



Assessment Terms

The University Plan has been revised to better focus the plan. In revising the University Strategic Plan, the total number of goals has been reduced from 9 to 7 and broader statements have been added to organize the goals around *strategic priorities*. Benchmarks will be identified for the strategic goals and in the university strategic plan, the areas responsible for specific benchmarks will be identified. For example, a benchmark to increase the number of undergraduate freshman students enrolled will be the primary responsibility of enrollment management.

All areas and units (including departments, centers and institutes) are asked to revise and update their strategic plans. The strategic plans should be aligned with the university priorities/goals when appropriate but more importantly the strategic plans for the areas and units must reflect the critical goals for the individual areas/units. That is, each area or unit strategic plan must represent the mission and vision for that area/unit.

For the area and unit strategic plans, the following outline should be followed:

Mission – a statement of the key functions or purposes of the area or unit.

Vision – a statement of what the area or unit wants to achieve in the near future (usually a 5-year time period). The vision should indicate a level of achievement or recognition based on the mission of the area or unit.

Core Values – those characteristics that serve as the foundation upon which the area or unit will operate. Values include such characteristics as honesty, support of diversity, academic freedom. In most cases, areas and units will not need to revise their mission and vision statements, nor their core values.

Strategic Goals – statements that advance the area/unit to fulfill its mission and achieve its vision.

Benchmarks – measures of the degree of success in achieving each goal over the next 5 years. Benchmarks are measurable, specific indicators of performance for each goal. There should be multiple benchmarks for each goal.

Objectives – focused statements to address a specific benchmark in each goal. Objectives support the work toward the benchmarks.

Strategies – statements of actions to achieve objectives.

The above outline differs from the 2001 strategic plans in two ways:

1. The term Benchmarks is now used rather than Critical Success Factors, although the intent of the new term is the same as the former phrase:
2. The "Assessments" that were included with each Objective have been deleted. The Objectives focus on the Benchmarks and different measures within each Objective are not necessary.

Suggestions for revising area and unit strategic plans:

1. Align the area and unit strategic plan with the University strategic goals to the extent that such an alignment is consistent with the mission and vision of the area or unit.
2. Be sure to include the important goals that advance the area/unit toward its vision.
3. The goals do not need to address policy, procedures or area/unit normal operations as these should be addressed in other documents (Ops, operational handbooks, etc.)
4. Keep the number of goals limited to those most critical to achieving area/unit vision. Goals can be updated as situations demand. Keep the strategic plan manageable.
5. Use only benchmarks that are clearly measurable (quantitative or qualitative measures may be used) and directly relate to the goal.
6. Program-level assessment of student learning must be addressed in the annual assessment reports and should be reflected in the academic colleges and departments as appropriate. Goals related to the undergraduate and graduate educational experiences can capture the program-level assessments (course-level outcomes and assessments are not included).
7. Engage faculty, staff and students in the revision of strategic plans.

This document has been drawn from:

Reeve, Gilmore. (2006). *Guidelines for updating and focusing strategic plans for areas and units*. Retrieved on June 9, 2006 from http://techdata.irs.ttu.edu/stratreport/docs/Strategic_Planning_Update_Guidelines.doc