Doing
Academic Planning

Effective Tools for Decision Making

edited by Brian P. Nedwek

Society for College and University Planning
ELECTRONIC REFERENCE CITATIONS

Citations to electronic references (at the end of each chapter) are primarily to websites, though there are a few references to listservs and gophers. Citation practices for the Web are in flux. Based on user requirements we start all citations with the URL (Universal Reference Locator). Where websites have titles, the title follows, followed in turn by information on the sponsoring organization and the author. All these URLs will be accessible in a single online location through “SCUP’s Planning Pages” at http://www.scup.org.

Because the Web is an actively evolving collection of documents, no assurance can be given that any particular URL will still be active at any time after the citation is printed, although most will remain valid. If that is the case with a Web reference you are trying to locate, please use the other information provided to perform your search with the various online search engines, or consult “SCUP’s Planning Pages.”

You are invited to contribute citations to online works you find of value in your professional work. Send URLs to <scup@umich.edu>. Thank you.
Academic leaders have been caught flat-footed by the convergence of two powerful forces. Rapid and pervasive introduction of information technology is one front moving through the landscape of higher education. Emerging storms of discontent from numerous stakeholders over the process and product of higher education form another. Together these environmental factors are transforming the academy.

Historically, academic managers were focused on factors of production—number of books in libraries, proportion of faculty with terminal degrees and the like. They assumed a relatively stable and noncompetitive environment. Organizational structures and role relationships were neatly hierarchical and autonomous. Core functions were executed with an insensitivity, even immunity, to external environmental forces. Stakeholder involvement was limited and passive. Education was a public good and the policy agenda was preoccupied with issues of access.

Today, academic leaders are challenged by an expanding universe of information technology and its uses, and by a changed focus from a provider-centered culture to a learner-centered world. The new era is one of networks of learners wherein the student, not the library, is the center of the information universe. Libraries can no longer be viewed as mausoleums with an insatiable need for additional resources; rather they must be seen in competition with a host of organizations to serve as interdependent resources to the learner. The traditional “provider-centered” model argued for highly formalized systems of data and information broadcasting to a relatively passive client. Traditional systems promoted place-bound learning as a preferred technique to promote efficiency in production. The “learner-centered” focus suggests individualizing the pace of learning, (i.e., each learner progressing at a rate tailored to individual abilities and balanced against other forces in competition for their time) and thus has powerful implications for space planning and its use.

The learner-centered focus has implications beyond individualization. Historically, curriculum planning and assessment systems were designed to fit the production model. Thus, what courses to offer and when, were to be determined on the basis of
Doing Academic Planning

provider wants and expectations rather than learner needs. The emerging individualization suggests a very different approach to curricular and assessment information system design. With a focus on the individual learner, curriculum decisions are more likely to be guided by skills to be demonstrated and content to be mastered within each skill domain. This approach provides individualization of a curriculum, based on the readiness of the learner. Instructional settings are structured along the lines of individual needs, thereby minimizing the need for gross homogenization of a group of learners (i.e., the use of general survey courses in the core curriculum as a way to gain efficiencies in the curriculum).

A learner-centered education has powerful implications for traditional planning tools currently available to higher education leaders. For example, to what extent are existing models of space utilization appropriate in an environment that seeks to maximize individualization of learning opportunities? Does assignable square footage per FTE (full-time equivalent) student have as much utility in this new information age compared with its use in a producer-centered milieu? What then replaces classroom utilization planning tools? As implied by Dolence and Norris' Transforming Higher Education, the learner's relationship to the production function changes as well.

The principle organizational model becomes focused on the networks between resources, agents, and learners. A network approach introduces design issues heretofore unexplored within the planning community. This new metaphor suggests core concepts different from the production-centered educational model of old. Network access replaces access to the “goods,” just as growing resources within a network replaces passive reception of predetermined goods. Thus, students will seek out and contract with a variety of learning resources to develop skills. Self-paced learning modules, occasional live lectures, simulations, tape-delayed lectures, and the like suggest that planning tools need to focus more on the resources available to a client group during episodes far more frequent than a 16-week semester. Networking also suggests a reconsideration of traditional articulation agreements between educational sectors. The emerging pattern is one of collaborative arrangements among sectors of society from private industry and service organizations to integrated educational sectors. A seamless network of opportunities, service providers, and learners is on the educational horizon.

Faculty/student relational changes have altered the role expectations of faculty from dispensers of information to facilitators. Students, in turn, are expected to take responsibility for managing their learning. Faculty roles in this expanding information universe are unfolding. Facilitator, coach, and navigator are role definitions in the new order. Individualization of education is coupled with collaborative learning arrangements. Education in this new environment is seen as a strategic investment; in this setting stakeholders are involved more deeply than ever before.

Demonstrated accountability and resource allocation decisions linked to academic plans are transforming how we teach, research, serve, and govern. Simply put, the academy has been asked to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and economy in what

---

we do; more important, we must change while living in a fish bowl. How will academic leaders as planners respond to these challenges in creative ways without losing sight of the institution's core identity?

The various dimensions of this sourcebook, (e.g., how to assess information/technology use capacity), can serve the evolution of higher education well. In assembling this reader, the selection of materials was guided by a sensitivity to provide academic planners with tools to perform core functions and activities that facilitate the transformation of higher education institutions from provider-centered cultures and organizations to learner-centered franchises. Readings examine partnerships and alliances needed for higher education institutions to survive, if not lead, the transformation of society into the information age.

In summary, facing storms of change within and outside the academy, higher education officials have realized that major realignments are underway creating demographic, economic, political, and cultural imperatives. Demographic and economic forces have become translated into the political language of “return on investment” public policy. Quality, accountability, and institutional effectiveness have become part of the culture for stakeholders in higher education.

In summary, facing storms of change within and outside the academy, higher education officials have realized that major realignments are underway creating demographic, economic, political, and cultural imperatives. Demographic and economic forces have become translated into the political language of “return on investment” public policy. Quality, accountability, and institutional effectiveness have become part of the culture for stakeholders in higher education.

Program directors, department chairpersons, academic deans and their associates, and academic vice presidents—at two and four-year institutions in public and independent school sectors—are anticipating continued change and are ready to respond in a timely fashion using new planning approaches and techniques.

This introductory book is organized around eight core topical areas: environmental scanning and related policy analysis tools; curriculum planning; enrollment management; human resources planning; planning for information technology; student services; integrating academic with facilities and budget planning; and accountability tools. Marie E. Zeglen, in Chapter 1, provides a systematic look at stakeholder and issue analysis techniques to make plans rational and actionable. In Chapter 2, Thomas V. Mecca describes the concepts and basic approaches of environmental scanning that higher education leaders can use to identify major discontinuities and related changes in their external environments. Gertrude M. Eaton and Helen E. Giles-Gee examine classic academic program review in Chapter 3, but from a learner-centered perspective and the new accountability. Chapter 4 introduces academic managers to the planning issues surrounding curriculum planning through alternative delivery strategies and partnerships. Kathleen A. Corak and James L. Croonquist bring a fresh look at the issues of delivering a curriculum in nontraditional ways.

Enrollment management is examined in two chapters. In Chapter 5, Michael E. Middaugh and Dale W. Truhelm describe recruitment and retention analysis tools that are used at the University of Delaware, but are easily adaptable to other institutions. They also discuss the relationship between financial aid and enrollment management in Chapter 6, providing a proactive approach to financial aid management and strategic planning.

A range of human resources planning issues are examined in Chapter 7 by Carol Everly Floyd; faculty recruitment and retention, their roles and responsibilities, and
a series of recommendations are discussed in actionable form.

Chapters 8 and 9 contain a systematic look at information technology—from how to assess institutional capacity to planning for its expansion. Linda Fleit provides a way to examine information technology resources in ten key areas. Susy S. Chan then examines planning for information technology and calls for the application of process reengineering as a component of organizational transformation.

Diana L. Sharp and G. Gary Grace take an integrated approach, in Chapter 10, to understanding student development by applying a service perspective. Gretchen Warner Kearney and Stephen P. McLaughlin examine a co-curricular framework as an experiential learning opportunity to augment classroom learning. Co-curricular involvement has emerged as a key component of holistic education and has a positive impact on educational attainment. Chapter 11 provides a good introduction to current approaches and practices in co-curricular planning models.

Putting academic planning into a larger context is the focus of Chapters 12 and 13. Dilip M. Anketell examines how to integrate academic and facilities planning, followed by Thomas K. Anderes' recommendations on how academic plans and processes should be linked with budget development and funding allocation processes.

The use of performance indicators (PIs) as a method to couple quality assurance with accountability is becoming increasingly common among higher education systems, institutions, and programs. The closing chapter by Brian P. Nedwek introduces academic leaders to a range of PIs of process and outcomes in higher education.

Brian P. Nedwek
Associate Provost, Saint Louis University
President, Society for College and University Planning
Acknowledgments

Doing Academic Planning is the first in a three-volume series of publications by the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) for academic leaders and planners. Many individuals gave countless hours to the task of building the first sourcebook. Members of the Academic Planning Academy of SCUP assisted in identifying the core components for the sourcebook and potential contributors. SCUP's Director of Education and Research, Mendi Spencer, provided numerous ways to improve the quality and usefulness of the book to a wide range of readers. Terry Calhoun, SCUP's Publications Director, has been supportive throughout the project, keeping us all focused on the deliverables, and sensitive to the needs of the reader in the knowledge age. Danny Steinmetz, temporary staff in SCUP Publications, helped in many ways, including preparation of the index. J. Thomas Bowen, Jr., Chair of the Professional Development Committee, shared his keen insights on how to integrate academic and facilities planning, and provided considerable assistance with Chapter 12. Meredith Whiteley, Chair of the Publications Advisory Committee, helped in so many ways to bring this academy goal to reality. I am grateful to the staff at Saint Louis University, especially Barbara Lind for her assistance in manuscript management and preparation, and to Ryan Comfort for his critical insights.
# Contents

**Electronic Reference Citations** ................................................................. i

**Preface** ........................................................................................................... iii

**Acknowledgments** ........................................................................................... vii

**Contents** ........................................................................................................... ix

**Expanded Table of Contents and List of Figures and Tables** ........................ xii

## Environmental Scanning

1. Policy Analysis: Scouting for the Academic Wagon Train .................................. 3
   Marie E. Zeglen

2. Approaches to Environmental Scanning .............................................................. 17
   Thomas V. Mecca

## Curriculum Planning

3. Planning an Academic Program Review ............................................................ 27
   Gertrude M. Eaton and Helen F. Gilles-Gee

4. Alternative Delivery Strategies, Partnerships, and Articulation Agreements:
   New Recipes for Favorite Dishes ........................................................................ 35
   Kathleen A. Corak and James L. Cronquist

## Enrollment Management

5. Recruitment/Retention Analysis Tools ............................................................... 49
   Michael F. Middaugh and Dale W. Trusheim

6. Financial Aid and Strategic Planning ................................................................. 57
   Dale W. Trusheim and Michael F. Middaugh

## Human Resources Planning

7. Human Resources Planning .............................................................................. 69
   Carol Eberly Floyd

## Planning for Information Technology

8. Institutional Information Technology Resource Assessment ............................. 79
   Linda Fleit

9. Planning for Information Technology .................................................................. 87
   Susy S. Chan

## Student Services

10. Student Development: An Integrated Approach to the Age Old Pursuit .......... 97
    Diana L. Sharp and G. Gary Grace

11. Planning the Co-Curricular Component ........................................................... 107
    Gretchen Warner Kearney and Stephen P. McLoughlin

## Academic Planning within the Larger Context

12. Integrating Academic and Facilities Planning ................................................. 117
    Dilip M. Anketell

13. Connecting Academic Plans to Budgeting: Key Conditions for Success ........ 129
    Thomas K. Anderes

## Linking Quality and Accountability

    Brian P. Nedweb

**Index** .............................................................................................................. 145

**About SCUP** ..................................................................................................... 155

**Order Form** ..................................................................................................... 157
## Expanded Table of Contents and List of Figures and Tables

### Electronic Reference Citations

Preface

Acknowledgments

Contents

Expanded Table of Contents and List of Figures and Tables

Environmental Scanning

### FIGURES & TABLES

- Figure 1. Policy Development, Implementation, and Evaluation Cycle
- Table 1. Contents of the Policy Presentation
- Table 2. General Guidelines for Policy Analysis Reports

### CORE PLANNING QUESTIONS

Planners and policy analysts as partners

The role of the analyst

### QUESTIONS

Basic Concepts

Issues

Stakeholders

Policy partners

Policy analysis as an iterative process

The “messy” troika of judgment, intuition, and political savvy

Models grounded in the environment

Actionability

Approaches and Practices

Issue crafting

Clarifying the issue

Establishing the context for the issue

Stating policy objectives

Stating a broad range of policy alternatives

Suggesting success criteria

Recommendation on proceeding

Policy crafting

Refining policy alternatives

Specifying and creating a model for each policy alternative

Assessing the viability of each policy alternative

Policy selection

Setting the context for each policy alternative

Identifying policy attributes

Comparing the policy alternatives

Goal achievement

Cost-benefit

Actionability

Ranking the policy alternatives

Policy presentation

Manipulation and Delivery

Packaging of the proposal

Actionability Issue

Access

Feedback

Design

Delivery

Recommendations

Defining the issue

Including the stakeholders

Knowing the environment

Recognizing the quasi-political role of the analyst

Over-emphasizing quantitative approaches

Sharing responsibility for policy outcomes

Going beyond incrementalism

Summary

Print References

Electronic Sampler
Approaches To Environmental Scanning ...................................................... 17

**FIGURES & TABLES**
- Figure 1. Typical Scanning Information Resources ......................... 19

**CORE PLANNING QUESTIONS** .......... 17

**BASIC CONCEPTS** ............... 17
- Levels of the environment .......... 17
- Approaches to environmental analyses .......... 18
- Components of environmental scanning process ................. 18

**APPROACHES AND PRACTICE** ........ 18
- Models of environmental scanning .......... 18

Environmental scanning systems .......... 18

**MANIPULATION AND DELIVERY** .......... 21

**ACTIONABILITY ISSUES** .......... 21
- Vulnerability audit .......... 21
- ED QUEST .......... 22
- The issue management model .......... 22

**RECOMMENDATIONS** .......... 23

**PRINT REFERENCES** .......... 23

**ELECTRONIC SAMPLER** .......... 23

---

**Curriculum Planning** ................................................................. 25

Planning An Academic Program Review .................................................. 27

**FIGURES & TABLES**
- Figure 1. Four Key Steps in Program Review Process .......... 29
- Table 1. Academic Program Costs and Productivity Indicators .......... 32

**CORE PLANNING QUESTIONS** .......... 27

**BASIC CONCEPTS** .......... 27

**APPROACHES AND PRACTICES** .......... 28
- The program review process .......... 28
- Role of the chief academic officer .......... 29
- Role of the department chair .......... 30
- Role of the faculty .......... 30
- Role of students .......... 30

Role of the institutional research or planning office .......... 31
- Role of the president/board of trustees .......... 31

**MANIPULATION AND DELIVERY** .......... 31
- Cost and productivity indicators .......... 31
- Departmental analysis and recommendations .......... 32

**ACTIONABILITY ISSUES** .......... 33

**RECOMMENDATIONS** .......... 33

**PRINT REFERENCES** .......... 33

**ELECTRONIC SAMPLER** .......... 33-34

---

Alternative Delivery Strategies, Partnerships, and Articulation Agreements: New Recipes for Favorite Dishes .................................................. 35

**FIGURES & TABLES**
- Figure 1. Issues to be Addressed in Cooperative/Articulation Agreements .......... 37

**CORE PLANNING QUESTIONS** .......... 35

**BASIC CONCEPTS** .......... 36
- Cooperative agreements .......... 36
- Planning model elements .......... 36
  1. What are the intended outcomes of this agreement? .......... 39

2. What is the environment for the agreement? .......... 40
3. What are the processes for approval of the agreement? .......... 41
4. Has the agreement worked? .......... 44
5. What, if anything, can be done to improve the agreement? .......... 44

**SUMMARY** .......... 45

**PRINT REFERENCES** .......... 45

**ELECTRONIC SAMPLER** .......... 45
Enrollment Management ................................................................. 47

Recruitment/Retention Analysis Tools ............................................. 49

FIGURES & TABLES
◆ Table 1: Student Information System Weekly Admissions
   Campus Summary Report ................................................. 50
◆ Table 2: Fall 93, 94, and 95 Current First-Time New Students ....... 52
◆ Table 3: Enrollment, Dropout Rates, and Graduation Rates for First-Time Freshmen on the Newark Campus (Total) .. 55

CORE PLANNING QUESTIONS ............................................. 49

Financial aid and Strategic Planning ............................................. 57

FIGURES & TABLES
◆ Table 1: Financial Aid/Admissions Extract and Overall Financial Aid Extract ............... 60
◆ Figure 1: Financial Aid Flow Chart ... 61
◆ Table 2: Admissions and Financial Aid Outcomes by SAT Range: Illustration 63
◆ Table 3: Institutional Scholarship Award Distribution by Major Freshmen, Sophomores, and Juniors Only;......... 64

CORE PLANNING QUESTIONS ............................................. 57

BASIC CONCEPTS ...................................................... 58
Financial aid .................................................. 58
Tuition discounting .................................................. 58
Differential or preferential packaging ........................................ 58

Human Resources Planning .................................................. 67

Human Resources Planning .................................................. 69

CORE PLANNING QUESTIONS ............................................. 69

BASIC CONCEPTS ...................................................... 69
Faculty Recruitment and Retention ........................................... 69
Minority and female faculty ................................................ 70
Part-time faculty .................................................... 70
Market and equitable salaries ............................................. 71
Institutional mission commitments ......................................... 72
Institutional mission commitments ......................................... 72
Relationships between teaching and scholarship ..................... 72
Focus on departmental units ............................................. 73

MANIPULATION AND DELIVERY ........................................ 73
Ensuring strong curricula at both the undergraduate and graduate levels ........................................ 73

Increasing the mutual benefits of the scholarship/teaching connection .. 73
Expanding the range of faculty development opportunities ........ 73
Differentiating faculty responsibilities .................................. 73
Improving the faculty teaching and scholarship .................... 73
Improving rewards for excellent faculty teaching ..................... 74
Emphasizing research about teaching .................................. 74
Application of principles to liberal arts colleges and community colleges ... 74

ACTIONABILITY ..................................................... 74

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CAVEATS ................................... 75
PRINT REFERENCES .................................................. 75

ELECTRONIC SAMPLER .............................................. 75-76
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Planning within the Larger Context</th>
<th>115</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Figures & Tables**
- Figure 1. Campus Planning and Implementation Wheel .......... 119
- Table 1. Long Range Academic Plan 1995–2004 .......... 125

**Introduction**
- Core Planning Questions .......... 117
  - Why plan .......................... 118
  - How do you get decision makers to plan .......... 118
  - Should staff planners be a part of the process .......... 118
  - What type of plan .......................... 118

**Basic Concepts**
- Conceptual program development .......... 119
- Organization ................. 120
- Process ................. 121
- Content ................. 121
- Deliverables ................. 122

**Comprehensive Planning Approaches and Practice**
- Co-curricular planning model .... 109
- Needs assessment ................. 110

**Manipulation, Delivery, and Actionability Issues**
- Why is the data collected on co-curricular programs often not useful to academic planners ... 112

**Recommendations**
- Print References .......... 114
- Electronic Sampler .......... 114

**Planning the Co-Curricular Component**
- Core Planning Questions .......... 107
  - What is the co-curriculum .......................... 107
  - Why is the co-curriculum important ................. 107
  - What nationwide trends are affecting co-curricular planning .... 108
  - What are the most common obstacles to co-curricular planning ........ 108

**Basic Concepts**
- Environmental factors ................. 109

**Comprehensive Planning Approaches and Practice**
- Needs assessment ................. 110
- Actionability Issues ................. 125

**Conclusions and Recommendations**
- Planning must be viewed as essential and adequately supported for an institution to maximize benefits ... 126
- The planning process must be open, inclusive and responsive to input ................. 127
- Schedules should be carefully managed to ensure adequate time for input and feedback ................. 127
- Adequate, appropriate policies, procedures and committee structures must be established to ensure compliance with the plan and subsequent review and revision as a "living" document ................. 128
- Progress toward implementation of the plan should be tracked through continuous, regular updates of the documents ................. 128

**Print References**
- Electronic Sampler .......... 127
Connecting Academic Plans To Budgeting: Key Conditions For Success .......................... 129

CORE PLANNING QUESTIONS .................. 129
Legitimize planning .................. 129
Legitimize budgeting ................. 129
Follow through on expectations raised in planning .................. 129
Secure institutional support ........ 130
Provide continuity over time in the achievement of goals .......... 130
Track performance .................. 130
Reduce decisions made outside of program priorities ........ 130

PLANNING AND BUDGETING—
AN INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE .......... 131
Strengths .................. 131
Weaknesses .................. 131

PLANNING AND BUDGETING—
A SYSTEM PERSPECTIVE .................. 132
System "vision" and leadership .... 132

Participation by key constituencies ........ 132
Planning to budget connections .. 132

COMPARISON OF INSTITUTIONAL
AND SYSTEM PLANNING .................. 132

RECOMMENDATIONS .................. 133
Active leadership .................. 133
Broad participation ................. 133
Intention to connect planning and budgeting .......... 133
Informational forums ............ 133
Feedback on decisions ........ 133

FINAL THOUGHTS .................. 134

PRINT REFERENCES .................. 134

ELECTRONIC SAMPLER .................. 134

Linking Quality and Accountability ........................................ 135

Linking Quality Assurance and Accountability: Using Process and Performance Indicators ... 137

FIGURES & TABLES
Table 1. Sample Performance Indicators Across Levels ........ 140

CORE PLANNING QUESTIONS .................. 137
Quality .................. 138
Indicators .................. 138

APPROACHES AND PRACTICES .................. 139
System applications ........ 139
Institutional applications .... 140
Program applications ....... 141
Individual applications .... 141

ANALYZING AND DISPLAYING
PI INFORMATION .................. 141
Data display ................. 141
Making comparisons public .... 142

ACTIONABILITY ISSUES .................. 142
Producing usable knowledge ........ 142
Making PI systems useful .... 144

SUMMARY .................. 144

PRINT REFERENCES ........ 143–144
ELECTRONIC SAMPLER ........ 144

Index ........................................................................ 145

About the Publisher—SCUP ........................................ 155

Order Form ................................................................ 157
Environmental Scanning

Policy Analysis: Scouting for the Academic Wagon Train

Marie E. Zeglen

Approaches to Environmental Scanning

Thomas V. Mecca
Excerpt
Today’s academic leader needs to marshal the best available information to guide the planning process. But good information alone is not enough. Policy analysis is a systematic tool which academic leaders can use to ensure that their plans will result in effective action.

Policy Analysis: Scouting for the Academic Wagon Train

Marie E. Zeglen

CORE PLANNING QUESTIONS

Visions, plans, and policy analyses are all part of the same effort to build the future. The pioneers in this country who drove wagon trains westward had a vision of a new life in a new land. They had a general plan for how to make their journey from east of the Mississippi to the mountains and seashores of the west. They used policy analyses to decide which particular path or direction should be taken whenever they encountered obstacles such as rivers or hostile populations along the way. Policy analysis is a systematic process for reducing issues or problems to actionable solutions. Wildavsky refers to policy analysis as “an activity creating problems which can be solved” (1979, p. 17). The process is systematic, in that policy analysis proceeds through a set of predictable steps once an issue or problem has attracted the attention of an individual or group. In policy analysis, however, the problem is not taken for granted. It is analyzed, clarified, and crafted in such a way as to allow for solution. Policy objectives are set and solutions are then developed to meet those objectives. The solutions have to be actionable, or capable of being implemented in the specific environment where the problem exists. The analyst uses a variety of research and modeling techniques to predict the effects of each potential solution. Policy alternatives are then systematically compared to identify policy outcomes, trade-offs, and impacts. Criteria such as cost-benefit, goal achievement, or actionability are typically used in sorting out alternatives. The end product is a set of recommendations for future action which is presented to policy makers.

Planners and policy analysts as partners. Policy analysis is grounded in the kinds of real world issues an academic leader already understands. Like all planning processes, policy analysis is iterative, seeking continually to refine and rethink assumptions and conclusions throughout a study process. Policy analysis does not ignore political processes. On the contrary, a good analysis takes into account the way political factors influence an issue or its resolution. Like planning, policy analysis is collaborative and involves continual consultation with stakeholders and policy makers.

Planning and policy analysis are kindred disciplines. Both activities “deal with the future, use similar methodologies, operate in institutional settings, exercise influence, and participate in similar implementation processes” (Benveniste, 1989, p. 53). Partnership is productive between analysts and planners. Analysts contribute skill and sensitivity in designing change, while planners bring knowledge and experience to make change happen. While judgment and intuition are part of both policy analysis and planning, the policy analyst also brings a background in quantitative techniques to the planning process.

Marie E. Zeglen

is Associate Provost for Planning and Institutional Research for Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona. Zeglen is a member of the Society for College and University Planning who has presented at SCUP’s annual, international conference.
The role of the analyst. Policy analysts need extensive access to policy makers, stakeholders, and others in order to function effectively. The analyst must have a thorough understanding of the issue and its context, and be able to judge the actionability of policy options. An analyst’s judgment is sharpened when opportunities to test and exchange ideas with policy makers and stakeholders are afforded throughout the planning process.

QUESTIONS
Policy analysis can be used to study many types of academic planning issues. It is an optimal approach for answering questions such as:

- What is the real issue needing the attention of decision makers?
- What policy or other options do decision-makers have for resolving the issue?
- Which of the possible options provide the best resolution to the issue?
- What are the likely effects and side effects of implementing the option?
- How can change best be managed to ensure success?
- How will decision makers know if the change really works?

BASIC CONCEPTS
There are several basic concepts for the academic planner to understand before using policy analysis:

- Issues;
- Stakeholders;
- Policy partners;
- The iterative nature of policy analysis;
- The role of judgment, intuition, and savvy in policy analysis;
- The use of grounded models; and
- The need for actionability of recommendations.

Issues. An issue is any disagreement among stakeholders for which a solution is sought by policy makers. Issues that present planners with significant social, economic, or ethical problems are most likely to benefit from a policy study. Consider an example from academic planning. In response to anticipated enrollment pressures, leaders decide to promote several initiatives to enable students to complete degree programs more quickly. Plans are proposed to extend academic program delivery in terms of the calendar, the locations where courses are taught, and the mode of delivery by which students can receive instruction. In addition, course and facility scheduling are reviewed to eliminate barriers to efficient student access to required courses and programs. A committee is formed to make recommendations, but numerous issues emerge during discussion of potential options. Department chairs are concerned that facilities commonly used by the department faculty will be less available under the new plan. Faculty are concerned with equity in compensation for teaching courses outside the current academic year calendar on which most contracts are based. Courses are not available in alternative delivery formats, and faculty have no time to develop new instructional approaches. Students are concerned with the proposed pricing for the different program alternatives. Local employers are concerned that student workers may not be available in the timeframe needed to support seasonal work. The administration is concerned that the enrollment opportunities created through the new approach will not create student access fast enough to forestall legislative intervention. The institution’s financial officer believes that the committee has not shown clearly that the new programs will be cost effective or allow adequate time for facility maintenance. The array of issues arising from the committee’s work demands the brokering of a political decision from institutional leadership. That decision can be informed by systematic study of the issues and the policy alternatives.

Stakeholders. Stakeholders are individuals or groups who are invested in a policy outcome. The investment may be made for personal, emotional, national, economic, philosophical, artistic, or other reasons. Investment in a policy outcome forces stakeholders into the political process as either recognized, legitimate players in the decision, or illegitimate challengers to the political order. Benveniste (1989) describes two kinds of stakeholders: “the real clients or beneficiaries” (p. 18) and
the implementers or "individuals within or outside the organization who would carry out the policy or plan" (p. 19). A third group should not be overlooked—the plan or policy designers. It is natural for the planner or policy analyst to have a stake in the acceptance of policy recommendations and in the successful implementation of the resulting policy. This kind of stakeholding is healthy, motivating, and not of concern unless the analyst or planner loses objectivity.

Stakeholders for academic issues can include a wide variety of individuals, such as administrators, faculty, staff, state and federal government officials, students, parents, alumni, trustees, politicians, taxpayers, professional societies, and members of the business and industry community. Policy analysis must take into account the various stakeholders' views and concerns about an issue either through direct or indirect means. Many information sources can be used to gauge stakeholder interests, such as surveys, research reports, or focus groups. Generally, more effort is expended to track the views and positions of those stakeholders with greater ability to influence change.

The "invisible" stakeholders of the past are not silent about academic issues today. Students and their parents are now concerned about academic curricula and their content. The business community now invests substantial funds in the preparation of college graduates for employment. Bringing these silent stakeholders into the planning process is important. Ignoring such stakeholders only postpones dealing with their needs.

Stakeholders who are unsupportive or adversarial should be sought out since they provide a lens for predicting the reaction of some groups to new policies. Participation of those without commitment to the customary way of operating can stimulate creative approaches to problems or encourage support for changes that are later implemented. As an example, when business leaders were named to the Task Force on the Future of Engineering Education in the University of Wisconsin System, there was an initial period of critical, even adversarial, discussion about the goals of the engineering programs. Ultimately, the business leaders contributed many innovative ideas to the planning process and later helped to seek better funding for the plan.

**Policy partners.** The problems academic leaders face today can't be solved without involvement of other organizations or individuals. Policy partners are individuals or groups who can be co-opted or invited to share in developing a solution to a problem. These policy partners may or may not initially be stakeholders to an issue. In many cases, the partner may choose involvement in the planner's issue in order to solve another unrelated problem. For instance, businesses are often willing to fund classrooms in their facilities to increase educational opportunities for their staffs. Academics may trade expertise for use of the classrooms, which can help institutions meet goals for delivering other programs. Business professionals can become stakeholders after being invited to collaborate as partners in policy making.

**Policy analysis as an iterative process.** There are few policy problems with only one acceptable solution. The task of the policy analyst is to identify and study solutions, proceeding until one is found that is actionable in the environment. The "best fit" solution may not be identified immediately, so policy analysis is often an iterative process. Quade (1975) indicated that analyses may need to be reshaped and redone for several reasons. The alternatives identified may not achieve the goals established for solving the problem. The goals themselves may be unrealistic and need redefinition or lowering. The recommendations may not be actionable because of political or other external constraints. Gill and Saunders (1992) explain that issues themselves can change as a study unfolds. The analyst needs to adapt to such changes and refocus the study.

The "messy" troika of judgment, intuition, and political savvy. The role of the policy analyst is like that of an organizational anthropologist. The policy analyst needs to use disciplined, rational approaches in assessing how an issue works in the environment. But the process changes when the analyst must identify the best solution to resolve an issue. Determining what solution will work...
Judgment, intuition, and political savvy are at least as important as facts or analyses in selecting among policy alternatives. These skills are gained from immersing oneself in the environment of the problem and its solutions.

Models grounded in the environment. Policy analysts have a unique task compared to academic researchers. A physicist might build a model that describes how a phenomenon works. The goal of the model is to identify the underlying universal laws governing how the phenomenon behaves—water molecules exposed to heat, for instance. The physicist assumes that if the model is correct, it will work for any water molecules exposed to heat, in any location meeting the specified conditions. In contrast, the policy analyst does not look for universal laws in the systems studied. Instead, the analyst attempts to describe and model the uniqueness of an issue being studied. The representational world which is created by the analyst is unique to the issue and its particular set of stakeholders and environmental constraints. The analyst looks for the solution that best fits the particular issue, as expressed in its specific environment. In so doing, the analyst usually considers how the issue has been resolved in similar settings.

Actionability. A successful policy analysis creates more than an improved understanding of the issue or its stakeholders. It contains actionable recommendations. The solutions must work, and must be acceptable to stakeholders and policy makers.

APPROACHES AND PRACTICES
Policies are the vehicles of both organizational stability and change. They specify the rules and practices by which individuals inside organizations behave and how organizations manage their relationship to external individuals or groups. They may be formal or informal. Policies change in a cyclical manner, as illustrated in Figure 1. The three parts of the cycle are the processes of policy development, implementation, and evaluation. Policies are conceptualized, developed, and then implemented. At some point, stakeholders or policy makers agree that the policies either work acceptably or need change. Out of this evaluation come pressures and ideas for improvements or new policies. Then the cycle starts anew. Varying methods are used to progress through the cycle, ranging from decision making according to the simple preferences of a leader to structured techniques, such as cost-benefit analysis or risk assessment.

As a formal method, policy analysis is used in policy development, policy evaluation, and policy optimization. In policy development, policy analysis serves to identify viable policy options in response to issues. Policy evaluations focus on means of assessing whether or not a policy achieves its intended goals. Policy optimization is the use of formal methods, such as operations research or total quality management approaches, to analyze and strengthen goal achievement under a given policy.

Academic leaders most often come into contact with the use of policy analysis as a tool for policy development. There are four main steps in using policy analysis to develop new policy ideas: (1) issue crafting, (2) policy crafting, (3) policy selection, and (4) policy presentation.

Issue crafting. Policy analysis is similar to the activities of a wagon train scout. The scout’s job is to go ahead of the wagon train to survey the territory, to determine what people and animals live along the way, to look for both obvious and subtle dangers, to define safe routes to the destination, and to make general recommendations to the wagon train master on how to proceed. When a mountain or river or desert lies in the path of the wagon train, the scout needs to alert the wagon master to the problem, to provide good information about the obstacle, and to offer an initial assessment of alternatives to explore. In policy analysis, the first step is to craft an issue scouting report. Issue crafting has six basic goals: (1) clarifying the issue, (2) establishing the con-
text for the issue, (3) stating the policy objectives for solving the issue, (4) giving a broad overview of the range of feasible policy alternatives to explore, (5) suggesting criteria for determining whether a policy has successfully met policy objectives, and (6) recommending whether or not to proceed with a full analysis of the issue. A well done scouting report may be just as valuable to policy makers as a full fledged policy analysis. It helps sort out which issues are productive to address, and which issues are not. Some problems require policy study, while others can be solved by other actions, such as funding allocations or personnel changes.

Clarifying the issue. Policy issues are not always clear in reviewing controversy or problems. Conflicts may really represent symptoms of a problem rather than the real issue. The heat of the desert sun may be the first apparent problem, but lack of water is more serious. Student complaints, for instance, about small aid awards could be the result of changes in external financial aid programs or could result from financial constraints due to lowered enrollments. The policy analyst or planner must clarify the issue sufficiently to define meaningful approaches to its solution. Quade (1975, p. 71) recommends that an issue be defined with respect to “where it came from, what its symptoms are, why it is a problem, and what will be done with the analysis if it is carried out.”

Establishing the context for the issue. It is important to put the issue into context in order to understand it. The context includes the issue culture, issue history, and potential constraints or opportunities related to the issue. The issue culture is the context in which the issue is viewed, discussed, and managed by potential stakeholders and policy partners. The history of the issue, and any policy actions addressing the issue, are a preview of how future policy actions might be received. Finally, the existence of any constraints on how stakeholders view what constitutes resolution of the issue is important in crafting the issue. For instance, policy makers may only be interested

---

**FIGURE 1**

**Policy Development, Implementation, and Evaluation Cycle**

1. **Policy Development**
   - Problem/Issue
   - Issue Crafting
   - Policy Crafting
   - Policy Selection
   - Policy Presentation

2. **Policy Evaluation**
   - Policy Optimization
   - Policy Evaluation
   - Policy Operations

3. **Policy Implementation**
   - Policy Implementation
   - Policy Decision
The purposes of narrowing policy objectives are to create a manageable study focus and to communicate realistic expectations for outcomes to the policy maker.

Stating policy objectives. Once an issue is defined clearly and placed in context, policy objectives or goals can be identified. According to Quade (1975), the issue analysis should “suggest the objectives toward which programs for meeting the problem should be directed… [and] call attention to the ultimate goal toward which the solution is directed” (p. 73). Gill and Saunders (1992, p. 19) distinguish between the assigned objectives of the study and the objectives of the policy maker. If these different objectives are in conflict, the results of the analysis may not be actionable. The purposes of narrowing policy objectives are to create a manageable study focus and to communicate realistic expectations for outcomes to the policy maker.

Stating broad range of policy alternatives. Issue crafting surveys the landscape of potential policy alternatives, striving for completeness and culminating in some judgment about potential alternatives. Here the analyst advises the policy maker about the likely policy paths to be recommended in a full study. Information about potential policy alternatives comes from review of the policy literature, networking with policy makers or stakeholders, or from other sources—such as historical works, client feedback, or focus groups. The information is synthesized, and used to decide whether or not a given policy alternative should be considered. Majchrak (1984) points out that policy changes may range from the incremental to the fundamental. By including this information in the issue crafting paper, the analyst gives the policy makers or other stakeholders an opportunity to shift the direction or scope of analysis, should the project go forward.

Quade (p. 75) suggests that the following information be included about each policy alternative in the presentation of issues: description, judgment of potential effectiveness, rough costs or cost areas, possible spills or unintended consequences, initial comparison of alternatives, and any other important considerations.

Suggesting success criteria. Criteria for assessing the success or failure of future policy changes are suggested in the issue report. If possible, quantifiable measures should be identified which can later be used in policy evaluation.

Recommendation on proceeding. The issue report is a thorough but preliminary study of the issue being faced. Its most important component is the judgment of the analyst whether the policy maker should pursue a more intensive policy study. Some potential reasons why further analysis may not be fruitful are: (1) the organization does not control the policy levers necessary to effect change, and so should pursue political action rather than policy action; (2) the issue can be resolved by a more direct action, (3) not enough information is available to sustain a reasonable policy analysis, or (4) the policy issue is already well studied and understood, so an educational rather than analytic effort might be useful. If the analyst recommends proceeding, the issue crafting report can set expectations for the scope, cost, and time frame of the study to follow.

Policy crafting. Policy crafting is the effort to identify, specify, and assess the viability of policy choices for resolving an issue. Continuing the wagon train scout analogy, the scout analyzes which routes are likely to bring the wagon train to its destination in a safe and timely manner. As part of this effort, the scout considers the characteristics and culture of the wagon train, specific information about each possible route, and other environmental factors (projected weather, food, and water along the route, and the possibility of dangerous encounters). The scout explores portions of each possible route to gather more information. In academic planning, the routes considered range from changes in existing policies or practices to entirely new approaches. Policy craft-
Policy Analysis: Scouting for the Academic Wagon Train

Refining policy alternatives. In the issue scouting report, a number of potential policy alternatives are presented. The alternatives are described in broad-brush terms, and an informed guess is made concerning their viability. In policy crafting, each alternative must be fully defined and sit is in its environmental context.

All policies are embedded in a cultural environment with rules and norms by which individuals and organizations operate to achieve goals, choosing behaviors consistent with values and operating practices to maximize gains. Further, the extent to which individuals and organizations can achieve goals will be limited by their influence, authority, and power. In order to plan for a policy change, the analyst has to understand the values and modus operandi of stakeholders who direct or influence outcomes to achieve specific goals. Different stakeholders see policies as more or less beneficial or adoptable in light of their goals, so the analyst should examine how such factors will operate for each policy alternative being studied.

Gill and Saunders (1992) point out that it is useful to analyze history or trends in policy development concerning an issue. Any given policy alternative has probably been tried in other organizations or even in the same organization in the past. Review of successful and unsuccessful implementations of policies in similar settings can aid in identifying specific challenges or benefits of one policy approach over another.

There may be legal, judicial, economic, ethical, cultural, or political constraints on the kinds of policies that can be considered. For instance, the existence of a contract may eliminate some policy options. Some policy goals or initiatives may also create opportunity for change in other policies. Emphasis on research partnerships with business, for instance, may enable change in academic program delivery or academic support services.

Specifying and creating a model for each policy alternative. The analyst often creates a model for how a new policy would operate in the environment. The model is a representation of reality accurate enough to give the researcher confidence in predicting the effects of a change in policy (Quade, 1975). Models range from thought experiments to complex mathematical representations of systems. In building a model, the analyst uses the best available tools and information and seeks first to represent the most important features of the environment for which a policy change is being planned. For example, in building a model to use in simulating policies for enrollment planning, the first step is to replicate the overall environment of the institution. Factors like demographics, high school enrollments, the economy, and institutional policies concerning admissions, financial aid, and academic standards, would be represented. Once the overall environment—the microcosm—is modeled, ideas about the effects of policy changes can be tested. Models can help show the lag between policy implementation and actual change, or highlight unanticipated effects of policy. Quade points out that models can be very good as communication devices and as a way to focus the judgment and intuition of researchers and stakeholders on finding a policy solution (p. 49). The policy analyst or planner can use the model to verify understandings about the environment by sharing the model widely and using it to discuss potential changes with stakeholders. Since simulating policy changes in a model is less threatening than pilot testing such changes in the real world, open discussion of policy alternatives is facilitated. Participation of stakeholders in development and review of the model also promotes confidence in its later use in simulating policy impacts.

Assessing the viability of each policy alternative. Deciding whether or not a change is viable is one of the most difficult tasks in planning. Benveniste (1984) distinguishes between technical and feasibility methodologies associated with planning activities. Technical methodologies, such as systems analysis, forecasting, or trend analysis are helpful in analyzing among alternatives and in describing the environment for which change is being planned. Feasibility methodologies are more active than technical meth-
Sharing the policy ideas helps to transfer ownership of the ideas from the planner or policy analyst to stakeholders and policy makers. Change may fail if this transfer of ownership is not successfully made.

What are some of the common reasons a potential policy might be dismissed as unworkable? A policy proposed may not achieve the desired policy outcomes. Other hurdles a policy must leap are those of acceptability to stakeholders, economic affordability, and political feasibility. Proposed changes should not result in unwanted impacts unrelated to the change at hand. Solutions should not create new problems worse than those being solved.

Policy selection. Policy selection is the task of assessing the policy alternatives and identifying the best option or options for the policy maker to pursue. The wagon train scout eliminates some alternatives through exploring, mapping, and examining sections of each potential path. The scout's next step is to explain the narrowed choices to the wagon master and provide some judgment on the optimal route for the train to follow. In academic planning, policy selection relies in part on the use of formal methodologies or techniques to compare alternative courses of action, and in part on the more intuitive assessment of how actionable a policy choice would be. For that reason, every policy alternative must be studied and assessed within the context of the environment in which it will be implemented.

The steps to follow in assessing the value of any policy alternative include: (1) setting the environmental context for each alternative, (2) identifying relevant policy attributes for each alternative, (3) comparing the policy alternatives with respect to the attributes, (4) ranking the alternatives on the basis of the comparison, and (5) making recommendations for change or stability.

Setting the context for each policy alternative. The environmental context for each policy alternative includes the influence of cultural, historical, and any other constraining or promoting factors on how a policy will operate in the particular environment under study.

Each policy alternative is seen as more or less consistent with the views, practices and philosophies of the different stakeholders for the decision. Once a new policy is adopted, there will be a shift in the relative power or influence of stakeholders in the policy area. The analyst must understand and assess both the willingness of different stakeholders to accept or support a decision, and the relative influence or power of those stakeholders. Is a decision likely to be blocked, regardless of the merits of the policy being suggested?

Given what is known about the way in which different policy alternatives have been treated in the past, what kind of reception will the policy idea receive? Are there particular stakeholder groups that need to be advocates for a given policy shift? How does the policy change compare to prevailing policy trends in the area?

A new policy direction may be seen as either a vehicle for enhancing change in a specific direction or a throwback to policy now seen as antiquated. The policy may also have implementation characteristics that make it
Identifying policy attributes. Stokey and Zeckhauser (1978) point out that it is a fairly easy task to choose among alternatives if there is only one outcome of a policy and it can only be measured one way. For instance, if the only goal a policy needs to satisfy is to increase the number of students enrolling in an academic program, then ranking alternatives such as lowering admissions standards or awarding program-specific financial aid is straightforward. Preference is given to the alternative that results in the highest number of students in the program. But, “the trouble is that most policy proposals (intentionally or otherwise) serve a variety of objectives, and their outcomes are described in terms of more than one characteristic, some of which may be unfavorable” (p. 117). This “multi-attribute problem” (p. 117) means that analysts first need to define all of the attributes, or valued consequences, associated with each policy alternative before comparisons can be made. In the example on increasing enrollment in a program, there are probably some associated goals, such as maintaining quality standards or expanding in accord with curricular concerns, that need to be considered for any policy change. The analyst needs to know which attributes are most important to satisfy. No one policy is likely to have the same performance characteristics with respect to each attribute, so a decision is usually made favoring one attribute over another.

Comparing the policy alternatives. The analyst compares the anticipated performance of each policy alternative with respect to each attribute. There are three attributes traditionally considered in the comparison: goal achievement, cost-benefit, and actionability. Other impacts of policy change need review, such as unanticipated consequences or impacts resulting from how the new policy interacts with existing policies (Majchrak, 1984). Sometimes, doing nothing at all is the best alternative.

Goal achievement. To what extent does the policy alternative satisfy the desired policy attributes or goals? Projecting a policy’s effectiveness in meeting goals can be difficult. Sources of information to help with this assessment include data from prior use of the policy in similar environments, views of stakeholders on how well a proposed policy might meet their interests or goals, willingness of key stakeholders or implementers to expend effort to make the policy change successful, and, if available, simulations or pilots of the potential effects of the policy.

Cost-benefit. Stokey and Zeckhauser (1978) point out that “benefit-cost analysis is the principal analytical framework used to evaluate public expenditure decisions” (p. 134). This kind of analysis is related to the assessment of goal achievement, but focuses on linking the relative amount of success in meeting goals to the cost of the effort involved. There are at least two major limitations to cost-benefit analysis used in policy comparison. First, many of the desired policy attributes in higher education are not easily quantifiable. For instance, what level of “benefit” can be assigned to delivering a higher quality versus a lower quality course in business economics? The cost of quality will usually be higher, given traditional methods of course delivery, and the benefits (better decision making by future executives?) may be very high but not easy to identify or demonstrate. The second major limitation is that cost-benefit analysis focuses only on costs and benefits that can be identified at the time of study. Stokey and Zeckhauser (1978) point out that such benefits or costs need to be discounted in some fashion to account for consequences experienced in the future (p. 136). Another difficulty to keep in mind is that costs and benefits of a future action are unknown and must be projected. The analysis must rely on either a model that can be used to simulate the policy effects, or on data from a pilot project or a project in another setting. Cost-benefit analysis is also insensitive to political issues. The question of who gets the benefits or who pays the costs may be more important than the ratio resulting from analysis.

Actionability. There are two components to the decision of whether or not a policy change is...
“actionable” or able to be implemented. The first is stakeholder support of, or opposition to, the potential policy. The best ways to assess opposition are to study similar implementations of policy and to use structured interviews with key stakeholders. Organizational requirements for the success of the new policy are the second component. Majchrak (1984), for instance, lists three critical aspects of the organization that should be reviewed in assessing how actionable a policy might be: (1) the structure needed in the organization to implement a policy, (2) organizational resources needed for implementation, and (3) related policy mechanisms needed for implementation. For example, a policy change initiating on-line registration for students may require structural changes in terms of staffing or work processes. Implementing the new registration system would require technology, staff, time, and other resources in order to be successful. Related policy changes in the area of student course approval processes and faculty involvement in scheduling decisions may also be necessary.

**Ranking the policy alternatives.** The analyst usually stops short of recommending one final alternative and, instead, presents information on all actionable alternatives. Preferences for selection among policy alternatives do not always match the results of whatever quanti-

---

**Table 1:** Contents of the Policy Presentation

| 1. Issue | Clarify the issue addressed by the policy study. |
| 2. Policy objectives | State what specific policy objectives are to be addressed. |
| 3. Context for change | Review the key environmental factors that affect the issue and any policy solutions. Mention major stakeholders and potential partners with the ability to influence whether or not a policy change will occur or will work if implemented. |
| 4. New policy model(s) | Describe the new policy model(s) recommended in the study. Attempt to “encapsulate the vision in a short metaphor, slogan, or memorable statement that conveys its essence and captures attention” (Nanus, 1992, p. 127). |
| 5. Policy rationale | Give the underlying rationale for selecting the policy model(s), including results of the policy comparison process, and the judgments of stakeholders, policy makers, and/or the analyst concerning the viability of the models reviewed. |
| 6. Policy outcomes, tradeoffs, impacts | Give informed estimates of policy outcomes, tradeoffs with other organizational outcomes, and impacts that can be expected on other areas of the organization. |
| 7. Critical success factors | List any factors needed to ensure the success of the policy change, such as required investments, related policy changes, provision of staff training, or involvement of particular stakeholders or partners in the change. |
| 8. Implementation concerns | Alert stakeholders and policy makers to any challenges that can be expected in implementing the change(s), and include suggestions about the handling of any implementation issues. |
| 9. Recommendations | Recommend one or more new policy models be adopted, or that no alternative model is better than the current approach. Suggest other actions to help resolve the issue under dispute if recommending the status quo. |
| 10. Future evaluation strategy | Recommend an approach to evaluation of the policy change, including method of study, monitoring measures, or periodic review to assess goal achievement or cost-benefit. If relevant, point out the need for baseline data on current policy or practices to enable evaluation after implementation of policy change. |
tative approaches are used in the comparison of policies. In the end, policy preferences are based both on quantitative assessments and a judgment about what policies will be most effective and actionable in the environment at hand. The perfect policy would be one that achieves the organization's policy goal in the least costly manner, with positive benefits to all stakeholders, and can be implemented without creating any new problems. Needless to say, such a policy usually does not exist! The challenge for the analyst is to synthesize all the information available on context, potential performance, and implementation for each policy alternative, and to arrive at a slate of acceptable policy choices.

Policy presentation. How the scout presents the choices to the wagon master is important. The wagon master wants good information on which to base a decision, but does not necessarily want to be told what to do! Recommendations for the content of a policy presentation are given in Table 1 (page 12). The presentation may be written or oral, or both. If written, the presentation should always begin with a brief executive summary communicating the main points and recommendations in the proposal. Any detailed material should be included as an appendix, or referenced as a separate report. The analyst should assume that many of those interested in the study will review only the executive summary.

MANIPULATION AND DELIVERY

The packaging and delivery of the proposal is part of the political process for building support for the policy decision about to be made. Policy makers may want to use the analyst's report as an independent expert document, a statement of a new policy direction for the organization, or a vehicle for floating some new ideas on a topic under discussion. Since the analyst does not "own" the delivery process (policy makers do), it is important to tailor the structure of the policy proposal report to its intended use. Generally, the analyst or planner will need to deliver the report to many different kinds of audiences in a variety of oral and written forms. As an alternative, other staff within the organization may adopt the project, officially or unofficially, to carry the process forward. At a minimum, the report delivered by the analyst should be sufficiently complete and well constructed to allow for further repackaging to meet the communication needs of decision makers.

Packaging of the proposal. Stokey and Zeckhauser point out that "many policy analyses are gathering dust because they are too long or too hard to understand" (1978, p. 329). Policy researchers are often academicians and may package a policy proposal using the same style as in academic research. Academic papers typically follow a format: state a problem, summarize all relevant literature and information about the problem, state an hypothesis about the problem, describe the research design for studying the problem, present results of the study, interpret the results, and then make recommendations for further research or improvement of the study. The audience for a policy report is much less patient than the audience for an academic paper! A good discussion of the style and format of a policy report is found in Majchrak (1984). Table 2 contains general guidelines for preparing a useful report for policy makers or stakeholders.

The challenge for the analyst is to be concise as well as credible. Only a limited

| TABLE 2  |
| General Guidelines for Policy Analysis Reports |
| |
| Directness | • Provide a brief executive summary. |
| | • State conclusions first. |
| | • State the problem addressed by the study. |
| | • State study limitations. |
| | • Clearly state factors needed for success. |
| | • Use the active voice. |
| | • Forego jargon. |
| Focus | • State the issue. |
| | • State and discuss all actionable alternatives. |
| | • State tradeoffs and impacts of each alternative. |
| | • Use concrete examples. |
| Format | • Limit data tables or move to appendix. |
| | • Use graphics to convey information. |
| | • Create oral and written versions of the report. |
| | • Be brief. |
amount of the thought and work behind the analysis can be presented in the policy report, but supplemental materials can give detail on the contextual or comparative information used to support conclusions. Different readers have different needs and desires for information. "Some will desire more detailed information, some will only want the major findings, and some will only want information that directly helps them" (Majchrak, 1984, p. 94). Ultimately, the success and credibility of the analysis will depend on the quality and workability of the ideas within it. Packaging needs to be effective, without getting in the way of the ideas in the report.

**ACTIONABILITY ISSUE**

Actionability is enhanced when the analyst is positioned to understand thoroughly both the technical and political aspects of the problem being studied. Four factors are extremely important in helping assure actionable results: (1) access to stakeholders and policy makers, (2) regular feedback among the analyst, stakeholders, and policy makers, (3) effective study design, and (4) effective study delivery.

**Access.** The analyst needs to understand the views of stakeholders and policy makers if a successful policy path is to be plotted. Such understanding is impossible if the analyst does not have access to individuals and organizations influential in the policy process. Majchrak (1984) points out that both the policy analyst and the policy maker learn from the interaction. The policy analyst learns about the political process while the policy maker learns about the study process. Without access, the analyst has to resort to second- and third-hand information and must make guesses about political positions, values, and impacts. Lack of access can result in incorrect assumptions about issues and policies, or policy effects going unchallenged during the study. The consequence may be that unreasonable or unacceptable solutions will be posed to stakeholders and policy makers.

**Feedback.** Effective policy analysis cannot be done in isolation; the analyst needs to seek and obtain reasonable feedback during the study process in order to maximize the workability of resulting recommendations. Feedback at the end of the process of study is too late. In-process feedback from stakeholders and policy makers is critical at almost every step during the study. Examples include the restatement of the issue, the statement of policy objectives, the initial cut at policy alternatives, the reasonableness of policy models, the policy comparison, and the assessment of actionability. Even the packaging of the final policy report is dependent upon feedback concerning the specific audience, and goals for presentations or written reports.

**Design.** Good study design maximizes the chance for workable results. However, there is a pragmatic aspect to policy research as compared to academic research. Thoroughness in analysis trades off to some extent against the timetable for policy action. As Stroey and Zeckhauser (1978) stress, "a less ambitious study that is in hand when policy is debated will be far more valuable" (p. 329) than one which is thorough but late. Policy studies have to be as thorough as possible—given the timetable for discussion and change, and the resources available for the study. Recommendations may not be actionable if the study design is flawed or if insufficient information is available to support the conclusions. But the study effort will be wasted if policy decisions are made before its completion.

**Delivery.** If policy makers, stakeholders, or policy partners do not understand the results or recommendations of the study, there is little likelihood of action. Good delivery is sensitive to the culture, background, and priorities of the audience for policy change.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Policy analysis is a powerful tool for improving the academic planning process. Properly launched, it helps elevate the conversation beyond politics and results in more effective plans. Policy analysis is also an imperfect art. There are seven essential admonitions for the academic leader using policy analysis in planning: (1) define issues so that solutions are achievable, (2) find and include the views of all stakeholders on issues, (3) know the environment of the problem and of the solutions, (4) recognize the
Institutional stakeholders. Research. Defining the issue. One principle of total quality management is to invest more time in designing good processes than in checking for errors later. Similarly, policy analysis benefits from investing time in the definition and clarification of the issues to be studied rather than relying on later evaluation techniques to discover if a new policy is working effectively. Good policy crafting depends on good issue crafting. Issues that are unclear or misidentified or misfocused will lead to policies with similar characteristics.

Including the stakeholders. Understanding the views, environment, and goals of stakeholders is critical to success in an academic planning effort. Not including the views of relevant stakeholders leads to stake analyses which do not address the needs for change of different groups or individuals. Policy recommendations that are not embraced and owned by both stakeholders and policy makers eventually fail.

Knowing the environment. Issues cannot be understood without knowing the environment in which the problem developed. Policy crafting cannot be done effectively without understanding the environment in which solutions to the problem must operate. Implementing a policy designed for another time, another place, or another culture is usually fruitless.

Recognizing the quasi-political role of the analyst. A good policy analysis incorporates information about the biases and points of view of stakeholders in selecting and comparing potential policies. To understand the political side of the environment, the analyst, like the participant-observer, has to become involved, even immersed, in the thinking patterns and culture of the organization. The challenge is to maintain objectivity in the way the analyst uses and assesses the information gained from this participation. If the policy analyst or planner becomes a stakeholder, analysis may be distorted. This can happen if the analyst becomes committed to a particular course of action, either because of employment with the academic organization or due to attachment to a particular idea or position. The process itself may influence the judgment of quasi-political role of the analyst, (5) balance quantitative and qualitative approaches, (6) share responsibility for policy outcomes, and (7) recognize when reengineering is needed instead of incrementalism.

PRINT REFERENCES


ELECTRONIC SAMPLER

http://cause-www.colorado.edu/

This is a good source for reams of on-line information about higher education policy pertinent to information technology.

http://epn.org/

EPN (Electronic Policy Network: Idea Central). This website contains links to a number of policy centers and think tanks on a wide variety of issues and topics, some of which are related to higher education.

http://seamonkey.ed.asu.edu/eplaa/


In addition to the website, there is a listserv for related discussions. Instructions on how to join are located on the Web pages. A related listserv, EDPOLYAN, is for discussion of education policy. You may subscribe from http://info.asu.edu/asu-cwis/eplaa/discuss.html.

http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/coe/eps/Prof/Prof.html

Professional Information. College of Education, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Nick Barabas. A set of links to colleges of education and related departments, education resources, philosophy of education resources, and more.

http://www.fsu.edu/~air/home.htm

Internet Resources for Institutional Research. AIR (Association for Institutional Research).
the analyst, as the pressure to produce satisfactory results comes to bear.

**Overemphasizing quantitative approaches.** There is a great danger in giving too much emphasis to quantitative measures and results in policy analysis. Quantitative information is important in providing a rational basis for the policy selection or comparison process but may mislead if not coupled with expert judgments and the intuitions of those closely associated with the policy area. The pressure to maximize the cost-benefit or other performance ratios estimated for policy alternatives should not automatically outweigh intuitive judgments on the viability of policies. Ultimately, the policy analyst needs to make recommendations balancing both qualitative and quantitative assessments.

**Sharing responsibility for policy outcomes.** The policy analyst becomes part of the arena for decision making, sometimes even assuming the role of assistant or partner to the policy maker. The price of access and participation in the planning process is shared responsibility with the policy makers and policy implementers for the outcomes achieved. The policy analyst who embraces this responsibility as a team member is more likely to be invited into the policy process again. Changing overnight from a policy developer to a policy evaluator, while maintaining political innocence, is generally not well received!

**Going beyond incrementalism.** Policy analysis often leads to incremental change. Incremental changes are easiest to make, since they manipulate practices that already exist in the culture of the organization. The focus on actionable change creates a dilemma for the analyst when only incremental change seems acceptable, but only real reengineering can solve a problem or meet a planning goal. The policy analyst may have to choose between playing it safe with incremental recommendations or taking the risk of a bolder recommendation. Incremental change is usually doable, but not always meaningful!

**SUMMARY**

Policy analysis is a critical tool for higher education leaders and planners who are trying to reinvent the academy. Strategic vision is needed to see a new future, and careful planning is needed to move an institution toward that future. But the vision and plan are not enough to ensure successful change. Good information is needed, but it is not enough. Many obstacles and issues arise during a process of cultural, political, or institutional change. Policy analysis is the tool for articulating solutions to those issues that would otherwise impede progress. The methods and techniques used in policy analysis combine sophisticated use of information with the judgment, intuition, and political savvy needed to find actionable solutions to problems. A partnership among leaders, planners, and policy analysts is needed to craft the new academy successfully.