The College of New Jersey

Strategic Planning Feedback Session

Meeting Highlights: May 8, 2012

February 13-14, 2012

# Introduction

The Strategic Planning Task Force and the Committee on Planning and Priorities met to:

* Review feedback received from the College community and the Board of Trustees on the strategic map developed at the February 13-14, 2012 strategic planning session.
* Agree upon the changes to the strategic map based on this feedback.

# Summary of Strategic Plan Feedback

Mort Winston, Co-Chair of the Strategic Planning Process, Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Department of Philosophy at The College of New Jersey, presented a summary of the feedback received from the College community, which can be viewed by clicking on the link below. A full summary is provided in Appendix A.



Mort introduced Stacey Zawel of TSI Consulting Partners who reviewed the feedback from the Board of Trustees, which included:

## Strengths

* The plan is mission aligned.
* The strategic map focuses on the important areas the Board has been discussing.
* It covers the right bases.
* Clear focus on excellence and affordability
* Emphasis on:
  + Transformative student experience
  + TCNJ’s distinctiveness and branding
* Well-researched
* The strategic objectives outline steps toward achieving the strategic priorities.
* Sets the stage for developing benchmarks and metrics that will guide implementation and evaluation
* The concept of a “good enough” plan; it’s important not to let perfection get in the way of action.
* The process was good; it involved a lot of people.

## Issues and Concerns

* We need to make sure that we have clear definitions for the broad terms of the plan. It will lose focus and clarity if we aren’t sure what those terms mean.
* We need to make sure that students are at the core of the strategy. Our fundamental goal is to help students succeed.
* The plan seems somewhat generic. It could apply to any school; it needs more TCNJ specificity.
* It’s very important for us to distinguish TCNJ going forward. That requires focusing on our fundamental strengths.
  + The liberal arts
  + Strong academic areas – such as health care and medical professions
* TCNJ is an amazing school; we need to make sure it has the identity and brand to ensure its sustainability.
  + Branding is critically important.
  + We need to make sure that what’s happening with Rutgers and Rowan doesn’t ever happen to TCNJ.
* The plan needs to embed the unique values of TCNJ – both those we want to appeal to and those we want to preserve.
* We need to make sure that we are looking more broadly than just New Jersey. We want to position TCNJ nationally and internationally.
* The plan doesn’t include explicit assumptions about what the students who will enter TCNJ in the future will be like.
  + Young people five years from now will be very different than current students.
  + They will bring different entry knowledge, have different learning preferences and communicate their expectations in different ways.
  + We need to anticipate and respond to that.
* The strategic plan as written is good, but there are some key questions:
  + How do we use it to make decisions?
  + How do we ensure the effectiveness of implementation?
* The plan doesn’t deal explicitly with the governance model.
  + How does the Board relate to the President, the Cabinet and the faculty?
  + The strategy needs to guide the Board in making tough decisions.
* We need to emphasize accountability and metrics.
  + Although outcomes and metrics are important, it’s important that “the tail not wag the dog.”
  + We shouldn’t spend so much time on metrics that we don’t implement the plan.
* Will it meet the accreditation requirements of Middle States?
* In what way is this plan asking us to do business in a different way?
* We are clearly rethinking our relationship to the State of New Jersey.
  + We will have greater autonomy to define our own destiny.
  + It will also require new capabilities as we separate from state support.
  + We have to weigh the advantages and disadvantages.
* We need to make sure that we cultivate resources the College needs. We need $5,000 givers that we can cultivate to become $50,000 givers.

## Suggestions to Improve the Plan

* Add a strategic objective on anticipating and responding to the changing profile of entering students.

## Suggestions to Ensure the Success of Implementation

* Focus on a few priorities and make sure that we nail them.
* We need to work on this in a focused way that includes measures and accountabilities.
  + It’s important that we focus on the things that have the greatest impact for the optimum financial cost.
  + We have to have very specific goals and clear action plans for moving them forward.
  + We need to identify short-term, medium-term and long-term goals.
* Ensure someone with genuine operational experience is empowered to make it happen. It needs to be someone with a track record for getting things done. This includes:
  + Holding people accountable for results
  + Developing the tactical plan to support the strategy
  + Ensuring there are clear deliverables and metrics
* We need to demonstrate the outcomes and value that TCNJ provides as an institution.
  + We need to be able to demonstrate that value to employers, graduate schools and parents as well as students.
  + How will we certify what individual students have learned?

Based on the feedback received and extensive discussion that followed, participants agreed to the revised strategic map on the following page. Revisions are highlighted in red.



Discussion included the following points:

* “Strategic” was added to the central challenge in order to reflect the importance of making thoughtful choices. The revised central challenge is, “Make the strategic choices necessary to provide educational excellence on an affordable, sustainable basis.”
* Many participants agreed that defining “affordable” and “sustainable” in the central challenge is critical.
* Respondents widely supported keeping TCNJ affordable, as highlighted in the central challenge.
* In objective A-1, “mission” was added to reflect that a mission exists, which needs to be communicated; a new mission isn’t needed. Revised objective A-1 is, “Clarify and communicate mission, identity, and distinctiveness.”
* “And new” was added to Objective B/C-4 to read “Foster engaged and new pedagogies and best practices wherever learning occurs”, reflecting:
  + The changing profile of students
    - Some feel TCNJ is unable to nimbly respond.
    - The College struggles every year to decide who to accept/who to turn away.
  + It’s important to recognize that students of today (and tomorrow) are more comfortable with alternative instructional models.
  + Educational delivery may need to adapt.
    - Faculty need to be strongly encouraged to adapt.
    - Many on the campus don’t embrace “new” well.
  + Some believe online learning is crucial in higher education.
    - It’s important to be cognizant of the national landscape.
    - Otherwise, TNCJ could be left behind.
* Though some feedback noted concern that nothing bold is in the strategic plan, participants agreed that opportunities to be bold are captured in:
  + Objective E-3, “Create a culture of innovation and strategic/institutional effectiveness.”
  + Specific implementation plans for Phase I and Phase II priorities
* While some respondents don’t see where the Master Plan fits on the strategic map, session participants clarified it is present in:
  + Objective C-6, “Create/modernize facilities for co-curricular student engagement.”
  + Objective E-4, “Create the physical infrastructure to support effectiveness.”
* Many respondents view the strategic plan as a starting point to build a shared vision for the College.
* Framing future discussions about the strategic map in the context of the mission and core beliefs will help increase understanding of how these documents are related.
* It was noted that some members of the Faculty Senate don’t see a clear vision for achieving academic excellence in the strategic plan.
  + They see the plan as too abstract
  + It doesn’t include specific guidance.
* Some respondents mentioned that school spirit is absent on the strategic map, but participants agreed it is closely tied to identity, and defining identity is a Phase I priority.
* Many questions from respondents were related to details that will be answered in implementation, including:
  + What the College’s signature experiences are
  + What makes TCNJ unique
* Respondents are very supportive of the focus on assessment.

# Committee on Planning and Priorities

Discussion about the composition of implementation teams and the tracks of work continued at the regularly scheduled CPP meeting. Discussion included the following points.

## Composition of Implementation Teams

## Teams need to have:

## Expertise

## Balanced representation

## Participants agreed to appoint co-chairs and entrust them to develop teams

## A clear and open process for selecting team members is critical for credibility

## The “Models and Reallocation and Strategic Decisions and Processes” team needs Cabinet and CPP representation.

## Tracks of Work

* Models and Reallocation and Strategic Decisions and Processes
  + A significant amount of the work in these tracks is in operations.
  + This summer it will be important to:
    - Align calendars.
    - Align budgets.
* Define Distinctive Identity and Excellence/Signature Programs
  + The input gathering part of this work could be completed by ad hoc task forces.
  + The majority of the effort will be:
    - Agreeing on an identify
    - Deciding what it means to be excellent
  + These two tracks of work inform each other.
    - Some felt combining the implementation teams makes sense; others suggested keeping them separate.
    - Identity work needs to start with the input received from Cognitive Marketing

# Appendix A: Summary of Strategic Plan Feedback

# **Strategic Plan Feedback**

**May 3, 2012**

1. **What excites or encourages you about the strategic direction for TCNJ?**

Keeping TCNJ Affordable (Central Challenge)

* “Exploring options to keep TCNJ affordable and within reach for everyone.” – 6 responses

Clarify and Communicate TCNJ Identity & Distinctiveness (A)

* Agree that “Identity and Distinctiveness” is main issue and glad that it will be addressed

Reaffirm the TCNJ Mission and Key Educational Elements/Outcomes (A1)

* *No responses*

Define Key Outcomes for TCNJ Graduates (A2)

* “Defining key outcomes for graduation helps students know more about the knowledge they obtain from their time at the College.” – 4 similar responses
* Opportunities to engage all students in ownership of their own education with the good of enhancing and understanding the importance of the transferable skills they are learning, no matter what major

Identify Points of Excellence and Distinctiveness (A3)

* I’m excited about developing a reputation for TCNJ. I believe to be very important for this reputation is student – faculty relationship which is unique compared to other institutions.

Define Concise Institutional Identity (A4)

* “Identity” – 46 responses

Aside from “Defining a concise identity,” here are examples:

* + Aligning and defining identity between constituents (alumni!).
  + Also, identity is quite an important issue for us in the long run to ensure success, and in the short term for initiating more talk about the college outside our small region.
  + Because we, as a student body & educational facility don’t yet have a developed true sense of identity.
  + Branding and giving TCNJ an identity rather than “A college on NJ”.
  + Clarifying the TCNJ identity so that all faculty, staff, students have united talking points.
  + Defining a unique identity for TCNJ. The College should be known for its overall excellence, but outside of the NJ bubble, little is known about what TCNJ stands for.
  + Giving TCNJ a name outside of NJ; the improvements in the identity and distinctiveness of TCNJ excites me because I feel like that is a thing that needs to be fixed. Every student should feel unified and on the same page on the institution that he or she is attending.
  + I am pleased to see that having a distinct college identity is one of our priorities. I believe it is crucial to market TCNJ as an academic institution that strives to be recognized beyond New Jersey.
  + I like the idea of delving into TCNJ’s identity and defining it in order to communicate it to others.
  + Increasing awareness of TCNJ and creating a TCNJ label of what TCNJ actually is categorized as an academic institution.
  + Like the discussion of identity, but been talking about this for a long time and needs to get resolved.
  + The part where we get a better identity is what exactly we need the most because I know that TCNJ is a great school but it would be nice for others to know it as well.
  + For example, there have been many meetings, discussions to determine our identity, but nothing concrete ever comes of this.
  + I am pleased to see that having a distinct college identity is one of our priorities. I believe it is crucial to market TCNJ as an academic institution that strives to be recognized beyond New Jersey.
  + I also think it is important that coming up with a clear direction for what kind of college TCNJ is was included in this plan; setting an image for TCNJ is very important.
  + Formulating/articulating a true direction and true vision.

Other responses (each once):

* To aim to achieve greater clarity within the college’s mission, goals.
* Determining a proper label for the school will give prospective students a better idea about the College.
* Problems are being recognized; strengthening all aspects (academic, co-curricular, etc.); school identity.
* Revising our mission and communicating it properly with a careful discussion of identity.

Communicating TCNJ Identity (A5)

* Branding – 2 responses
* Communication/Marketing, especially beyond New Jersey – 32 responses

Examples:

* The “defining” of our identity excites me! It will open such a different approach to any and every decision which needs to be made by TCNJ. It will also allow us to market our college appropriately.
* The development of the institution will allow for a boost in recognition which will then boost school spirit. This upward change within the strategic plan is exciting to be a part of. The improvements to the institution will also increase school pride in alumni since the College will become more prestigious.
* I’m excited about the aggressive action to be taking in developing the name recognition and reputation of the College.
* I think the goals of the strategic plan are all exciting but the goal to become more nationalized and well known to people out of our immediate area. This is such a great institution and should be recognized!
* I like that it is trying to increase its presence/reputation beyond the region. One problem most students face is that TCNJ doesn’t mean anything to schools/companies outside of NJ. We need a reputation more like that of Rutgers.
* I am excited about furthering the TCNJ name as we gain the reputation we deserve.
* The intentional efforts to promote, publicize, and build the TCNJ culture outside of the immediate localities – the internal improvements and progress to support this image.
* Making known and giving credential (on a national scale) to TCNJ; I’m excited about TCNJ having a “greater name”. I want my college to be recognized as the great, challenging institution that is. I think it is on its way there, but has not truly become a “big name” yet in terms of our diplomas and degrees.
* I am excited to see the school gain a reputation and bring attention to TCNJ, not only to benefit the schools but also the students in the long run
* If name can be more widespread and create a true identity, it may attract more highly qualified students and also will give current students a better opportunity.
* Marketing for the future. This is very important for students as future institutions or future employers look at college.
* The plan to make TCNJ’s great reputation known on an international and national level.
* With the new finances that will guarantee their capability of being effective educators and researchers that will broaden the name of TCNJ to states outside NJ
* Potential increase in out-of-state marketing/appeal.

Strengthen TCNJ Intellectual Community and Focus Academic Programs (B)

* Focus on academic core.
* Expand/strengthen faculty intellectual community.
* I am also excited that academic programs will get stronger.
* Acknowledges the centrality of academics.
* One of the things that excites me about TCNJ‘s future is its academic growth.
* The school at large and the faculty, research opportunities, volunteering opportunities, etc. are imperative for the school’s advancement. As a smaller, public school, research can always be expanded and developed.

Support for Faculty Scholarship (B1)

* Increase support for faculty scholarship.- 7 responses
* Teacher-scholar (investment).
* Need to invest in infrastructure (facilities, faculty, and staff).

Use Program Assess to Define and Drive Excellence (B2)

* *No Responses*

Strengthen the Integrated, Transformative Total Student Experience (C)

* Coming up with a plan addressing student life integrating academic and student affairs – 15 responses
  + It would be nice to see an enhanced student experience which improves on the academic and student life. They should feed on each other. Ultimately, students should enjoy and get something out of their total experience.
  + Strengthening all aspects (academic, co-curricular, etc.); mostly co-curricular.
  + Includes academic and student affairs as partners in learning.
  + The future direction about TCNJ show’s now they want to implement a high excellence of academics crossed with the different cultures of TCNJ already profound.
  + It would be nice to see an enhanced student experience which improves on the academic and student life. They should feed on each other. Ultimately, students should enjoy and get something out of their total experience.
  + Strengthening the total student experience especially modernizing/creating facilities (hopefully student center).

Enhancing Entry Points (C1)

* Enhancing “Entry Points” is essential to getting students on track as soon as they enter TCNJ – 5 general responses
* Transfer integration – 3 responses (including one with explicit reference to grad students)

Implement as Assessment Process for the Total Student Experience (C2)

* Develop and improvement in Assessment Process for the total student experience – 6 responses

Create/Modernize Facilities for Co-curricular Student Engagement (C6)

* “Modernizing Facilities” - 12 responses
  + 5 explicit mentions of Student Center
* Increased facilities and better maintenance of existing ones – 1 response
* I am most excited by the prospect of enhanced/created/modernized facilities for co-curricular student engagement. Not only will this benefit the students directly, but it will also serve multiple purposes. – 2 responses
* Addressing the technology and facilities that are lacking behind our peer institutions – 3 responses
  + Student concerns were taken in to account – technologically updating campus, “Wi-Fi.” Hopefully students will become more engaged by creating new buildings/student center.
* Linking physical plan with strategic priorities (especially co-curricular one). – 1 response

Identify and Prioritize Signature Experiences and Foster Universal Participation (BC3)

* Just “Singular Experiences” – 7 responses
* Just “Universal Participation” – 2 responses
* Combining both – 6 responses
  + Foster universal participation-signature experiences.
  + Encouraging/striving towards students’ participation in “signature experiences.”
  + Additionally the strengthening of programs involving students will create student success that will allow the name of TCNJ to grow further.
  + The level of student involvement that will be reached along with the improvement of signature experiences.
  + Creating a stronger intellectual community and strengthening the student experience.
  + TCNJ work to have opportunities such as studying abroad, MUSE, etc. available to students enabling them to a different learning experience.

Foster Engaged Pedagogies and Best Practices Wherever Learning Occurs (BC4)

* The planning for increasing the interaction between faculty and students.
* Taking into account “wherever learning occurs”.

Strengthen Advising to Foster Student Learning and Success (BC5)

* Addressing advising – 21 responses
  + It addresses what I feel are the major issues at the college - strengthening identity, improving communication channels (and I include "advising improvements" in that category).
  + Strengthening academic advising is the key to student success. Without advising, students would not have any direction on their college path.

Develop and Implement a Sustainable Financial Model Supporting A, B, C (D)

* Financial stability – 5 responses
  + We are taking ownership of our financial need.
  + The development of a financially profitable strategy for the foreseeable future.
  + Issues such as The College’s image and financial resources are something I am very happy are being addressed.
  + With the new finances that will guarantee their capability of being effective educators and researchers that will broaden the name of TCNJ to states outside NJ

Build Financial Models to Support Strategic Resource Deployment (D1)

* Financial modeling and accountability – 3 responses.
  + Putting building financial models as top goal definitely will help students and the college in the future.
  + Linking or supporting educational excellence with a financial development model.

Implement Reallocation to Support Strategic Priorities (D2)

* General excitement about reallocation principle – 9 responses

Other responses – 1 response each

* Focus on updating programs with the highest expected growth (Engineering, CS, and Nursing).
* Anticipating a plan for affordable finances reallocated to priorities established by faculty, student, staff; faculty/student fostered collaboration.
* I’d like to see that the yearly budget goals will be synchronized.
* This document specifies, almost mandates, addressing several issues that we have tended to avoid, such as D.2 develop and implement reallocation to support steal priorities. We’ve never had anything this strong before that I’ve seen.
* Plan to tie resource allocation to afford need.

Explore Creative Options for Revenue Enhancement (D3)

* The ways in which creative revenue generation- thoughtfully done- can help create a better educational experience- with new programs, courses, and opportunities – 4 responses

Expand and Strengthen Development Efforts Aligned with Priorities (D4)

* Expanding and strengthening developmental efforts aligned with priorities.

Ensure Adequate Human Resources Aligned with Priorities (D5)

* I’ll be excited when we fill our interim positions with quality candidates who are committed to leading TCNJ towards new ideas and keep us inspired.

Create a Strategically Effective Institution Supporting A, B, C (E)

* *No responses*

Align Decision Making with Strategic/Institutional Effectiveness (E1)

* *No responses*

Align Institutional Planning, Assessment, and Budgeting Processes (E2)

* *No responses*

Create a Culture of Innovation and Strategic/Institutional Effectiveness (E3)

* Promoting a Culture of Innovation.
* Main mission to train students for social entrepreneurship.

Create the Physical Infrastructure to Support Effectiveness (E4)

* Creating physical infrastructure to support our needs.
* Phase one builds the infrastructure to move forward.

Implement Technology to Support Effectiveness (E5)

* Focus on modernizing our facilities and technology – 7 responses
  + The growth of the intellectual community at TCNJ, as well as addressing the technology and facilities that are lacking behind our peer institutions.

Expand and Strengthen Faculty and Staff Development (E6)

* Faculty and Staff Development – 8 responses
  + Excited about investing in faculty, facilities, etc. rather than seeing them as revenue storms.
  + Measuring outcomes is a good thing, as is the seeming consistent process and faculty and staff development that will follow to get us better.
  + Need to invest in infrastructure (facilities, faculty, and staff).

Create a Culture of Accountability Focused on Outcomes and Metrics (F)

* Overall favorable responses re: assessment. 19 responses
  + Benchmark measurements seem like a promising way to measure;
  + Taking on accountability based on metrics.
  + There is finally an initiative to establish effective, data driven planning.
  + Creating cross area goals and assessment.
  + Assessing our effectiveness on an ongoing basis.
  + Using assessments already being done and having that infused in decision-making.
  + Alignment of processes (assessment, master plan, budgets, and strategic plan) – more realistic and sustainable.
  + Flexibility for an ever changing world – opportunity for reassessment as we go.
  + Measuring outcomes is a good thing, as is the seeming consistent process and faculty and staff development that will follow to get us better. The idea of actually having a clear plan that will be assessed regularly to ensure we are meeting our objectives.

Overall Support for Map

* Making progress, moving in the right direction, like supporting D & E to other goals.

|  |
| --- |
| * That the 5 overarching objectives are appropriate and critical; and finally, I like the B/C section crossover goals (B and C 3, 4, 5) as they need to be handled collaboratively. |

* Takes into consideration both sides of TCNJ experience – faculty and student (& cooperation); realistic about what we can and can’t do within 3 year timeframe.
* Alignment of processes (assessment, master plan, budgets, and strategic plan) – more realistic and sustainable.
* “Walking the talk” – we have been talking about strategic planning for over 10 years. Let’s stop talking and start implementing!

Miscellaneous

* You also captured that we have extraordinarily weak alumni relations, but I don't think that the alumni office itself can do much to fix that without partnerships with faculty and staff. We compartmentalize so many elements of our curriculum. We just had 15 alumni on campus to speak to accepted students and they were happy, engaged, excited to be back, and loved us. But faculty in our department coordinated that event--they wouldn't have returned had we not asked them. Our campus has to recognize that administrative offices, such as alumni and development, don't build relationships with students, so we shouldn't say that they alone should be reaching out to students once they graduate.

**2) What issues or concerns do you have about the strategic direction of TCNJ?**

**A) Concepts That Need to Be Clarified**

* Process Concerns
  + Doesn’t address the weaknesses gathered during the data collection phase.
  + Strategic Map information is being gathered in silo fashion when the map strives to end the silo approach.
* Impact of the plan is unclear
  + How will reallocation be achieved is a major concern
  + Will the areas of focus in the plan make the college more fiscally sound?
  + Cost to students is a major concern; could changes eliminate our attractiveness to first generation students?
  + Students concerned about attention to total student experience
  + The plan’s impact on academic program is ill-defined and could be negative
  + How does Campus Town affect the plan and the plan affect Campus Town?
  + Plan will impact marketing of college (identity, signature programs)?
* Plan limitations
  + The plan is not bold enough to move us forward
  + Broad nature makes it unachievable; it lacks solutions
  + NOT a strategic plan – it is a plan for strategic improvements
  + How the plan will be funded is a major concern

**B) Suggested Revisions**

* Time span identified is insufficient/problematic
* Defining our identity now and for the future is paramount to the success of the plan. No universal view of identity currently but is needed to promote the institution
* Stronger and earlier emphasis on technological improvements, including Wi-Fi
* Greater emphasis is needed on the Total Student Experience, particularly student development in multiple learning contexts beyond the classroom, and the needed students services.
* Master Plan/facility issues (financial capacity and need to see buildings as investments, need for new student center, residence halls, and other student facilities, and need to address existing facilities)
* Stronger focus on Faculty/Staff Development
* Need more focus on academic concerns and faculty role, as well as academic program quality and faculty evaluation
* A greater emphasis needs to be placed on advising
* Alumni Participation/Financial Support and School Spirit need to be stronger emphasis
* Stronger emphasis on diversity
* Communication should be its own section/objective in the plan.
* Assessment focus needs to be enhanced in the plan
* Mission should address graduate programs.
* Community relations with Ewing not taken into account enough

**C) Clarity of Map Logic**

* Language concerns (wordsmithing)
  + Use of a catchy slogan or motto, may provide direction/create motivation among community members to work toward the goal.
  + Clarification of wording needed for universal understanding
* Map Design
  + Prioritization – “top to bottom” layout of objectives in columns under each strategic initiative suggests misleading “top to bottom” priority
  + Timing - a clear implementation timeline needs to be built into the map.
  + Omissions from the map (communications, school spirit)
  + Layout/Visual needs enhancement

**D) Implementation Issues or Concerns**

* Do we have adequate resources to realize the plan?
  + Funding is required otherwise fear it is unachievable (largest number of concerns)
  + Human resource capacity to sustain the plan may not be in place.
  + Outside forces will impact success of this plan (tuition rates, financial debt, budget process and state funding).
* Do we have, can we create the cultural will to achieve the strategic plan?
  + Understanding culture and community development (the college as an open complex system) is critical to the success
  + Unsure we have the ability to move forward in our current culture (apathy, morale, engagement, buy-in)
  + Ability to make hard/unpopular decisions, including reallocation of resources
  + Need to trust that the plan is a good one and play it out to completion!
  + Ability to maintain past initial effort
* Communication issues
  + Poor communications will impede the plan’s success unless addressed (faculty input, targeting audiences, students/administration, communication gaps between areas of college)
* Implementation strategy-
  + short (current implementation) and long term (sustaining strategic process)
* Accountability and Leadership –
  + Who is accountable to whom and for what? How will this be measured?
  + Leadership for the plan and communication between groups
* Workload Concerns –
  + How will staff and faculty manage to complete tracks of work with workloads that are already demanding?
  + Staff, in particular are already doing more with less human and financial resources.

**3) What Suggestions do you have to ensure successful implementation?**

1. **Concepts that Need to be Clarified**

* Respondent’s indicated that clarification is required in a number of areas, including in terms of:
  + Defining for the various constituent groups the purpose of the strategic plan;
  + Reaffirming the mission and resolving the components of the mission that appear to be in conflict (“not innovative, supportive environment);
  + Clarifying the institution’s vision to give a greater sense of purpose to the strategic planning process beyond simply to “improving things.”

1. **Suggested Revisions**

* Wording Changes- Some specific suggestions
  + “Explore” should be changed to “identify and implement” viable revenue enhancement options; “reaffirm’ the mission should be “embrace”
  + The impact of the central challenge may be greater if it was less wordy. Additionally, tightening up the language of the strategic priorities and objectives would help make the message more powerful.
* Implementation Plan/Timeline - There was considerable feedback regarding the implementation timeframe. Generally, there were those who believed that it was important to get started immediately and proceed quickly, and those who believed that three years is too short for the work that must be done. Concern over the implementation plan itself also drew considerable feedback, including suggestions for phasing in implementation and carefully planning the cost, resources, and timeline/deadline for each phase.
  + A realistic view of the institution. A realistic view of the 3 year timeline.
  + To not tackle too much at one time. Do not get bogged down by the time line; just focus on the goals at hand rather than the deadline.
  + Have a more practical outline with hard deadlines
  + I think that checkpoints of implementation will be necessary to ensure success. A detailed outline of what practices are necessary during the process should be created and strictly followed. Any deviations should be clearly explained and re-integrated into the map.
  + Create more focused and attainable “phases of implementation.”
  + Implementation of the strategic plan needs to be done by implementing the initiatives that can be completed with minimal amount of time and cost, and then move on to the next.
  + Because this is a long-term process, I think that specifically targeting freshman and underclassmen will be necessary because once they grow older, they will be the ones influencing and shaping the younger students and the shape of the school as a whole.
  + The cultural innovation should be in the first phase because it is going to take longer.
  + In order to ensure success I believe each part should be exactly followed and taken time to be completed efficiently.
  + Identify attainable goals that can be started as soon as possible, the quicker the better once again, involve students more.
  + In order not to lose excitement on progress – implement them as fast as possible.
  + Things always get pushed back. I think things just need to start happening.
  + Prioritize, set an implementation plan for each objective and ensure you have adequate resources, financial and personnel, to insure the implementation is possible.
  + Create incentives and focus on a few objectives.
* Governance Structure – Limited feedback was provided regarding the lack of attention to the governance structure in the plan.
  + Nothing about the addressing of assessment of governance structure – addresses collaboration and bureaucracy; cooperation among the departments need to be addressed.

1. **Clarity of Map Logic**

* Map Structure – Limited feedback was provided regarding the map structure. Generally, the map was perceived by those respondents to not accurately reflect what will happen as part of the implementation process for a strategic plan. One
  + The impact may be greater if the presentation of the map was changed to a different structure - example: circular instead of linear.
  + Create a diagram that reflects the complexity of practical implementation of strategic plan.
* Map Content – While the map structure was perceived by a few respondents to lack appropriate complexity, the content of the map was perceived by a number of respondents to be too complex and/or lacking in clarity. However, others indicated that the map content did not provide the necessary information in terms of identifying who is responsible for carrying out tasks, how decisions are made, etc.
  + This plan is a good start, but NEEDS to be more concise and specifics as to which initiatives will be implemented.
  + Simplify map by combining certain points; reduce the redundancy.
  + Needs to be boiled down to a few clear concepts and ideas; needs to incorporate a fun is good about going about the implementation of the plan
  + The impact of the central challenge may be greater if it was less wordy. Additionally, tightening up the language of the strategic priorities and objectives would help make the message more powerful. Successful implementation may be achieved if areas that impact the entire campus community are noted (as focusing on accountability and outcomes are), otherwise, they appear to be separate points.
  + Take some of the "candor" and richness from the original focus group and link most frequently mentioned comments to the various aspects of the strategic map. This will help to keep the strategic planning process "down to earth," i.e., connected as closely as possible to the people who voiced their opinions and concerns.
  + The map has lots of verbs with no subjects who will do them.
  + How do decisions get made? How is information shared? Map doesn’t get into details, but the details need to be defined.
  + Need specifics for each box in the map, e.g., What does it mean? Who is involved? How is direction/decisions made?
* Where does the Facilities Master Plan fit?
  + One staff member felt that all items in the strategic map were important to the college, but expressed concern about how facilities fit into the long term goals.
* Building a new/larger student center that both students and faculty/staff can utilize will help strengthen student experience.

1. **Implementation Issues or Concerns (major focus of this question)**

* Leadership – Comments regarding leadership were numerous and strongly stated. Respondents consistently remarked that there is a need to identify an appropriate individual who will lead the implementation process overall, as well as identify those who will be responsible for the successful implementation/completion of each step or phase.
  + Need a “champion” or spokesperson who is visible on campus.
  + After task force – be sure we have someone steering the process to be sure focus.
  + Better leadership. We need leaders who can tell the story of TCNJ & its direction not only to external but internal readers. This is not difficult but for some reason our leaders have not committed to telling that story
  + Some suggestions would be to enhance proper delegation and allocation of the tasks in order to stay on top and ahead of the strategic plan.
  + Need champions for each track. Also, deliverables need to be clearly defined and individuals must be given authority to truly evaluate (and report different truths). Concerned that the divisions of labor for completing is ambitions plan will unravel over time (need to incentives to participants - broad-based). Also, live professional managers for each track.
  + We need new executive leadership at the college.
  + The highest levels of leadership at the college need to keep endorsing and supporting the effort
  + Someone needs to be in charge of each strand of implementation. If no specific individual is in charge, implementation will flounder.
  + I would suggest to first plan which executives are in charge of executing specific initiatives, and then to go forward.
* Ownership and Engagement – A significant number of respondents indicated a strong desire to see the continued engagement of the campus community (and students in particular) throughout the strategic plan implementation process.
  + Involve maximum number of people; time to reflect to provide useful commentary for consideration , otherwise feels like direction already set; recognize people need ownership; cultural change will need to be carefully managed to get and sustain buy-in and perhaps reward system intrinsic/extrinsic.
  + People need ownership; staff moral improvements
  + Hear from those in the trenches, please!
  + Student feedback is crucial. More meetings and feedback to make sure this is also what we feel we need.
  + Maintain student feedback, getting accurate student feedback is the most important for success (focus groups, surveys, specific student group studies).
  + Keep the campus community involved throughout the entire process.
  + Much student feedback is needed along the way. Not solely in the initial phases.
  + Transparency, continued involvement of faculty and students, not just deans and cabinet. Regularly tell us what is being proposed – not springing a final decision on us – viz;, the policy on policies or “printergate”
* Good Communication – Communication also received considerable mention in the feedback. There appears also to be a concern that the process will proceed without appropriate notification to the constituent groups as to what is happening.
  + Opportunity for more and informal communication using current social media such as Twitter, blogs, etc.
  + Keep more open communication with staff & faculty & students; collect feedback on plan through more informal communication (social media, Twitter, Facebook, etc.
  + Communication - making sure that the stakeholders have a clear route of communication.
  + Clear frequent communication.
  + Receiving an update on the success of the plan every few months over 3 years.
  + Make sure students are aware of these changes. Also make sure we’re informed of all the changes beforehand so this doesn’t come as a shock to the campus.
  + Keep students informed – we go here and are more aware of how things can effectively be pursued.
  + Transparency – different ways of communicating with stakeholders instead of just emails.
  + Maintain CPP oversight; transparency; have a mechanism where intermediate steps are reported out – “we are proposing this: not “here’s what we decided”
  + Allow for everyone at the school to know, or have the opportunity to know about the strategic plan and implementations. Keep it student centered.
  + Be explicit about how the plan will be implemented, with a focus not on "CPP" and other acronyms as much as on us as TCNJ employees...how can we in our individual positions internalize the plan and maintain its health through the implementation process. What do we need to be doing - focus on us, rather than you in your meeting rooms with closed doors.
* School Spirit – School spirit was regularly mentioned by respondents – often in the context of broader comments often referring to “involvement” and “communication.” In terms of specific “school spirit” comments, respondents often mention the need to reach out to alumni and deepen/strengthen their relationship to the institution.
  + Put more emphasis on school spirit for faculty and staff- people excited about school will be excited about plan
  + Embrace mission and school spirit & wear down weekly for staff/faculty.
  + Get alumni excited about it - $ and other help.
  + For the implementation of some of the issues on the strategic map. I think that if we had more school spirit (and we got this by advertising sports games more, having a sophomore type of welcome week) that our alums would feel more inclined to give more and to also help mentor our students.
* Funding/Resources – Responses to issues relating to funding/resources were remarkably open, honest, and realistic. A number of respondents mentioned the need to be realistic about our limitations and about the need to reallocate resources. There was also a strong understanding of the need to be creative in enhancing revenue long-term to progress in achieving our plans.
  + Deal with morale, including financial position with the state.
  + Explore -> identify revenue.
  + Explore should be changed to identify and implement viable revenue enhancement options.
  + Develop a healthy awareness of our limitations; identify what if anything goes away in pursuit of this new plan.
  + Develop awareness of our limitations; truly make tough decisions on what needs to go away.
  + On finance B Budget-Planning Council years ago, we discussed the future possibility of a law school – it brings in a lot of money and helps reputation. Has this been discussed? It is a MAJOR plan, requires $ and space, but in the future it could be a big boom to the school.
  + Acceptance of limitations and commitment to supporting initiatives with both financial and human resources.
  + Be less concerned with branding and images of an "institutional identity" and actually put real resources into achieving high quality teaching (and all that this entails). That is the only way students will achieve meaningful outcomes.
  + I think fundraising has to be the No. 1 priority. Faculty have to be chasing grants, fellowships, and donors have to be identified.
  + We need to do cost-benefit analyses and learn what programs/areas provide the greatest benefits or negative impacts to the college and capitalize on that information.
  + Realistic goals based on evidence, resources. Know limits of an institutions size. Not lose sight of what it means to be a public institution.
  + Really focusing on finding and implementing creative and new ways to gain revenue so that our other objectives can be reached. This entire plan needs to be communicated well to all of the college campus so that the changes can be received and understood.
  + Reallocation of resources.
  + Transparency in the financial allocations and progress of the implementation.
* Accountability/Assessment – A number of respondents focused strongly on monitoring/assessing progress toward the achievement of the plan’s goals and ensuring accountability for outcomes.
  + Good assessment tools; good assessment data evaluation.
  + Take small steps and do an on-going, systematic assessment of progress made and adjust the plan accordingly. Keep in mind that the only way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time.
  + When reporting to the campus community on progress in the planning process, show how actions taken address those specific opinions/concerns raised by the focus group participants.
* Level of accountability and how people are held accountable.
* Frequent checks and address student and faculty that it is their combined responsibility to make sure that the goals are met and that the plan is executed adequately.
  + Implementation of the strategic plan needs to be done by implementing the initiatives that can be completed with minimal amount of time and cost, and then move on to the next.
  + Sticking to model that focuses on outcomes and assessments.

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