

Quality Focus Essay



Allan Hancock College Quality Focus Essay

I. Background and Guiding Principles

Allan Hancock College's action projects are guided by the philosophy that as an institution of higher learning we are committed to finding innovative ways to enhance student learning and achievement in order to ensure institutional effectiveness. Our culture is supported by the belief that shared governance and academic freedom are primary vehicles in promoting excellence in all teaching, learning and services through open and honest communication. To this end, Allan Hancock College's Shared Values include:

Student Success

Innovation

Mutual Respect

Lifelong Learning

Diversity

Academic Freedom

Shared Governance

Excellence

These values guide the review of the institution through a self-reflection of the standards and awareness of the changing internal and external factors that impact the college now and into the future. The self-evaluation team analyzed data, established of short and long-range goals, and reflected on the fiscal setting in which public institutions operate in order to define the most salient foci for the Quality

Focus Essay. These foci respond to the need to leverage available increasingly restricted resources and ensure integration of newly mandated external planning requirements in support of the Mission of Allan Hancock College:

Allan Hancock College provides quality educational opportunities that enhance student learning and the creative, intellectual, cultural and economic vitality of our diverse community.

To meet the identified areas of need in this self-evaluation, the two action projects include:

1. Integrated Planning and Decision Making, and
2. Integrated Planning, Program Review, and Resource Allocation

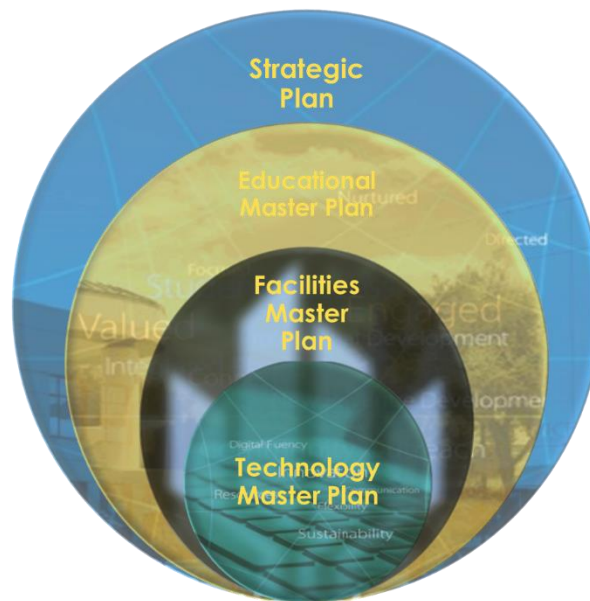
Integrated planning is the linking of vision, priorities, people, and the physical institution in a flexible system of evaluation, decision-making, and action. The planning processes shape and guide the institution over time during financial growth and decline.

Allan Hancock College is committed to the spirit and practice of inclusive and comprehensive shared governance in college decision making. Integrated planning is an essential component in this endeavor as reflected in the College's guiding decision making document, *Councils and Committees, Pathways to Decisions (CCPD)*. This commitment includes, but is not limited to, the following beliefs (CCPD, page 3):

- all employees should have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in college decision-making processes;
- all employees should have opportunities to participate meaningfully in college governance;
- information should be shared openly and in a timely manner with all constituencies and, college decision-making processes should undergo regular review and evaluation by all constituencies to ensure their continuing effectiveness and improvement.

When Allan Hancock College developed the CCPD, it made a commitment to pursue a systematic approach to organizational planning to guide the decision-making processes of the campus. This systematic approach to the planning process includes the integration of all operational plans under the general direction of our Values, Mission, and Vision. In other words, the realization of our purpose as an educational institution is accomplished by the operational plans of the various units and departments throughout the campus.

When the Strategic Plan 2014-2020 was developed, the college intentionally integrated the Educational Master Plan, Facilities Master Plan, and Technology Master Plan to support the strategic directions outlined in the Strategic Plan.



There are other plans, such as Enrollment Management, that link back to the Strategic Plan but provide more detailed operational direction to support the college

mission. Recognizing the importance of integration across the institution, members of the 2014 strategic planning retreat added the Strategic Direction “Integration”

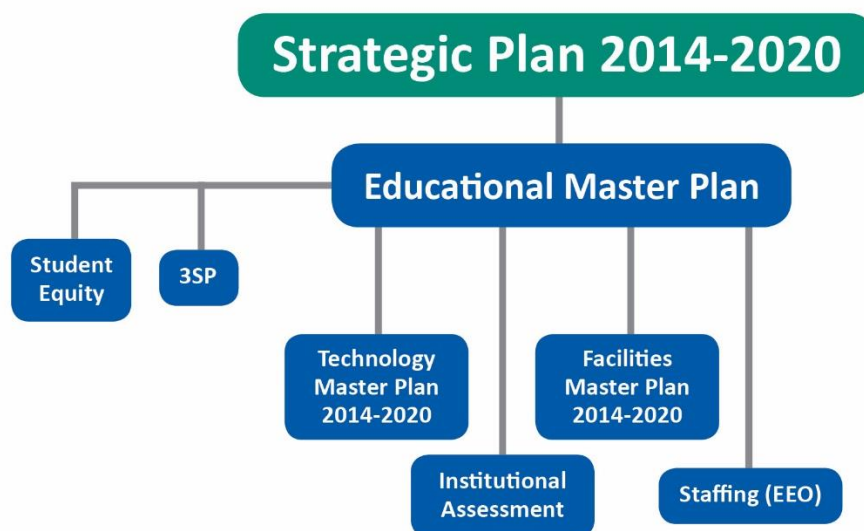
(including Community Integration and Employee Integration) in addition to the other strategic directions focused on the ACCJC standards. To implement ongoing evaluation of the planning structure, the Strategic Plan includes the Action Step focused on integration (page 19):

*A taskforce will reevaluate and refine the Councils and Committees Pathways to Decisions manual to create a structure for improved communication, **integrated planning**, and timely decision making.*

This review occurred in 2014-2015 and resulted in numerous recommendations and revisions (see March 2, 2015 memo to College Council from task force) that require further action. While surveys indicate increased satisfaction with communication, the college realized

during the self-study process that deeper consideration of several of the recommendations was required. The QFE is a result of that realization, and of thoughtful planning to implement necessary action steps to ensure ongoing integration and institutional effectiveness. Included in the steps for the Project Area *Integrated Planning and Decision Making*, continued evaluation and revision of the CCPD will be an integral component.

Integrated planning is neither top-down nor bottom-up; it is an interactive process in which an institution, through its governance processes, thoughtfully uses its values and vision to set priorities and deploy its resources and energies to achieve institutional changes and improvements at various levels of the organization in response to current or anticipated conditions.



The College recognizes that institutions that take a holistic and integrated approach to planning find opportunities to combine and leverage plans, maximize effective use

of resources, as well as create more effective pathways for making changes. To this end, AHC will review and revise the planning and decision making

processes to benefit from the value imbued in integrated planning.

Along these same lines, improvements to integrated planning and decision making need to reflect upon the allocation of resources through institutional budgeting processes and the essential steps used to identify resources. Decision making often, if not always, has some implication for resources. Accreditation Standard I.B.9 requires the institution to ensure integration of planning and resource allocation:

The institution engages in continuous, broad based, systematic evaluation and planning. The institution integrates program review, planning, and resource allocation into a comprehensive process that leads to accomplishment of its mission and improvement of institutional effectiveness and academic quality. Institutional planning addresses short- and long-range needs for educational programs and services and for human, physical, technology, and financial resources.

AHC will focus on making improvements to the integration of planning, program review, and resource allocation as it is through program review that unit and institutional plans are integrated and resource needs are identified.

During development of the CCPD, great steps were taken to align the timing of resource allocations with the planning cycle and to ensure a process of evaluation of these processes. The CCPD itself

defines four indicators of effectiveness for decision making under shared governance, as follows:

1. **Efficient Communication (verbal and written)**
2. **Access to information (written and verbal feedback)**
3. **Function**
4. **Institutional Evaluation**

During reflection on the standards, the self-study teams became aware of changes to institutional processes that have occurred as a natural result of collegial consultation. Though such changes were made with a desire to improve the college, they were not always systematic nor formalized, leading to some lack of clarity and misalignment and pointing to the need to address three indicators of effectiveness:

1. **Access to information (written and verbal feedback)**
Stakeholders across the institution understand how to access a variety of information sources to keep abreast of decision-making processes
2. **Function**
Decision-making processes are well defined, formalized, and agreement on them has been achieved by all constituency groups
3. **Institutional Evaluation**
Review all processes for improvement on a regular basis

As noted in the ACCJC Newsletter of fall 2009, institutions “may also find contradictions that need resolution—sometimes by the re-formulation or abandonment of some of the plans that were made. Actions determined through

integrated planning bring the purpose of program review and evaluation alive and enable an institution to improve educational quality.” The action projects defined in the next section of this QFE are not only meant to integrate operational processes, but are also intended to provide a clear structure and avenues for communication that will enhance the ability of employees to improve educational quality through program review.

II. Description of Action Projects

During self-evaluation team meetings, co-chairs discussed common themes where there was ample evidence of meeting a standard, but clear areas surfaced where institutional effectiveness could be enhanced.

These areas of improvement are described below as anticipated outcomes for each of the two general foci of this QFE:

Anticipated Outcomes and Alignment with Standards

Action Projects	Anticipated Outcomes	Alignment with Standards
Integrated Planning and Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic analysis and evaluation of measureable outcomes tied to major college plans • Integration of data such as Institution Set Standards, IEPI Goals, Strategic Planning Goals, and other metrics to inform college planning • Systematic evaluation and improvement of major college plans • Improved understanding and clarity of decision making processes related to resource allocation as articulated in the CCPD. • Evidence that processes are followed and lead to institutional effectiveness tied to the College Mission. 	I.A.3 I.B.6 I.B.7 III.A.7 III.A.9 III.A.10 III.A.14 III.B.2 III.C.2 III.D.2 III.D.3 IV.A.1 IV.A.2 IV.B.3
Integrated Planning, Program Review, and Resource Allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic evaluation and improvement of planning I.B.9 resource allocation process • Clear integration of program review and major College Plans • Integration of program (unit) plans with major college plans • Transparent cycle of planning and resource allocation aligned to support programs and services that meet the Mission of the College. 	I.A.3 I.B.5 II.A.2 II.A.14 II.A.16 II.B.3 II.C.1 II.C.2 II.C.3 III.A.7 III.A.9 III.A.10 III.A.14 III.B.2 III.D.1 III.D.2 III.D.4

Action Projects: Description, Purpose and Project Goals

As discussed in the introduction, the reflection on the standards during the self-evaluation lead AHC to recognize that in order to ensure institutional effectiveness into the future, recent developments external to the college needed to be integrated into institutional planning processes. The primary initiatives that AHC identified include:

- a. Externally mandated Student Equity and 3SP Plans
- b. Online Education Initiative
- c. Increased emphasis on basic skills transition to college level work
 - i. Common Assessment Initiative/Multiple measures
 - ii. Acceleration of students through developmental education
- d. Focus on Job Training outcomes and skills builders data analysis
 - i. Strong Workforce Initiative
 - ii. Doing What Matters
 - iii. Launch Board Employment Data
- e. Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative Goals
- f. AB104 (Adult Education)

The environmental factors that the self-evaluation team focused on include:

- a. Increased reliance on categorical funding
- b. Enrollment challenges
- c. Community demographics

With state funding focused on specific areas such as student equity, student support programs, enhanced CTE opportunities, and adult education, colleges must ensure that these resources are integrated into the institutional

allocation process to leverage remaining general funds to support the broad based mission of Allan Hancock College. Since the District is located in a geographic region of low educational attainment and limited K-12 enrollment growth for the next five years, the college must make the most efficient use of all sources of revenue when allocating funds for programs and services.

Integrated Planning and Decision Making

The action steps identified to address integrated planning and decision making are intended to bring newer plans into a more intentionally integrated connection with existing college plans. Rather than rely on staff intimately involved in the development and implementation of a plan to determine how best to integrate their goals and leverage existing resources, direct steps and processes will be developed to guide the integration so there is no ambiguity about the necessary steps or criteria.

Overarching goals of an improved process of integrated planning and decision making is a focus and commitment on the College Mission, Vision, and Philosophy with demonstrated support for student learning and achievement. The action steps will involve a thorough review of the CCPD by cross-functional groups and constituencies to identify gaps where better clarity can be brought to alignment with college functions. Through support such as IEPI workshops on integrated planning, training at SCUP events, and visiting colleges with well-developed processes, AHC will enhance the professional skill sets of all stakeholders in

the planning processes. Once the revised process is developed, focused communication and orientation for new and existing employees will be critical to the success of this project. The project steps will conclude with development of data to show how plans integrate in the progress of institutional goals and where the college stands towards achieving its goals; to further aid in communication, a budget dashboard will be developed to provide stakeholders with the status of budget allocation decisions.

Integrated Planning, Program Review, and Resource Allocation

Allan Hancock College has well-defined program review processes for instructional, student services, and administrative programs as well as a Board Policy that codifies program review (BP 3255, Program Review). These processes are covered in detail in the self-evaluation. A long standing component of program review is a resource needs analysis that links to evaluation of student outcomes data, student trends, and other factors, including service components in administrative program review. In making improvements to the process of program review, the QFE goals are to ensure alignment of program plans to institutional plans and priorities in meaningful ways and to ensure that the budgeting process is transparent. Closing the loop on the program review and resource allocation process includes documenting measureable improvements to the support of students and tying these outcomes back to plans and resources.

With funding to the college coming from myriad sources, it is important that the allocation process identify the best way to allocate various categorical and District funds to serve the College Mission. The Academic Senate Program Review Committee is currently in the process of evaluating alternative technology platforms to facilitate improvement to the program review process, including better integration of data analysis and resources, program goals, and programmatic impact of allocations. The current labor intensive effort to identify all resource requests and compile these data for prioritization through various channels is an impediment to the process as it duplicates efforts and makes it difficult to tie resource allocations back to the program for follow up evaluation. Embedded within the use of technology to enhance the program review and resource allocation process are improvements to instructions and communication.

Because the planning and prioritization processes happen throughout the year, it is imperative that all necessary budget decisions be identified to coincide with funding availability in a useful calendar. The steps taken to improve the integration of planning and resource allocation will consider the budgetary process from a multiyear perspective to align allocation with adopted budget timelines and funding cycles from state and federal sources. Once the details of the process are formulated, a compliance and communication system will be added to ensure consistency with the process and timeline and transparency of the processes.

Overview of Action Projects and Goals

Action Project	Goals
Integrated Planning and Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking of AHC Mission, Vision, and Philosophy with institutional priorities. • Flexible system of decision making that honors AHC Core Values, Board Policies, and regulations pertaining to collegial consultation and effective participation. • Timeline of planning and resource allocation that promotes the college mission. • Demonstrated focus on student learning and achievement.
Integrated Planning, Program Review, and Resource Allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional priorities and strategic goals aligned with resources. • Transparent budgeting processes. • Clear connection between program planning and resource allocation that supports student learning and achievement.

III. Action Steps

The self-evaluation team took a measured approach to assessing the high impact activities that could be accomplished within ACCJC timelines and would make measurable improvements to institutional

planning and resource allocation. Since some of the action steps transcend multiple stakeholders and constituency groups, details need to be developed as the steps are acted upon.

Integrated Planning and Decision Making

Goals	Action Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking of AHC Mission, Vision, and Philosophy with institutional priorities. • Flexible system of decision making that honors AHC Core Values, Board Policies, and regulations pertaining to collegial consultation and effective participation. • Timeline of planning and resource allocation that promotes the college mission. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate and update the CCPD, including a cross-functional group to oversee the process. 2. Identify and visit colleges with solid planning processes. 3. Review Council structure and functions to ensure integrated planning and decision making. 4. Attend SCUP training. 5. Identify major college plans and evaluate integration to ensure integration of new plans. 6. Internal SWOT analysis to identify gaps in planning steps. 7. Joint council meetings to ensure cross pollination of constituency input. 8. Charrette/compressed planning meeting(s) to identify most effective budgeting and resource timelines. 9. Update new employee orientation with focus on planning and governance. 10. Build in information gathering and feedback mechanism into budgeting timeline. 11. Create budgeting dashboard to inform stakeholders of resource allocation status. 12. Build integrated data dashboard that links outcomes of major college plans. 13. Develop and maintain an integrated planning status matrix (updated twice a year).

Integrated Planning, Program Review, and Resource Allocation

Goals	Action Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional priorities and strategic goals aligned with resources. • Transparent budgeting processes. • Clear connection between program planning and resource allocation that supports student learning and achievement. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a mechanism to identify and leverage all district general and unrestricted funding sources to ensure broad based support of programs and services. 2. Work with Academic Senate to revise program review templates and guidelines to ensure integration with major college plans and accreditation standards. 3. Work with Academic Senate to identify and implement program review technology to streamline tracking of program goals, resource needs, and allocations. 4. Update College portal to improve communication about integrated planning and resource allocation. 5. Work with Academic Senate to build intentional analysis into program review to measure when resource allocations improve programs and services. 6. With Academic Senate reassess and revise processes for resource prioritization that integrates into planning timelines. 7. With Academic Senate identify processes and people to ensure compliance with integrated planning processes delineated in the CCPD. 8. With Academic Senate identify and update Board Policies that relate to integrated planning. 9. Develop evaluation component of revised resource allocation process. 10. Develop communication strategy.

IV. Resources Integrated Planning and Decision Making

The Self-Evaluation team considered both existing and new resources needed to implement the action projects in a meaningful and reasonable timeline. As noted in the background section of this document, the college has strong foundations in place to implement the necessary steps to make institutional improvements. The underpinning of governance, decision making, and planning is in place. The Councils and

Committees Pathways to Decision Making is well regarded and provides the underpinning to college governance. The inclusive decision-making process is well supported through the councils and committee structure that is evaluated each year as part of ongoing steps to ensure institutional effectiveness. The strategic plan and other college plans provide clear direction and emphasis of integration of planning. Through proactive efforts of the College President, AHC was one of the first California Community Colleges to receive Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative Funds that are

currently allocated to provide assistance with improved enrollment management stewardship and to bring in new technology to make data more readily available and used. Categorical funds have been leveraged to add support to the function of institutional research, in particular in the areas of equity research.

The primary area of need with regard to new resources is in the area of training in best practices to implement and support integrated planning. College leaders, including faculty, have already attended workshops on this subject, but more thorough and comprehensive work is

needed. Additional resources needed include those associated with professional development training of new and existing staff to ensure broad scale understanding and participation in the college planning and decision making process. In order to make the information more readily available and accessible to faculty and staff, the College plans to modernize and upgrade its portal. The College is planning to implement the Ellucian Portal by June 2017. A component of this project is to leverage the modern portal framework to improve communication and information sharing.

Existing Resources	New Resources
Strong Council and committee structure	PD Training on governance, decision making, and college processes
Councils and Committees Pathways to Decision Making (CCPD)	Resources to modernize college website to improve communications
Strategic Plan	Funds for training with SCUP or similar training on integrated planning
IEPI Funds for CBT consulting for enrollment management and technology	
Compression planning training	
New Institutional Research Analyst	

Integrated Planning, Program Review, and Resource Allocation

Program review data for instructional programs are provided through the software Tableau. The clear visualizations and ability for the end user to query student outcomes data by year, course, student demographic, and modality has greatly enhanced the ability to use data.

Along these same lines, AHC uses eLumen for tracking and reporting student learning outcomes data. Courses are mapped to programs and institutional outcomes within eLumen and a multitude of reports are readily available. One component of eLumen that the college is investigating is the program review module that addresses many of the current challenges with the labor intensive

process. The module integrates budgets and resource requests and makes tracking and follow up much easier to evaluate. The Academic Senate Program Review Committee will be evaluating this option as well as a few other types of technology in order to make a recommendation in the 2016-17 academic year. In August, the college added a new cabinet-level position, vice president of institutional effectiveness; this position was created in order to ensure better integration and use

of data across the college to make informed decisions.

Should the college not choose to use the eLumen program review module, some alternative platform will need to be acquired. With regard to new resources, this is likely to be the most costly resource need with this action project, beyond travel or training.

Existing Resources	New Resources
Tableau Server	Technology platform for Program Review
eLumen for disaggregated assessment reports	
Academic Senate Program Review Committee to propose revisions of program review process	Training on new program review platform
New VP Institutional Effectiveness and Executive Director of Advancement	

V. Evaluation of Action Projects

Fundamental to the evaluation of the action projects is the analyses of quantitative and qualitative data and analysis in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, **integrated planning**, implementation, and re-evaluation to verify and improve the effectiveness by which the mission is accomplished.

The primary responsible parties for these actions projects are already defined in the CCPD as both College Council and Institutional Effectiveness Council, in consultation with the Academic Senate.

Plan for evaluating the outcomes and effectiveness of the projects

Action Projects	Measures of Progress	Responsible Parties	Timeline
Integrated Planning and Decision Making	<p>Completion of revision of CCPD and approval at College Council.</p> <p>Revise Administrative Policy on Integrated Planning.</p> <p>Develop new policy on Institutional Effectiveness.</p> <p>Integrated planning processes are evident through clear linkages to College Mission and across plans.</p>	<p>Group identified in action step.</p> <p>IEC/Academic Senate</p> <p>IEC</p> <p>CC, Academic Senate</p> <p>IEC/Academic Senate</p>	<p>Fall 2017</p> <p>Fall 2017</p> <p>Spring 2018</p>
Integrated Planning, Program Review, and Resource Allocation	<p>Evaluation of Program Review Process to ensure improved linkage between program goals and resource needs.</p> <p>Demonstrated improvement in understanding of resource allocation processes by campus constituencies.</p> <p>Demonstrated allocation of resources through program review improves student outcomes.</p> <p>Percentage of program reviews completed on time.</p> <p>Demonstrated compliance of planning and resource allocation processes with new criteria and established timelines.</p>	<p>Academic Senate Program Review Committee, IEC</p> <p>Public Information Officer</p> <p>IEC/Academic Senate</p> <p>IEC, Cabinet</p> <p>IEC, College Council</p>	<p>Spring 2017</p>