

Strategic Planning and Continuous Improvement

STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Planning and Continuous Improvement
Administrative Unit

December 22, 2004
Date

Signature of Administrator

I. Administrative Unit Description

The Office of Strategic Planning and Continuous Improvement (SP&CI) is a leadership and service unit for the campus community. It facilitates the campus planning process, and supports directions and processes as the institution becomes an evidence based, continuous improvement organizational culture. Under the auspices of SP&CI, Institutional Assessment and Institutional Research and Information Management provide information and support for accountability and self-improvement strategies.

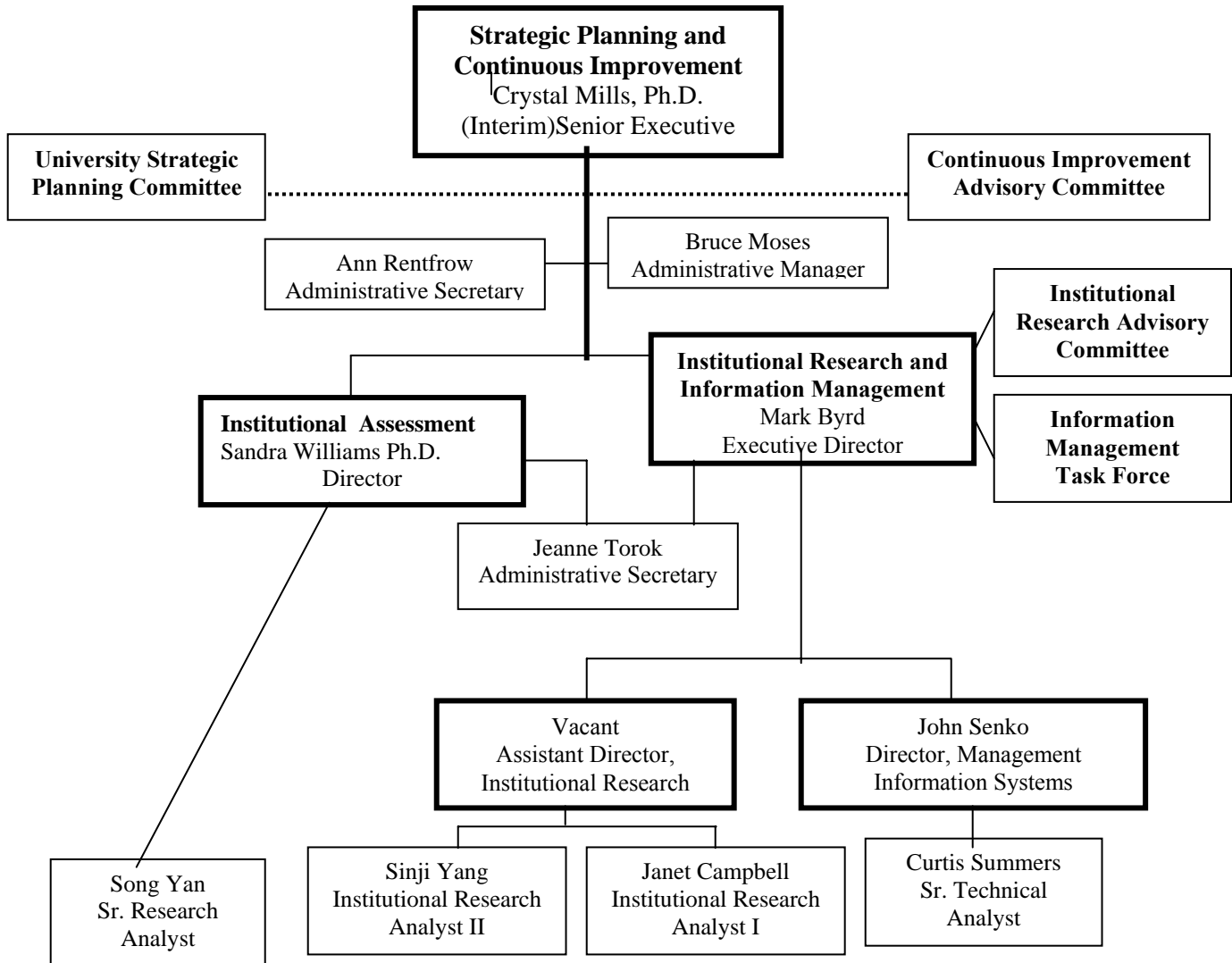
The Office of SP&CI is led by a Senior Executive and staffed by an administrative manager, administrative secretary, a graduate assistant and a student worker. The Senior Executive for SP&CI also provides administrative oversight for the Office of Institutional Assessment and the Office of Institutional Research and Information Management. The Office of Institutional Assessment is staffed by a Director, a research analyst and a graduate assistant. The Office of Institutional Research and Information Management is led by an Executive Director and staffed by a director, an assistant director, two analysts, and two graduate assistants. An administrative secretary provides support for both Institutional Assessment and Institutional Research and Information Management.

In addition to working closely with the University Strategic Planning Committee, the Office of SP&CI receives guidance from the Continuous Improvement Advisory Committee, composed of representatives from various divisions and colleges, for the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) accreditation process. A key element for AQIP is an evidence-based approach to institutional improvement.

Working closely with constituents throughout the University to develop metrics for various institutional goals and progress reports, a primary role of the Office of

SP&CI is to keep the goals of the organization before its stakeholders. Various advisory committees serve as communication links with constituents, and provide advice and feedback regarding the institutional metrics that tap key institutional goals, including criteria for accreditation. As providers of information and analytical support for administrative units, both Institutional Assessment and Institutional Research and Information Management receive advice from the Institutional Research Advisory Committee and the Information Management Task Force. These groups provide guidance around components of the data warehouse, data integrity and stewardship, policies for data access, and other issues related to accurate and timely University assessment and reporting.

The combined budget for the Office of Strategic Planning and Continuous Improvement, Institutional Assessment, and Institutional Research and Information Management is \$1,068,159. The following organizational chart displays the various staff positions and committee structure of the administrative unit.



II. Administrative Unit Planning Process

The University has an ongoing inclusive biennial strategic planning process that was initiated during the 2000-01 academic year. The intent of this strategic planning process is to establish EMUs market niche through the refinement of the primary mission and the development of a set of strategies that give EMU a comparative advantage among identified peer institutions. Since the initial planning process rolled out, the emphasis has been on better understanding the environment, the competition, and the strengths and weaknesses of the institution. Toward that end, the Office of SP&CI has facilitated environmental scans, engaged in SCOT analyses through a crosscutting committee process, and provided guidance and support for planning processes within Divisions and Units across campus.

In an attempt to gain broad based participation, the Office of SP&CI has promoted processes aimed at the proliferation of planning activity on campus that ultimately results in an institutional plan. Over the last planning cycles, we have noted the need to better coordinate planning activities. We have also noted the need for increased analytic studies and information to support the planning process. These issues have been discussed with the Strategic Planning Committee and administrative and support staff of the Office of SP&CI. Plans have been developed to gather and broker relevant information and better coordinate the evaluation and inclusion of Divisional and Unit plans into the institutional plan.

On the continuous improvement end of the continuum, the Office of SP&CI seeks to implement and support processes aimed at the development of a culture of total quality. Activities to inform and orient the campus community about strategic planning and continuous improvement processes, and to gather input from constituent groups within the University, are underway. Retreats, workshops, and focus groups have laid the groundwork for institutional assessment and the development of continuous improvement projects that will be used for AQIP. Institutional assessment activities were completed in April 2004 and potential action projects have been identified.

While planning for the Office of SP&CI is integral to University level planning and AQIP accreditation, a unit specific planning process has been undertaken and specific goals and objectives have been identified. It should be noted that recent changes in University leadership and the movement of the Senior Executive for Strategic Planning and Continuous Improvement into the role of interim Provost, disrupted planning for the unit. With the appointment of the interim, discussions were undertaken to facilitate the planning process for the unit. All administrative and support staff within the Office have participated, on some level, in the unit planning.

III. Administrative Unit Mission and Goals

The Office of Strategic Planning and Continuous Improvement employs a participatory approach to planning and change. The activities of the office are designed to support University decisions and strategic choices that lead to quality goals.

The **Mission** of the Office of SP&CI is to facilitate organizational planning and change activities that support continuous improvement and movement toward a planning, evidence based organizational culture.

The **Vision** for the Office of SP&CI at EMU includes the use of participatory, collaborative, creative and flexible processes that support the refinement and implementation of the University's Mission, Values and Guiding Principles and AQIP accreditation. The strategic planning and continuous improvement activities support an organizational culture that reflects a commitment to quality and accountability, and is supported by an evidence-based approach to organizational management characterized by:

- *Ongoing assessment, planning and evaluation
- *Data driven decision-making
- *Widely published University metrics
- *Ongoing continuous improvement activities

The **Goals** for the Office of SP&CI are set within a three year time frame and are operationalized under Strategic Planning and Continuous Improvement, Institutional Assessment, and Institutional Research and Information Management.

Strategic Planning and Continuous Improvement Goals:

1. Coordinate and facilitate the biennial strategic planning process for the institution, and evaluate the strategic plan and its related initiatives.
 - a. Update the University Strategic Plan.
 - Facilitate the strategic planning process to ensure an inclusive and informed process for evaluating unit plans and initiatives
 - Recommend Division and Unit initiatives to the Cabinet for approval and inclusion in the University strategic plan
 - Assist the Cabinet and Budget Office in budget development and funding decisions regarding strategic initiatives
 - Disseminate information to the University community
 - b. Evaluate the planning process and make recommendations for improving the next planning cycle.
 - Debrief the process with the University Strategic Planning Committee
 - Develop feedback process for Divisions and Units
 - Link evaluative mechanisms to institutional directions, strategic initiatives, and implementation strategies

- Develop planning guidelines for the next round

c. Conduct special and ongoing studies that inform planning and evaluation for the next round.

- Hold community and campus focus groups as part of an ongoing environmental scan
- Update the Environmental Scan
- Involve the campus community in prioritizing important environmental facts/trends that impact the University
- Update the SCOT analyses
- Update the Economic Impact Study
- Finalize the aspirational peer institution list
- Benchmark peer/aspirational institutions

2. Facilitate a change process to become a continuous improvement, evidence-based organizational culture.

a. Derive indicators of institutional effectiveness

- Begin AQIP projects and target outcomes
- Benchmark peer and aspirational institutions in AQIP areas
- Consult with campus and corporate advisory committees
- Use consultants from business/manufacturing to facilitate institutional learning (borrow corporate knowledge)

b. Integrate academic program and accreditation reviews, and administrative operational audits into strategic planning and continuous improvement processes.

- Convene an Executive Committee of members from the Strategic Planning Committee and the Continuous Improvement Advisory Committee
- Develop procedures to align, integrate and deploy University processes and a comprehensive system for planning and improvement

3. Facilitate communication and dissemination of information about strategic planning and continuous improvement activities.

a. Enhance awareness and availability of information regarding strategic planning and continuous improvement.

- Publish a quarterly newsletter
- Redesign the Website for user friendly access to information
- Meet with divisions/units as requested to provide information
- Collaborate with University Marketing and Communications to develop a "public" version and implement a communications plan for the updated University Strategic Plan

- Collaborate with University Marketing and Communications to implement a communications plan for continuous improvement including approaches to recognize and reward improvement successes
- b. Facilitate professional development activities to support strategic planning and continuous improvement.
- Organize sessions to inform and support the campus community regarding implementation of continuous improvement initiatives (e.g. Presidential Speaker Series, workshops, town hall meetings, and presentations)

Institutional Assessment Goals:

Institutional Assessment at EMU is a mechanism for identifying areas for change and institutional improvement. It operates as an essential part of the University's decision making process by providing accurate and timely qualitative information to meet the University goals for continuous improvement and accreditation.

1. Enhance institutional assessment efforts by providing complementary, university-wide assessment initiatives for academic departments and student support services:
 - Provide information to support specialized accreditation/ reaccreditation processes
 - Provide survey services to divisions and units
 - Gather and summarize comparative information from current and aspirational peer institutions based on national surveys

2. Design and implement assessment research projects based on institutional goals.
 - a. Collect, analyze and interpret student and university operational data to support an evidence based environment using national comparative studies.
 - CIRP
 - YFCY
 - NSSE – with over sample
 - FSSE

 - b. Collaborate with Advancement and Alumni Relations and other internal units to update databases and conduct internal studies.
 - Alumni Survey
 - Administrative Services Survey
 - Housing and Dining Survey

 - c. Coordinate assessment activities as they relate to identified AQIP Projects (including the development and administration of survey instruments to measure University culture).

- Faculty and Staff Development
- Communication
- Customer Focused Service
- Student Centered Programming

d. Prepare user-friendly reports based on the information collected for strategic or operational planning, setting institutional policies and making academic and management decisions at all levels of the University.

- Prepare Summative/Comparative reports for dissemination to the University Community
- Provide routine assessment information to be used as a catalyst for continuous improvement, best practices identification and accreditation measurement requirements
- Hold town hall meetings and focus groups to disseminate information and clarify understandings and needs
- Prepare and deliver presentations for regional and national conferences

Institutional Research and Information Management Goals

Institutional Research and Information Management at EMU is a source of comprehensive information about the University, and a service-oriented provider of analytical support for administrative units. It operates as a locus of “neutral competency”, a service-oriented, collegial unit that leads the way in developing shared, innovative, forward-thinking integrated information systems supporting a data-driven, fact-based environment for strategic planning, budgeting, decision making, continuous improvement, and measurement of performance.

1. Develop, organize and facilitate the use of new, sophisticated information in support of strategic planning and continuous improvement.
 - a. Implement and maintain the institutional data warehouse, including readily available access to key external data sources.
 - Develop procedures and standards for updates and data integrity
 - Finalize the data dictionary
 - Establish data stewards
 - Develop web-site and standard reports
 - Identify time lines for phase-in
 - Pilot the web-site and make refinements
 - Launch the warehouse
 - b. Provide access to data and coordinate, consult, guide and facilitate research design and analyses completed by administrative units within the University using the data warehouse.

- Disseminate information on the data warehouse to the University Community
 - Develop on-line procedures (tutorial) for data access
 - Develop and implement a plan for ongoing live support for research using the data warehouse
2. Provide a neutral competency to initiate and conduct studies and provide analytical support for the University community.
- a. Collect data about the environment, transactions of, and performance of the institution, e.g. undertake studies for various administrative divisions based on needs and priorities shaped by the University Strategic Plan, etc.
- Provide assistance for the development of research designs that are responsive to internal user needs (as requested)
 - Analyze and interpret collected data and prepare routine reports on enrollment, faculty, and staff
 - Transform data analyses into information that can be used to support institutional planning, set institutional policies, and make academic and management decisions (AAUP, Budget, etc)
- b. Coordinate and serve as the official data source for official reporting to governmental agencies and external organizations.
- IPEDS
 - HEIDI
 - Other Universities/Organizations requests
 - Develop and implement institutional portfolio on website

IV. External Analysis

The American Council on Education (2004) notes that the relationship between public institutions of higher education and their states is being “redefined, with greater autonomy (that is, freedom from state regulation) often exchanged for increased accountability (demonstrating how the institution will meet state needs in a fiscally responsible manner).” At the first in a series of essays based on roundtable discussions among college and university presidents, the American Council on Education and the Futures Project identified common elements in the relationship between public higher education institutions and their states. These elements include: 1) a shift toward allowing market forces more sway; 2) increased tuition and enrollment flexibility; 3) more procedural and operational autonomy; 4) level funding from the state (typically, in inflation-adjusted dollars); 5) more emphasis on entrepreneurialism in generating new revenues, and 6) the introduction of performance standards and accountability measures (American Council on Education, The Futures Project, 2004).

As noted by the Crosscutting Committee for Continuous Improvement, “There is a pervasive national accountability movement” with “increasing emphasis on state accountability requirements for public universities.” Institutions of higher education are

moving to incorporate continuous improvement approaches into day-to-day operations, and accreditation requirements are now focusing more on the development of an organizational culture of evidence. Regional accrediting bodies require input, process and outcome data, and measures for determining institutional progress toward goals and objectives. The Higher Learning Commission, National Council on Accreditation (NCA), has launched the Academic Quality Improvement Project (AQIP) as an alternative institutional reaccreditation process. This is a Baldrige based continuous quality improvement approach to reaccreditation. Similarly, other regional accrediting bodies have integrated elements of continuous improvement into their accreditation processes and many discipline specific professional accrediting bodies have also fully implemented quality improvement in their expectations.

Coupled with the AQIP requirements, there has been an increased demand from federal and state governments for different data and information on institutions of higher education. These expanded requirements have changed the kind of information necessary and the way the information is collected. National databases, national surveys, and other assessments are now required to fulfill the research and information needs of these constituents, along with peer comparison data. Within Michigan, the legislature and various state agencies are increasingly requesting that the Universities document progress toward goals and present outcome measures. This is in effect, a demand for a change in culture.

James Duderstadt, former University of Michigan president (A University for the 21st Century, 2000), suggests that the most critical challenge for institutions of higher education is developing the “capacity for change” in order to respond to the needs of a rapidly changing world. Culture change at EMU, though necessary, is fairly daunting and presents one of the biggest obstacles to achieving organizational responsiveness. Public universities like EMU are complex systems with a myriad of interests. Creating a continuous improvement environment and a culture of evidence, securing buy in, ownership of accomplishments, understanding of responsibilities, and engaging the tools to help change minds and attitudes requires advanced systems thinking and integrated process teams working in concert over time.

V. Internal Analysis

Both the foregoing national trends and the commitment that EMU has made to move toward an organizational culture of evidence and continuous improvement create the context for ongoing interaction and synergy among continuous improvement activities, strategic planning, and a fully integrated, service-oriented institutional research function. The major internal environmental issues affecting strategic planning and continuous improvement activities include the increased demand for information by the University community and needed support for AQIP accreditation information.

The colleges, departments, and divisions have expanded their need for institutional data significantly. The additional need for data and information is coming from program review, program accreditation, program retention and student service requirements. This need for information will be met in part with the development of a data warehouse, which will provide clean reconciled data for the campus community to use. Though there have been several delays in the implementation of the data warehouse, this support for the university is scheduled to come on-line in January 2005. However, as noted by the Crosscutting committee, the demand for information also relates to “communicating and educating the campus” about University level planning and the new AQIP process. This would ideally be accomplished through the identification of “administrative and faculty leaders to disseminate information and stimulate understanding” in “routine meetings, retreats, and other forums.”

Along with the need for effective communication, the crosscutting committee report speaks to the need for comprehensive institutional assessment and the development of metrics for broad institutional goals. EMU has a Director of Institutional Assessment that is responsible for evaluating and expanding assessment activities. This objective fact positions the University well for the development and implementation of a “robust system for institutional assessment.” The University is also positioned well for the development of metrics to tap broad institutional goals supporting continuous improvement. We have gathered information on LEAN Manufacturing processes that underlay corporate successes around driving culture change, operational asset effectiveness, and implementing key performance metric systems. We have access to information and consultants that will be able to help EMU translate management processes and systems, and support cultural change. In addition, EMU has an approved listing of Peer Institutions that may be used to benchmark processes and outcomes. The Office of SP&CI is actively working on the finalization of our list of Aspirational Peer Institutions that may also provide information on appropriate institutional metrics.

The above discussed issues are intricately interwoven, and a priority for the Office of Strategic Planning and Continuous Improvement over the next three years.

VI. Executive Summary of Proposed Administrative Unit Strategic Initiatives

The Office of SP&CI has identified three strategic initiatives that will provide leadership and support for the development of a “capacity for change” at EMU. These initiatives directly relate to EMU’s goal for the development of “an evidence-based culture” and external demands for accountability and continuous improvement.

Strategic Initiative 1: Expand Institutional Assessment activities

During the last round of planning, the strategic initiatives for the Office of SP&CI sought funding for participation in national surveys and the purchase of software and supports

for the development and implementation of the data warehouse. Much progress has been made on the data warehouse, which is scheduled for implementation in January 2005. EMU has participated in a number of national surveys including CIRP, YFCY, and NSSE. Data from these surveys have been summarized and are currently being migrated into the data warehouse where it will be used for ongoing assessment and continuous improvement efforts.

The initiative herein proposed for the expansion of institutional assessment activities relates directly to the AQIP accreditation process and supports the AQIP criteria on “Understanding Students’ and Other Stakeholders’ Needs.”

a. How the initiative supports and advances one of more of the University Directions.

This initiative will be able to inform the strategic planning committee and provide the EMU community with measures of success, or point to areas in need of improvement. The initiative focuses on helping the University develop and implement active assessment strategies to better understand student and stakeholder needs by collecting, analyzing and using assessment information. This initiative directly advances Direction 6 of the EMU Strategic Plan. However, robust and comprehensive institutional assessment activities are able to provide support for most of the strategic directions.

b. How the initiative supports the unit/college vision and goals.

The initiative will assist in moving the campus toward a more data-driven, fact-based environment for strategic planning and decision making. As noted by the Crosscutting Committee for Continuous Improvement, “In order for the University to successfully embrace and implement continuous improvement processes, a robust system for institutional assessment must be in place.”

Institutional assessment has been identified as a potential AQIP project. Additionally, the vision for the Office of SP&CI includes ongoing activities to support an organizational culture that reflects a commitment to quality and accountability, and is supported by an evidence-based approach to organizational management. The expansion of assessment activities directly supports this vision.

c. How the initiative relates to initiatives proposed by Crosscutting Committees.

This initiative takes into consideration the strategic issues identified by the Crosscutting Committee for Continuous Improvement and explicitly adopts the recommendation for a “robust system for institutional assessment.” The initiative will provide data and information to support the AQIP criteria on “Understanding Students and Other Stakeholders’ Needs.”

- d. *How the initiative allows the University and administrative unit to be measurably more effective in the next five to seven years.*

The vision and goals for the Office of SP&CI are directly tied to the directions stated in the Strategic Plan and the needs identified by the Crosscutting Committee for Continuous Improvement. This initiative will address the need for the collection of information about our students, faculty and staff, institutional culture/climate and the dissemination of data and information. The Office of Institutional Assessment will be able to administer a national survey of faculty-student engagement, hold focus groups with faculty and students, and oversample students within strata for the national surveys. This will in turn provide Administrative Units/Colleges/Departments with critical information to support evidence-based decision-making.

Strategic Initiative 2: Communicating and Educating the Campus Community about quality improvement processes and AQIP accreditation

This initiative has three components: (1) the use of consultants from business and manufacturing to help EMU establish a LEAN system; (2) a series of presentations and workshops to inform the campus community about continuous improvement models and activities; and (3) the refinement of the Strategic Planning and Continuous Improvement website.

The presentations and workshops will involve members of the Continuous Improvement Advisory Committee and expert consultants from business and manufacturing leading sessions to inform and consult with members of the campus community about continuous improvement models and approaches. These sessions will involve campus stakeholders in conversation about continuous improvement activities, and sessions will incorporate information on the AQIP approach to continuous improvement and reaccreditation.

AQIP requires the development of an Institutional Portfolio that includes items and information selected to demonstrate and communicate achievement or progress toward accomplishing goals. These measures and quality indicators are reported and updated routinely. The portfolio provides the opportunity to reflect upon achievements and areas for potential learning. It also serves as a vehicle by which to disseminate important information and educate the campus community.

- a. *How the initiative supports and advances one or more of the University Directions*

The initiative has a broad impact on all directions in that the information provided may be used to support any of the directions. However, this initiative will primarily advance Direction 6 which aims to "improve institutional effectiveness" by promoting an "organizational culture of assessment and continuous improvement, characterized by benchmarking and trend and data analyses, implemented through

processes including evaluation of administrative unit effectiveness and academic program review.”

b. How the initiative supports the unit/college vision and goals

This initiative is integral to successfully accomplishing the vision of Strategic Planning and Continuous Improvement. The initiative will facilitate a shift in the University's organizational culture toward a continuous improvement, evidence-based approach to doing business that is characterized by evaluation of institutional effectiveness, commitment to measurement of progress toward goals, data-driven decision-making, and ongoing activities to improve the learning environment, programs, processes, and outcomes.

c. How the initiative relates to initiatives proposed by Crosscutting Committees

This initiative specifically incorporates an issue identified by the crosscutting committee as key for continuous improvement: communication. Communication is an issue that rises to the forefront in every forum within the University when discussions focus on how best to improve the University. The implementation of this initiative will support the communication goals identified by the crosscutting committee.

d. How the initiative allows the University and administrative unit to be measurably more effective in the next five to seven years.

Successfully this communication and education initiative is important in order to systematically implement Direction 6. This initiative provides the foundation and support necessary to educate the University about continuous improvement and communicate progress on continuous improvement goals. It will allow the University community to learn lessons from business and industry about effective and efficient processes and appropriate metrics. Additionally, this initiative will assist in AQIP accreditation, be responsive to the information needs of internal and external constituents, and help inform decision-making at all levels.

Strategic Initiative 3: Benchmarking Peer/Aspirational Institutions

In October 2002 the University approved a list of “current” peer institutions and began work on the development of a list of aspirational peers. The list of approved peer institutions, posted on our website, are institutions that are “most like” EMU in terms of mission, size, mix of programs, etc. While peer institutions may be established for each academic department, the EMU peers were identified for “general” purposes. One consequence of identifying “general” peers is that Colleges/Departments have had difficulty using this tool in their planning efforts.

Aspirational peers are those institutions that we aspire to be like on some criterion. EMU conducted an aspirational peer institution analysis in 2003 based on selected criteria, including student body characteristics, research, academic programs, alumni giving, learning environment, fiscal status, and facilities. Though aspirational peers are used to “benchmark” activities/processes, EMU has not approved the list of aspirational peers.

This initiative would assist the University community in using peer institutions in the development of strategic plans by using an expert group to “benchmark” processes and identify successful operational models, and then disseminate information to Divisions/Colleges/Departments at EMU.

- a. *How the initiative supports and advances one of more of the University Directions.*

This initiative will be able to inform planning efforts at all levels within the EMU community. It will assist in the identification of University metrics and the implementation of evaluative systems to track continuous improvement. This initiative directly advances Direction 6 of the EMU Strategic Plan. However, the identification of successful operational models and University metrics has the potential to support all six of the Directions.

- e. *How the initiative supports the unit/college vision and goals.*

The initiative will assist in moving the campus toward a more data-driven, fact-based environment for strategic planning and decision making. The cross cutting committee noted the need for the development of University metrics. Additionally, the new AQIP accreditation process requires that the University engage in ongoing evaluation and report progress. Similar to the other initiatives that are part of the current strategic plan, this initiative supports the development of an organizational culture that reflects a commitment to quality and accountability, and is supported by an evidence-based approach to organizational management.

- f. *How the initiative relates to initiatives proposed by Crosscutting Committees.*

This initiative takes into consideration the strategic issues identified by the Crosscutting Committee for Continuous Improvement and explicitly adopts the recommendation to develop University metrics that will allow EMU to track progress on goals. Additionally, the initiative will allow EMU to “benchmark” processes related to the AQIP projects that will be undertaken for continuous improvement.

- g. *How the initiative allows the University and administrative unit to be measurably more effective in the next five to seven years.*

This initiative will assist the University and this administrative unit in identifying successful approaches, processes, and activities that support continuous improvement efforts and assist in the development of University metrics for monitoring change. Support of this initiative will allow a group of EMU representatives to visit peer and aspirational institutions to “benchmark” processes and identify metrics that are used to track success at those institutions. These representatives will work collaboratively to develop recommendations for change, monitor and evaluate the change effort, and support the change effort through the dissemination of information based on identified University metrics..