

Austin Community College
Institutional Planning Council
Abbreviated Post Activity Review: Master Plan development for 2009-2011
September 19, 2008

What went well?

Based on the responses to the questions posed to the small groups at the September IPC meeting, the process and mechanics for developing the Master Plan went well. Collaboration, communication, and consistency were also reported to have gone well, as were tying effectiveness of initiatives to priorities and core indicators.

What could have gone better?

Timing, however, could have gone better; late, changing, and rushed deadlines were most mentioned in this regard. There was some confusion about what was wanted in the database, including initiatives vs. initiative objectives, as well as master plan vs. operating/new money requests. Responses indicated Cluster Group Leaders' presentations needed more depth and pizzazz; members experienced lack of motivation when the prioritization process raised "false hope," so to speak, and working across functional areas was difficult, especially when planning college-wide projects. Additionally, IPC members expressed concern that there was not a clearer connection between the IPC priorities and the President's priorities. Finally, two things that members felt could have gone better than they did were the fact that there was more work for the cluster leaders and credit instruction cluster needs more initiatives.

What would we do differently? What have we learned?

Most of the comments concerned the prioritization process—everything is weighted the same, members don't know where the line is and don't have advance information on the number of initiatives allocated above the line, etc. We need to identify a way to deal with initiatives that are "ongoing" or college-wide, or related to adding new programs. There needs to be a better way to communicate with/ give a heads up to facilities, human resources, etc.

We learned that the process at ACC is different from other places, that it's good to hear what everyone is planning, and that the retreat provided the best interaction—college-wide dialogue. Please see the verbatim comments below.

These comments were gathered in the small group activity at the September 2008 meeting.

- **What went well?**
 - Entering information.
 - Mechanics seem to work well.
 - Easy to use for recording priorities and initiatives.
 - People seemed pleased with results.
 - Cycle remained the same, so if possible to enhance learning from previous year – enter priorities.
 - Data delivery – clearly define budget/spreadsheets.
 - Minimized documentation process for planning MP initiatives/budget.
 - Charles Lovette.
 - IPR reports internally (to deans/VP).
 - Goal accomplished in PLOTO (complete conversion of tech took seven years).
 - At least we are doing it and the whole concept, the Big Picture consistent.
 - – reviewed current initiatives and accomplishments (internal and external) tweaked previous areas of initiatives as they were affected by external constituents.
 - Good focus for initiatives tied to Master Plan.
 - Tying to core indicators is helpful.
 - Building on previous Master Plan initiatives
 - Good instructions.
 - Fixed since last year – explained well this year.
 - For Linda's particular cluster they worked as a team and things went really well.
 - Sharon state that things go very well when the clusters meet and representatives clearly learn and rep. to council.

- Cross fertilization collaborative style.
- Participatory process at all levels – all brought into process and ergo committed to result.

- **What could have gone better?**
 - Instruction should have more initiatives.
 - Ratio of instructional/non-instructional.
 - Timeline for cluster groups.
 - Difference between initiative and objective?
 - Five-year data – IPC priorities vs. what happened? Success? Progress?
 - Budgeting impact – information regarding what gets approved out of master plan.
 - Cluster Group presentations were shallow/not very meaningful – no time for in depth.
 - Brainstorming at beginning of academic year.
 - IPR/MP timing.
 - Connection or disconnection to IPC priorities and president’s role/priorities.
 - Effective communication – board/president priorities.
 - Distinction between Master Plan and operating/new request.
 - At department chair level this still seems to be a problem.
 - Delay in starting of process to after start of academic year.
 - How to integrate new campuses into the plan and budget process.
 - Presentation – visuals would be great.
 - Equal amount of time to present case.
 - Wishy-washy deadlines.
 - Timelines rushed.
 - One large meeting during a busy time.
 - Deadlines not communicated.
 - Confusing what was wanted in the database – not enough training.
 - Cluster Leader entered initiatives.
 - More work for Cluster Leader.

- Different process – not enough explanation communication.
 - Able to coordinate with other Cluster Groups.
 - Confusing to not have in budget even after group plans.
 - Some functional areas within cluster were overlooked.
 - Items not requiring funds – prioritized with all the rest?
 - How do we handle college-wide projects?
 - Discouraging to have initiative float to top only to have it disappear.
 - Approved in MP – not approved for budget. MP initiatives should roll to next year if not approved in budget. If approved in budget then it needs to move to top of list.
 - Discouraging – reduces motivation.
 - Hard to pare down initiatives for broad Cluster Groups.
 - Changed definitions so much we were not sure what is going. Full reorientation unnecessary.
 - If it doesn't roll, why have three-year views – seems as focused on one-year.
 - Start earlier – don't change definitions in process.
 - Items that are approved in MP but not funded should roll to be considered for funding in our operating budget.
 - Communication is vital.
 - Check for understanding – don't assume people understand the process. The concept is clear – the process is not.
- What did we learn?/What would we do differently?
 - Report on every initiative.
 - A lot of the people are uncomfortable with prioritization process.
 - Nominal.
 - Everything weighted the same.
 - Can give only one vote
 - Weighted voting.
 - Seamless - unit level should be the start, with IPR plan as guide, then up to big picture MP.

- DL – growth: expectations from facilities, faculty, and technology? How to predict? Innovate? Adapt?
- What a Master Plan is.
- Understanding priorities.
- Connectivity across campuses.
- We need to find a way to add new programs and new initiatives.
- Voting – where is the line?
- Know in advance how many will be allocated and above/below the line.
- Who draws the line?
- How many initiatives above the line?
- Tighter alignment with facilities from database send items directly to facilities to enter (gives them a heads up) determine priority.
- Round Rock should not be included in the Master Plan process for prioritization – have its own group.
- Should not have to go through process if initiative has already been ongoing – down menu or separate process.
- Process for multi-year initiatives
 - Should not have to add again, should rollover.
 - Should have option to adjust priority if already approved.
- Makes you think about the future and plan for it.
- Good to get together and hear what everyone was planning. Brings awareness.
- Health, safety and maintenance became institutionally funded.
- Process different at ACC than elsewhere – more participatory.
- Not a budget process.
- Patient with process – spend a lot of time clarifying and defining – all about flow chart.
- Best interaction was at retreat – best part of it – college-wide dialogue.