Administrative
Program Review Guide
October 2021

Purpose of Program Review

The program review process at ECC is intended to evaluate the progress towards achieving existing goals and outcomes of an office. The program review also involves looking forward to plan for the next four years—setting up new/adjusted goals and outcomes, guided by the aforementioned evaluation. Through the program review process, each office has an opportunity to: 1) critically evaluate the accomplishments and services offered and 2) plan four-year ahead, recommending necessary changes in order to ensure that goals and outcomes are met.

Figure 1: Program Review Cycle

Source: Institutional Research and Planning

The *program review processes* are carried out by all areas of the College (Administrative Services, Academic Affairs, Human Resources, Student Services and the President's Office). Reviews for all areas of the College are conducted every 4 years, except for Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, which are reviewed on a two-year cycle.

The program review process is a part of the broader planning cycle at ECC where the plan of each entity informs and aligns to the plans of other entities. The ECC Strategic Plan and institutional goals inform the annual plans for the areas; the annual plan of each area informs the annual plans of units/ divisions underneath them; the annual unit/division plans inform the annual plans at the programmatic level. Conversely, the annual plans of offices/programs at the programmatic level align and contribute to the annual plans at the next level up, and so on (see figure 2).

Figure 2: Alignment Between ECC Planning Processes
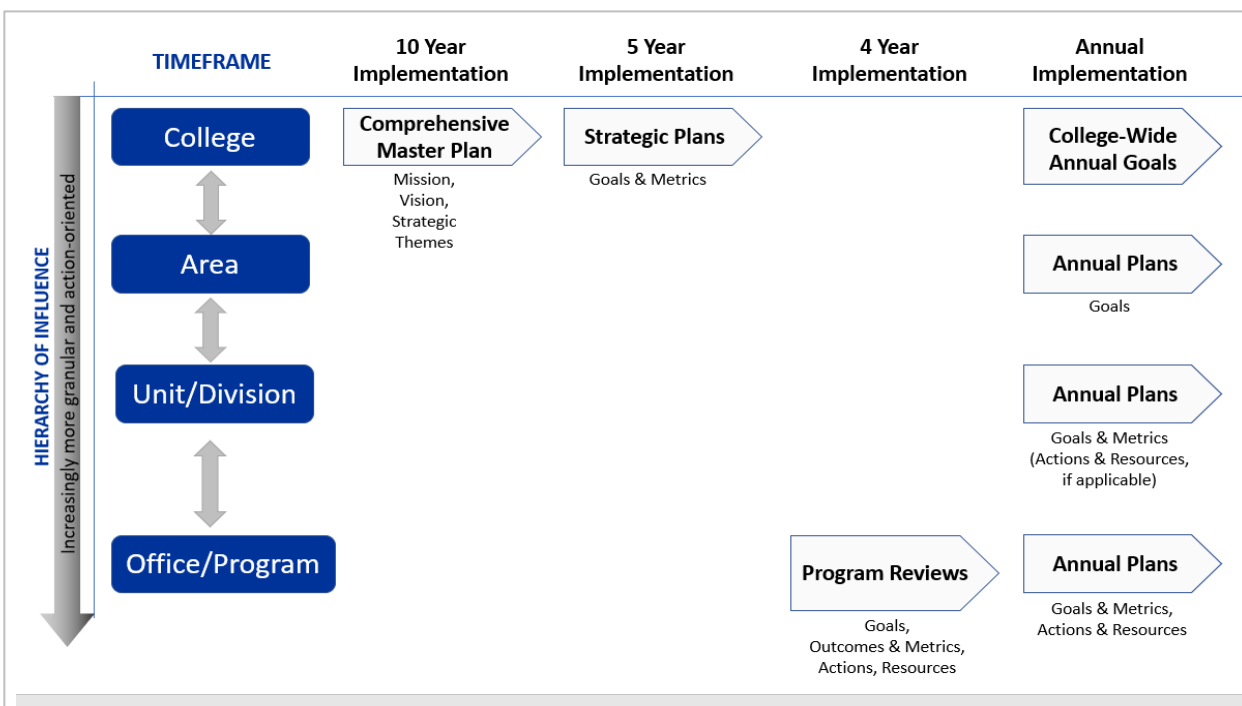
Source: Institutional Research and Planning

Planning Process: Setting Four-Year Goals, Outcomes, Actions, and Resources

Four-year goals define what the office would like to accomplish by the end of the implementation period (4 years). If clear goals do not currently exist for a given office, the process that is described in the next pages will help with the articulation of goals for the office under review. If four-year goals already exist for the office, please go to the Assessment Process: Reviewing Goals and Outcomes section below.

Goals are long-range, broad statements that express desired results. They reflect the key role and responsibilities of the office and will help set the direction of the office. Given the unique role and responsibilities of the office, how would it better serve its key constituents in the next four years? Goals provide the framework for determining specific outcomes and performance indicators or accomplishments.

> Example of a goal (from IRP): *"Champion the re-engineering of the annual planning process."*

It is recommended that an office should have **no more than four goals** for the four-year period. If too many, it may be difficult to achieve all of them since the activities across the office may lack focus to have great impact. Throughout the review process, the office should review the existing institutional goals when planning for the next four years. How may the office contribute to these institutional goals in the next 4 years? After articulating clear goals, determine how the office will track the progress towards achieving its goals (see the Planning Process: Performance Indicators/ Accomplishments section).

Outcomes are related to the distinct role of the office at ECC and to the key services it provides to the institution. Outcomes are statements that express what stakeholders (students, faculty, staff, and possibly external stakeholders) served by the office will experience, receive, or understand if the goals of the office are met. For administrative offices, services mostly refer to non-instructional responsibilities that may directly or indirectly improve student success.

Examples on how to begin an outcomes statements include:

> *Faculty and Staff will receive…..*
> *The campus will receive….*
> *Faculty and staff will be satisfied with….*

> Example of an outcome: *"Managers who participate in the annual planning training will feel adequately prepared and confident to lead the annual planning process within their offices ."*

If outcomes are achieved, the goals of the office will be achieved as well. More specifically, in the example above, if a survey of managers show that they feel they have the knowledge to lead the annual planning process in their office (i.e., the outcome has been achieved), the achievement of this outcome contributes to reaching the IRP goal of championing the re-engineering of the annual planning process. Probably, to fully achieve this goal, there are other outcomes that need to be achieved as well.

Actions are tasks to complete in order to progress toward a desired goal/outcome (e.g., update procedures, develop training, refurbish technology, etc.).

> Example of actions: *"Provide annual training to office managers participating in the annual planning process."*

In this example above, the action (e.g. provide training) will contribute to the outcome (e.g., managers feel adequately prepared to lead the annual planning process) which in turn will support the goal (e.g., IRP champions the annual planning process).

Resources are assets relative to facilities, technology, staffing needed to achieve goals and outcomes (e.g. personnel hire, software/hardware, instructional equipment, non-instructional equipment, furniture, facilities).

The office should first review its current resources. This will help identify existing resources that could be repurposed to better support the new goals and outcomes. If the current resource levels do not adequately support the new goals and outcomes, additional resources needed must be identified to achieve the goals and to see an impact on the office's outcomes.

> Example of resource requirements: *"Additional online team collaboration tools and hiring an additional staff member to coordinate and facilitate the training, and to develop training materials."*

In the example above, in order to execute the action (e.g., provide training) and contribute positively to the outcome (e.g., managers feel adequately prepared to lead the annual planning process), the office

will need to ensure that there are adequate online collaboration tools and someone available to coordinate and assist with the training.

Planning Process: Performance Indicators/Accomplishments

Performance indicators/accomplishments are measures used to track progress of goals and outcomes of an office. Outcomes for an office are tracked through the level of satisfaction, knowledge or awareness of its stakeholders. In other words, to what extent would the stakeholders feel a change in the quality of services received from the office?

While performance indicators are usually quantitative, some goals/outcomes may be linked to the successful completion of a project (e.g. the development of a document, the installation of a software, etc.). In these cases, the performance indicator is not quantitative, but whether a particular project has been completed (accomplishment).

> Example of a performance indicator: *"Percentage of managers who participated in the annual planning training who are comfortable articulating clear goals for their programs."*
>
> Example of an accomplishment: *"Development of materials and templates for the annual planning training."*

When determining performance indicators/accomplishments for outcomes, ensure that the data feeding into these indicators/accomplishments is collected and tracked by someone either within ECC (e.g., internally by the office or by another area of ECC) or externally by an organization outside of ECC. If there is a proposal for a new indicator that involves data that is not currently being collected, ensure that a process to start data collection and tracking will be in place throughout the four-year period. This is a key step to ensure that the necessary data exists to track outcomes and assess progress towards the goals.

While targets[1] are not necessary for the performance indicators of outcomes, they can be used to describe the impact of the planned actions on the outcomes. The aim is to have as many stakeholders as possible affirming that they have satisfactorily attained the desired knowledge or experience described in the outcome. Also, assuming the role and responsibilities of an office do not change significantly year to year, the desired outcomes articulated in each program review should not change significantly over time for the same office. Thus, progress towards achieving the outcomes can been seen in the data over time.

Assessment Process: Reviewing Goals and Outcomes

The assessment process seeks to determine to what extent the goals and outcomes of the office have been achieved.

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[1] A target is the degree of change needed to ensure a goal/objective/outcome has been met. Targets may be set based on historical trends, averages or industry benchmarks.

In order to do the assessment, the office could either conduct a stakeholder survey/focus group or analyze data that has been collected to date. If a survey of stakeholders is needed, ensure that there is adequate time during the assessment phase to conduct the survey and to complete analysis of the survey results. If the latter is the case, ask the relevant data owner for access to the data, while providing adequate time for analysis during the assessment phase. Beyond citing the data in this assessment phase, it is very important to provide insightful narrative of the significance of the data observed. Has there been significant progress towards achieving the outcomes? Why or why not?

If significant progress has not been made on the outcomes, then the goal may not have been fully achieved.

If the goals have not been met, assess whether existing goals are still aligned to the strategic plan of the College and existing institutional goals. A discussion with the next-level manager is a critical step to ensure the office's goals and outcomes align with the manager's mid-term vision of the area/unit/ division he/she leads.

If the office's goals and outcomes are still aligned and relevant, implementation of the same goals and outcomes could be extended for the next four years. If the existing goals and outcomes are no longer relevant, how can they be revised or should the office establish new goals and outcomes for the next four years?

The office should also consider external circumstances that may hinder the pursuit of the goals and outcomes. How have changes in the circumstances (e.g., changes within ECC, in the demographics of students, with policies/regulations, etc.), affected the ability of the office to achieve its goals and outcomes? What new actions may be needed to support existing goals and outcomes?

Assessment Process: Envisioning Resources

Finally, given the current progress towards achieving the office's goals and outcomes, evaluate the need of resources for the office in order to ensure the goals are met and the desired outcomes are realized in the next four years. For each of the following resource types: a) facilities and equipment, b) technology/ software, and c) staffing, clarify in broad terms:

1. What resources does the office currently have?
2. What resources does the office need to better support the new goals and outcomes (if these were set)?

While the multi-year goals and outcomes from the program review should inform the annual goals in annual planning, the multi-year, high-level review of resources from the program review should inform the annual budgeting process.

Since the program review is completed every 4 years (with the exception of the Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs), the activities involved in the program review are quite cyclical. Thus, the last step of assessment from one planning cycle becomes the first activity needed for the next program review.