



## Strategic Planning & Budgeting Overview

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### Strategic Plan

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After several months of development and review by the numerous campus groups, Northwest College's Board of Trustees approved the *2008-2010 Strategic Plan* in June 2008. This strategic plan consisted of the following:

- Vision statement
- Mission statement
- Enduring Values of the institution, along with a brief description of each
- Strategic Goals categorized by priorities:
  - Access
  - Support
  - Partnerships
  - Institutional Vitality
  - Student Achievement
  - Communication and Image

The strategic goals—which include both quantitative and qualitative goals—provide a guide for institutional decision-making and resource allocation.

### Implementation and Tracking Plan

Although many previous strategic plans at Northwest College were well designed, there were often weaknesses in their implementation: (1) the plans lacked an evaluation system to measure success; (2) the plans lacked a description of assigned responsibility for the implementation and accomplishment of strategic goals; and (3) as activities were developed to address various targets and priorities in past plans, integration among administrative units was not consistently present. To rectify those deficiencies as the current plan was being implemented, the College President—along with vice presidents and other individuals with assigned responsibilities—created the *Implementation and Tracking Plan*.

The *Implementation and Tracking Plan*, which is continually being updated, defines the strategic goals by describing how each is measured and what the timeframes are. For each strategic goal of the *Strategic Plan*, the *Implementation and Tracking Plan* includes the following:

- Timeframe
- Baseline data, which is a quantitative measure for numerical goals and a more descriptive measure for qualitative goals
- Targets for each year of the plan
- Data for each completed year
- Key responsibility

In November 2009, the College completed a major assessment of the strategic plan's first-year results, which was shared with the college community and Board of Trustees. The *Strategic Plan 2008-2010: First Year Progress Report*—along with its companion report, *Strategic Plan: Implementation and Tracking Plan (with First-Year Data)*—showed that the College was highly successful at meeting or surpassing the majority of first-year targets. A progress report for the second year of the strategic plan will be completed in November 2010.

At its November 2009 meeting, the Board of Trustees agreed to extend the current strategic plan to create a three-year plan, based on a request from the College President. There were several advantages to this decision:

- The *2008-2010 Strategic Plan* had been successful at focusing the College's attention on appropriate priorities and strategic goals. It made sense to provide more time for the effects of the strategic plan to be realized.
- The College has had the opportunity to analyze data for only one year of the plan. It will be beneficial to have two years of data prior to the creation of the next plan.
- Extending the plan until 2011 will also allow the College to have the results of the November 2010 visit by the Higher Learning Commission prior to the creation of the next plan, which will likely be a 2011-2014 plan.

Once the Board of Trustees approved the extension of the strategic plan by one year, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee was charged with three tasks:

- *Recommending to the Board of Trustees new strategic goals where needed.* The fact that a third year was added to the plan was a contributing factor in amending some of the goals. For example, Strategic Goal 5.3 ("Increase the first-time, full-time student fall-to-fall retention rate by 1.5% per year") had as its first-year target an increase in the retention rate from 59.0% to 60.5%. The first-year data of 62.7% far surpassed the first-year target, so the Institutional Effectiveness Committee recommended an amended strategic goal to be a 62.0% retention rate for the second and third years of the strategic plan.
- *Establishing new second-year targets where needed.* Again, because first-year data exceeded targets—oftentimes quite significantly—for so many of the plan's strategic goals, new second-year targets were needed in several situations.
- *Establishing third-year targets (2010-2011) for each strategic goal.*

## Operational Plans

Each strategic goal in the *2008-2011 Strategic Plan* has an individual or individuals who have been assigned "key responsibility" for leading the College toward accomplishment of that goal. As such, the vice presidents have been given the charge to create **operational plans** (using the college-wide *Implementation and Tracking Plan* as a guide) for their administrative units to meet the strategic goals for which they have "key responsibility" and to support the achievement of strategic goals for which they have more collaborative, but not the lead, responsibility.

## Major Plans

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In addition to the College's Strategic Plan, the President's Advisory Council has identified several **major plans**. These plans tend to be cross-functional, have an institution-wide focus, and

have major implications for successful implementation of the College's Strategic Plan. These plans serve to direct resources and coordinate efforts.

### **1. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan**

*Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs*

This plan addresses the way student learning outcomes are developed and assessed at the course, program, general education, and all-college levels. NWC's faculty-led process includes several years of data collection and analysis that have resulted in the implementation of new student support programs, redesign of academic programs, the reassignment of faculty positions, and improved student performance (especially noteworthy at the all-college integrated outcome level).

### **2. Enrollment Management Plan**

*Overall Responsibility: Vice President for Student Affairs*

*Recruitment Plan Responsibility: Vice President for Student Affairs*

*Retention Plan Responsibility: Vice President for Academic Affairs*

Enrollment management is a process that enables Northwest College to identify enrollment goals that connect with its mission, strategic plan, and resources. The Enrollment Management Plan is a dynamic and holistic plan consisting of two parts: the Recruitment Plan and the Retention Plan. The Enrollment Advisory Committee, which oversees the development, implementation and assessment of the plan, is made up of cross-functional members to assist in integration of administrative processes, student services, curriculum, and marketing. Faculty, academic support personnel, student affairs staff, college relations staff, administrative services staff, the institutional researcher, and one student are members of the committee. The full committee meets monthly to monitor the progress of each sub-committee's work. All units coordinate to provide the best service to students.

### **3. Facilities Master Plan**

*Responsibility: Vice President for Administrative Services*

Over the years, Northwest College has expanded without a facilities plan in place. Buildings and parking lots have been designed and placed where expedient. Programs have evolved and have typically been located where space was available. The College made the decision to develop a comprehensive Facilities Master Plan to guide the institution for the foreseeable future.

The firm Gould Evans was retained to develop a Facilities Master Plan and create a "road map" for the College – a living document to act as a framework for future planning and decision making. This effort has included evaluating existing facilities and programs, creating a front door for the campus, strengthening campus identity, clarifying overall campus organization and physical layout, creating design guidelines, and developing an implementation plan for potential projects.

### **4. Priorities for Web Site Development Plan**

*Responsibility: Vice President for College Relations*

This plan sets forth priorities for development of NWC's website for the coming year, as established by the Web Management Committee, which provides overall direction for the College's web presence within parameters of the site's mission statement. Priorities on these lists represent major areas of emphasis—areas the committee believes should receive concerted effort.

The planning is approached by the committee in late spring and summer in a two-step process as follows: 1) The committee assesses progress made in reaching the previous year's priorities, and 2) establishes priorities for the coming year. Over the years, priorities were often divided into primary and secondary projects (an exception to this division occurred in 2007-08 when the committee implemented a freeze on all new development in order to fully implement a new content management system and complete site redesign); however, the committee abandoned that distinction in the 2009-10 plan. Drafts of the plan are reviewed by the President's Advisory Council and the College Council. Achieving these priorities enhances NWC's Web presence in ways that help recruit and retain students and employees, and creates a functional Web environment for the College's various operations.

### **5. Big Horn Basin Market Research Plan**

*Responsibility: Vice President for College Relations*

This plan provides a five-year road map for the College's environmental scanning activities in its service area of the Big Horn Basin (the counties of Park, Big Horn and Washakie). Not having financial resources to proceed with a late 1990s plan to repeat comprehensive market research five years after first being done in 1998, the College Relations Office was charged with developing "home-grown" research. A five-year plan to survey residents in the service area was implemented, with annual community surveys conducted.

The plan stages out specific geographic areas to be targeted by community surveys each year, allowing all service area residents to be surveyed within the five-year period. Aggregate data collected from respondents regarding attitudes and perceptions, college selection factors, awareness of NWC, computer use, media habits, etc., are reviewed by the Integrated Communications Committee, and executive summaries are created in the College Relations Office. Those summaries are then reviewed by the President's Advisory Council, the College Council and, finally, the Board of Trustees. Actions taken as a result of survey respondents' input and subsequent analysis have informed changes to course delivery as well as approaches to promotional efforts.

### **Next Steps**

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Northwest College has a diversified planning system. Including the *2008-2011 Strategic Plan, Implementation and Tracking Plan*, four operational plans, and six major plans, the College has plans to cover the most significant and important issues.

However, in the diverse planning system under which the major plans were created, the College has recognized that planning has not been done on a common cycle and that there are several situations where major plans do not yet have direct-enough ties to the *2008-2011 Strategic Plan*.

The College has identified strategies to deal with both challenges. Individuals and committees have worked to make the linkages between the college-wide strategic plan and major plans more explicit, although much of that work will occur when the College creates its next strategic plan, which will likely have a 2011-2014 timeframe. When that college-wide strategic plan is created, the focus during the development of the major plans will be on supporting the next college-wide strategic plan. Thus, the strategic plan and major plans will have more coordinated timeframes and goals.

The following table shows the timeframe for both development and implementation of the college-wide strategic plan and major plans:

<b>Plan</b>	<b>Key Responsibility</b>	<b>Current Timeframe</b>	<b>Timeframe for Next Plan</b>	<b>Schedule for Plan Creation</b>	<b>Target Approval Date</b>
<b>Strategic Plan</b>	President	2008-11	2011-14	Spring 2011	June 2011
<b>Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan</b>	VP for Academic Affairs	Varies	2011-14	Spring 2011	June 2011
<b>Enrollment Management Plan</b>	VP for Student Affairs	2006-11	2011-14	Spring 2011	June 2011
<b>Facilities Master Plan</b>	VP for Admin Services	2008-13	2013-18	2012	January 2013
<b>Priorities for Web Site Development Plan</b>	VP for College Relations	2010-11	Annual	Spring & Summer 2011	August 2011
<b>Big Horn Basin Market Research Plan</b>	VP for College Relations	2010-14	2015-19	Fall 2014	Fall 2014

The next college-wide Strategic Plan will be created through a collaborative process that will occur during the Spring 2011 semester. A “strategic plan development work group” will develop the draft plan.

During the development of the strategic plan, the College Council, the President’s Advisory Council, and the Board of Trustees will have an opportunity to review the draft plan and provide input. The Board of Trustees ultimately approves the final strategic plan.

When new major plans are created, they will also be reviewed by College Council and the President’s Advisory Council. In addition, new Major Plans will have a specific assessment cycles, and assessments of each plan’s success will be provided to College Council and the President’s Advisory Council on a more regular basis.

### **Assessment Plans**

Each work group at the College has also written learning outcomes Assessment Plans for their area. These were created primarily as a result of a months-long, campus-wide effort to create learning outcomes-based initiatives in all departments and units on campus. Follow-up assessments of specified outcomes have been uneven. Now with an Institutional Effectiveness Committee and an Institutional Researcher, the College is in a position to improve the quality and consistency of these outcomes assessment activities across the College.

## Budgeting / Action Resource Planning Process

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The standard operating budget is developed over several months, beginning in about December of each year. During the 2008-09 academic year, the College President added the Action Resource Plans to the budget development process. Action Resource Plans link significant budget requests to the *2008-2011 Strategic Plan*. These plans help “close the loop” by having the College’s strategic plan and major plans more explicitly drive resource allocation decisions.

Action Resource Plans describe what action/request is desired (e.g., new staff position or major piece of equipment) and the rationale for such request. Also included are a description of the linkage between the request and the College’s strategic plan, the projected outcome of the request, how success will be measured, and the projected cost and timeframe of the request.

Each major administrative unit (President’s Office, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Administrative Services, and College Relations) creates an Action Resource Plan, with all requests prioritized within the administrative unit. The President’s Advisory Council then evaluates these requests and selects those to be included in a college-wide Action Resource Plan, with approved items to be incorporated into the following fiscal year’s budget.

The College has completed the Action Resource Planning process twice: once during 2008-09 to prepare for the FY10 budget, and more recently in 2009-10 to prepare for the FY11 budget.

The following list provides an overview of budget items for FY11 that were approved via the most recent budgeting and Action Resource Planning processes:

<b>Budget Item</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<i>Staffing:</i>	
Staff salary increase for 2010-11 <sup>1</sup>	\$75,000
Adjunct faculty budget	\$81,500
Division secretary position	38,000
International Academic Programs – <i>increase in support staff to support International Academic Programs as well as weekend activities for all students</i>	22,500
Writing Center staff – <i>increase in staffing budget</i>	10,000
Hinckley Library – <i>extra employment hours during Summer 2010 for staff to move books and equipment during the renovation project</i>	6,636
Hinckley Library – <i>employment hours to staff new late-night study area</i>	6,169
Perkins/Co-op – <i>additional hours</i>	5,000
Gallery Coordinator – <i>additional hours</i>	2,000
Disabilities Coordinator – <i>increase contract from 10 to 11 months</i>	4,825
Disabilities Services – <i>increase in student employment hours</i>	4,500

Assistant Wrestling Coach position – <i>increased funding for the current position due to the large number of wrestlers and the individual nature of the sport</i>	3,000
Athletic Department – <i>increase for contracted services</i>	5,500
Campus Resource Officer position – <i>increased funding needed to make the position a college employee</i>	3,500
Human Resources – <i>supplemental staff costs</i>	15,000
Bus driver – <i>additional hours</i>	10,750

***Program costs/supplies/equipment:***

Model UN project – <i>funding to support program expansion</i>	5,000
Theatre production	5,000
Athletic Training – <i>establishes a start-up budget</i>	8,000

***IT/software/licensing:***

Software license increases	48,000
Document imaging – <i>staffing (one-time)</i>	8,000
Bandwidth increase	1,500
Administrative computing – <i>hardware</i>	10,000
Computing Services – <i>parts/repair</i>	5,000
Computing Services – <i>budget for recycling and properly disposing of outdated hardware</i>	4,000
WebCT / Moodle – <i>funding for the one-year overlap</i>	35,000
Content management system – <i>upgrade</i>	9,500
Active Admissions – <i>funding for software and license</i>	13,000
Web development – <i>funding for contracted services to create online forms and web apps</i>	20,000

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<sup>1</sup> Although there was no overall budget increase for faculty salaries, College policy allowed for funding a “step” on the faculty salary schedule for eligible faculty for 2010-11