

2007 SERIES: ENABLING CAMPUS GROWTH AND OPTIMIZATION

Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Annual Progress Reporting

**PRESIDENTIAL
PERSPECTIVES**

a higher education presidential essay series



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FOREWORD

RICHARD EKMAN, PRESIDENT, COUNCIL OF INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

Last year, Scott Miller, president of Wesley College, and Marylouise Fennell, senior counsel for the Council of Independent Colleges, edited a volume of essays that offered presidential perspectives on managing private colleges and universities. The presidents who contributed essays were those with enviable track records in leading their institutions. To the surprise and delight of the editors, authors, and publisher, the readership for these essays proved to be much wider than current leaders of private colleges. Many presidents of public universities and of community colleges commented on the usefulness of the essays. For those of us who start with the premise that there are significant differences between the public and private sectors of higher education, the appeal of the volume was eye-opening, and to Miller and Fennell it led to their decision to produce a companion volume that would draw more widely on authors from a variety of institutions.

They have done it. Under the theme of “enabling campus growth and optimization,” Miller and Fennell have enlisted the help of a diverse group of highly successful presidents of institutions—private and public, two-year and four-year, technical institutes, and others. Each of these essays—written from one perspective—when read together with the others, offers insights into what is different and what is similar in the challenges that all institutions of higher education face today.

That is not to say that the differences are less meaningful than they once were—hardly. They may in fact be even greater. However, if one looks at the careers of college and university presidents, one can find many more instances of crossover than was the case a decade ago. Successful presidents serve more frequently as leader in more than one institution than in earlier eras. Some cross between the public and private sectors—although my impression is that the traffic from the public to the private is much heavier than the traffic in the other direction. Additionally, movement between the presidents’ offices of large and small institutions also takes place more frequently than it once did. To be sure, these shifts in the patterns of presidential career mobility are still on the margins—most presidents serve only one institution, and the position is the pinnacle of their careers. Most presidents serve entirely or mostly in one sector of higher education—public or private, two-year or four-year. There is no substitute for a good match between an individual’s sense of vocation to serve an institution and that institution’s mission.

When reading the essays that follow, one cannot help but be struck by the recurring themes. Many of the issues that presidents face in leading their campuses are the same everywhere and many of the solutions are similar. Lest one leap too quickly to universals, it needs to be said that the management of a college or university is not a science. There is no theoretical textbook with prototype examples that will provide guidance in all cases to those who lack experience, talent, or good sense. However, it is eminently clear from reading these essays by individuals who have wrestled successfully with vexing operational issues that there

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is a body of lore that is different from the literature that one encounters with the management of other types of organizations. A small college is not the same as a small for-profit business that produces widgets or sells a service, nor is it the same as a non-profit organization that serves the arts or social services. The essays that follow might best be viewed as the findings or lessons of a group of natural experiments—testing important general propositions in non-specific cases that are not experimentally perfect and did actually take place. Even more to the point of understanding effective leadership, the essays illustrate that good judgment has no experiential or procedural equivalent for a campus leader.

In the end, we ought to be grateful that the stewardship of these colleges and universities is in the hands of such talented people. We are surely grateful to Scott Miller and Marylouise Fennell for identifying these success stories and the impressive individuals who can write about them so thoughtfully and usefully for the benefit of the rest of us.



Richard H. Ekman is the president of the Council of Independent Colleges. Before being appointed president of CIC in September 2000, Richard Ekman served as vice president for programs of the Atlantic Philanthropic Service Company. Ekman served from 1991 to 1999 as secretary of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, where, in addition to his overall administrative responsibilities, he focused especially on issues in higher education, technology, libraries, area studies, and faculty development. His campus experience includes appointments as vice president and dean of Hiram College, and as assistant to the provost of the University of Massachusetts at Boston.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DR. MARYLOUISE FENNELL, RSM
DR. SCOTT D. MILLER

More than in any previous era, the competitive pressures in higher education are causing colleges and universities to adopt practices more commonly found in the for-profit sector. To not only survive, but also to excel, institutions of higher education are becoming more student friendly, emphasizing their “brand” to establish a discrete market niche and leveraging growth to create competitive advantage. Simultaneously, the rising cost and scrutiny of the value of a college education are challenging colleges and universities to become more effective and efficient in their operations.

Presidential Perspectives: Enabling Growth and Optimization is a management paper series written by and for college presidents. The 2007–2008 year represents the second year of this popular presidential series, which builds on the inaugural year’s theme of “Creating a Competitive Advantage”. This year’s series focuses on the strategies colleges and universities are employing to balance the pressures of growth and cost, while remaining competitive and true to their institutional visions. Authored by notable presidents whose institutions are in the forefront of innovative practices, each chapter addresses a different aspect of how colleges and universities are enabling campus growth while improving operational efficiency.

Thanks to the generosity of ARAMARK Higher Education, a leading provider of award-winning food, facilities, and conference center management to colleges and universities, a different presidential chapter will be distributed electronically and posted each month on the Presidential Perspectives website (www.presidentialperspectives.org). The culmination of the series will be a bound keepsake book.

We are especially indebted to:

- Bruce Alperin of ARAMARK Higher Education, for his perspective on issues facing higher education, guidance, and countless hours in bringing this project to fruition.
- Dr. Richard Ekman, president of the Council of Independent Colleges, a dear friend and colleague to both of us, who continues to advocate for independent higher education, encourages dialogue, engages us in reform, and stimulates progressive national programs and initiatives, while providing stellar support to member presidents in every aspect of their professional lives.
- Martha Gaffney, Betty Van Iersel, and Ellen Coleman, our special assistants, who regularly read our minds.
- Annie Miller, Scott’s wife of 24 years, a dedicated supporter of education, who has loyally served as “First Lady” of two colleges.

ABOUT THE EDITORS



Dr. Marylouise Fennell, RSM

Dr. Marylouise Fennell is senior counsel for the Washington, D.C.-based Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), for which she also coordinates the New Presidents Program. She is past president of Carlow University in Pennsylvania, and her background includes both teaching and administrative positions at Saint Joseph College and the University of Hartford, both in Connecticut, and Boston University.

Dr. Fennell holds a bachelor of arts degree from Diocesan Sisters College, a master of education and Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study from the University of Hartford, and a doctoral degree from Boston University. She has also published widely. An internationally recognized management consultant, she has worked in more than 20 countries, including a post as chief consultant for the Association for Private Universities of Central America (APRICA). Her awards include more than 40 honorary doctoral degrees, and she is presently a member and/or chair of six college boards of directors. In addition, Dr. Fennell serves as executive director of the Inter-American Consortium, a partnership of six American and 11 foreign higher educational institutions.



Dr. Scott D. Miller

Dr. Scott D. Miller is in his eleventh year as president of Wesley College in Dover, Delaware.

Dr. Miller earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from West Virginia Wesleyan College, Master of Arts from the University of Dayton, Ed.S. from Vanderbilt University, and Ph.D. in higher education administration from The Union Institute and University.

Prior to coming to Wesley, Dr. Miller served as president of Lincoln Memorial University (1991 to 1997). Before being named president, he previously served that institution as executive vice president (1988 to 1991) and vice president for development (1984 to 1988). A native of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Dr. Miller is a former director of university relations and alumni affairs at the University of Rio Grande in Ohio. Well known nationally for his contributions to higher education, he was one of 17 nationwide presidents featured in a Kaufman Foundation-funded book, **The Entrepreneurial College President** (American Council on Education/Praeger Series on Higher Education, 2004). The Wesley story was one of four “amazing turnarounds” featured in the book, **The Small College Guide to Financial Health** (National Association of College and University Business Officers, 2002). He is a regular columnist for The Delaware State News and College Planning and Management.



STRATEGIC PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION, AND ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTING

DR. ANTOINE M. GARIBALDI, PRESIDENT, GANNON UNIVERSITY

In today's competitive and assessment-driven higher education environment, it is imperative for a college or university to have a strategic plan, which should consist of key goals, related objectives, strategies, and tactics, providing a clear vision and focus for the president and key administrative leaders of any institution. Additionally, it serves as a working blueprint for the institution's current and future direction. However, in order for the campus community, trustees, and alumni to embrace the goals as realistic, the objectives must be implemented effectively. Additionally, the progress or lack of success on individual goals must be reported annually as another means of demonstrating that the strategic plan is a serious document that will help the institution to achieve its long-term aspirations. This article describes a process of strategic planning and implementation, as well as annual progress reporting, that I have used between 2001 to 2007 during my presidency at Gannon University.

Developing and Gaining Support for the Strategic Plan

At my first press conference in early June 2001 at Gannon University, I stated that one of my four priorities was "to establish and implement a strategic planning process that will allow us to capitalize on Gannon's strengths to make it a stronger and more nationally-known university." Within two months, a nine-member strategic planning task force—consisting of faculty, staff, a trustee, and an alumnus—had been formed and were meeting on a regular basis during the school year. The target date for having a written draft that would be presented to the University community was the April 2002 inauguration. The initial five-year strategic plan draft was distributed campus-wide. Faculty, staff, and students had the opportunity to comment on and react to it individually, collectively through departmental deliberations, and in campus forums where the goals and objectives were explained and where some members of the task force and I responded to questions, concerns, and recommendations. Overall, the comments and suggestions were very constructive and helpful in the development of the final plan. Such vetting processes are extremely important in the development of a strategic plan, for the plan will only be successful if the university community buys into the plan and

"The strategic plan has helped to emphasize the University's priorities and aspirations, and has given direction to faculty and staff in their development of new programmatic initiatives."

embraces it. Moreover, when the president comes from another institution, it is important for him or her to take time to learn the campus culture and become more knowledgeable about the diverse needs of the university's varied constituencies.

The final version of the original Gannon University *Strategic Plan: 2002-2007* was approved by the Board of Trustees in late September 2002, and it was distributed to the Gannon community in booklet form within two weeks. The seven goals of the five-year Strategic Plan were:

- Goal I:** Advance the Academic Excellence of Gannon University
- Goal II:** Promote Gannon University's Catholic Identity
- Goal III:** Increase Alumni Involvement and other Revenue for Additional External Resources
- Goal IV:** Strengthen the Teaching and Scholarly Development of Faculty and the Professional Development of Staff
- Goal V:** Expand Gannon's Involvement in, and Service to, the Local and Regional Community
- Goal VI:** Increase Gannon's Enrollment and the Quality of Students Admitted to the University
- Goal VII:** Increase the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Information Technology Services and Communications Processes

It is important to note that the seven strategic goals and their related objectives are not the only areas of focus for the University; however, they have been the most prominent during this five-year period. Thus, the

strategic plan has helped to emphasize the University's priorities and aspirations, and has given direction to faculty and staff in their development of new programmatic initiatives.

Implementing and Annually Assessing Progress on the Strategic Plan

Gannon University's five-year strategic plan has been implemented smoothly for several reasons. First, it is recognized as the blueprint for Gannon's future success and direction. Second, new academic and programmatic initiatives must be tied to the strategic plan's goals and objectives, and unit plans submitted by faculty and staff are more likely to be funded and supported if the strategic linkage is strong. Third, and most important, an annual progress report on the seven goals of the strategic plan is developed by my senior staff and me at the end of the academic year.

The report is distributed to the Board of Trustees and the Gannon community early in the fall semester, and ample copies are available for alumni, friends, foundations, and other supporters of the University. The fifth-year progress report on the *Gannon University Strategic Plan: 2002-2008* was recently completed, and the Gannon community will receive this report and the new *Strategic Plan II: 2008-2013* early in the 2007-2008 academic year.

Distributing an annual report on the past year's achievements and/or shortfalls related to the strategic plan is a clear example that this process includes both accountability and transparency. Whether a university meets, exceeds, or falls short of any or all goals, this detailed annual reporting conveys the message that the strategic plan is more than an inanimate booklet on a shelf, but rather a living document consisting of goals and objectives

that must be measured and assessed continuously until achievement has been reached.

Some of Gannon's most notable accomplishments related to the current five-year strategic plan include the following:

- For the past three years, *U.S. News & World Report's* "America's Best Colleges" Guide has consistently ranked Gannon in the top-tier among Master's I comprehensive universities in the northern region. Additionally, for the second consecutive year, Gannon was also ranked as a top-10 best value university in the "Great Schools, Great Prices" category.
- Enrollment growth has increased from an overall total of 3,407 in 2001 to 3,815 in 2007.
- More than \$36 million has been raised through gifts from alumni and friends to The Power to Transform Campaign and grants from private foundations, federal government, and state government.
- Gannon's endowment has doubled from \$18 million in 2001 to \$36.4 million as of the second quarter of 2007.
- A \$1.824 million Title III grant, the largest single grant in Gannon's history, was awarded by the U.S. Department of Education. This grant assisted in the establishment of Gannon's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) in 2005, which has played a significant role working with faculty to develop pedagogically-sound strategies for incorporating instructional technology across a variety of academic disciplines.
- The Erie Technology Incubator (ETI) has been established on Gannon's campus with the support of a \$4 million state capital grant and other state and federal funding. The ETI, which will open in the spring of 2008, is expected to create new jobs and assist high-tech start-up companies across northwestern Pennsylvania.

- With the assistance of a nationally-known consulting company, Gannon's branding and marketing initiative has increased the University's name recognition locally, regionally, and nationally.
- Average faculty and staff salaries have increased significantly between 2001 and 2007, and the percentage of full-time faculty with terminal degrees has risen from 50 percent in 2001 to 65.7 percent in fall 2006.

While this list is not all-inclusive, it does provide a few examples of the results of the current five-year strategic plan.

Transitioning from Current Strategic Plan to the Next or Future Five-Year Plan

It is also important to ask how the University's leadership will blend the existing strategic plan with the new and next five-year strategic plan of the University.

At Gannon, a Strategic Planning II task force was appointed in August 2006, and met during the 2006-2007 academic year to develop the University's *Strategic Plan II: 2008-2013*. Over the past year, the task force discussed the results of the first strategic plan and spent a considerable amount of time determining what programs should be expanded and those programs that should be initiated over the next five years. The Strategic Plan II thrust statement and draft outline of this second strategic plan were shared with the entire Gannon community during the 2007 spring semester. Another detailed version of the strategic plan has been developed and is being shared with the Gannon community and trustees this summer. Feedback will be collected from the University community and will be incorporated into the final version, which will be presented to the Board of Trustees in late September 2007 for their approval.

Conclusions

As should be clearly evident after this brief article, strategic planning is a time-consuming but worthwhile process that requires discipline and effective implementation. However, when the goals and objectives are recognized by all constituencies as the strategic blueprint for the university's future growth and success, positive results will occur. In conclusion, because strategic planning is a continuous process, the strategic plan must be viewed as a living document that must be updated every few years.



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Nationally recognized for his more than 30 years of teaching and administrative experience in secondary and higher education, as well as in the federal government, President Garibaldi is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and the author of 10 books and monographs and more than 75 research articles and chapters.

Dr. Garibaldi serves on the boards of several national higher education organizations, including the Council of Independent Colleges (where he is chair of the Board of Directors through January 2008), the American Council on Education, National Association of College and University Business Officers, the NCAA Division II Presidents Council, Seton Hall University, the University of Saint Thomas (Minnesota), and the Sister Thea Bowman Black Catholic Educational Foundation.

He received his undergraduate degree magna cum laude from Howard University in 1973 and his doctorate in educational psychology from the University of Minnesota in 1976.



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