



Evaluating Strategic Planning Effectiveness  
Mid-Year Feedback from Team Leaders and Members  
2022

Strategic planning supports the mission through the creation of intentional action to meet the future challenges of both the organization and its stakeholders.

***Cowley College is committed to providing opportunities for learning excellence, personal achievement, and community engagement.***

### **Introduction**

The Institutional Effectiveness Office surveyed team leaders (11) and members (34) to collect information for needs assessment and strategic planning effectiveness using the College's SurveyMonkey platform. Survey delivery method to team leaders included Cowley College email information; survey delivery method to team members utilized an anonymous, email link.

Both surveys lead with the following introduction and statement of purpose:

*Successful strategic planning rests on a foundation built by team composition. High performing strategic planning activities involve an organization at every level of its hierarchy and as such, becomes one of the organization's most important, shared governance activities.*

*This assessment asks a series of questions about team effectiveness. The intention of this assessment is not to "grade" a team or to identify "poor" performing team members, nor to imply inadequacy for team leaders. This assessment plays the same role as other learning assessments on campus: The purpose of this assessment is to increase self-awareness, foster critical conversations, and increase the quality of strategic planning at Cowley College.*

*Thank you for stepping into the role of team member for Year One of the 2022-2025 Cowley College Strategic plan. You are not in this role by chance – your expertise and experiences make you the right fit, and I hope you know how much I value your willingness to contribute to one of the most important, but often most challenging, activities on our campus.*

## **The Role of Strategic Planning in Accreditation Reporting**

Cowley College's regional accrediting agency, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), focuses its attention on institutional planning processes in *Federal Criterion 5, Institutional Effectiveness, Resources, and Planning*.

5.A. Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.

5.C. The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

## Survey Items

Table 1 below includes the survey items and the mean, or average, scores for each group whose feedback was solicited. Items are scored on a scale of 5 where 5 = Very satisfied, 3 = Somewhat satisfied, and 1 = Not satisfied at all. The items listed below mimic items included in the 2020 Spring Noel Levitz College Employee Survey (CESS).

<b>Table 1. Strategic Planning Alignment, Campus Involvement and Support</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	
	<b>Team Leaders</b>	<b>Team Members</b>
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50%</b>
The strategic priorities and goals of the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan support the mission, purpose, and values of the College.	4.73	4.29
Strategic planning processes (environmental scanning; SWOT analysis, strategic challenge identification; team-based goal setting with action planning) support the College's efforts to plan carefully.	4.73	4.12
Strategic planning activities at Cowley College provide employees with an opportunity to plan for the future.	4.18	3.69
A spirit of teamwork and cooperation at Cowley College supports the successful achievement of strategic planning goals.	4.18	3.53
<b>Summary Score (Mean of the Mean)</b>	<b>4.46</b>	<b>3.91</b>

Table 2 below includes the survey items and the mode, or frequency, scores for each group whose feedback was solicited. The items listed below as “How involved in strategic planning are” for nine stakeholder groups and scored on a scale of 5 where 5 = Too much involvement, 3 = Just the right involvement, and 1 = Not enough involvement. These items are included in the 2020 Spring CESS.

<b>Table 2. Involvement in Strategic Planning</b>	<b>Mode Score</b>	
	<b>Team Leaders</b>	<b>Team Members</b>
Faculty	3	3
Staff	3	3
Directors of Administrative Units	3	3
Administrative Council	3, 4	2, 3
Students	2	2
Trustees	2,3	1
Alumni	2	1
Foundation	2	1
Community Members	2	1

Table 3 below includes a mode, or frequency, score and summary information for a rubric scored by team leaders. The rubric, introduced with the verbiage reproduced below, included three dimensions:

- Team Composition: Asking, “Are the right people in the room?”
  - Scoring on a scale of 3 where 3 = Members represent all departments with the expertise to achieve team goals, 2 = Somewhere in the middle, and 1 = Members do not represent any of the departments with the expertise to achieve team goals.
- Team Resources: Asking, “Is the team supported with the fiscal resources needed to be successful?”
  - Scoring on a scale of 3 where 3 = All needed support from leadership has been received to accomplish strategic planning goals, 2 = Somewhere in the middle, and 1 = No support from leadership has been received to accomplish strategic planning goals.
- Team Support: Asking, “Does the team receive support from College leadership?”
  - Scoring on a scale of 3 where 3 = Members represent all departments with the expertise to achieve team goals, 2 = Somewhere in the middle, and 1 = Members do not represent any of the departments with the expertise to achieve team goals.

*Introduction: At first glance, the rubric below may appear to be an “all or nothing” assessment but the largest section for each dimension has been left blank so you can enter feedback that communicates team needs. If your response to one or more of the dimensions is “somewhere in the middle,” then please assign a score between 2.00 and 2.99 to this milestone and use the space provided to share detailed feedback.*

**Table 3. Team Effectiveness Rubric**

	<b>Mode Score</b>
<b>Team Composition</b>	2
Overall, team leaders appear to believe that current team membership is appropriate to the purpose and activity of their team; however, leaders also shared concerns that more involvement is needed to ensure adequate representation across the campus. Additional recognition that employees who participate strategic planning are those who regularly volunteer for other, important organizational tasks.	
	<b>Mode Score</b>
<b>Team Resources</b>	3
Team leaders who selected a score of 2 expressed their understanding about their role in securing funding for their team through advocacy and the need to lead team progress with less than desired funding. Multiple leaders shared current team success without significant funding and concern about potential declines in funding due to overall, budgetary concerns.	
	<b>Mode Score</b>
<b>Team Support</b>	3
Team leaders expressed satisfaction with current support from College leadership but also expressed concern regarding lack of alignment and resulting support between strategic plan initiatives and administrative goals and the impact of recent, campus events.	

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Robust employee feedback from the 2020 Spring CESS provides evidence for needed improvement in strategic planning processes with significant gap scores (>1.0) and higher deviation in satisfaction scores (>1.0) for survey items associated with organizational planning. (See Table 4 below)

Results from the 2022 fall, mid-year survey offer evidence that employees who participate on strategic planning teams recognize this activity supports mission, purpose and values; support careful planning efforts; and corresponding processes provide employees with an opportunity to be involved. However, when comparing mean scores by team role type, the largest gap in Table 1. Strategic Planning Alignment, Campus Involvement and Support, (0.65), was related to perception that an overall spirit of teamwork and cooperation supports the successful achievement of strategic planning goals. This gap is not in contradiction to the gap evidenced for similar item in the 2020 Spring CESS.

**Table 4. Campus Feedback, CESS Section 1: Campus Culture and Policies**

Scoring where 1 = "Not important at all"/"Not satisfied at all" and 5 = "Very important"/"Very satisfied"	N	Importance		Satisfaction		GAP
		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	
<i>This institution involves its employees in planning for the future</i>	144	4.41	0.71	2.97	1.07	1.44
<i>This institution plans carefully</i>	143	4.57	0.67	3.00	1.01	1.57
<i>This institution's leadership demonstrates support for shared planning and decision-making</i>	136	4.33	0.67	3.13	1.04	1.20
<i>There is a spirit of teamwork and cooperation at this institution.</i>	139	4.48	0.61	3.28	1.07	1.20

Campus perceptions about specific stakeholder group involvement in planning activities, Table 5 below, reflect similar feedback from 2022-2025 strategic plan team leaders and members. Three specific stakeholder groups identified through both assessments for increased involvement are students, alumni and community members.

**Table 5. Campus Feedback, CESS Section 3: Involvement in planning and decision-making**

<i>How involved are:</i>	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Faculty	140	2.96	0.85
Staff	140	2.37	0.71
Directors of Administrative Units	139	3.43	0.77
Senior administrators	140	3.61	0.74
Students	140	2.33	0.72
Trustees	138	3.78	0.89
Alumni	138	2.72	0.80
Foundation	137	2.88	0.71
Community members	139	2.81	0.84

Overall, feedback received through the 2022 fall team leader and member assessments, when evaluated in light of the 2020 CESS campus results, indicates a continued need for College leadership to identify coordinating improvement actions to increase specific stakeholder participation in planning activities and to communicate the importance of strategic planning as a vehicle to increase teamwork and cooperation at Cowley College.

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