

Linking Resource Allocation to Planning and Assessment

Edited by Larry Goldstein, MS



The Society for College
and University Planning

Excerpt





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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this introduction is to explain why this compilation of material is worth your consideration. Especially so if you are directly involved with the planning process on your campus or assisting your higher education clients with their planning efforts. With multiple types of planning occurring on campus, there is tremendous risk of disjointed efforts that could prove counter to each other. The primary way to avoid this is by integrating the various forms of planning—strategic, infrastructural, financial, operational, and many more—with each other to ensure coherence and consistency of effort.

As important as integrated planning is, however, it's not enough. By design, planning should be the driver of all effort. If we stop there, though, very little will be accomplished. Plans must be supported with adequate resources or nothing gets done. And it's critically important that the resources be linked or aligned with the plans. Just throwing resources at an issue is not helpful. The resources must go where they are most needed and where they will do the greatest good in support of the mission.

There is a third element that must be present to ensure maximum effectiveness—assessment. Without some form of assessment, it's unlikely we will ever know what has been accomplished and whether it was a success. Assessment requires the identification of goals—preferably quantifiable goals—before the effort begins. When done well, assessment will occur at pre-established milestones when the expected outcomes are compared with actual results. And then, most important—as should be the case for all assessment—decisions will be made. It is typical that things may not have occurred exactly as expected and something will need to change as a result. Maybe the deadline or scope will need to be adjusted. Or maybe additional resources will be needed. Or in the worst case, maybe the effort proves to be futile and should be scrapped. This type of decision-making can happen only if assessment occurs.

The following compilation of a book chapter and articles drives this point home with various arguments demonstrating the importance of relying on integrated planning, which then is linked to resource allocation and assessment. With specific references to campus environments, as well as theory, the articles collectively demonstrate the criticality of these essential processes.

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