



# Strategic Planning Implementation: Strategic Public Leadership

**Author :** Mike Smith

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Lydian Altman and Gordon Whitaker reported on the work of the implementation committee. The idea has evolved slightly from the original proposal submitted to the DAC, mostly in that the work also will involve faculty members with different kinds of expertise—not just members of the leadership faculty. The committee has done a nice job of developing the goals for this initiative.

The overarching goal is to help public agencies set priorities and achieve the results they want. In order to meet that goal, our clients must come to see strategic public leadership as encompassing planning, implementation, and evaluation as an integrated and continuing process. It is not enough just to plan and set priorities. The committee is building a strategic public leadership model of practices that includes the following steps: (1) understand context, (2) create goals and objectives, (3) develop action plans, (4) allocate resources, (5) manage progress, and (6) evaluate results.



This will require work by more than just the leadership faculty, and the initiative will draw on a wide range of expertise at the School. For example, faculty with subject-matter expertise in certain areas, like economic development or public information technology, may need to help local leaders understand the context for creating goals and objectives. Others will need to help them learn how to rigorously evaluate the results of their plans—people like Maureen Berner who understand program evaluation. The committee has started identifying people and matching them with the part of the process where they can make a contribution.

Gordon and Lydian described two related objectives that the committee has identified as important in helping North Carolina officials adopt this systemic approach to thinking about strategic leadership. One is the creation of a technical assistance program to help public agencies implement these practices. Another is the integration of teaching about the model across as many



different School courses as possible. If elected officials learn about this model in the Essentials course and if managers learn about it in the Public Executive Leadership Academy (and so on), for example, it increases the chance that they will adopt it in their cities and counties. Lydian and Vaughn Upshaw are developing a new strategic planning course that uses this model. The committee is working on a business plan and a management structure for the program—both of which are critically important for moving it forward. They recognize the need to generate sufficient revenue to cover the costs of doing the work.

In addition to helping public agencies set priorities and achieve results, the committee also has identified the goal of contributing to scholarship about the value and effectiveness of selected strategic public leadership techniques. The model looks good, but how do we know that it really works? Or that it is better than other approaches? These are important questions, and there were related questions from the DAC about how this will be determined. One challenge is that our clients are not likely to seek our help in using this model from beginning to end. It is more likely that they will ask us to help them with a portion of it, which will make it more difficult to evaluate the overall model. The committee will be thinking hard about how to evaluate the model, which is not surprising since evaluation is one thing that the model encourages others to do.

I encourage Gordon, Lydian, and members of the DAC to add anything else about the committee's work. They are working hard and making progress. I'm sure that they would appreciate feedback from anyone about their work. The other two strategic planning implementation committees—information resources and collaborative work environment—will report on their progress at the next DAC meeting on April 9.