wealth of expertise and experience of corporate leaders in our own efforts to advance institutional excellence.

Note
1. The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Program is administered by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, Department of Commerce. For further information, see www.quality.nist.gov/qnew.htm; and the 2001 Criteria for Education Performance Excellence (Washington, D.C.: Baldrige National Quality Program, National Institute for Standards and Technology, 2001), also available at the same Website.

From: PURSUING EXCELLENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION
EIGHT FUNDAMENTAL CHALLENGES
Brent D. Ruben, Ph.D.
Chapter 4, pp. 94-154

Chapter Four

Becoming More Effective Learning Organizations
Clarifying Goals and Evaluating Outcomes

One of the pervasive themes of contemporary organizational learning theory and practice is the emphasis on information and measurement for evaluating and enhancing excellence. There is little argument about the value of assessment, measurement, and the use of the information that results, but the question of what should be measured and how that information should be used has been more problematic.1 In business, where financial measures have traditionally been the primary focus, a broadened range of performance indicators is being introduced to more fully represent key success factors for an organization. Examples include measures of consumer perceptions, employee satisfaction, and innovation. As issues of defining, measuring, and documenting excellence become increasingly consequential in higher education, an understanding of the concerns motivating these changes within the private sector and the new measurement frameworks that are emerging can be extremely useful.

Accounting-Based Measures of Organizational Excellence

Traditionally, business and industry have measured organizational performance using a financial accounting model that emphasizes profitability, return on investment, sales growth, cash flow, or economic value added:
The accounting systems that we have today—the historical cost-based numbers that we all love to hate—have developed over hundreds of years. They can be traced back to the first “joint stock” or publicly owned companies of the 14th century and even earlier.

Financial measures provided a basis for accountability and comparability. Take the case of the East India Trading Company, which was an early joint stock company. Let’s say they had a manager 4,000 miles away running a trading post, and they shipped that person a boatload of goods. The purpose of accounting was to ensure that the manager used those goods to serve the company’s interests and not just his own [Zimmerman, 1993, p. 6].

The need for external accountability and standardized measures for financial comparison across corporations continues today. In recent years, however, questions have increasingly been raised regarding the exclusive reliance on these measures. There is a growing sense that these financial performance indicators, used alone, fail to capture many of the critical success factors required for external accountability and are of limited value for addressing internal management needs (Brancato, 1995; Hexter, 1997).

The Harvard Business School Council on Competitiveness noted the constraints of conventional financial performance in an analysis of differences in investment patterns in U.S. corporations compared to organizations in Japan and Germany. Among the conclusions of the study (Porter, 1992, p. 73) were that the U.S. approach to excellence measurement:

- Is less supportive of long-term corporate investment because of the emphasis on improving short-term returns to influence current share prices
- Favors those forms of investment for which returns are most readily measurable; this leads to an overinvestment in assets whose value can be easily calculated
- Leads to underinvestment in intangible assets—in internal development projects, product and process innovation, employee skills, and customer satisfaction—whose short-term returns are more difficult to measure

More generally, it is noted that accounting-based measures (Brancato, 1995):

- Are too historical
- Lack predictive power
- Reward the wrong behavior
- Are focused on inputs and not outputs
- Do not capture key business changes until it is too late
- Reflect functions, not cross-functional process within a company
- Give inadequate consideration to difficult-to-quantify resources such as intellectual capital

One might also add to the list that a preoccupation with a small set of financial indicators encourages efforts to “spin,” or in some cases even “cook,” the numbers to create a positive image to colleagues, managers, and the investor community. The general conclusion is that financial indicators alone are limited in their ability to adequately represent the range of factors associated with organizational excellence. Accounting-based measures, for instance, may not capture key elements of an organization’s mission, customer satisfaction and loyalty, employee satisfaction and turnover, employee capability, organizational adaptability or innovation, environmental competitiveness, research and development productivity, market growth and success, and other important company-specific factors (Brancato, 1995; Kaplan and Norton, 1996a, 1996b).

The Quality Approach and Expanded Measures of Excellence

Many major corporations now couple financial indicators with other measures selected to reflect key elements of their mission, vision, and strategic direction. Collectively, these “cockpit” or “dashboard” indicators, as they are sometimes called, are used to monitor and navigate the organization in much the same way a pilot and flight crew use the array of indicators in the cockpit to monitor and navigate an airplane. The usefulness of these indicators extends beyond performance measurement per se.
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and contributes also to self-assessment, strategic planning, and the creation of focus and consensus on goals and directions within the organization.

One approach that addresses this need systematically is the "balanced scorecard" developed by a study group composed of representatives from major corporations, including American Standard, Bell South, Gray Research, Du Pont, General Electric, and Hewlett-Packard (Kaplan and Norton, 1992, 1993, 1996a, 1996b, 2001). As described by Kaplan and Norton (1996a, p. 2), "The Balanced Scorecard translates an organization’s mission and strategy into a comprehensive set of performance measures that provides a framework for a strategic measurement and management system." Specifically, Kaplan and Norton (1996a, p. 10) explain: "The Balanced Scorecard should translate a business unit’s mission and strategy into tangible objectives and measures. The measures represent a balance between external measures for shareholders and customers, and internal measures of critical business processes, innovation, and learning and growth. The measures are balanced between outcome measures—the results of past efforts—and the measures that drive future performance. And the scorecard is balanced between objective, easily quantified outcome measures and subjective, somewhat judgmental, performance."

Organizations that adopt this approach report that they are able to use the approach to:

- Clarify and gain consensus about vision and strategic direction
- Communicate and link strategic objectives and measures throughout the organization
- Align departmental and personal goals to the organization’s vision and strategy
- Plan, set targets, and align strategic initiatives
- Conduct periodic and systematic strategic reviews
- Obtain feedback to learn about and improve strategy (Kaplan and Norton, pp. 10, 19)

One company executive describes the approach and critical questions it addresses this way (Brancato, 1995, p. 42): "A balanced business scorecard is an information-based management tool that translates our strategic objectives into a coherent set of performance measures. We start with the vision. What are the critical success factors to attain our vision? What are the key performance measures to measure our progress against those success factors? What are the targets, initiatives, and what is the review process to ensure that this balanced business scorecard is the key management tool to run the businesses? And, finally, how do we tie in the incentives?"

**Excellence Indicators in Higher Education**

Organizations of all types are reconceptualizing the excellence indicators they use, and the uses to which these indicators are being put. For those in higher education, what is of particular significance is not so much the particulars of the dashboard, balanced scorecard, or other measurement-based approach, but rather the widespread movement to reexamine the measurement process and its role in evaluating, monitoring, and advancing organizational excellence.

In higher education, as in business, there are time-honored traditions regarding measurement of excellence. Rather than emphasizing primarily financial measures, higher education has historically emphasized academic measures. Motivated, as with business, by issues of external accountability and comparability, measurement in higher education has generally emphasized those academically related variables that are most easily quantifiable. Familiar examples are student and faculty demographics, enrollment, grade point average, scores on standardized tests, class rank, acceptance rates, retention rate, faculty-student ratios, graduation rates, faculty teaching load, counts of faculty publications and grants, and statistics on physical and library resources.

As important as the traditional indicators are, they do not capture some of the key success factors for a college or university; nor do they necessarily reflect specific dimensions of a department or institution’s mission, vision, or strategic direction. Traditional indicators are subject to other limitations as well. For example, our most popular and familiar measures relative to teaching and learning emphasize inputs—resources, student test scores, faculty credentials, attributes of the facility, and so on. These have been highly valued in various rating systems, but they do not necessarily provide useful information on what an institution itself has contributed to these outcomes.
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Measures of student qualifications and institutional selectivity are examples. Student grade point averages and standardized test score measures of selectivity may be good descriptions of the capabilities students bring with them to our institutions, but they say little about the value our courses, programs, or institutions add through the teaching and learning process; nor do they help to evaluate the cumulative benefits derived from having attended a particular institution. As Pascarella (2001) and others have noted, considerably more attention has been devoted to measuring the reputation and resources of institutions than to determining what impact they actually have on the breadth and quality of students' learning.

Other efforts to assess excellence have focused on measures such as student or alumni occupational success or income levels, but these also fail to identify and isolate the contribution of the college teaching and learning experience from particular socioeconomic, networking, and other patterns that may characterize students who attend particular institutions (Pascarella, 2001). Although higher education assessment studies (for example, Astin, 1993) have advanced our understanding of the teaching and learning process, the insights gained from this research have generally not been translated into indicators that are useful for monitoring, intervening in, or comparing institutional excellence (Johnson and Seymour, 1996).

As with business, higher education indicators have tended to be primarily historical, have been limited in predictive power, are often incapable of alerting institutions to changes in time to respond, and have not given adequate consideration to important but difficult-to-quantify dimensions. Ironically, the emphasis on easy-to-quantify, limited measures has, in a manner of speaking, come home to haunt in the form of popularized college rating systems with which educators are generally frustrated and critical but that are consistently used as the measures against which they are evaluated by their constituents (Wegner, 1997).

A promising development in this area is the National Survey of Student Engagement, which collects, analyzes, and disseminates student perceptions on teaching and learning engagement at hundreds of institutions. The survey includes sixty key items that address issues of academic challenge, opportunities for active and collaborative learning, extent of student interaction with faculty members, opportunities for enriching educational experiences, and supportiveness of the campus environment. The resulting database provides comparative information across nearly three hundred institutions (Kuh, 2001a).

Even though new criteria are being suggested, most evaluative frameworks use quite traditional criteria. In a study conducted for the Educational Commission of the States on measures used in performance reporting in ten states (Ewell, 1994), the most common indicators were:

- Enrollment and graduation rates by gender, ethnicity, and program
- Degree completion and time to degree
- Persistence and retention rates by grade, ethnicity, and program
- Remediation activities and indicators of their effectiveness
- Transfer rates to and from two- and four-year institutions
- Pass rates on professional exams
- Job placement data on graduates and graduates’ satisfaction with their jobs
- Faculty workload and productivity in the form of student-faculty ratios and instructional contact hours

Absent from this and many other lists of higher education performance indicators are short-term or long-term measures that isolate the contributions of the institution to student learning. Also missing are indicators that capture the extent to which student, faculty, and staff needs and expectations are being met by a college or university, despite the widely shared view that attracting, retaining, and nurturing the best and brightest people is a primary goal and critical success factor. Even in evaluative systems that gather information from students about their satisfaction with particular courses and services, little effort has been devoted to systematically measuring the expectations of prospective students and their parents, and the extent to which those expectations are subsequently realized or altered over the course of the college experience. National studies examining these issues reveal significant gaps that are generally not measured or addressed at an institutional level (Selingo,
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2003). Even less attention is generally directed toward measuring faculty and staff satisfaction levels within particular units or an institution as a whole, though this may be one of the better upstream predictors of the ultimate quality of instruction, research, administrative, and support services within an institution.

**A Balanced Scorecard for Higher Education**

The fundamental purpose of a dashboard or scorecard is to translate the often abstract mission, aspirations, plans, and goals of an organization into more tangible criteria that can be measured, monitored, communicated, and used to motivate and guide the advancement of excellence. Given that the academic mission of colleges and universities is the creation, sharing, and application of knowledge—traditionally described in terms of teaching and learning, scholarship and research, and public service and outreach—the primary challenge in developing an academic dashboard is to determine how best to measure these activities.

Many of the basic dimensions of excellence in these pursuits are common across various types of colleges and universities. Institutions of all kinds need qualified and competent faculty and staff, credible scholarship, innovative and engaging teaching and learning processes, appropriate technology and facilities, capable students, and support from various external publics.

Although less often acknowledged, excellence in communication and a service-oriented culture, appropriate visibility and prominence within the state and beyond, a welcoming physical environment, a friendly and supportive social environment, expectations of success, accessible and effective systems and services, and a sense of community are also generally important indicators of present and future success. These characteristics generally translate into successful engagement with internal and external stakeholder groups. For each such group, desired and potentially measurable outcomes can be identified:

- **Prospective students:** applying to a program or institution as a preferred choice, informed about the qualities and benefits they can realize through enrolling
- **Current students:** attending their program or institution of choice with well-defined expectations and a high level of satisfaction relative to all facets of their experience; feeling that they are valued members of the academic community with the potential and support to succeed
- **Families:** proud to have a family member attending the program or institution, supporting and recommending it to friends and acquaintances
- **Alumni:** actively supporting the institution and its initiatives
- **Employers:** seeking out program or institution graduates as employees; promoting the program or institution among their employees for continuing and professional education
- **Colleagues at peer and other institutions:** viewing the institution as a source of intellectual or professional leadership and an enviable workplace
- **Governing boards:** being supportive of the institution and enthusiastic about the opportunity to contribute personally and professionally to its advancement
- **Local community:** viewing the institution as an asset to the community; actively supporting its development
- **Friends, interested individuals, donors, legislators, and the general public:** valuing the institution as an essential resource; supporting efforts to further advance excellence
- **Faculty:** pleased to serve on the faculty of a respected, well-supported program, department, or institution
- **Staff:** regarding the department or institution as a preferred workplace where innovation, continuing improvement, and teamwork are valued; recommending the department or institution to others

How excellence is conceptualized and the weights associated with various criteria that emerge vary with the institutional type. The importance of particular criteria also varies as a consequence of one's perspective. For faculty and many administrators, academic quality as judged by peers and professionals is of paramount importance. To students, employers, alumni, the public, and other external audiences, the extent to which colleges and universities are responsive to their articulated needs and expectations is also
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important. As employees, faculty and staff may have other criteria that enter into judgments of the level of excellence of the department or institution. Factors associated with operational and administrative accountability may define a fourth perspective and set of criteria (Ruben, 2003a). These perspectives are not mutually exclusive and are, in fact, complementary in many respects. Collectively, they define four ways of thinking about departmental or institutional excellence, in terms of which evaluations can be made:

1. The quality of programs, services, and activities as judged by peers and professionals
2. The extent to which programs, services, and activities are perceived to meet the needs of and expectations of their beneficiaries
3. The quality of the organizational climate, and the satisfaction of faculty and staff from their perspective as employees
4. The effectiveness and efficiency of operational and financial dimensions of the organization

Building on these concepts, excellence indicators can be developed for any department or institution, given clarity on the mission, vision, and goals. The process essentially involves translating these higher-level concepts into more tangible dashboard indicators. Some of the indicators are likely to include traditional and familiar measures, and others might be quite unique and specific to purposes and aspirations of particular institutions.

For the sake of illustration, consider a college or university with a mission that emphasizes learning, discovery, and engagement equally. The dashboard ideally includes indicators that reflect each of the four perspectives on the excellence associated with teaching and learning, scholarship and research, and public service and outreach at the institution. Thus indicators are included that focus on the quality of mission-critical activities, the extent to which academic programs and services meet the needs and expectations of stakeholders, workplace climate and faculty and staff satisfaction, and operational and financial performance. For an academic institution or department, this translates into a dashboard composed of five areas: teaching and learning, scholarship and research, service and outreach, workplace satisfaction, and administration and operations (Figure 4.1).
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Teaching and Learning

In the proposed framework, teaching and learning are composed of quality assessments in two primary areas: (1) programs and courses and (2) student outcomes. This framework points to the value of incorporating multiple dimensions, multiple perspectives, and multiple measures in evaluating the quality of academic programs and courses, and student outcomes. Appropriate to these assessments are systematic inputs from peers or colleagues (at one's own institution and perhaps others), students (at various points in their academic career), alumni (affording retrospective analyses), and employers or graduate directors (providing data on workplace and graduate or professional school preparation).

Each group can contribute pertinent and useful insights. Collectively, these judgments yield a comprehensive and balanced cluster of measures that help to address concerns associated with reliance on any single perspective of measure (American Association of Higher Education, 2002; Trout, 1997b; Williams and Ceci, 1997).

Colleagues from one's own or another institution can offer critical assessments of instructor qualifications and the scope, comprehensiveness, rigor, and currency of programs or course content, and so on. Students and alumni can provide valuable assessments of the clarity of course or program expectations; curricular integration; perceived applicability; extent of interaction with faculty; opportunities for involvement with faculty research; and the instructor's delivery skills, enthusiasm, interest in students, accessibility, and other dimensions.

Examples of possible indicators are listed in Table 4.1. In the case of academic and academic-support programs and services, the cascade of measures might well include clarity of mission of programs and courses, disciplinary standing, need, coherence, rigor, efficiency, qualifications of instructors, currency and comprehensiveness of materials, adequacy of support services, and teaching and learning climate. These can be assessed in any number of ways. Typically, evaluations of disciplinary standing are derived from external review, accreditation, or other peer review systems. The need for particular programs and courses can be assessed by considering such factors as unfulfilled demand, offerings at other institutions, and systematic input from employers or alumni. Coherence considers measures of internal curricular linkage and integration, and rigor assessment is likely to include data on assignment standards and grading practices with student and alumni input. Efficiency can include cost-student enrollment ratios, student-faculty instruction ratios, and the like. Qualifications of instructors (or in the case of academic-support programs, of staff), course content, and delivery assessments can be based on peer review and other inputs (American Association of Higher Education, 2002; Braskamp and Ory, 1994).

Student outcomes can include measures of program or course preferences, selectivity, involvement, learning outcomes (knowledge and competency acquisition), fulfillment of expectations, satisfaction, retention, preparedness, placement, motivation for lifelong learning, and other variables that may be appropriate to the mission, vision, and goals of the institution or program. Preference measures, for instance, document answers to questions such as "Was this college/program my preferred choice?" Selectivity reflects input measures of the "quality" of students enrolled in courses or programs, and learning outcomes assessment measures cognitive and behavioral competencies. Thus, in addition to content learning, assessment may also include the ability to engage in collaborative problem solving; appreciation of diversity; leadership skills; interpersonal and presentational communication skills; ethical thinking; and other capabilities appropriate to the mission, vision, and goals of the institution or program.

In addition, student satisfaction with academic support and other services—for instance, libraries, advising, facilities, computing, placement, housing, health services, recreation, or transportation—should also be included in the dashboard.

Surveys and focus groups with student and alumni groups can be the basis for evaluating and tracking satisfaction with academic programs and support services over time. For instance, alumni can be asked some years after graduation whether they would choose the same university or program if they were enrolling today. Preparedness for careers or further graduate study might be assessed through input from graduates, recruiters or employers, and graduate program directors. Placement measures can be derived through systematic alumni tracking.
Teaching and Learning

In the proposed framework, teaching and learning are composed of quality assessments in two primary areas: (1) programs and courses and (2) student outcomes. This framework points to the value of incorporating multiple dimensions, multiple perspectives, and multiple measures in evaluating the quality of academic programs and courses, and student outcomes. Appropriate to these assessments are systematic inputs from peers or colleagues (at one's own institution and perhaps others), students (at various points in their academic career), alumni (affording retrospective analyses), and employers or graduate directors (providing data on workplace and graduate or professional school preparation).

Each group can contribute pertinent and useful insights. Collectively, these judgments yield a comprehensive and balanced cluster of measures that help to address concerns associated with reliance on any single perspective of measure (American Association of Higher Education, 2002; Trout, 1997b; Williams and Ceci, 1997).

Colleagues from one's own or another institution can offer critical assessments of instructor qualifications and the scope, comprehensiveness, rigor, and currency of programs or course content, and so on. Students and alumni can provide valuable assessments of the clarity of course or program expectations; curricular integration; perceived applicability; extent of interaction with faculty; opportunities for involvement with faculty research; and the instructor’s delivery skills, enthusiasm, interest in students, accessibility, and other dimensions.

Examples of possible indicators are listed in Table 4.1. In the case of academic and academic-support programs and services, the cascade of measures might well include clarity of mission of programs and courses, disciplinary standing, need, coherence, rigor, efficiency, qualifications of instructors, currency and comprehensiveness of materials, adequacy of support services, and teaching and learning climate. These can be assessed in any number of ways. Typically, evaluations of disciplinary standing are derived from external review, accreditation, or other peer review systems. The need for particular programs and courses can be assessed by considering such factors as unfulfilled demand, offerings at other institutions, and systematic input from employers or alumni. Coherence considers measures of internal curricular linkage and integration, and rigor assessment is likely to include data on assignment standards and grading practices with student and alumni input. Efficiency can include cost-student enrollment ratios, student-faculty instruction ratios, and the like. Qualifications of instructors (or in the case of academic-support programs, of staff), course content, and delivery assessments can be based on peer review and other inputs (American Association of Higher Education, 2002; Briskamp and Ory, 1994).

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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>• PRODUCTIVITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Disciplinary standing</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>• Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need</td>
<td>Profession/discipline</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Coherence</td>
<td>Research agencies</td>
<td>• Submissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rigor</td>
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<td>• Publications</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>• Publication stature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teaching-learning climate</td>
<td>Governing boards</td>
<td>• Citation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public at large</td>
<td>• Awards/recognition</td>
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<td>• Preferences</td>
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<tr>
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Activity level/contacts

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Scholarship and Research

Research and scholarship can be defined by assessments of quality in the areas of productivity and impact. Both are areas in which colleges and universities generally have well-developed measures of achievement.

Typically, productivity indicators include activity level. Depending on the field, activity level measures encompass frequency of presentations, performances, article and paper submissions, publications, and funding proposals. Impact measures for research and scholarship typically include publication rate, selectivity and stature of journals or publishers, citations, awards and recognition, editorial board membership, peer assessments of scholarly excellence, funding of research, and others (Braskamp and Ory, 1994; Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1994). In addition, faculty and research satisfaction with academic and institutional support—for instance, libraries, facilities, computing, and administrative support—can also be included in the dashboard.

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- Preferences

Table 4.1. (continued)

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Public Service and Outreach

The public service and outreach indicator cluster is composed of quantitative and qualitative measures of the engagement and
impact of the department or institution, and the extent to which that engagement addresses the needs and expectations of key external stakeholder groups. As illustrated in Table 4.1, this cluster should include measures for each of the groups whose assessments of the quality and performance of the institution or program have important implications for the unit in terms of mission fulfillment, reputation, recruitment, economic viability, and so on.

The definition of key external stakeholder groups depends on the nature of the department or institution and its mission. For academic units, the list of potential candidate groups might include the university (beyond the unit itself), profession or discipline, alumni, potential students, organizations and individuals seeking new knowledge, family members or parents of students, employers, community, state, region, governing boards, friends of the institutions, individual and corporate donors, legislators, and the public at large.

Once the scope of key stakeholders is defined, the measures for each should capture the quality of contributions of the unit on the basis of criteria that have been determined to be significant to the external group. Some general measures that are appropriate for a number of these stakeholder groups are the level of participation by department or institution faculty or staff in external groups, selection for leadership roles, and reputation of the institution within the targeted groups.

In some cases, measures are specific to a particular stakeholder group. For instance, when assessing the standing of a department or program within the larger university community, measures may include promotion and tenure rates, requests to serve on thesis and dissertation committees in other programs, and invitations to serve on and play a leadership role in key university committees and projects, in addition to other general measures of engagement and perceived contributions to university life.

In the case of potential employers, preferences for university graduates as employees and the likelihood of promoting an institution among their employees for continuing education are important measurement considerations. In the case of organizations or individuals seeking new knowledge or the solution to problems, the number of contacts, requests for information, proposals requested, and initiatives funded are among the possible measures.

For alumni, key financial and moral support of the university and its initiatives are key measures, and the extent to which the university is perceived to be an essential state resource is an important indicator of public support. For parents and families, issues of interest include attitude toward having a family member attending the university and the likelihood of recommending the institution to friends and acquaintances.

Although institutional data may be available as input for some indicators, focus groups, surveys, and other systematic approaches for capturing the perceptions and perspectives of these groups may be also required.

Workplace Satisfaction

In addition to indicators associated with instruction, scholarship, and service and outreach, another important indicator is workplace climate and workforce satisfaction. Inputs to indicators for each group include measures of attractiveness of the institution as a workplace, turnover, compensation, assessments of workplace climate, and faculty and staff morale and satisfaction. Measures in this category include a combination of institutional data (analysis of application and retention data); perceptual data from faculty and staff groups; and information derived from sources such as exit interviews, focus groups, and surveys.

Administration and Operations

A final set of indicators captures key operational measures, such as financial soundness, capacities and utilization levels, quality and maintenance of facilities, the effectiveness and efficiency of administrative support processes, strategic planning and follow-through, and leadership effectiveness.

For example, financials might include revenues by source—state appropriations, tuition, donations, endowments, grants, and so on—and expenditures, such as operating budgets, debt service, credit ratings and ratios, deferred maintenance, and expenditures for the institution or unit. Specific measures to be included in this category vary depending on the level and type of unit involved.
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The Dashboard Approach Is Not a Panacea

The dashboard approach to performance assessment in higher education does not magically answer the questions "What is excellence?" or "What should be measured?" For a department or institution adopting the model, the fundamental task—and certainly not a simple one—involves clarifying how excellence is to be defined, what criteria are relevant to that concept, what measures best capture these criteria, and what methods are most useful for gathering that information. Though not a panacea, the advantage of this approach is its framework for dialogue and a structure for decision making as to the appropriate evaluative criteria, measures, and methods.

The list of dashboard indicators mentioned in the previous section—and specific measures discussed for each—is meant to be suggestive, not definitive nor prescriptive. Many more indicators and measures are mentioned than any single program, department, or institution is likely to want—or be able to monitor—at least initially.

Depending on the mission and goals of a particular department, the appropriate components of the dashboard might be quite different from those discussed in the previous pages. For instance, if the department in question has an administrative or service mission, the dashboard would be composed of indicator clusters very different from those of an academic unit (Ruben, 2003a). Indicators for instruction and research can be replaced by measures appropriate to the department's mission. The top-row indicators for an administrative department would consist of measures of the quantity and quality of a unit's programs, services, and activities, using technical, peer, or professionally accepted standards of measurement. A second cluster of measures would capture the criteria and perspective of those who use or benefit from the work of the unit. Thus physical plant, purchasing, or computing services departments might include measures of work productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency, and also indicators of the satisfaction of those departments for which they provide maintenance, building, or renovation services. An administrative department dashboard might also include indicators of the effectiveness of relationships with vendors, suppliers, partners, and collaborators. Individual units might well include indicators that highlight dimensions of particular relevance to their plans and goals.

Comparisons and Benchmarking

Another formidable task is identifying an appropriate group of peer departments or institutions with which to compare and contextualize outcomes. In a number of measurement areas, comparisons (benchmarking) with peer, competitive, or leading institutions or departments are essential to have an appropriate context for interpreting indicator information. For instance, without a broader context of comparison, it is difficult and perhaps impossible to meaningfully interpret data on student learning; scholarly productivity; or retention or level of satisfaction of faculty, staff, or students. In some areas, comparative information is readily available. However, depending on the unit, its mission, and the selected indicators, it may be necessary to create a benchmarking process that involves selecting the appropriate topics of comparison and developing methods for gathering information, perhaps in collaboration with peer departments or institutions that would benefit equally from access to the same information.

Concluding Comments

The task of establishing dashboard indicators is not a simple one, yet having an agreed-upon set of measures that operationally define "excellence" for an institution, department, or program is of great value for assessment, tracking, and communication. Clear evaluative criteria are the basis for a straightforward, accessible, and mobilizing answer to the question "How are we doing?" so as to connect outcomes to goals.

Beyond their value for measurement per se, there is perhaps nearly as great a benefit to be derived from the dialogue and consensus-building process through which dashboard indicators and comparison organizations are determined, and there is great benefit to making the activity as inclusive as possible. It can be a process for reclarifying priorities and goals, refocusing and reenergizing faculty and staff, and broadening responsibility for shared leadership within the unit. The review and decision-making processes create an opportunity to discuss the strengths and limitations of measures that may be in use, and to give consideration to additional or alternative measures. Ideally, the selected indicators include both outcome and predictor measures. Outcome measures are essential
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for determining the current standing of a program, department, or university. Predictor measures are critical to anticipating and influencing outcomes.

In many ways, the dashboard concept is much more than simply a different approach to measurement. It is, rather, part of a larger paradigm for thinking about how information should be collected and used. The paradigm shift is from one that sees information as an institutional resource to one that sees it as a community resource; from organizing information to serve standardized and routine reporting requirements to one that serves decision makers with a variety of analytic needs; from information that is static and historical to information selected to anticipate new and changing needs; from regarding information as a good to be carefully rationed because it is the basis of power and control to a view that regards it as a shared resource and the appropriate basis for open and collaborative discussion and decision making (Friedman and Hoffman, 2001).

The time is right for demanding greater clarity and precision of ourselves in our approaches to thinking about and measuring excellence—whether in academic, administrative, student affairs, auxiliary services departments, or in the institution as a whole. If we fail to be proactive in this task, definitions and measures are likely to be imposed upon us by external sources, and by those who lack our comprehensive knowledge of our work and its purposes. More important, as models to which others look for examples of premier learning organizations, the academy must embody the highest standards with regard to defining and measuring the criteria of excellence to which we aspire. The dashboard approach offers a college or university a creative approach for meeting this challenge; in so doing, it helps to translate the institution's mission and vision into a comprehensive, coherent, communicable, and mobilizing framework for external constituencies and the organization itself.

Notes
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2. In 2001, 220,000 students from 320 institutions were surveyed (Kuh, 2001a). See www.indiana.edu/~nsse for additional information.
3. I am grateful to Henry Wiebe of the University of Missouri-Rolla for suggesting this term.
4. This approach was used in research by Joseph Cerny and Maresi Nerad of the Graduate Division, University of California, Berkeley.

Narratives

Becoming More Effective Learning Organizations: Clarifying Goals and Evaluating Outcomes

The clarification of goals and the evaluation of outcomes are among the most fundamental activities of learning organizations. Within the academy, these processes require dialogue on the nature of programmatic, departmental, or institutional excellence, and collaborative decision making on how excellence can best be measured, monitored, and communicated. If issues related to goals and outcomes are not appropriately addressed, discussions of quality, progress, or performance are often quite hollow, and decisions about resource allocation, priorities for improvement, and longer-term goals for the future are less informed than they might otherwise be.

Clarifying goals and measurement approaches can serve other functions as well. It can be a means of reaffirming a common set of purposes, a tool for determining institutional improvement needs, a foundation for strategic planning, and the basis for communication and advocacy—for more persuasively telling the story of the program, department, or institution.

In the first narrative in this section, Mary Sue Coleman, president of the University of Michigan, describes how excellence indicators and targets were used to translate strategic goals into easily captured and communicated measures in support of the institutional planning process at the University of Iowa while she was president there.

Next, Susan Williams, professor of management and former vice president for administration, describes the measurement approach used at Belmont University in Nashville, devoting particular attention to the manner in which academic success and the perspectives of students and other stakeholders were addressed.
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The use of the balanced scorecard at a divisional level as a strategy for redefining and pursuing excellence is the topic of the narrative by Ron Coley, assistant vice chancellor for business and administrative services, and Paul Dimond, principal administrative analyst, both of whom are at the University of California, Berkeley.

The final narrative, by Mo Qayoumi, briefly describes the use of benchmarking and measurement comparisons across institutions to address what may be one of the most widely discussed issues within the academy: parking.

The narratives presented in the next section emphasize the challenges of self-assessment, planning, and continuous improvement, while also addressing issues related to the process of clarifying goals and evaluating outcomes.

Implementing a Strategic Plan Using Indicators and Targets

Mary Sue Coleman  
President, University of Michigan; Former President, University of Iowa

Universities are frequently targets of public and political scorn for being inflexible, stodgy, and resistant to change. I believe that this undeserved reputation arises from outside observers’ perplexity at the decentralization and power sharing typical of higher education. It is true that a nonhierarchical structure makes moving the mother ship in any one direction, to say the least, a challenge, even though creative innovations bubble up all over campus. Consequently, universities appear more static to external observers than they actually are.

A “Report Card” for the University

An important question for me—and for many of my presidential colleagues—is how to harness the energy, the power to convince all in the university to buy into the big picture and contribute to changes that move the whole institution forward. At Iowa, we have addressed this challenge with several Regents-mandated external audits and three five-year strategic planning cycles; regarding the latter, two cycles were coupled with universitywide measures—or indicators of progress—that would form an annual “report card”.

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for the university. Community building, enhanced communication, and more focus by both internal and external constituencies on universitywide progress have been positive outcomes of this annual ritual. In addition, we have been spurred to better self-management and have developed a powerful tool for public accountability.

The University of Iowa is a comprehensive public university, the state’s first public institution of higher learning, founded in 1847. A member of the Big Ten athletic conference, its annual enrollment is twenty-nine thousand students, with twenty thousand undergraduates and nine thousand graduate and professional students. The university is known widely for many of its programs, particularly in the arts and the health sciences. Iowa is home to the renowned Writers’ Workshop, five nationally regarded health science colleges (medicine, nursing, pharmacy, dentistry, and public health), and the largest university-owned teaching hospital in the United States. Iowa is also world-renowned for programs in educational testing and assessment, which have spawned such enterprises as ACT, still headquartered in Iowa City. A growing research enterprise garnered $341 million in external grants in 2001–02, and the university’s Oakdale Research Park and Technology Innovation Center help transfer the school’s research advances to business and industry, as well as incubate emerging businesses. The University of Iowa is located in Iowa City, a small city of approximately 62,000. Cedar Rapids, Iowa’s second-largest city, with a population of 120,000, is about twenty miles away from Iowa City. The burgeoning and increasingly interrelated economic development in the area has earned these cities and the area connecting them the name “the Technology Corridor.”

Our fundamental mission at the University of Iowa, as a public research university, is to discover, preserve, and disseminate knowledge in order to enrich the lives of all citizens across our state, as well as throughout the nation and the world. It is true that these profoundly significant products of our work are inherently unquantifiable. But because we wish to be judged as a community of learners by the highest public standards, we have worked toward establishing the objective milestones of our indicators to mark advances in our institutional goals.

At the beginning of my presidency of the University of Iowa, I sought to establish a set of core values to guide our strategic planning. James C. Collins and Jerry I. Porras, scholars of management and organizational behavior, point out that truly visionary organizations both “preserve the core and stimulate progress” (Collins and Porras, 1994, p. 82); hence our interest in complementing our long-range vision with shorter-range strategic planning, and developing stimuli within those strategic plans through specific progress indicators. I believe such methods are necessary to track change over time and are crucial to keeping our aims on a straight course. Certainly spontaneous imagination, even audacious ideas that spill beyond the confines of a strategic plan and its targets and indicators, are important parts of stimulating progress. But we also must keep our hands on the wheel of strategic planning as part of our complement of methods for steering—and stimulating—our progress.

We are now seven years into the process of measuring ourselves and publishing the results annually—two successive plans, each with its own indicator list. We send annual reports to every faculty member, and we also publish the annual strategic plan indicators report on our Web site (www.uiowa.edu/%7Eprovost/plan/ind0001/index.html and www.uiowa.edu/president/strat_plan.html).

Selecting Measures
The first challenge for the university—and an educational exercise in and of itself—was assembling a list of possible measures. Our strategic planning committee’s first effort produced about three hundred, far too many to be useful. After extensive consultation with the stakeholders, we narrowed the list to thirty-five, a number broad enough to cover many aspects of our university programs but narrow enough to focus on a reasonable number of areas to which we might devote more attention or resources. Of those thirty-five indicators, twenty were “targeted indicators” and fifteen were “progress indicators.” Progress indicators reported data that we wished simply to collect and monitor; targeted indicators were those quality-related measures that could be associated with time-specific numerical objectives. For our targeted indicators, we set five-year targets so that we could stretch ourselves beyond what we might have thought possible with only the narrow vision of an annual scope. (A number of our targeted indicators also had subtargets, totaling thirty-seven specific measures in all.)

All thirty-five of these targeted and progress indicators were directly tied to the seven overall goals of the strategic plan. For
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All thirty-five of these targeted and progress indicators were directly tied to the seven overall goals of the strategic plan. For
example, “comprehensive strength in undergraduate programs,” the first goal, was accompanied by nine targeted indicators ranging from measurement of four-, five-, and six-year graduation rates to undergraduate participation in experience-based education, to senior faculty commitments, to teaching undergraduates. Under goal four, “distinguished research and scholarship,” we measured success by external research funding, intellectual property disclosures, and library rankings. Under goal six, “strong ties between the university and external constituencies,” we measured contributors to our foundation (development), nondegree enrollments, arts programming on the statewide optical fiber network, patient visits to our health sciences centers, and mean monthly national news citations. Under goal seven, “a high-quality academic and working environment,” our targets measured both physical and cultural aspects of our workplace. We aspired to eliminate our deferred maintenance backlog by meeting the national building renewal funding norm of 1 percent of our physical plant value. We set targets for participation in professional development programs for our staff, and we maintained progress indicators to monitor satisfaction of our constituencies by conducting periodic surveys of faculty, staff, students, patients, and visitors.

Setting Appropriate Targets

The most common reaction on campus I received to setting targets was the query, “What would be the consequence of not meeting a particular goal?” I thought that if we set the targets too low and reached or exceeded all of them immediately, the university community, as well as the public, would be pretty skeptical of our intention to push ourselves to reach a new level of excellence. So we had to attempt to reach a balance. I assured everyone that it was perfectly acceptable to have some targets that would be very difficult to achieve.

At the end of the first five-year strategic planning period, we had met, exceeded, or made significant progress on 86 percent of our targets, demonstrating to the community that concentration on a few areas could make a substantial difference to the university.

In a number of areas, we discovered that annual reporting worked in a positive way to alter behaviors across the university. This is perhaps best illustrated in our four-year graduation contract. At the beginning of the time period, fewer than 50 percent of our students were signing the contract on entry, while at the end of planning period more than 70 percent of the entering students were doing so. Academic advisors began to focus on encouraging students to take heavier course loads. The residence hall system developed more special-interest floors, which we have dubbed “learning communities.” These residence hall options demonstrably enhanced student retention and academic success. From these efforts, overall four-year and six-year graduation rates rose.

We also learned that some of the indicators we had selected were not useful, or they outlived their usefulness in a few years. We dropped our attempts to quantify campus safety, primarily because in a relatively safe community statistical results varied wildly from year to year. We dropped our measurement of technology-equipped classrooms once we simply reached our goal. We dropped targeting the number of National Merit Scholars and high school valedictorians in our entering freshman class because we decided that we wanted to concentrate our measurements on student achievement once they were enrolled at Iowa.

The Evolving “Report Card”

Given our experience with these indicators and the university community’s growing comfort with such measurements, devising a new, smaller set of indicators for our recently adopted strategic plan was relatively straightforward. In the new plan we have devised twenty-four indicators with associated targets, including many fewer sub-targets. We also dispensed with the more cumbersome distinction between targeted and progress indicators. Some indicators that simply mark progress remain, but the majority of our new measures are targeted, since they demonstrate not only our progress but also our ambitions most dramatically.

In addition, for our new strategic plan we required each college to develop its own plans, linked to the overall university plan and holding the colleges accountable for universitywide progress. We asked that deans answer four essential questions in crafting their collegiate strategic plans: (1) How will your initiatives contribute to the goals of the university’s strategic plan? (2) How will they contribute to the universitywide indicators? (3) If the universitywide indicators are not relevant to collegiate goals, what other
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indicators do you suggest? and (4) How will the college fund its initiatives?

What has been the effect of having the ability to revisit and report on the plan every year? Within the university, the report serves to remind everyone about the plan at least once each year. For individual units, focus on particular parts of the plan and the targets has become a regular exercise, and it has helped define their own goals while, reciprocally, assisting the progress of the university as a whole. For example, our recently created College of Public Health, by its very nature, emphasizes public outreach, which dovetails with the university's core value of community and the strategic plan's service elements. At the same time, the College of Public Health's development of a strategic goal to "promote meaningful community service and collaboration" and its attendant measures helps the university as a whole chart its service activities, which are difficult to measure institutionwide and are thus not heavily reflected in our twenty-four indicators. A sampling of our indicator measures included in the University of Iowa report card for our current strategic plan is shown in Figure 4.2.

Although a five-year strategic plan and annual report cards on our indicators make up an effective short-term set of stimuli for progress toward achieving our institutional mission and fulfilling our core values, such limited-scope tools can suffer from the exigencies of the moment. As with many other states, Iowa has experienced significant revenue shortfalls in recent years, resulting in budget cuts to the university. Fulfilling even our five-year goals quickly became an untenable proposition, and we were forced to choose among the twenty-four indicators we had established only two years before to measure our progress. For example, we decided to preserve our four-year graduation plan to best serve our students and continue progress toward our graduation rate goals, necessitating that we drop our goals for building repairs. In preserving the academic core of our mission, we also decided that we could not abandon our commitment to maintain our library system ranking by the Association of Research Libraries in the top fifteen, so we protected our library from budget cuts. Although harsh budget realities did have an impact on our goals and indicators in midstream, those same goals and indicators nevertheless proved invaluable in setting priorities and making decisions throughout the budget-cutting process.
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Figure 4.2. (continued)

Undergraduate Participation in Study Abroad

Grad/Prof Students Winning Fellowship Awards

Grad/Prof Program Top Ten Disciplinary Rankings

Library ARL Ranking

Elections to National Scholarly Academies

Minority Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty
Even in the midst of budget difficulties, our annual report card has greatly increased my ability to communicate more effectively with the university’s various constituents and our publics by presenting to them our strategic planning progress. Each year, I make a formal presentation to our governing board, weaving in anecdotes about the people behind the statistics. On occasion, I have used a multimedia show to demonstrate some of the best technology that is available for classroom use. Then I use the same presentation or some slight variant for civic clubs, alumni groups, legislators, faculty, and staff groups. Such a clear and effective presentation helps increase public confidence in the university’s activities and accomplishments, sparks enthusiasm for academic accomplishments that are so often overshadowed by athletics, and awakens pride and a sense of ownership in the university as a resource for all Iowans.
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Measuring Excellence from a Stakeholder Perspective

Susan G. Williams
Professor of Management, Jack C. Massey Graduate School of Business, Belmont University

When a university commits itself to the difficult and often humbling process of listening to students and other stakeholders with improvement as the overall goal, good things can happen. The result is an agile approach and a keen awareness of the marketplace where the campus community achieves strong continuous performance assessment, strategic planning, and system redesign.

Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee, began its improvement initiative in 1990. Since then, the university has been recognized nationally for its work in student-centered teaching and learning. Belmont is a private, coeducational, comprehensive university; it sits in the heart of Nashville, in a quiet area convenient to downtown and adjacent to Music Row. Belmont is home to more than thirty-three hundred undergraduate and graduate students. The university offers undergraduate degrees in more than fifty major areas of study through our six undergraduate colleges and schools. In addition, master’s degrees are available in accountancy, business administration, education, English, music, occupational therapy, nursing, and sport administration. The School of Occupational Therapy also offers a clinical doctor of occupational therapy degree, and the School of Physical Therapy offers the doctor of physical therapy degree.

Our faculty comprises two hundred full-time professors. The student-to-teacher ratio is 11:1. Eighty-five percent of Belmont classes enroll fewer than twenty students. Belmont consistently receives national recognition for its commitment to personal interaction between students and faculty.

The Commitment to Stakeholder Data Gathering

Early in the 1990s, the senior leadership group conducted a census of students, asking them what delighted them and disappointed them about all aspects of the university. The president and senior leaders read every comment. At the end of the census, student comments were categorized, and teams began work on those improvements most important to students. Changes included centralized student services through Belmont Central, a one-stop place for students to do business with the university, and a focus on teaching excellence through a Teaching Center. Both initiatives are evidence of the result of listening carefully to students and translating their words into redesigned practices.

Stakeholder Expectations and Requirements

Assessing student and stakeholder needs means determining exactly who those stakeholders are and researching their key requirements. Belmont University spent almost a year in this process. Table 4.2 illustrates stakeholders and their key requirements identified through the research process. Although many of those requirements may seem intuitive, getting consensus on their importance is a helpful activity for campus and community members. Note that most of the dimensions are measurable. The university established a balanced scorecard approach that resulted in measures and “benchmarks” for the most important requirements (Kaplan and Norton, 1996a). Belmont holds membership in the Associated New American Colleges (ANAC), small to midsize comprehensive colleges and universities dedicated to the integration of liberal and professional studies. These colleges meet regularly and share virtually all operational and teaching and learning results. Examples of benchmarking information include salaries, student satisfaction, residence life and housing figures, placement rates, library holdings, and academic structure. When Belmont changed its system of schools to one of colleges within the university, the change was informed by data from other ANAC institutions.
Measuring Excellence from a Stakeholder Perspective

Susan G. Williams
Professor of Management, Jack C. Massey Graduate School of Business, Belmont University

When a university commits itself to the difficult and often humbling process of listening to students and other stakeholders with improvement as the overall goal, good things can happen. The result is an agile approach and a keen awareness of the marketplace where the campus community achieves strong continuous performance assessment, strategic planning, and system redesign.

Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee, began its improvement initiative in 1990. Since then, the university has been recognized nationally for its work in student-centered teaching and learning. Belmont is a private, coeducational, comprehensive university; it sits in the heart of Nashville, in a quiet area convenient to downtown and adjacent to Music Row. Belmont is home to more than thirty-three hundred undergraduate and graduate students. The university offers undergraduate degrees in more than fifty major areas of study through our six undergraduate colleges and schools. In addition, master’s degrees are available in accountancy, business administration, education, English, music, occupational therapy, nursing, and sport administration. The School of Occupational Therapy also offers a clinical doctor of occupational therapy degree, and the School of Physical Therapy offers the doctor of physical therapy degree.

Our faculty comprises two hundred full-time professors. The student-to-teacher ratio is 11:1. Eighty-five percent of Belmont classes enroll fewer than twenty students. Belmont consistently receives national recognition for its commitment to personal interaction between students and faculty.

The Commitment to Stakeholder Data Gathering

Early in the 1990s, the senior leadership group conducted a census of students, asking them what delighted them and disappointed them about all aspects of the university. The president and senior leaders read every comment. At the end of the census, student comments were categorized, and teams began work on those improvements most important to students. Changes included centralized student services through Belmont Central, a one-stop place for students to do business with the university, and a focus on teaching excellence through a Teaching Center. Both initiatives are evidence of the result of listening carefully to students and translating their words into redesigned practices.

Stakeholder Expectations and Requirements

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### Table 4.2. Belmont University Stakeholder Requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Key Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Excellent learning opportunities related to programs of study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Highly qualified, motivated faculty who are accessible both inside and out of classrooms; good advising from those faculty</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Authentic, practical learning experiences, particularly in major fields</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Small classes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Physical safety; good campus amenities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Extraordinary student service</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tolerant environment to explore new ideas; emotional safety in learning environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cutting-edge technology for learning, research, service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunities to give feedback on their learning and on service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult students; Graduate students</td>
<td>Diverse cultural experiences (in addition to above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Courses offered at convenient times</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expedited, prompt services</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic freedom</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competitive compensation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty development resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classrooms and offices equipped and designed for multiple uses; technology to better serve the learning process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reasonable workload shared equitably by all colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Fair and equitable pay and benefits; job stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationships with coworkers and supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>Consistent, positive institutional reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interaction with other alumni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents, families</td>
<td>Safe environment for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hirable skill levels for graduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong academic reputation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attractive, affordable school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caring, encouraging staff and faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donors</td>
<td>Thanks and recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accurate and timely response to gifts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunities to participate, influence, and develop relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers</td>
<td>Students who have workplace 2000 skillsets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunities to present their businesses to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students who have both personally and professionally ethical behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community, society</td>
<td>Well-educated workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service and involvement</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership, community service</td>
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The focus of this narrative is on stakeholder measures, but it is important to note that Belmont is also concerned with assessing teaching and learning outcomes that cannot necessarily be effectively assessed by listening to stakeholders. Formal measures and indicators include first-year retention rate, graduation rate by college and program, placement rate by college and program, certification examination pass rates, number of faculty accessing teaching-improvement activities, peer teaching reviews, peer mid-course assessments, general education peer audits, and activities of faculty improvement groups. The university has a teaching center whose entire focus is helping faculty become better teachers, creating a collegial ethos that is student- and values-centered. In
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addition to within-course assessments, the university recognizes other results as outcome measures. Placement rate, licensure examination pass rate, retention, graduation rate, and students’ satisfaction with their learning environment are among the measures that are tracked, and results in these areas have also improved dramatically in the past ten years.

Accrediting agencies, university faculty, and administration all monitor end measures, as well as in-process learning measures. Several indicators are monitored and compared to peer institutions as evidence of student learning. Since 1995, retention from first year to second year has risen from 70 to 78 percent, and placement rate overall is well over 90 percent within six months of graduation. In the largest university program, music business, the placement rate is 97 percent after one year. In the School of Nursing, the state examination pass rate for 2000-01 graduates is 100 percent, up from 93.2 percent over the last five years. The licensure examination pass rate for doctoral graduates in physical therapy is 98 percent for the first two graduating classes. In occupational therapy (another new program), of the eighty-two graduates the placement rate is 100 percent upon graduation with a 98 percent first-time pass rate on licensure examinations. Finding comparative information required research as well as collaboration with other institutions. Belmont’s memberships in the National Consortium for Continuous Improvement in Higher Education and ANAC gave us venues for obtaining comparisons and benchmarks.

The Baldrige Framework: Another Measurement Tool

A commitment to continuous improvement as a strategic management construct encouraged leaders to assess the university using the 2000 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Program criteria for performance excellence. Using first the criteria designed for business and later the Criteria for Performance Excellence in Education (2000), Belmont completed three comprehensive assessments in the 1990s, two as part of the Tennessee Quality Award and one nationally as part of the Malcolm Baldrige Pilot Program for Education in 1995. These assessments brought outside evaluator feedback from business and education leaders who were part of site visits and application review teams. As a result of those assessments, many Belmont teams made improvements in areas of importance to the university. In 2000, Belmont University requested permission from its regional accreditor, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), to use the Baldrige National Quality Program Criteria for Performance Excellence in Education (2000) for its ten-year reaccreditation study. The results of that self-study served to inform the strategic planning initiatives of 2000. There was a consensus on campus that assessing ourselves in that way would be more helpful than traditional assessment, and our expectation was that the resulting feedback report and reaccreditation documents would lead to more innovation and improved learning systems. Both the accreditation report from SACS and the site visit report commended the university for using these approaches (“Belmont University Alternate Self-Study,” 2000).

Belmont University is committed to the premise of “student-centered education,” and this commitment drives every aspect of a student’s academic, social, and administrative experience. The university collects information through a variety of methods and has done so since the early 1990s. Through demographic and market research, student and faculty and staff surveys, focus groups, academic unit surveys, graduating student measures, and student advisory groups, the university determines and anticipates the changing needs and expectations of current and future students. Such a focus results in consistently high student satisfaction with their learning environment, service, and faculty teaching. In several of these areas, Belmont sets the benchmark for student satisfaction among peer institutions. These universitywide measures and results, based on stakeholder and internal requirements, are shared with campus units through the budgeting process and various teams and committees:

- Student satisfaction (four key areas)
- Faculty satisfaction
- Staff satisfaction
- Student satisfaction (four key areas)
- Financial learning
- Enrollment
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Measuring the Effectiveness of Internal Partnerships

The university has an extensive network of processes designed to support the teaching and learning process. One of the most noteworthy aspects of these support processes is that we consider them part of a good learning environment for the entire campus community; as such, they are also assessed and improved for excellence. Many support areas have what they call “partnership agreements,” which are negotiated internally between and among work units. Work units assess each other on attributes of processes that are shared among them. Figure 4.3 is an example of a check sheet that internal partners use to indicate key process attributes and negotiate those that are important to their areas.

In the design of support processes, the university meets regularly with key suppliers and business partners—food service, technology vendors, high schools and community colleges, book suppliers, building contractors, and others—to take their needs into account. We call our key vendors partners, and at various stages in our relationships we have partner meetings to discuss our mutual expectations and needs. Belmont has defined these key partners, as well as their and our principal requirements. The university uses a set of measures to determine the health of the relationships and to assess whether we and our partners are meeting each other’s needs.

![Figure 4.3. Partnership Agreement Check Sheet.](image)

| Speed ☐ | Cycle Time ☐ |
| Cost ☐ | Compliance Risk ☐ |
| Completeness ☐ | Clarity ☐ |
| Helpfulness ☐ | Caring Attitude ☐ |
| Usefulness ☐ | Consistency ☐ |
| Quality ☐ | Creativity ☐ |
| Accuracy ☐ | Breakthrough Opportunity ☐ |

Challenges

Ultimately, any assessment initiative’s success depends upon the organization’s culture for change, resources, people, tools, and processes. Belmont’s struggle to assess itself, with improvement as the goal, has been and continues to be a difficult one. The reluctance of people to hear bad news or see figures that are disconfirming impedes trust in assessment processes. People often search for excuses rather than ways to change. The role of leadership and of the larger faculty in assessment cannot be overstated. Strong leaders, both in the faculty and the administration, who ask the right questions, listen with understanding, and plan change with colleagues are the foundation for improvement. Effective measurement and improvement systems ultimately lead to a place where stakeholders value the organization and are willing to help it succeed. Belmont University seeks to be such a place.
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A Balanced Scorecard for Business and Administrative Services at the University of California, Berkeley

Ron Coley
Associate Vice Chancellor of Business and Administrative Services

Paul K. Dimond
Principal Administrative Analyst

The University of California, Berkeley, is a member of the ten-campus University of California system and is the largest public research university in the world. On a hillside overlooking San Francisco Bay and the Golden Gate, the Berkeley campus serves a student population of thirty-three thousand, employing nineteen hundred faculty and twenty thousand staff (full-time and part-time). As the original campus of the UC system (1868), UC Berkeley is often referred to simply as “Berkeley” or as “Cal.” Its tripartite mission of teaching, research, and public service follows the vision of California’s founders, who dreamed of a university that eventually, “if properly organized and conducted, would contribute even more than California’s gold to the glory and happiness of advancing generations.”

Berkeley’s long-solid reputation in agriculture, the humanities, and engineering took on a new dimension in the 1930s with physicist Ernest O. Lawrence’s development of the cyclotron, turning Berkeley into the home of “big science.” Beginning with Lawrence, eighteen Berkeley faculty have won Nobel Prizes, in physics, chemistry, literature, and economics. In recent decades, Berkeley’s faculty has gained the campus a world-class reputation in the biological sciences as well.

Student culture is another distinguishing hallmark of the campus. The Free Speech Movement of the 1960s paralyzed the campus as students fought for the right to advocate for political and social causes. Since then, Berkeley’s student body has become known for passionate advocacy around issues of racial, ethnic, and gender equity, and other forms of social and political fairness. Led by the student body, faculty and staff have also embedded diversity and social equity into Berkeley’s campus culture.

Berkeley’s Business and Administrative Services (BAS) Division provides support services to the academic enterprise. The division encompasses eighteen departments with a total staff of nineteen hundred. Its services range from back-office business functions to physical plant, human resources, environmental protection, police, student health services, intercollegiate athletics, and recreational sports.

In the mid-1990s, the BAS Division was in dire need of resources, and its service level was suffering. The early years of the decade had seen a fiscal crisis in the state that adversely affected the budgets of all public services, including UC Berkeley. Administrative divisions of the campus were allocated a disproportionate share of the cuts, as campus leadership did its best to shelter the core of the enterprise: the academic and research programs.

In 1995, Vice Chancellor Horace Mitchell assumed the leadership of BAS and began a series of administrative improvement efforts that continue to develop through the present. His goal was to improve BAS services to a level of quality commensurate with the stature of the institution. This meant two things: sharply focusing BAS services to support the campus mission of teaching, research, and public service; and achieving a level of service excellence that would enable and facilitate faculty and students in their own quests for excellence.

The intended result would be a corps of support staff—accountants, custodians, plumbers, administrative assistants, police officers, and others—energized, skilled, and viewing their own job as helping students to learn and faculty to expand the frontiers of knowledge.

Recognizing that the campus’s academic programs and capital infrastructure needs would limit BAS funding indefinitely, Vice
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The Foundation for Improvement: Core Competencies and Administrative Vision (1996–97)

Beginning with the fundamentals, Mitchell formed a campuswide committee to identify and describe management core competencies—the behaviors and skills needed by all campus managers to meet the needs of a constantly changing work environment. The results of the committee’s work can be viewed online (http://partnership.chance.berkeley.edu/ManageCoreComp/index.html).

Next, another team was formed from all sectors of the campus to articulate the “Berkeley administrative vision,” a comprehensive statement of the role and nature of administration in an academic institution (http://partnership.chance.berkeley.edu/vision.html). Together with the core competencies, the administrative vision was a foundation for the needed improvements that were to follow. The impact derived in part from the fact that all sectors of campus administration, both academic and nonacademic, collaborated in their birth.

The Added Vigor of New Campus Leadership: CECCI (1997–1999)

Chancellor Robert M. Berdahl arrived on the Berkeley campus in 1997, charted a course of improved strategic planning, and laid the groundwork for a campuswide culture of continuous improvement.

To secure the commitment of top leadership in his improvement effort, Berdahl selected a group of key campus leaders to make up the Chancellor’s Exploratory Committee on Continuous Improvement (CECCI). The committee defined a four-tiered approach to continuous improvement:

1. Strategic leadership and vision
2. Organizational assessment
3. Process improvement
4. Staff engagement

These four categories have been the focus for a host of subsequent academic and administrative improvement initiatives in virtually all segments of the Berkeley campus.

The BAS Balanced Scorecard (1999–2002)

BAS looked for an improvement model to embed in its own operations the four-tiered approach defined by CECCI. The model had to address the fundamental challenges faced by the BAS Division:

- A minimally trained management corps
- Difficult communication throughout its far-flung departments
- Scarcity of collaboration, and untapped synergies, among its departments (“eighteen silos”)
- Lack of alignment to an organizational strategy (“1,000 staff, 1,000 strategies”)
- A talented but demoralized workforce
- A staff culture in which personal values sometimes superseded organizational values
- A lack of adequate measurement systems, in some units, to track performance
- Scarce resources

In 1999, BAS adopted the Balanced Scorecard model of Kaplan and Norton (1996a, 1996b, 2001) as its framework for meeting these challenges. The scorecard was seen as a vehicle for all four tiers of the CECCI approach:

1. Strategic leadership: by articulating core values and strategic goals, aligning the organization around those values and goals, and giving managers a common language for their leadership efforts
2. Organizational assessment: by developing a system of metrics to track performance toward strategic goals
3. Process improvement: by using the metrics to feed cycles of continuous improvement
4. Staff engagement: by showing staff their connection to the organizational mission, by providing ways to demonstrate accomplishments, and by putting staff into major feedback loops

In sum, the balanced scorecard appeared to provide what BAS needed most: a multifaceted communication vehicle whose aim was alignment of daily operations to the overall mission. A pilot was begun in seven of the eighteen BAS departments.
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1. Strategic leadership: by articulating core values and strategic goals, aligning the organization around those values and goals, and giving managers a common language for their leadership efforts
2. Organizational assessment: by developing a system of metrics to track performance toward strategic goals
3. Process improvement: by using the metrics to feed cycles of continuous improvement
4. Staff engagement: by showing staff their connection to the organizational mission, by providing ways to demonstrate accomplishments, and by putting staff into major feedback loops

In sum, the balanced scorecard appeared to provide what BAS needed most: a multifaceted communication vehicle whose aim was alignment of daily operations to the overall mission. A pilot was begun in seven of the eighteen BAS departments.
The Balanced Scorecard Pilot

In tailoring the Kaplan-Norton model to the BAS pilot, a number of adaptations were decided on.

Focus on Frontline Units

Rather than installing an organizationwide balanced scorecard, with goals and measures cascading from the “corporate” level to the workunit level, the pilot consisted of separate balanced scorecards for each of the fifty frontline work units (termed “strategic business units,” or SBUs) in the seven pilot departments. This approach was intended to have a direct and immediate impact on a frontline staff that felt disenfranchised. In addition, it was hoped that the success of these frontline balanced scorecards would win the commitment of senior and midlevel managers who at first showed only marginal willingness to invest in this new structured measurement system.

Critical Goals Instead of Organizational Strategy

The Kaplan-Norton model begins with an overall organizational strategy and aligns goals and metrics to that strategy. The BAS Division, however, lacked a clearly articulated divisional strategy. In tune with the decision to focus on frontline SBUs, managers and supervisors were engaged in an active process to identify “critical goals” for each of their frontline units. Metrics were then identified to track each SBU’s performance toward its critical goals.

Values Instead of Perspectives

A final and most critical deviation from the Kaplan-Norton model was the recasting of the model in terms of BAS’s core organizational values. Kaplan and Norton defined four “perspectives”: learning and growth, internal process, customer, and financial. Hoping to infuse its own organizational spirit into the framework, BAS decided to balance its scorecards around four “core values” that parallel the Kaplan-Norton perspectives:

1. People (“We enable and develop our people for progress”)
2. Processes (“We continuously improve our processes”)
3. Resources (“We use our resources wisely”)
4. Service (“We anticipate and respond to the needs of our customers”)

Exceptionally high-quality service is the ultimate value and the ultimate goal. BAS leadership felt that the “value” language offered greater potential for motivating staff and was more aligned with top BAS management’s own value-driven leadership style. See Figure 4.4.

The Balanced Scorecards that resulted from these adaptations can be viewed at http://bas.berkeley.edu/BalancedScorecard/.

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Figure 4.4. The Logo of the BAS Balanced Scorecard Pilot, University of California, Berkeley.
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Figure 4.4. The Logo of the BAS Balanced Scorecard Pilot, University of California, Berkeley.
Balanced Scorecard Metrics: Selection Process

Two things proved especially valuable in BAS’s metric-selection process: (1) a “coach” with broad organizational experience (the balanced scorecard coordinator) to assist managers in identifying good metrics, and (2) a clear set of guidelines. The BAS guidelines for metric-selection are shown in Exhibit 4.1.

Exhibit 4.1. BAS’s Guidelines for Selecting Good Metrics.

1. CRITICAL GOALS: Every metric relates to a critical goal. The metric tracks progress toward that goal.
2. GOALS BEFORE METRICS: Critical goals should be identified before metrics, not vice-versa.
3. NEED TWO TYPES OF METRICS: There are two types: those that measure outcomes of performance (such as financial performance or customer satisfaction) and those that measure factors that drive performance (such as cycle time, staff skill level, or staff morale). Both types are needed.
4. A METRIC IS A NUMBER: If it’s not a number, it’s not a metric.
5. METRICS SHOULD BE UNDERSTANDABLE: Metrics communicate the organization’s expectations to staff. If the metric is hard to understand, the message is lost.
6. USE EXISTING DATA WHERE POSSIBLE: In all cases, the potential benefit must exceed the cost of collecting the data.
7. METRICS MOTIVATE BEHAVIOR: A well-designed metric motivates desired behavior; a poor metric motivates adverse behavior. Almost any metric is capable of motivating adverse behavior if it stands alone; use of multiple metrics (“scorecards”) counteracts this.
8. BALANCE YOUR SCORECARD: Strive for several metrics in each of the four quadrants of the scorecard. This encourages your managers to manage to an entire scorecard, not individual metrics.
9. KEEP IT STRATEGIC: Both critical goals and metrics should be truly strategic. A simple test: “Is the chancellor likely to care about this?”

10. A SCORECARD SHOULD TELL A STORY: A good balanced scorecard will tell the story of your unit’s strategy: What are your critical goals? How will you measure your success in reaching these goals?

Introduction of the Pilot: A Calculated Strategy

The introduction of the balanced scorecard pilot was an exercise in strategic communication. The communication plan included all the usual elements: meetings, newsletters, posters, training sessions. More effective than any of these, however, was the decision to let the tool acquire its own voice through high initial impact. The first element introduced was an organizational climate metric in the form of a staff survey. All eleven hundred staff in the pilot units were asked to fill out a probing 128-question survey titled “Let’s Hear It!” asking how they felt about virtually every aspect of working at Berkeley. They replied with gusto, adding reams of detailed comments, and the balanced scorecard was launched.

The “Let’s Hear It!” survey brought many telling moments:

- Six supervisors, in a particularly troubled wing of the organization, refused to take the survey so long as their common manager was in the room (they were given a separate room and wrote with great relish).
- About seventy staff took the survey in one of five languages other than English. These staff, for whom English was a second (or fourth) language, showed remarkable enthusiasm for the survey; it was the first time ever that they had been invited to communicate in the workplace in their native language.
- There were expressions of shock by some managers and supervisors when the survey results reported how their staff really felt about their jobs and work environment.
- The five-hundred-person Physical Plant Department decided to use the survey results as one basis on which to design a major reorganization.
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Evaluation of the Pilot

BAS leadership originally estimated a three-year time frame (1999-2002) to fully embed the balanced scorecard pilot into operations. Results to date (late 2002) have been encouraging:

- The first annual "Let's Hear It!" survey displayed in dramatic fashion that BAS's workplace climate fell far short of staff expectations. A round of staff-generated improvement initiatives has followed each year's survey, and the second and third annual surveys showed changes in staff opinions that roughly reflected the effectiveness of those initiatives. Management has come to accept this as confirmation that climate and culture can indeed be managed and improved.

- The common language and increased focus of the balanced scorecard evolved into a series of interdepartmental committees charged with managing various dimensions of strategy: safety, communications, human resources, customer advocacy, and others. Collaboration among departments took tangible shape.

- A balanced set of ten to fifteen metrics was developed for each of the fifty frontline units. Each unit's set held two types of metrics: a few common ones (used by all or most units) and some specific (unique to that unit). The configuration, including the common metrics, is shown in Exhibit 4.2.

- Strategy review using the accumulated data began in May 2002. The leadership team of the pilot (associate vice-chancellor plus departmental directors) conduct a biweekly review session at which the managers of two SBUs present their goals, metrics, and results. The leadership team examines each SBU's strategy and makes suggestions for improvement. These sessions are becoming an important vehicle for the "communication that brings alignment." Managers are showing increased focus on what really matters.

One of the strengths of the balanced scorecard approach is its reliance on hard data to measure results. The data are showing positive trends in many areas:

- Customer satisfaction: based on recent survey data from key campus customers, plus reduced frequency and severity of complaints

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**Exhibit 4.2. Metrics Template Used in BAS Balanced Scorecard Pilot.**

**PEOPLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITICAL GOAL</th>
<th>METRIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent workplace climate</td>
<td>Let's hear it! staff survey (annual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled, knowledgeable, learning-oriented staff</td>
<td>Average percentage completion of individual learning plans (an annually revised plan for each staff member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe and healthful working environment</td>
<td>IPP performance ranking (a composite metric evaluating the unit's performance on the six major parts of its Illness and Injury Prevention Plan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy staff</td>
<td>Injury and illness rate (work-related recordable incidents)</td>
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<td>Revenue less expense, or budget less expense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productive use of resources (Other specific goals and metrics)</td>
<td>(Metric specific to unit)</td>
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**PROCESSES**

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Other indicators of organizational improvement are also strong. Discussions of strategy are appearing on meeting agendas at every level. The metrics are focusing attention on factors that “drive success” (the past two years have seen a large increase in time allocated to leadership training, supervisory training, customer advocacy training, individual career-development activities, and proactive safety planning). The primacy of improving service to customer groups is being recognized; more service-oriented workshops are being held, their effectiveness is being assessed, and a Web-based survey system to track customer satisfaction has been piloted.


Late in 2001, a review of the progress of the balanced scorecard pilot led to the decision to expand the approach to the remainder of the BAS Division. In addition, Vice Chancellor Mitchell perceived that there was a further benefit to be gained: clear articulation, for the first time, of a BAS strategy. This thinking paralleled the evolution of Kaplan and Norton’s own view (1996a, 1996b, 2001) of the balanced scorecard tool, from their earlier conception of the balanced scorecard as a “balanced measurement system” into a broadened view of the model as the basis for a “strategic management system.” In other words, this tool for measuring organizational performance, if properly crafted, could achieve greater impact as a tool for managing implementation of strategic strategy.

To make the larger BAS implementation truly strategy-centered, Mitchell and his senior leadership team adopted the approach described by Kaplan and Norton in their latest book, *The Strategy-Focused Organization* (2001). The BAS leaders first articulated their divisional strategy in the cause-and-effect language of a Kaplan-Norton strategy map. During the summer of 2002, a select task force created a division-level balanced scorecard by devising metrics and initiatives relating to the strategic objectives on the map. In 2003, the balanced scorecard framework will be cascaded to all the BAS departments and to the strategic business units within each department. Where the “critical goals” identified by the SBUs of the pilot departments align well with BAS strategy, they will be incorporated (see Exhibit 4.2). Where this is not the case, new goals and metrics will be identified.

Ideally, every BAS employee will have a personal balanced scorecard that links to the larger framework. The result, it is anticipated, will be an implementation-and-feedback system without precedent in BAS, and an ever-increasing level of excellence by BAS in support of Berkeley’s academic mission.
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Comparing Solutions to Campus Parking Problems
Mo Qayoumi
Vice President for Administration and Finance and CFO, California State University Northridge

As the largest university system in the United States, California State University (CSU) consists of twenty-three campuses with a student body of more than 407,000 and a faculty and staff of 45,000. CSU serves as the gateway for many students who are seeking a college education in California. As such, CSU is awarding more than half of the bachelor’s degrees and roughly 30 percent of the master’s degrees in California. The system was created by the Donahoe Higher Education Act of 1960, which brought together individual California colleges and universities. The oldest CSU campus, San Jose State University, was founded in 1857; the newest campus, California State University Channel Island, was opened in 2002. CSU offers more than eighteen hundred bachelor’s and master’s degree programs in roughly 240 subject areas. Since 1961, CSU has awarded approximately two million bachelor’s, master’s, and joint doctoral programs.

The majority of students are commuters. Similar to most other campuses in the country, parking is an issue and a potential source of dissatisfaction for many students, faculty, staff, and visitors at CSU—a fact that was underscored in the 1999 CSU Student Needs and Priority (SNAP) survey report. One especially important matter for commuting students on any campus is the ease or difficulty in securing and paying for a parking decal. Satisfaction surveys conducted in spring 2001 at many CSU campuses indicated that 36 percent of the students were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the long lines and wait time and other problems associated with the existing procedures for securing permits. Because of the importance of this issue for most students, CSU decided to examine the process of decal issuance in some detail in an effort to identify potential improvements.

Decal issuance was also seen as a major problem from the perspective of the institutions involved. The Student Financial Services (SFS) offices at CSU campuses, which include cashiers, student accounts, and bursars’ offices, are responsible for processing student requests and payments for parking decals (among many other student financial transactions). Most SFS offices also issue parking decals to employees. Both SFS and the CSU parking offices had identified the issuance of parking decals as a matter in need of study for potential process streamlining.

Our Approach
To address this goal, CSU initiated a benchmarking study to compare performance among CSU campuses as well as other leaders in higher education and other sectors. The study was conducted in 2001, and the report—which serves as the basis for this narrative—was published by the participating team in early 2002.

Benchmarking is an action-biased approach for obtaining information to enhance performance. It begins with the premise that an organization should be humble enough to admit that there can be others who are better in accomplishing a particular task, and that it makes good sense to learn from them rather than reinventing the wheel.

The need for this study became obvious when the CSU Student Account Receivable (SAR) group determined that most campuses used the same methods of decal issuance and were all experiencing similar problems. The first and obvious issue was that at many institutions the largest number of faculty and students were purchasing their decals in person at the cashier’s office immediately before and after the beginning of the semester. Long lines were created at most cashier’s locations as a result. The challenge was to identify alternative methods that would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the decal issuance process.
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Participating CSU campuses in the study were Chico, Fresno, Fullerton, Hayward, Northridge, San Bernardino, San Jose, San Luis Obispo, and San Marcos. Dolores Basilio, from Quality Improvement Programs of the CSU chancellor's office, facilitated the study. The study was sponsored by William Barrett, associate vice president at CSU Fullerton (acting vice president, administration, in 2001) and myself as vice president of administration and finance at Northridge. John Darakjy, assistant director of financial services at CSU Northridge, led the study. In addition, there were about twenty-five other individuals from the aforementioned campuses that served as team members in the study. The stated goal of the study was to develop a model practice that CSU campuses could adopt to improve service; better meet the needs of students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders; and increase productivity in the issuance of decals.

**Current Practice of Decal Issuance**

Most CSU campuses did offer students and faculty advance purchase options. Students options included ordering by phone, Web, mail-in, or drop-box. Faculty and staff had the option of paying parking fees through automatic payroll deduction, eliminating the need for them to wait in line. Where they were widely used, these options greatly eased the workload of cashing staff and the inconvenience and dissatisfaction associated with a long wait in line.

Although many CSU campuses allow students to request parking decals months before classes begin, thousands of students do not take advantage of advance purchase options. Northridge reported that approximately 33 percent (fifty-five hundred) of student parking decals for the fall 2001 semester were purchased in person, with twenty-five hundred purchased the week before and during the first few days of classes. Fullerton reported that 60 percent (thirteen thousand) of their decals were purchased in person, and Sacramento reported about 40 percent (almost six thousand of their fourteen thousand decals) were sold in person. About half of the campuses surveyed mail the decal to students, and the balance required in-person pickup.

**Specific Tools and Methods**

The study used a number of tools and methods. A first step was to analyze the various processes and subprocesses involved in decal issuance:

- A flowchart describing the incremental steps from purchase to delivery
- A hand-off map indicating key inputs (among them student request, vendor supplies, payments, regulations) and outputs (permits issued, revenues, and so forth)
- An "as-is" map describing the current step-by-step process as the paperwork moved within and between functions and departments

The next step was analyzing the process using fit/gap analysis and Pareto diagrams. A number of measures such as quality of service, cost of implementing alternatives, timing, and validity period for the decal were identified. The needed information was gathered using student surveys and site visits in other organizations. The student surveys collected data on:

- Preferred method of payment
- Preferred method of applying for a decal
- Satisfaction or dissatisfaction with length of line and wait time
- Reasons for purchasing a decal in person

**Clarifying Dimensions of the Problem**

Using the knowledge obtained by staff from their interaction with students, faculty, and staff as well as a survey, these root causes for the three key issues were determined:

- Long lines of students. The common reasons students purchase decals in person were campus policy, lack of knowledge about advance or electronic purchase options, not receiving the decal, lack of confidence in the decal delivery system, personal choice, procrastination, financial aid issues, and no desire to part with money until necessary.
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• Missing or incorrect information or payments. Other reasons for avoiding advance purchase options that were common to all categories of purchasers (faculty, staff, and students) were missing request forms, concern about payment getting lost in the mail, lack of proper identification to purchase a decal, or lack of required information.

• Untimely or nonreceipt of the parking decal. Students who used advance purchase options reported that they sometimes receive their decals after classes begin—or not at all—thanks to incorrect address, mailing the decal too close to the start of term, postal delays, being unaware of the receipt, and fraud.

The Model Practice

A model practice was developed through using tools for process improvement, referencing survey and research data including the Customer Satisfaction Survey 2001, Performance Measurement 2000, and a process survey of CSU campuses conducted in fall 2001, as well as conducting site visits to USC, UCLA, and the Oakland Stadium to identify best practices. Given this input, the recommended model practice encompasses three key facets.

The first is Web-based service. The primary channel for the issues of parking decals should be the Web. The survey found that this is the most preferred option for students. Self-service for the students, faculty, and staff would resolve many of the problems with the current processes. Other electronic options could be considered, such as phone or kiosk, but would not be as effective as the Web. It was determined that to ensure that the Web is fully used, some procedural changes and new communication strategies (mentioned in the following sections) were needed to highlight the benefits of the approach for students, faculty, and staff.

Second, other strategies can be used to increase effectiveness and efficiency. The model practice recommendations achieve effective utilization of resources for both labor and material costs by significantly reducing or eliminating transaction processing and staffing for long lines of students. This is accomplished through:

• Automation with Web-based parking decal programs and services
• Applying financial aid awards (with student approval) toward the cost of parking

• Sale and distribution of annual decals to students instead of term decals
• Stronger student accountability for decals
• Long-term decals for faculty and staff
• Human Resources issuing decals to new employees
• Group reissuance of parking decals to permanent faculty and staff
• Outsourcing the mailing of decals to a third-party vendor
• Mailing decals no later than two weeks prior to the start of the term

The third key is increased and proactive communication. It was determined that improved communications will be needed to increase utilization of advance purchase options. Here are some of the communication channels to be used:

• Student venues such as orientation
• Information included in registration and financial aid packets
• Cyber voice technology, if available, by contacting students who have not purchased a decal a month before the start of the term

Impact of the Study

Of the six campuses that participated in the study, three have already adopted the model framework. Two of the campuses have indicated they will be implementing most of the recommendations, and one campus has decided not to implement the recommendations at this time.

Participating campuses learned a great deal from each other as well as the site visits, and exchange of policy and procedural information among participating CSU campuses resulted in campuses reexamining their own practices. There are immediate opportunities under current consideration: increasing communication with the student population through various venues, reviewing reasons for requiring vehicle information and other personal data, rethinking replacement decal fees, implementing more types of electronic payment, improving already available electronic systems, and outsourcing mailing of decals. The introduction of
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systemwide master enabling agreements to parking offices is already benefiting CSU campuses.

Benchmarking studies such as this one are not per se a silver bullet that can magically transform work processes or eliminate inefficiency or dissatisfaction. They can, however, bring greater clarity and rigor to problem definition and problem solving. The approach can also contribute significantly to changing the cultural fabric of an organization, giving greater emphasis to systematic information gathering and comparisons in institutional assessment and improvement efforts.

### Integrating Organizational Assessment, Planning, and Improvement

Making Organizational Self-Study and Change Everyday Activities

The need for more effective organizational assessment, better synchronization between assessment and planning, and the appropriate linkage of these activities with organizational improvement efforts is a significant one. The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award program (MBNQA), established in 1987 by Congress through passage of Public Law 100–107, constitutes a framework that helps address these issues. Named after Secretary of Commerce Malcolm Baldrige, who served from 1981 until his death in 1987, the intent of the program created by this legislation was to promote U.S. business effectiveness for the advancement of the national economy (Baldrige National Quality Program, 2003a) by providing a systems approach for organizational assessment and improvement. The program, which is administered by the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST), has also been an influential contributor in national and international efforts to identify and encourage the application of core principles of organizational excellence.

Essentially, the goals of the Baldrige program are to:

- Identify the essential components of organizational excellence
- Recognize organizations that demonstrate these characteristics