



UNITY COLLEGE 2025

TOOLS FOR PLANNING AND STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Adopted by the Board of Trustees
May 10, 2019



INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Initiative Implementation Plan. The Initiative Implementation Plan provides employees of Unity College with a template for the proposal of new initiatives. New initiative proposals will be evaluated by the President and Senior Staff employing the Strategy Screen criteria. Each initiative selected for implementation will be prioritized using the Decision-Making Paradigm and executed using part two of the Unity College Initiative Implementation Plan. At that point, The President will assign a project lead. The Implementation Plan helps the project lead, Senior Staff, and the President identify roles, resources, needs, goals, and accountability measures. It allows college leadership to plan appropriately for likely contingencies and understand decision tradeoffs and implications more thoroughly.

A standardized project implementation plan helps those proposing and executing a project better understand expectations and leads to more time spent on innovation and implementation and less time on process and gaining clarity.

The Unity College Initiative Implementation Plan is similar to other recognizable models, including the one included in the Dale Carnegie Leadership Training materials. Some of the explanatory language included in this plan is adapted from those materials.



I. PROPOSAL PHASE

1. **Define Current State** – Provide a very brief S.W.O.T. analysis that addresses the following questions and prompts.
 - a. **Background:** What is the reality of the current situation for Unity College? What is our history with this sort of initiative? Where are we today?
 - b. **Factors:** Provide information to facilitate a thorough estimate of the situation both internally and externally. What are the factors that might help or hinder our efforts and enable us to set realistic goals?
2. **Describe Desired Future State** – Provide a brief vision statement that provides an overview of the initiative and its value to the college that addresses the following questions and prompts.
 - a. **Service to Audience:** How does it fit into the college’s current strategic Audience-First Decision-Making Approach? What specific audience does this serve? How does it meet an identified need?
 - b. **Program:** What product could we offer this audience? Do any of our existing programs offer?
 - c. **Vision Alignment:** How will it advance the Strategic Vision of Unity College?
 - d. **Goals:** Why are we doing the initiative? What are the project goals to be pursued and benchmarks of success?
 - e. **Outcomes:** What specific outcomes will we accomplish in the scope of this plan? These should be specific, measurable, and timely.



3. **Identify Internal Resources Needed** – In order to realistically complete this initiative and achieve the outcomes listed above, list and describe the internal and external (new and reallocated) resources necessary. Include Human, Physical, Fiscal, and Technological. If possible, include a preliminary budget outline.
4. **Articulate Known Risk Factors** – Identify and expand on risk factors for the initiative. What are competitor programs or products? Is the audience base big enough to support the initiative? Will failure to execute expose the college to negative publicity? Is the subject matter controversial Will the initiative alienate anyone? Are potential partners above reproach? What happens if external resources do not materialize or evaporate? Are there legalities involved? Are there certifications or licenses involved? What are the professional standards for this type of initiative? What else?
5. **Develop Action Items & KPIs** – Create a list of actions that must be done to support the project goals listed above. Be specific, but don't get into to details at this point.
 - a. Do get this specific: "Action: Create a web site for business transactions, marketing, program description, and policy communication. Key Performance Indicator: Web site will be approved by president, linked to Unity College web site, and communicated through internal email, social media, and press release."
 - b. Don't break each one of those pieces down further into sub parts.
6. Submit proposal to Senior Staff for application of Strategy Screen criteria (if endorsed, move on to next step). **SEE BELOW FOR STRATEGY SCREEN.**

II. AFTER GREENLIGHT

1. Develop Project Implementation Plan

Develop a detailed Project Implementation Plan that accounts for each element in 2-4 below and which is...

- a. Coordinated: Develop an action plan in consultation with implicated work units and individual positions. Make sure to address 1) The requirements for achieving the set goals; 2) Who will do which part off each job; 3) How the different parts tie together; 4) The conditions that help and hinder goal achievement; 5) Timing – calendar and project-relative timing when plans and ideas are to be put into effect; 6) How all functions are to be coordinated properly.
 - b. Specific: Develop a project action plan that includes a list of action steps that are tied directly to stated initiative goals. Include which goal is supported; a project-relative start date (T minus X); a deadline; who has primary responsibility (one title per action); and a measure of success.
 - c. Measurable: Develop a project evaluation plan that is carefully aligned with initiative goals and outcomes, is measurable, timely, meaningful, and achievable. Each individual measurement should include the goal supported, the measure, the means of measurement, who is responsible for taking the measurement, and who receives the report.
2. **Develop/Adjust Necessary Documents.** Propose additions or adjustments to all college documentation related to the project, including but not limited to policies, standard operating procedures, and job descriptions.
 3. **Create Internal and External Communication Plan.** Work with the president's office to determine the scope and scale of communication needed, then work with appropriate college units and individuals to create a communication plan for college and broader audiences.



A communication plan should include...

- a. **Audience:** All audiences to be included, internal and external. Examples might include DE students, Flagship alumni, the governor of the state of Maine, regulatory agencies, accreditors, etc.
 - b. **Goal:** The nature and purpose of the communication for each audience. Why do we want to alert them? For marketing purposes? To maintain accreditation? To raise money?
 - c. **Media:** How each audience best communicates, e.g., email, letter, web site, social media, press release, web-based information form, flyers, postcards, etc.
 - d. **Message:** The key message for each audience. What does this audience care about? What do they need to know? What is the call to action or the ask for each audience?
 - e. **Content:** Draft language for each messaging point above. Include actual or sample photographs that will help with the communication.
 - f. **Communication Timeline:** When (absolute or relative timing) does each audience need to get the message or messages planned. Provide a timeline of message delivery dates that includes the communication title, the media type, the messaging purpose, and the content.
4. Implement, Monitor and Report.



STRATEGY SCREEN

A responsive and iterative approach to strategic planning requires prior agreement on principles by which any new idea may be efficiently assessed. A Strategy Screen is a set of criteria that Senior Staff and the President use to choose whether or not a new initiative is consistent with college identity and strategic direction. See Implementation Plan for details regarding the proposal of new initiatives for consideration.

STRATEGY SCREEN

A **Strategy Screen** is a set of criteria that senior staff and the President use to determine whether or not a new initiative is consistent with college identity, mission, and strategic direction.

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INITIATIVE CHECKLIST:

- Audience:** Does it serve a new audience or expand a current audience?
- Distinct:** Does it avoid internal competition for the same audience?
- Financial Viability:** Is the institution in a financial position to undertake and sustain it?
- Mission:** Does it advance the mission of Unity College?
- Values:** Does it align with the Unity College core values?

Version 004

Figure 1: Strategy Screen



DECISION-MAKING PARADIGM

The decision-making paradigm is designed as an articulation of college priorities to be applied during the decision-making process. When a choice must be made between competing alternatives, deference is given to elements of greater priority. Unity College prioritizes the element of audience above all else. The chart below outlines college decision-making priority from the largest encompassing circle (audience) to the most embedded circle (unit). Elements inside another element are in a subservient and service role to that element. So, Unit serves Function serves Modality serves Program serves Audience. Audience drives all else.

Decision-Making Categories Glossary

Audience

Audience is a segment of society that needs a program, experiences, or product that Unity College can and should meet. Those needs can be felt and expressed – like a family that wants an environmentally-friendly vacation in Maine. Or not expressed – like a Sudanese woman who wants to help her community, but may not realize that an environmentally-focused education is even an option. Clarity and demonstration of need – even if unarticulated – is imperative.

Audience answers the “Who?” in “Who do we serve?” For the purpose of clarity, Unity College recognizes the following categories of audience: Learners, Consumers, Clients, Partners, Foundations, Investors, and Donors. The categories of audience are meant to be comprehensive and a bit ambiguous, so that any identifiable audience should fit somewhere in the list – even if imperfectly. Taken together, these audiences comprise the segments of society which Unity College serves. Service to audience comes first for Unity College.

Learners fall into two categories, 1) students registering themselves in formal, structured, and for credit learning experiences, and 2) individuals signing up for informal learning experiences that do not result in credit or credential. Informal learning experiences do have learning outcomes as one part of the overall experience goals. These programs are typically less structured than formal learning experiences. Assessment of learning in these experiences is less formally conducted and less thorough (for example, self-reporting vs. tests or *practica*).

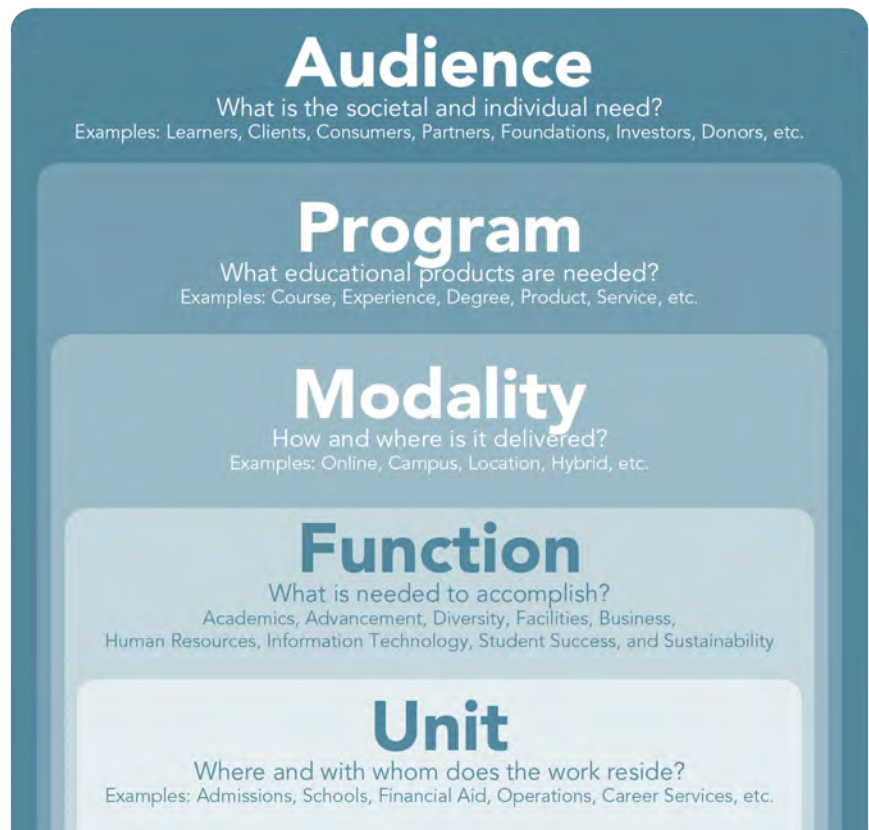


Figure 2: Decision-Making Paradigm



Consumers are typically individuals who are paying for and receiving products or services from Unity College as a simple transaction. Consumers may be selecting from a list or menu of pre-developed products or services, such as purchasing McKay Farm Ketchup, home tree assessment, catering for a wedding, an eco-tour from Events, a room at Sky Lodge, a vacation package, or Unity College logo apparel.

Clients are usually organizations or businesses who are paying for services or possibly goods. Examples might include a non-profit organization contracting with Unity College for leadership training, or a business contracting with Distance Education to develop an onsite sustainability workshop.

Partners are organizations (businesses, non-profits, churches, etc.) that work with Unity College officials to develop a relationship of mutual benefit. Partnerships typically require a memorandum of understanding or other legal articulation and go beyond simple transactions based primarily on readily available services on predefined fee schedules. Co-branding with a retail brand to sell Unity College endorsed equipment, and lending expertise routinely to a media company in exchange for college promotion might be examples.

Foundations are legally organized entities that distribute funds as a way of meeting foundation outcomes, typically through calls for proposals and application processes.

Investors are individuals or companies expecting a monetary or other clearly articulated return on a specific investment to the college or its enterprises.

Donors are normally individuals from whom the college receives a financial gift in alignment with or support of college values, mission, or principles. Stewardship expectations apply, but not explicit and specifically accounted for return on investment.

Program

Program is the “What” associated with a particular audience. Program is secondary to audience, but above all else in terms of priority in decision making. A program is a Unity College response to the clearly identifiable need of an audience segment. A program may be an experience, a product, a service, or other. The more clearly the need is articulated and demonstrated, the better for the purposes of addressing it with a program.

Examples of programs might include a McKay Farm goat-wrangling workshop, camping at Sky Lodge, a weeklong family camp, an environmental consultation, a presentation, and a jar of pesto.

Modality

Modality is determined as a function of preferred means, venue, or medium for a particular audience segment. Modality applies primarily to in person programs like campus, courses, tours, consultations, appearances, and presentations. Modality can combine attributes, such as extended, residential, overnight, and field experience. By extension modality could refer to a product outlet like a packet of seeds in a greenhouse retails environment. Modality answers the “how” question for a particular audience.

Function

Function describes what is needed to meet the initiative outcomes.

Unit

Unit is the department, office, school, or even in some cases individual role responsible for meeting the initiative outcome.



STRATEGIC PLAN

MANAGEMENT PROTOCOLS – FINAL DRAFT

Definitions

“The Unity College Strategic Plan” will mean the comprehensive Strategic Plan Document including background information, assumptions, rationale, and mission alignment, as well as the overarching goals of the plan. The document will be called “Unity College 2025”

“Strategic Implementation Plan” will mean the project management plan designed to assess, track, and manage successful implementation of the Unity College Strategic Plan.

“Document of record” will mean the latest adopted version of the Unity College Strategic Plan Implementation Plan as a file in the *project management software*. The *document of record* will be named “UCStrategicPlan(MM_DD_YYYY)”.

“Project management software” will mean the software package used to manage the *document of record* and will be determined by the President. The document of record will be posted on SharePoint.

“Document of record content” will mean accurate content derived from the *document of record*.

“Changes version” will mean the edited version of the *document of record* edited to include proposed changes prior to a BoT or Sr. Staff vote and will be called “UCStrategicPlan(PROPOSED_MM_DD_YYYY), where the date is the date of the last accepted changed.

“Goals” will mean the first level of planning as determined by the Board of Trustees.

“Objectives” will mean the second level of planning, support *Goals*, and will be determined by the president and senior staff.

“Initiatives” will mean the third level of planning, will support *Objectives*, and will be determined by Sr. Staff.

“Item” will refer to an individual Goal, Objective, or Initiative.

“Item entry” will refer to the individual elements that constitute the content of an *item*. Managed, monitored, and communicated *item entries* will include *Task Description, Complete/Incomplete, Lead Employee, Resource, Start Date, Finish Date, and Measure of Success*.

“Changes” will mean any substantial changes to the *document of record* and will include non-trivial changes to task names, resource allocations, start/finish dates, measures of success, and numbering of Goals and Objectives.

“Editorial changes” will mean any changes to spelling, grammar, coding, numbering of Initiatives and Actions, or other trivial edits to the document for understandability. Where there is a question, the President will decide what counts as an *editorial change*.

“Unity College Strategic Plan Project Manager” is the Unity College President or designee. The Project Manager is responsible for 1) monitoring and communicating with President and project leads regarding the overall progress to the Strategic Plan, 2) receiving, recommending, and managing proposed changes to the *document of record*, 3) making editorial changes to the *document of record*, and 4) providing accurate, readable versions of the *document of record*.

“Effort Level” is the amount of effort required to complete an item relative to other items at the same level of planning. Effort Level may be viewed as a “weight” assigned to items and is used to help gauge completion percentages.



Change procedures for *document of record*

Sr. Staff members are the college employees responsible for working with their constituencies to ensure operational planning and execution of the Strategic Plan. In the course of their work, Sr. Staff may have occasion to propose a change to the Goals and Objectives of the Strategic Plan. *Changes* to Goals in the *document of record* may only be adopted by majority vote of the Unity College Board of Trustees.

The normal process for members of Sr. Staff to submit changes to Goals is this:

1. A member of Sr. Staff may propose a change to Goals to Sr. Staff as a motion (with rationale) for discussion, and adoption by the Sr. Staff Committee.
2. Sr. Staff will consider the proposed change along with the change rationale and vote to either 1) forward the proposal to the President for consideration, 2) vote to decline to forward, or 3) vote to task the proposer (or other author) with redraft and resubmission.
3. The President will forward meritorious change proposals to the appropriate Board of Trustees Committee for consideration; explanation for unsuccessful proposals will be made to Sr. Staff and communicated in the Sr. Staff minutes.
4. The appropriate Board Committee will consider the proposed change for motion to the Board of Trustees; explanation for unsuccessful change proposals will be communicated to the President.
5. The Unity College Board of Trustees will vote to adopt or decline by majority vote. A change adoption result will be immediately reflected in the *document of record* and a new version of the *document of record* will be published.

Changes to Objectives and Initiatives

6. Members of Sr. Staff and *Lead Employees* will have occasion to propose *changes* to the Objectives of the Strategic Plan. Changes to Objectives in the *document of record* may only be made by majority vote by the Unity College Sr. Staff. The process is this:
7. A member of Sr. Staff or a *Lead Employee* may propose a change to Objective items to Sr. Staff as a motion for discussion, and adoption by the Sr. Staff Committee. Goal item changes may include any component of any Initiative.
8. Sr. Staff will consider the change and vote to either 1) adopt the proposed change, 2) vote to decline, or 3) vote to task the proposer (or other author) with redraft and resubmission.
9. Lead Employees may propose changes to Initiatives to the President. The President may approve changes to Initiatives on her/his own authority, and submit changes to Sr. Staff for information or endorsement.
10. The change process for all elements in the document of record will be managed by the project manager as supervised by the President.

Communication Procedures

1. Only content from the *document of record* will be used for internal or external publication and communication. Content from a *change version* may be shared for planning purposes, but will not be considered adopted until it has gone through the appropriate change process above.
2. The Project Manager is responsible for ensuring accurate content for all reproductions and will be responsible for providing access to the *document of record* and *document of record content* as appropriate.
3. Completed items will be permanently included in all subsequent versions.



Progress Calculation Procedures

1. Progress toward any *Item* (*Goal, Objective, and Initiative*) and toward the Strategic Plan itself will be calculated as a percentage, where 100% means completion of the Strategic Plan *Item*.
2. Each Strategic Plan *Item* requires a unique amount of effort. Therefore, each item must be assigned a relative *Effort Level*, or weight.
 - a. *Goal Lead Employees* are accountable for assigning *Effort Levels* to each *Item* in their *Goal* of responsibility.
 - b. Each *Item* requires a certain *Effort Level* relative to the other items at that level of planning.
 - c. The sum of all *Effort Levels* for *Items* that share a level of planning must be equal to 100%.
 - d. If changes are made to the document of record, the *Effort Levels* assigned to the affected items must also be adjusted so the sum at any level of planning remains equal to 100%.
3. Progress percentage will be calculated for each *Item* as the sum total of all sub-item progress percentages multiplied by the *Effort Level* percentage of the same.
4. Since they have no sub-items, *Initiative Item* progress toward completion will be established by the *Goal Lead Employee*.

Progress Reporting Procedures

1. Progress toward completion of strategic plan items at all levels will be reported to Senior Staff at least quarterly. All employees responsible for strategic plan items should be involved in reporting progress. The Board of Trustees will receive any and all Strategic Plan updates from the President.
2. Consistent, timely, and thorough reporting ensures transparency of the strategic plan process. A public-facing “dashboard” will display progress on *Goals* and *Objectives*. The complete progress report will also be made available to the public. The *Project Manager* is responsible for updating the progress dashboard.

