

HOW SHOULD THE STRATEGIC PLAN BE USED?

“The goal of a strategic planning process should not be to make strategy but to build prepared minds that are capable of making sound strategic decisions,” Sarah Kaplan and Eric Beinhocker, *MIT Sloan Management Review* (Winter, 2003): 71.

The university’s strategic plan is a *translation* of how the university can, with limited resources, meet the goals of the President and Board of Trustees. The library’s strategic plan is a *translation* of how the library can, with limited resources, work towards the university’s goals. Library units in turn *translate* how they can, given limited resources, fulfill the library’s goals.

Strategic planning is only a translation of broader translations. It is only at the individual level that your expertise can change planning into action. Strategic planning connects your actions to the broader goals of the university:

Library Unit goals → Library Goals → University Goals.

The University’s goals are:

1. to provide a premier undergraduate education experience ...,
2. to achieve an acknowledged position among leading American research universities,
3. to unequivocally establish Notre Dame as the premier center of Catholic intellectual life, and
4. to renew Notre Dame as a diverse and international intellectual community.

The library’s Strategic Planning Steering Committee, in turn, has translated the University’s goals into the following library goals:

1. to provide enhanced and secure access to the Libraries resources and services,
2. to facilitate the University's teaching efforts,
3. to provide library collections and information services to meet curricular, research and archival needs,
4. to renovate the Libraries,
5. to increase the effectiveness of the Libraries' organization, and
6. to assess the Libraries.

To prepare for the University’s next capital campaign, the SPSC created actions items to accompany these goals. While the action items represent important future activities they are not expected to represent everything the library does to achieve those goals. The action items, though, can help you translate the library’s goals to your own job.

The Plan Does Not Mention Copy Cataloging. Is This Activity Strategically Unimportant?

If a specific activity is not listed in the strategic plan, it does not mean that it is unimportant for achieving the library's goals. Think about it more broadly, from your supervisor's point of view. For example, does the library provide copy cataloging for a different reason than it provides original cataloging? Does cataloging for a special collection like Dante differ from cataloging books for sociology? Another way to think about it is to ask iteratively why something is important.

Q. Why do we copy catalog?

A. To create cataloging records.

Q. Why do we create cataloging records?

A. To help people find materials.

Q. Why do we help people find materials?

A. *To provide enhanced and secure access to the Libraries resources and services*

How Does the Library Measure the Success of the Strategic Plan?

The success of the strategic plan is based upon the library's ability to fulfill its goals. In turn, a goal's success is based upon the libraries completion of its action items. In all cases, success is partially based upon meeting deadlines and upon fulfilling some quantitative or qualitative target.

In the future, library managers and committee chairs will meet annually to review the progress toward and achievement of the library's goals and action items.

How Did the Implementation of the Plan Go This Past Year?

Library managers and committee chairs need to get together and discuss accomplishments over the past year. A number of items in the Strategic Plan, January 2003, could be "checked off," others identified as progressing, and perhaps others as not progressing at all. The SPSC believes that the activity of reviewing accomplishments is best done with a wider audience, not just its committee members.