

2. PLANNING AND EVALUATION

DESCRIPTION

In order to effectively fulfill a mission, continual evaluation and improvement are necessary. To accomplish this, Mohegan Community College has established a highly participatory planning process, which identifies long term (5 year) and annual goals. A number of planning documents have been developed, the most comprehensive of which is the Mohegan Community College Institutional Plan. The plan must respond to all objectives included in the Regional Community College Long-Range Plan. The plan details goals, objectives, performance outcomes, timelines, and administrative responsibility. These terms are defined as follows:

Goals - A goal grows out of the college mission and is a statement concerning the direction the college will take within the next five years.

Objective - An objective is a more specific statement, usually focusing on what can be accomplished within a year. Long-range objectives are identified if known.

Performance Outcomes and Timelines - Specific indicators to demonstrate successful completion of each objective are included with the expected target date.

Responsible Individual(s) - The responsible person (dean) is listed with each outcome.

The President initiates the planning process each year by mid-October. The process, which continues until June, results

in a plan for the next fiscal year, beginning July 1. The President presents a report which includes:

1. a detailed schedule for the process.
2. information and guidelines related to the internal and external opportunities, problems and constraints.
3. a discussion about major strategic issues.

The President's Cabinet and the Planning and Policy Advisory Committee (PPAC) then discuss, clarify, and agree on planning parameters. PPAC serves as the representative of the entire College community. PPAC was formed to address major institutional planning and policy issues and to provide a forum for discussion of other important issues. The structure and general functioning of this committee is described in Mohegan's governance document.

During the year meetings take place in which modifications are proposed, problems are discussed, and a consensus is reached. At this point PPAC makes recommendations to the President. The President then synthesizes the input and issues the official plan. A thorough discussion of this participatory process is outlined in the Mohegan Policy Manual (Policy #6).

After the official plan is issued, individual plans are developed by each manager, director, coordinator, and other staff with significant program responsibilities. Drawing from the Institutional Plan, these plans include specific and measurable objectives. The plans are also used as a measurement of individual

effectiveness, providing a portion of the framework for periodic and year-end evaluations.

In order to determine the effectiveness of the planning process, an ongoing and annual evaluation takes place. The evaluation process allows the College to verify its attainment of plan objectives. Everyone with planning responsibilities shares in the evaluation process. The responsible individuals monitor the progress toward accomplishment of the Institutional Plan objectives. PPAC also monitors the progress. Communication takes place up and down the organizational structure.

Near the end of the Fall semester, the President meets formally with each responsible staff person to ascertain the progress made toward reaching the objectives. After this communication takes place, a report is prepared and submitted to PPAC. If appropriate, mid-year adjustments are made. Before the Spring semester concludes, responsible staff submit written progress reports to the appropriate dean. Each dean then prepares a report to the President. The college community then receives an extensive consolidated institutional annual report on the status of the plan objectives.

In addition to directing Mohegan towards fulfillment of its mission, the process also serves a number of other purposes. It provides direction for budget planning, staffing, capital equipment planning, space planning, and numerous other planning processes because priorities have been established.

Another plan of significant importance is the Five-Year Institutional Assessment Plan. This ambitious, long-range plan was developed to assess institutional effectiveness within the scope of the mission. The President, President's Cabinet and PPAC were involved in the process, and input was received from the Regional Advisory Council. The scope of the assessment process, the responsibility for development and implementation, and the resources involved are fully explained in the plan document.

In 1990, a three year plan to expand opportunities for people with disabilities was developed. A cross section of constituencies formed the Disability Plan Task Force which identified problems, set goals, developed objectives, and set timelines. Since 1990, this plan has been integrated into the comprehensive Institutional Plan.

The Racial/Ethnic Five-Year Diversity Plan, initiated in 1986, identified barriers to the access and retention of students from under-represented ethnic groups. The plan outlined strategies and timelines for implementation of new programs, policies, and procedures to remove the barriers. Mohegan completed its first year plan and developed a second plan, utilizing the task force model consistent with our emphasis on participatory planning.

Other plans upon which Mohegan draws to develop priorities include "Toward 2000: Long Range Plan for Connecticut Community Colleges" and the "Strategic Plan for Technical Education." These plans, produced by the Department of Higher Education, were seriously considered by Mohegan.

All plans mentioned in this section are available for inspection.

APPRAISAL

Mohegan's highly participatory planning and evaluation process results in a comprehensive Institutional Plan which complements the mission of the College. Although the process is time consuming, everyone is aware of the plan and refers to it throughout the year. The yearly evaluation and revision of the plan encourages a reflective attitude among the staff. Communication and respect are fostered by the effort to achieve consensus on the plan. This major document is supplemented by the reports of various task forces.

Some weaknesses in the evaluation and planning process can be identified. A lack of resources led to scaling down the assessment activities which we had planned. Furthermore, budget decisions made at other levels of state government do not always match the planning priorities of Mohegan. Also, in recent years, there has been great inconsistency in the overall funding levels coming from the State. For example, the State has instituted budget cuts on an interim basis that result in the return of monies previously budgeted to run the College. This inconsistency has upset the local planning process in some instances. The planning process has also been weakened by a sparsity of institutional data available in useable form. We expected that a new automated data system, which would have partially remedied this problem, would be implemented

for the community college system beginning in 1992. At this time the Central Office has postponed the purchase of that system.

A recent survey of College staff indicated another possible weakness in the planning process. Many respondents felt that students were not sufficiently represented in the planning process, although two (2) student senators already sit on PPAC. Perhaps this could be overcome by devising a more specific role for the Student Senate in the development of the annual Institutional Plan.

PROJECTION

Planning and evaluation will receive even greater attention in the upcoming years. Our merger with Thames Valley State Technical College will require numerous task forces to integrate the planning and evaluation process. Three groups which have formed to date will make recommendations on governance and a new name, and will identify the policies and issues effected by the merger. The two institutions have different styles, but our shared vision will provide a bridge.

The uncertainties of state funding will continue to plague us and require us to seek alternate resources.

The demand for accountability, as well as our own desire for better information, will require increased attention to evaluation in all aspects of the operation of the College.

Projections for 1992/93 include the following major objectives which are specified in the College's Institutional Plan:

- 1) Provide appropriate forecasts and evaluations of FTE usage throughout the year to enable planning and control of semester course schedules.
- 2) Evaluate 1991/92 strategy outcomes and implement 1992/93 strategies as specified in the Plan to Expand Opportunities for People with Disabilities.
- 3) Develop a plan to increase cultural diversity at the College using the recommendation of the Task Force on Ethnic and Racial Diversity.