



Strategic Planning Recommendations: Open Forum #2

Author : Mike Smith

Categories : [Strategic Planning](#)

Date : October 6, 2009

We held our second forum on Tuesday afternoon and received more helpful feedback. One theme from the comments concerned our capacity to carry out some of the suggested priorities. Margaret Henderson indicated that the leadership faculty members have said that they will not have time to participate in the strategic public leadership initiative—the so-called “strategic planning on steroids.” If that is true, the initiative will fall to the EPA professionals who already are doing this work, and who rely on fees from the work to cover their salaries. Margaret expressed concern that we will not gain much in revenue if that is our model, and she is “spinning her wheels on how to make progress.” I indicated that the public leadership group had put forward several impact proposals, and the DAC concluded that the strategic planning initiative was likely to have the greatest impact. Time that might have been spent on the other initiatives should be focused on the strategic planning proposal—that is one consequence of making it a strategic priority and not the other proposals. Jeff Hughes also pointed out that the DAC had assumed that leadership faculty could allocate time to this priority by declining requests for help with other kinds of planning or retreats.

Glenn Barnes raised a related question about capacity. Where will the time come from to increase our assistance for public policy decision-makers? Are there things that we will stop doing to create more time? This priority will require some reallocation of existing resources, but it is too soon to know exactly how it will work. The implementation committee will review the Legislative Reporting Service and determine whether it is possible to shift faculty and staff time from digesting legislation to working more directly with policy decision-makers. That question can't be answered until we talk with legislators and others. It also is possible that faculty members will be interested in shifting some or all of their time to work on this initiative. It would mean doing less work in their existing fields, which is a strategic decision I am willing to make. We have decided to stop doing some things already as a result of the planning process—*Popular Government* and *NC Legislation*. It is much easier to make group decisions about these kinds of cross-cutting activities, but it is much harder for us to decide that certain individuals should spend their time differently. I will make those decisions in consultation with individual faculty and staff members.

Dan Chegash asked whether our strategic priorities amounted to a business plan for the School. Does it give us a guide for generating the revenue that we need? These are the priorities that we believe will have the greatest impact and that respond directly to the needs of public officials. Our hope is that this combination will create a willingness by officials to pay for these services even in



tough economic times. The ability to generate revenue was one factor in setting our priorities, but it was not the only factor. In addition to setting these strategic priorities, we are looking separately at how we charge for all of our services—which is focused on increasing revenue. Richard Whisnant pointed out that the recommendation on incentives and infrastructure to support more diverse funding sources clearly is aimed at increasing revenue. It will include a conversation and determination about how much we should consider broadening our customer base to generate more revenue.

A couple of more points from the session. Laurie Mesibov asked why we want to increase our profile with the General Assembly. Two reasons: (1) to increase the chances that they will call on us to help them make more effective policy decisions, and (2) to increase the likelihood that they will support the School.

Eileen Youens asked whether more than one committee will be involved in implementation and if I had a timetable for the next stage. There will be multiple implementation committees. In terms of a timetable for the committees, they will need to set deadlines for themselves as soon as possible, and they also will need to divide their work into manageable stages. The Information Resources Project includes lots of complex elements, and, as Katrina Hunt pointed out, most of them are interrelated. An early priority for that committee will be to determine how we share information previously communicated through *Popular Government*—we need to let public officials know how we plan to fill that gap. The committee implementing the public policy initiative will need to determine the future of the Legislative Reporting Service quickly because so many other decisions will depend on that one. I will work with the committees to set reasonable time frames for the completion of their work. There are questions that will need to be answered as we move through the next phase, but we need to be clear that we are implementing these priorities and not just continuing to plan.

This is not intended to be a comprehensive summary of the meeting, and so I encourage others who attended to add comments and clarifications. Thanks again to everyone who attended this session, including the members of the DAC. You have one more chance on **Thursday, October 8 from 9-10 am in Room 2321** to offer your thoughts about the recommendations. Not to worry if you don't have time to eat breakfast before the session. There will be M & Ms.