans, the chairperson of the board's long-range planning committee, the director of student services, the director of public relations and development, the three members of the policy and planning subcommittee of the committee of academic affairs, the president of the faculty association, a student and the director of research and special projects as secretary.

In order to function, he said, the committee would draw on an Office of Institutional Research which should be added to the responsibilities of the Director of Research and Special Projects.

A process should be established which would not depend on individuals and personalities, but would be ongoing, he said.

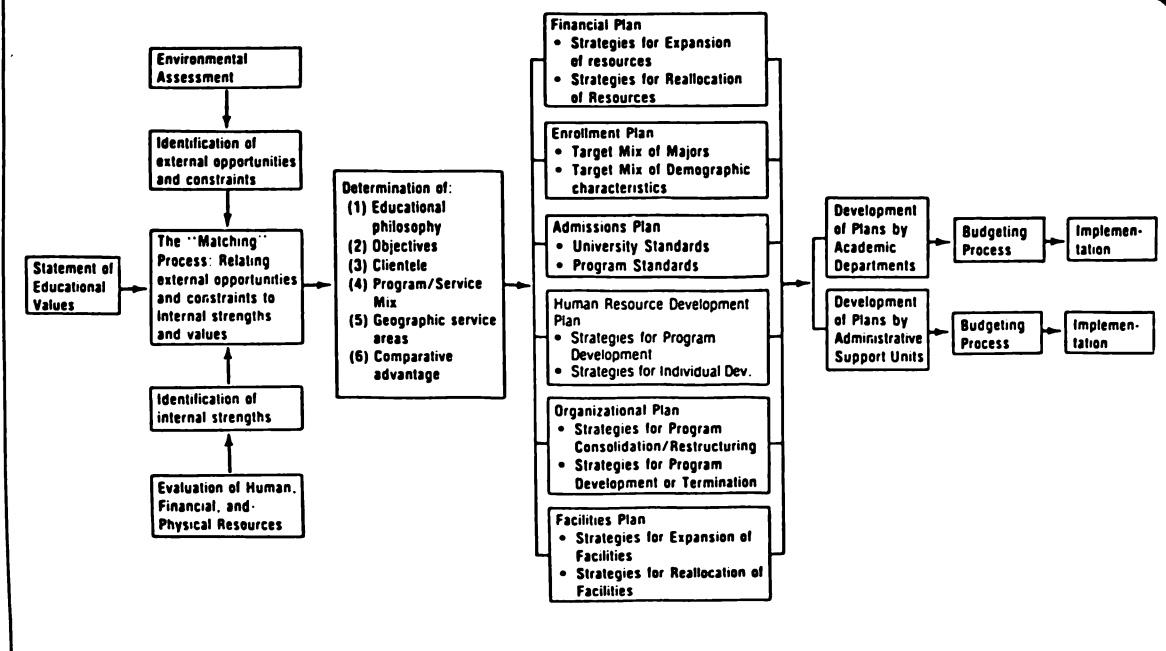
The purpose of the committee should be to formulate the direction for the university. It should not interfere with the current decision-making structures of the university but should improve them, giving decision makers more information on which to make decisions, he said.

The directions which the committee proposed would go as appropriate to senate and board for approval.

The Senate would continue to generate academic plans within the direction set, and the committee would "flesh out" its recommendations in terms of space, finances and other resources.

It was decided that the President should call together a new committee initially on an ad hoc basis and allow it to decide upon its mandate and membership.

A Strategic Planning System



Terms Of Reference

Name:

This is a standing committee of the President entitled "The Committee on Planning and Budgeting".

Purpose:

The purpose of this committee is:

1. to integrate all university planning and budgeting processes;
2. to prepare, review, and update the university's strategic plan and its components in consultation with appropriate segments of the university;
3. to make recommendations regarding the allocation of the university's resources to programmes and activities consistent with priorities identified in the strategic plan.

Functions:

The specific functions of the committee can be divided into four major phases:

Phase I. To develop a mission statement which involves:

1. identification of basic philosophy and values;
2. assessment of the external environment;
3. assessment of the internal environment (i.e. identifying strengths and weaknesses including human, financial and physical resources);
4. reassessment and periodic review of the university's mission statement in light of the results of steps 1 to 3.

Phase II. To develop a Master Plan

comprising inter alia the following components:

1. enrolment plan;
2. admissions and recruitment plan;
3. human resources development plan;
4. organizational plan;
5. facilities plan;
6. financial plan.

Phase III. To communicate the overall plan to all segments of the university community and to encourage and assist them to achieve the goals of the plan.

Phase IV. To recommend the allocation of resources in a manner consistent with the priorities identified in the strategic plan.

Membership:

The membership of the Committee shall consist of the following:

1. the President, as Chairperson
2. the Vice-President Academic
3. the Dean of Humanities and Sciences
4. the Dean of Human and Professional Development
5. the Assistant to the President for Finance and Planning
6. the Assistant to the President for University Services
7. the Director of Student Services and Counselling
8. the Director of Public Relations and Development
9. the Chairperson of the Long-Range Planning Committee of the Board
10. the members of the Policy and Planning subcommittee of the Committee for Academic Affairs of Senate
11. the President of the Faculty Association

Committee Activities

Since its inception, the Committee on Planning and Budgeting has accomplished several tasks.

- it completed a review of current planning procedures at the university
- it familiarized itself with the strategic planning process proposed by N. Uhl and J. White.
- it developed its terms of reference
- it decided upon its membership
- it reviewed the university's statement of Philosophy and Objectives identifying four major education values or ideals espoused:
 - its primary orientation to the education of women
 - its Catholic tradition
 - its small size which permits personalized instruction
 - its role as a university: teaching, research and community service
- it struck two subcommittees to recommend how to assess the Mount's internal strengths and weaknesses and to analyze the environment in which it operates.

The Long-Range Planning Process

by W.B. Ingalls

The planning and budgeting process upon which we have embarked was developed by Dr. R. Shirley and others for the National Centre for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) in the U.S.

In essence, it consists of four major phases:

- the development of a mission statement
- the development of a master plan, based on the mission statement
- the communication and implementation of the plan to the various sectors of the university
- the recommendation of resource allocation in a manner consistent with the plan.

The task is a large one and each phase will require a good deal of work on the part of many people, but the outcome should be an institution certain of where it wants to go, aware of opportunities and constraints it may encounter, and with some idea how it will reach its goal.

As far as developing a mission statement is concerned, the university has already taken the first step by developing a statement of its philosophy and objectives which expresses the ideas upon which the institution was founded and continues to operate.

That statement consists of four major components: Mount Saint Vincent as an institution primarily oriented towards the educational needs of women, Mount Saint Vincent as an institution with a Catholic tradition, Mount Saint Vincent as an institution of such a size as to permit personalized instruction, and finally Mount Saint Vincent as a university whose primary functions are teaching, research and community service.

Each of these components are values which those who participate in the life of the institution recognize. Others such as special interest in mature students or in international development may be added once this statement is discussed by the university community.

Before this wider consultation takes place, however, these ideas must be tested against the reality of our current strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and constraints of the external environment in which we operate.

Given our relative weakness in physics, for example, it would not make sense to attempt to develop a program in that area. On the other hand, the visibility of women's issues in the recent federal election campaign and in Canadian society in

general suggests that our orientation to the educational needs of women will be an asset in the years that lie ahead and likely to create opportunities for us.

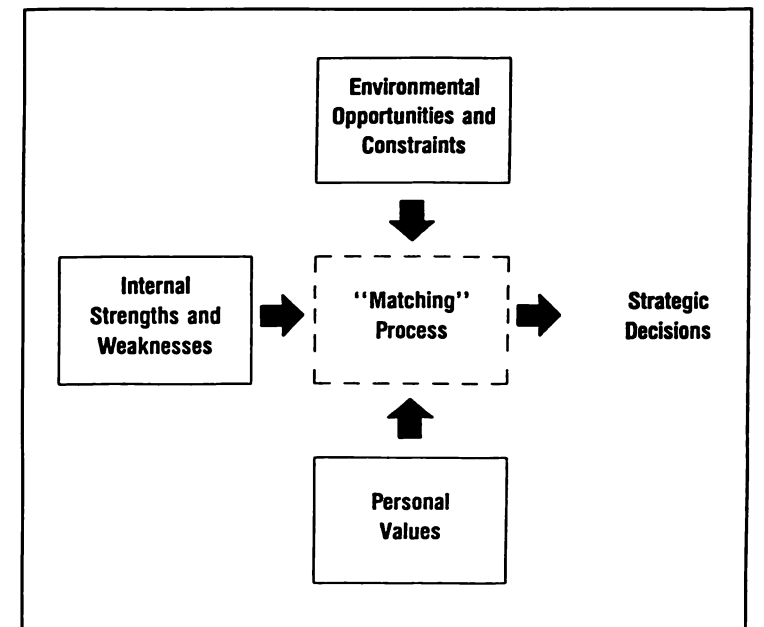
Once the internal and external assessments have been completed, the next step is a "matching" process whereby our educational ideals are tested against these realities.

Out of this process will come a mission statement which expresses both an ideal towards which we can move and a set of goals which are attainable.

This mission statement will express not only our educational philosophy and objectives, but also describe our clientele, our geographic service area, our mix of programs and services and advantages we possess in relation to our competitors.

With the mission statement completed, we are able to move on to the concrete and substantive activity of formulating a plan. Such a plan will have a number of components:

- **an enrolment plan**
This will indicate not only the number of students we hope to attract but also specify, for example, how many in which area and how many will be part-time and how many full-time, how many mature and how many traditional high school leavers.
- **an admissions plan**
This component would address issues of admission standards, targets and procedures.
- **human resources development plan**
In order to achieve our program, service and enrolment objectives we must have the human resources, faculty, administrative and support staff necessary. This would detail strategies for both program development and individual development.
- **an organizational plan**
Again to achieve our program and human resource plan, we must have the organizational structure which will facilitate our purpose.
- **a facilities plan**
In order to reach our programs, human resource and organizational goals we will need appropriate physical resources. A facilities plan would describe strategies for the expansion of the physical plant and the reallocation of space as needed.
- **a financial plan**
Finally, all of the preceding plans will cost money. The financial plan will address strategies for the expansion of financial resources



and for the reallocation of existing financial resources.

Taken together these components will comprise a comprehensive plan of where we want to go and how we expect to get there.

The next phase consists of two components: communication and implementation. Communication about the process has already begun. This issue of the Connection is another step in the process of keeping the university community informed.

While a variety of groups will be involved in the strategic planning and budgeting process, results obtained along the way will be shared widely for comment and discussion. To be successful, the plan must have the active agreement of everybody concerned.

But once the comprehensive plan has been formulated, it must be clearly communicated to the different units of the university to assist them in the development of their own plans.

Each academic department and each administrative support unit, for example, will be invited to consider how it might contribute to the achievement of the overall plan.

Funding might be made available to support departmental activities which significantly contribute to the overall plan. According to current practice, departments formulate five-year projections, but they are seldom given a context in which to work.

Under the new scheme, the overall plan will inform projections and activities at the departmental level.

Mention of the budget brings us to

the final phase, resource allocation. Once the overall plan and the departmental projections have been formulated, the planning process will be tied to the budgeting process by employing the priorities established in the planning process to determine the allocation of resources.

After receiving their allocation of resources, departments and administrative units will be asked to submit budgets in accordance with both the overall plan and their projected activities.

Thus, budgets will reflect both the priorities of the overall plan and departmental aspirations.

One final point about this planning process needs to be made. By all accounts the future of post-secondary education is likely to be fraught with difficulty. The purpose of the new planning and budgeting process is to create an institution which knows where it is going and how it intends to get there. But the process must not rob it of two of its greatest assets: creativity and flexibility.

Accordingly, the planning process must be open and amenable to change. It must allow for feedback from administration, the Mount's faculty, and students at all times.

No matter how clearly we see our goal is defined and no matter how carefully planned, obstacles along the path will be encountered. Unless the Mount can change direction, and do so rapidly in some circumstances, it may strike the obstacles and suffer irreparable harm. Planning should be a means to an end and not an end in itself.

Internal Assessment

The purpose of this sub-committee is to devise criteria for the assessment of the relative strengths of the Mount's various programs. Although the criteria to be used must be approved by the Committee on Planning and Budgeting, the three major areas for consideration are **faculty quality, student quality and numbers and cost revenue ratios.**

Faculty quality can be measured by the criteria currently employed by the Senate Committee on Appointment, Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure including teaching, scholarship and qualifications, but the focus will be the department level rather than the individual upon whom CARPT concentrates.

Students, as the primary users of our programs, can provide valuable insights into the quality and viability of programs. Thus, besides enrolment

figures, the entering averages of majors, the marks they attain, and finally the number of scholarships they earn, can give some measure of student quality.

The third major area to be studied is the cost-revenue relationship or the financial viability of a program. If a program which is central to the Mount's mission is staffed by underqualified faculty with a poor teaching record and little scholarly output, and at the same time costs more to operate than the revenue it generates, it becomes the focus of remedial action or else it may force the Mount to change some aspect of its mission.

On the other hand, the identification of strong departments in the areas central to the university's mission will allow it to assert its basic goal with assurance.

External Environment

This sub-committee is attempting to identify major external forces in the environment and to predict their impact on the Mount.

To make the task manageable, the group began with the four primary components in the university's statement of philosophy and objectives: the orientation to women, the Catholic tradition, the size which permits personalized instruction, and the institution as a university.

It attempted to identify the major forces which must be analyzed for trends and potential impact on the institution. These include: the economy, technology, bilingualism, demography, social factors such as the status of women and the political situation.

As well the committee is attempting to provide a profile of how the institution is perceived nationally and

regionally.

The application of communications technologies to new uses for example, is something which the Mount must come to grips with.

Course delivery systems will be affected by methods like DUET and Computer Assisted Instruction. Libraries will change beyond recognition as scholars at small institutions will be able to access information from large collections in other distant centres.

But at the same time, the search for truth which characterizes the Mount's Catholic heritage and its concern for personalized instruction must not be lost in efforts to ensure that students are taught in as technologically rich an environment as they will need to be technologically literate for tomorrow's world.

Institutional Research:

Support for the planning and budgeting process will be provided by an office of Institutional Research under the direction of Dr. Wayne Ingalls.

The role of an institutional research office is to provide information for decision-makers at the university.

Institutional research is, according to Bernard S. Sheehan and Lois E. Torrence, "the study and analysis of the operations, environments, and processes of higher education".

Its objectives include: improvement of institutional self-understanding; identification of the characteristics and expectations of constituent

groups; clarification of the uses of human, financial, and physical resources; evaluation of the teaching-learning process; policy analysis supportive of effective planning; and assessment of the outcomes of the varied activities of higher education.

Much information is already being gathered by the admissions office, the registrar, the business office and individual academic departments and public relations, alumnae and development offices.

One first task of the office is to inventory what kind of information is being collected, by whom, and for what purpose.

Minor adjustments in already existing programmes could either

yield more information or make it more useful to various planners and decision-makers.

Another task is to make that information available. Most institutional research offices publish a Fact Book which is what its name suggests, a book of information about the university. Typically fact books contain information about the university: its mission, its programs, its organization, its facilities and budget; information about students: admission, enrolment, achievement; and information about faculty and staff. Much of this information already exists in one form or another—it's now a matter of co-ordination.

Internal Resource Categories

- Human
- Financial
- Physical
- Program
- Image
- Internal Environment

Major Types of External Forces

- Economic
- Social
- Technological
- Political/Legal
- Demographic
- Competitive

**the
Connection**

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