



# STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INTERNATIONALISATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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TEMPUS IRIS 2<sup>nd</sup> Consortium Meeting, Berlin 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2013

# WHY DO HEIS NEED STRATEGIC PLANS?

*“Strategic planning in higher education in the current era takes on even greater importance today than it did even a decade ago.*

*The changing needs of higher education and society, the growth of information technology, the communications revolution, the fluctuations in access to financial and human resources, and the rapid pace of change in other aspects of the environment in which higher education operates, give strategic planning an added urgency.*

*More than this, however, in the prevailing environment of fierce competition for outstanding staff, students and resources, **strategic planning is about positioning, defining, or discovering the institution’s niche, and seeking to be the best in what it can do.**”*

(Hayward and Ncayiyana 2010)

# (IN)ABILITY TO RESPOND

- Universities in general are unaccustomed to responding to rapid societal changes and poorly equipped to deal with new challenges:
- Lack of experience in strategic thinking and planning
- Lack of ability to scan environment
- Tendency to be inward rather than outward facing
- Inability to respond to evolving stakeholder needs
- Lack of tradition in leadership and management
- Weak or inappropriate organisational cultures
- Academic portfolios out of line with current expectations
- Decline in student enrolments
- Issues of financial vulnerability and sustainability

# CONSEQUENCES OF NOT RESPONDING

- Loss of significance and relevance in education and research
- Inability to attract students, staff, funding
- Inability to compete
- Inability to make contribution at local or regional level
- Inability to make contribution to big questions
- Long term decline

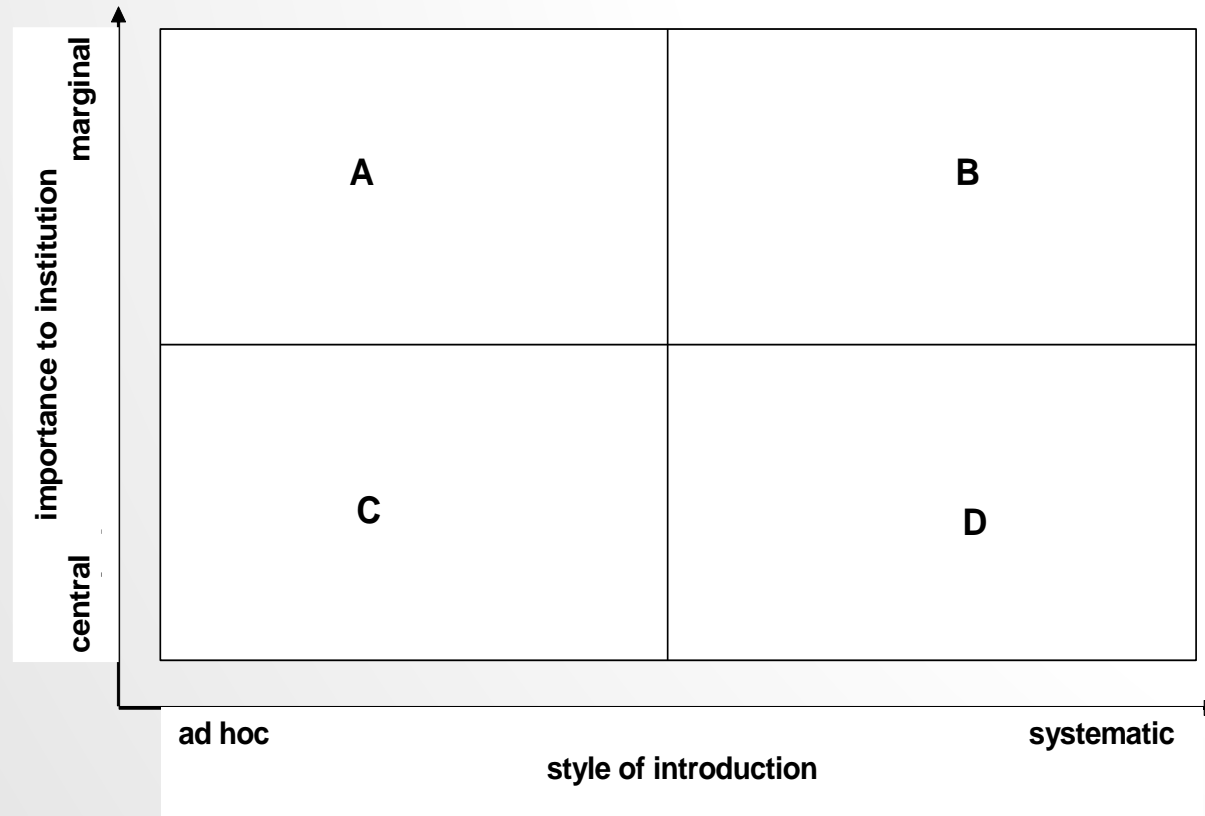
IS IT POSSIBLE TO DELIVER QUALITY HIGHER  
EDUCATION TODAY *WITHOUT* AN  
INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION?

A COLLECTION OF INTERNATIONAL  
ACTIVITIES IS NOT A STRATEGY

# FROM AD HOC TO SYSTEMATIC

- Ad hoc approaches
- Multiple goals
- Myriad of activities and initiatives across faculties and departments
- Lack of vertical and horizontal connections between the parts
- Frustration, failure, chaos ...
- Need for a more systematic framework

# INSTITUTIONALISATION OF APPROACHES TO INTERNATIONALISATION IN UNIVERSITIES (DAVIES)





# A PROCESS VIEWED WITH SUSPICION

- Imported from the business world
- The language of plans, objectives, deliverables perceived as incompatible with academic principles
- Value systems guided by principles of long term investment in educating people, creating and disseminating knowledge as opposed to typically short term focus on financial results
- Seen as a costly and time consuming deviation from principal purpose
- Focus more on academic innovation rather than financial sustainability
- Opportunity for institutional vitality rather than threat to academic identity

# EXTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- Now regarded as a central policy of many national governments, supranational agencies, funding bodies
- Useful in securing external funding when strong requirements to demonstrate responsible and effective management of funds with clear and measurable outcomes
- Also true of quality assurance and accreditation agencies requiring statement of strategic vision and intent
- Growth matched with concern with validity of academic awards
- Benchmarking against national and international standards
- Student demand

# BENEFITS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning becomes a means to face current challenges, offering the opportunity to:

- Align the university with its environment
- Establish vision
- Create a framework for future direction
- Set clear priorities
- Create a process for implementation and review
- Develop criteria for resource acquisition and distribution
- Benchmark with international good practice
- Build credibility in a competitive environment

# TAKING GREATER CONTROL OF EVENTS

- **Continuous:** not a one off exercise but a cycle of activities and constant review
- **Flexible:** in response to changing circumstances without losing sight of fundamental goals
- **Collective:** commitment and responsibility of everyone and clear leadership
- **Integrated:** understanding roles within the wider context and develop operations to support those of others through open and honest discussion around needs and ability for effective support
- **Informed:** decisions based on sound evidence and systematic collection of data
- **Specific:** objectives delivered by activities, phased in by priorities and resources, leading to outcomes

IT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BECOME A  
POWERFUL FORCE FOR ORGANISATIONAL  
CHANGE AND REINVENTION

# CONSISTENT WITH INSTITUTIONAL PURPOSE AND IDENTITY

- Not all institutions can or should be the same
- Not all can recruit from the same pool, deliver the same courses, do same research, make same contribution
- All operate in specific circumstances
- Positioning as leaders, followers, challengers, all valid in own right
- Balance between international, national, regional, local role
- Strategic planning as an effective means to meet diverse, and occasionally conflicting, requirements in a way that is consistent with core values and operations as well as circumstances in which they find themselves

# CONSCIOUS CHOICES FOR ACTION

- Strategic planning is about providing a clear basis for consideration, decision and action
- Provides a clear and explicit place for day to day activities in line with academic culture
- Should be as comprehensive and pervasive as possible
- Requires senior leaders to confront issues they might otherwise prefer to avoid
- Compromise may be the appropriate way forward in a particular circumstance
- But it should be a conscious one, made within the wider context of the strategic plan

# LEADERS MUST LEAD

- **Single most important factor is extent to which process is visibly driven and supported by senior leaders**
- A holistic approach to strategic planning
- History, size and operational practices often leads to fragmentation
- Affects every aspect of operations – some will expand, others diminish or stay the same
- For this to happen, senior leaders must be prepared to agree and implement the objectives



# OWNERSHIP

- An approach that seeks to ensure that all views are considered in the development, drafting and implementation
- **Critically dependent on active engagement** of staff and students
- Plans developed in isolation, even by most powerful institutional heads, often undermined by those responsible for delivery
- Lack of ownership among responsible leaders, unlikely to commit wholeheartedly to delivery of actions with which they disagree, especially if not consulted in their creation
- Plans developed in isolation often pass unnoticed by those at the coalface of delivery

STRATEGY DOES NOT HAPPEN IN A  
STRAIGHT LINE

# STRATEGIC THINKING

- Engaging in strategic thinking is more important than the plan itself
- Unpredicted and unintended events will happen
- University must be able to rethink strategy in response, to transform continuously
- Ability to combine formal and opportunistic planning
- Strict adherence to plan leads to rigidity
- Purely opportunistic response does not provide sense of direction
- Strategic planning is not an instrument of control but of facilitation
- Strategic thinkers are agile, flexible, creative

# IMAGINING THE FUTURE IN THREE KEY QUESTIONS

1. Where are we now?
    - Are we relevant, effective, efficient, value for money? An honest appraisal and frank assessment
  2. Where do we want to be?
    - Internal and external factors requiring a shift in trajectory, change in conception, refinement of aspiration
  3. How do we get there?
    - a strategic plan that provides a clear rationale and direction, galvanises people to deliver objectives through actions within a timeframe
- Moving away from looking at ourselves as we are now to how we want to be in the future and making it happen

# ONE CAVEAT

It will not achieve any of the above if it is a paper exercise only.  
This happens when:

- Rhetoric is greater than the reality (only a wish list)
- It is carried out only at the top of the institution
- It is used only for propaganda purposes
- It is disconnected from institutional reality
- It has few instruments to enable action
- It has no real consequences.

# IN CONCLUSION

- Concept and process of strategic planning relatively straightforward
- Successful development and delivery requires considerable, time, commitment, sustained energy and significant resources from a significant number of people, in particular at senior level
- Embarking on a process that has no natural end
- Affects every aspect of operations
- Potential to unlock latent energy
- Empowers to take control of institution and own destinies
- Makes the effort worthwhile

# PART 2

- INTERNATIONALISATION AT THE PROGRAMME LEVEL
- A PEER LEARNING APPROACH TO IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

# SELF ANALYSIS AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING AS TOOLS FOR CHANGE

Peer learners:

- Bring own experience and knowledge to the table
- Understand the issues
- Speak the same “language”
- Are interested and motivated
- Perceived as credible, unbiased, trusted
- Learn with and from one another through action and participation



# THREE QUESTIONS

- How to put internationalisation on the institutional agenda
- How to link internationalisation to academic objectives
- How to reduce the gap between strategic decisions and implementation

# INTERNATIONALISATION AT THE PROGRAMME LEVEL

- STEP 1: Analysing of current state of internationalisation
- STEP 2: Reflecting on and describing the added value of internationalisation according to common and specific characteristics and objectives
  - What is the specific contribution of internationalisation to enhancing the quality of education?
  - How is it expressed in terms of learning outcomes?
  - What is the link to the relevant graduate competences?

# ACCORDING TO A TEMPLATE

- Internationalisation should contribute to one or more of these learning outcomes in order to become meaningful for our study programme:
  - Learning outcome 1
  - Learning outcome 2
  - Learning outcome 3
- ...or contribute to one or more of these research related outcomes that strengthen our research community on topics relevant to our study programme:
  - Outcome 1
  - Outcome 2
  - Outcome 3
- Activities that would fall within these criteria are:
  - Activity 1
  - Activity 2
  - Activity 3

# GREATER UNDERSTANDING AROUND THE INITIAL QUESTIONS

- How to put internationalisation on the institutional agenda
  - Focus on common drivers (why are we doing it, what outcomes do we expect?)
  - Identification of 'uniqueness' , internal and external context, academic choices at the academic level
  - Importance of driving, facilitating, monitoring

# GREATER UNDERSTANDING AROUND THE INITIAL QUESTIONS

- How to link internationalisation to academic objectives
  - Seeing it as a means to enhance quality in T&L, research
  - Thinking in terms of the programme and its relation how it relates to the global environment
  - Identifying outcomes and impact
  - Gaining the involvement and active commitment of students and teachers
  - Investing in professional development
  - Building relations with the professional fields

# GREATER UNDERSTANDING AROUND THE INITIAL QUESTIONS

- How to reduce the gap between strategic decisions and implementation
  - Understanding it a process that undergoes constant revision and adaptation
  - Ensuring ownership and active participation of all stakeholders (management, academic staff, students, employers)

# LEARNING AROUND PEER LEARNING

- Thinking differently about familiar questions
- Becoming more inspired, creative, re-motivated
- Giving concrete meaning to abstract terms
- Moving from ad-hoc, incremental approaches to more strategic thinking
- Creating a group of critical friends who can provide constructive suggestions and “moral support”

# PART 3 PLANNING THE WORKSHOPS

- Main goal: training and capacity building of local IRO teams
- 5 workshops each lasting 3 days
- Agenda and contents will be guided by internationalisation strategic plans developed in WP2
- May include office models, roles and responsibilities, decision making processes, office management, developing and managing international agreements, partnerships and programmes, providing services, support for internationalisation at home, communication etc.....



# SCHEDULE

- Workshop 1 Sapir Israel 16-18 December 2013
- Workshop 2 UCSC Italy 20-22 January 2014
- Workshop 3 PHK Poland 2-6 February 2014
- Workshop 4 WUT Austria 3-6 March 2014
- Workshop 5 YVC Israel 7-10 April 2014

# SHAPED BY YOUR NEEDS

- What are the international aspirations for your colleges?
- What are the main objectives of your plan?
- What new activities will be started?
- What capabilities need to be in place?
- What systems and processes need to be implemented?
- What degree of change is required?