Integrated Planning: The "Difference that Makes a Difference" in Institutional Effectiveness Over Time

Justin P. Hoshaw, Michael Ben-Avie, Kimberly K. Daugherty, Nicholas R. Santilli, Megan Schramm-Possinger, Lina Di Genova, Robert Wilkinson, Ashli Grabau, and Erin M. Isaacson

Abstract: Higher education is at a crossroads. Institutions need to be increasingly adaptable to unexpected stressors while building more robust systems for assessing their students' longitudinal, multifaceted development within the context of mission-driven operations. Integrated planning is a collaborative process that meets these goals through the intentional coordination, within and among units, to engage in long-term planning while nimbly responding to changes that warrant procedural alterations so that institutions can meet their strategic goals. In this paper, we demonstrate how the architecture of institutional effectiveness (IE) is inextricably linked to the quality of its integrated planning (IP), with student learning and developmental outcomes at its nexus.

Keywords: *institutional effectiveness, integrated planning, assessment*

Introduction

If we have learned anything in 2020 it is that change is inevitable and it is up to institutions of higher education to anticipate change and manage it well. Embracing change not only allows for institutional adaptability and sustainability -- it also equips colleges and universities to generate knowledge and contribute to the equity, inclusion, and civic mindedness upon which our nation depends (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2020). Yet, much like a subtle bend and sway of a bridge, higher education must remain nimble without adulterating its two fundamental roles: to advance the learning and developmental needs of its students and the generation of new knowledge. Although both roles are unequivocally important, this paper is focused on students' learning and development, and more specifically, how post-secondary learners' multifaceted, substantive growth depends upon the effectiveness of the institutions in which they are matriculated.

Thus, in this paper, we demonstrate how the architecture of institutional effectiveness (IE) is

inextricably linked to the quality of its integrated planning (IP), with student learning and developmental outcomes at its nexus. These include facilitating students' academic habits of mind, interpersonal relationships, future orientation, sense of belonging, civic engagement and social responsibility, and capacity to cope with anxiety as well as other mental health issues (Astin, 1984; Ben-Avie & Darrow, 2018a; Kuh et al., 2006; O'Keeffe, 2013). We assert that the focus on IP and tracking student development and learning over time are underexplored prerequisites for IE, and are necessary if institutions are to meet their mission and remain afloat in increasingly volatile times. Further, we contend that student success must be situated in the center of college and university assessment, and that the goal of centrality – that is, maximizing students' success – is, again, a function of the quality of IP and longitudinal assessment practices.

Assessment creates a shared language about student learning and development. The critical

function of assessment is to name phenomena, to provide people with the language to articulate why they have a sense of unease when considering whether students are learning and developing well, and to provide a framework for talking about students in a nonjudgmental manner. These strategies provide the "language of development" when considering which of several policy options to select or curricular or co-curricular innovations to implement. Effective assessment strategies spark important discussions on campus that lead to purposeful educational changes based on evidence (Hutchinson et al., 2012; Kuh et al., 2015). Thus, the criterion for effective assessment is whether the learning and development of students were enhanced as a result of using the assessment insights.

IE is about maximizing the benefits gained from using these assessment insights. IE can be defined as both a noun and a verb as seen in Figure 1. IE as a "noun" is part of the institutional infrastructure. IE as a "verb" is the act of demonstrating IE. IE's relationship to integrated planning reflects IE's purpose as both a noun and a verb. As part of the institutional infrastructure, IE sets a structure for planning activities that happen on campus. Typically, an institution's board of directors along with the president and senior leadership set the broad strategic direction for an institution. The work of planning, from strategic to operational, academic to facilities, and student life to finance, is executed by leadership and campus stakeholders. A strong IE infrastructure sits at the nexus of all of these campus networks. In the context of this, IE offices may oversee unit planning -- to some degree -- and offer various levels of data and planning support for all institutional planning activities (Knight, 2015).

Figure 1

A Model of Institutional Effectiveness as both a Noun and Verb through Integrated Planning
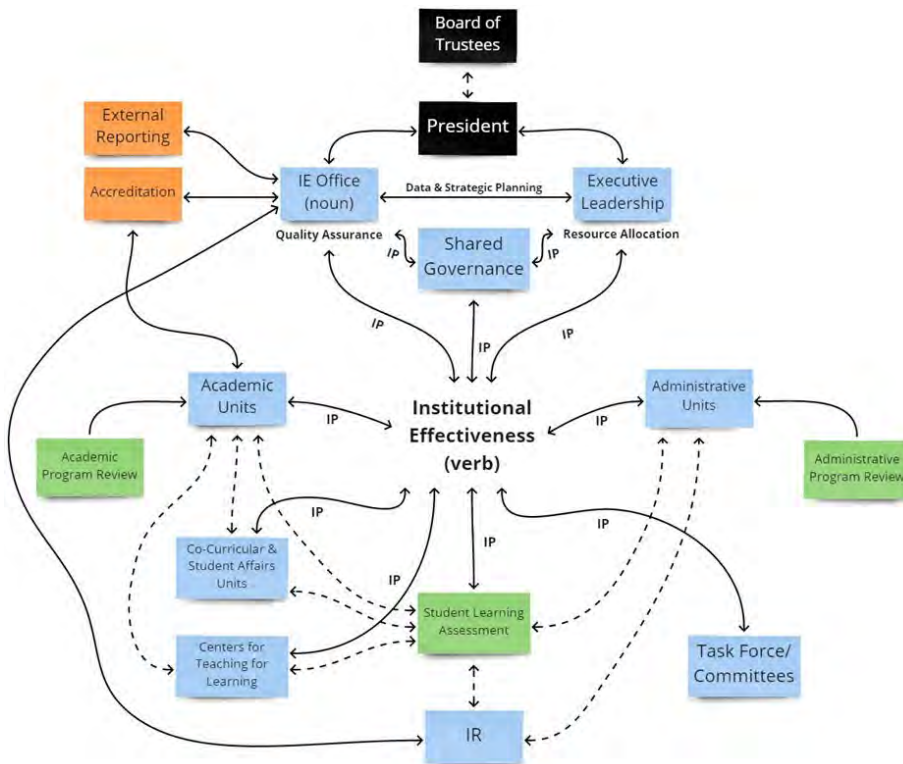
Note. This figure demonstrates the function of IE as both a noun and a verb in the broader institutional context. Black and blue boxes denote official university personnel and functions. Orange boxes denote external regulatory entities and functions. Green boxes denote mechanisms for gathering and usage of institutional data. Solid lines represent data collaboration to support institutional integrated planning. Dotted lines represent data collaboration to support work at the unit level.

As a verb, IE is the purposeful coordination and integration of institutional functions and processes that support institutional performance, quality, equity, and efficiency. Within the framework of the triad of teaching and learning, discovery, and engagement, those functions and processes include strategic and operational planning, outcomes assessment, institutional research, regional and specialized accreditation, and program/unit review. On the implementation side, this means that IE is the sum of institution-wide IP activities plus the longitudinal assessment of multifaceted student development. For example, IE has an important role in the master facilities plan to ensure that the plan for the facilities aligns with the learning and developmental needs of the students as well as the needs of other operational units (for example, IT), (Salem, Itani, & El-Hajj, 2020).

As both a noun and a verb, IE is operationalized through the comprehensive alignment of strategic planning, assessment (academic, co-curricular, and administrative) as well as program and administrative functional review to enhance effectiveness and efficiency while reducing the duplication of effort (Rizvi & Jacobsen, 2018). At times, the role of IE is to be a voice at the table during the planning process, offering insights based on data and helping the planning team to articulate desired outcomes. At other times, the role of IE is to promote IP.

IP is a discipline, not a methodology that creates "a sustainable approach to planning that builds relationships, aligns the organization, and emphasizes preparedness for change" (Society for College and University Planning, 2021). The key components of this definition namely, "sustainable, relationships, alignment," and "change readiness," grounds institutional progress in establishing a disciplined approach to deliver on mission-driven outcomes that foster student success, discovery, engagement, and institutional thriving. The organizational alignment that is fundamental to IP must occur both within and between units, so that the staff and faculty therein are working in collaboration to meet their institution's mission and goals with an eye towards proactive, forward thinking, long-term planning, and operational agility.

Situations in our current higher educational landscape set the stage for contextualizing our conceptual argument of IE being inextricably linked to the quality of its IP, with student learning and developmental outcomes at its nexus. For example, during periods of rapid change, questions from faculty often arise about how decisions are made to keep academic departments open or drastically transform programs to meet objectives established by senior leadership. Although cost-cutting measures during difficult times can result in adverse impact for academic programs, the same can be true in times of rapid expansion, whereby programs try to keep up with demand and little attention is paid to IE as a whole. The strain on student learning, academic careers, and administrative staff resulting from financial and related resource swings can take years from which to recover, often leading to mistrust among faculty and senior administration. During our current, markedly volatile period for higher education due to factors related to the pandemic, the enrollment cliff for traditional-age college students and financial uncertainty (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2020), IP offers colleges and universities an alternative approach where faculty and staff, as well as students and other important stakeholders, can take an active role in beneficially shaping the future direction of their institutions through engagement and commitment.

Broadly speaking, IP is a well-defined, intentional process that facilitates collaboration among students, faculty, staff, and senior leadership to make sound decisions that are mission-driven and data-informed. Guiding this process is the consistent scanning of both the internal and external environment for emergent trends that may impact institutional operations. In the context of this, when consequential shifts -- such as the transformation of a department -- need to be made quickly, the relationships, communication protocols, and decision-making processes germane to IP comprise the foundation required for the strategic enactment of change. Taken together, the benefits of an IP process are increased transparency, trust, organizational change agility, and collaborative governance resulting in better institutional and student outcomes. Thus, through IP, senior leadership, faculty, staff, students, and both internal and external stakeholders are positioned to generate solutions for short- and long-term plans that optimally support student learning and development and institutional thriving (Salem et al., 2020).

The "Difference that Makes a Difference"
Many institutions claim integrated planning (IP) as their mantra. This, however, is not really the reality. IP is the Holy Grail of institutional operations, often claimed but rarely found (Santilli, 2020). When an institution of higher education does not handle change well, it constantly operates in a crisis mode. In a crisis mode, the administrators, faculty, and staff do not have the wherewithal to engage in the type of long-term, prospective, global planning that leads to improved learning and developmental outcomes among students. Kinzie & Kuh (2016) write that "institutions usually implement piecemeal short-term initiatives with disconnected success programs leading to 'solutionitis'--the problem of doing something, anything, to and for students" (p. 13). The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (undated) defines "solutionitis" as "The tendency to jump quickly on a solution before fully understanding the actual problem to be solved. This behavior results in incomplete analysis of the problem to be addressed and fuller consideration of potential problem-

solving alternatives." The purpose of outcome assessment is to identify the underlying factors that may impact students' growth along essential learning and developmental outcomes, -- with students at the center of this endeavor -- as well as to effectively leverage change. This might mean that the "difference that makes a difference" is a low-cost, high impact strategy that had not been considered previously.

Keeping in mind that learning outcomes are interdependent, the most effective leverage for change may not necessarily be the most obvious one. Assessment that emerges from IP recognizes that, as with any ecosystem, intense stress on one part of the system influences the functioning of the whole system. However, assessment strategies that primarily pay attention to one aspect of students' learning and development may undermine their growth in another domain (Patton et al., 2016). It is for this reason that comprehensive IP is needed in institutions to ensure there is promotion of not only students' learning but also student development in all its facets. Holistic student development is a complex endeavor which requires administrators, faculty, and staff to coordinate their efforts. Directors and coordinators of assessment can help with this complexity when IP is used to drive priorities and assessment. The capacity to leverage data to promote students' learning and holistic development emerges from a process that enables colleges and universities to see essential learning outcomes as a comprehensive plan, identify the underlying operations that are causing problems, and to figure out how to use the results of assessment initiatives to inform decisions (Baer, 2019). Thus, IP without assessment built into it will not work.

Integrated Planning and Longitudinal Assessment of Student Learning and Development
To promote the manifold dimensions of students' learning and development, an integrated institutional planning process is needed that considers all the experiences that students have on campus, within the same framework, as well as their experiences over time. Assessments of the efficacy of these frameworks and experiences in

advancing students' multifaceted learning and development (e.g., persistence, engagement, motivation, belonging, communication skills, capacity to lead/work well with others, problem-solving, academic growth, management of cognitive and non-cognitive complexity, etc.) should then be used to determine how student-centered curricular and co-curricular experiences can be modified to best meet their needs longitudinally – as part of a continuous feedback loop (Carnevale et al., 2020). These competencies should be assessed, as should post-secondary outcomes -- such as job placement, income, graduate/professional study, educational attainment/post-baccalaureate completion rates, military service, and volunteer service -- as all are fundamental for success in emerging adulthood (Klor de Alva & Christensen, 2020). As alluded to above, integrated planning (IP) is a strategic and operational process that includes robust assessments of student development over time within the context of advancing institutional effectiveness.

In an effort to identify the "difference that makes a difference," the most effective leverage for change emerges from analyzing patterns and anomalies in data from assessments that track students' learning and development over time. To identify "the difference," cohort studies are essential that follow students from new student orientation through graduation or subsequent enrollment in another university. Learning and development are incremental processes and, therefore, longitudinal studies are necessary to determine the impact of an institution of higher education. A mission-driven, data-informed process of educational change that is informed by IP and the developmental sciences (developmental psychology, cognitive science, and neuroscience) is not common (Ben-Avie & Darrow, 2018b). Few institutions systematically measure college students' incremental growth along such aspects of developmental trajectories as future orientation and overcoming hesitancy to seek help. In a 2020 review of empirical research studies dealing with students' trajectories through higher education, Haas and Hadjar (2020) stated that the field of research on students' higher education trajectories (rather than on static points in time,

such as singular transitions) is "rather small" and "fragmented." The review analyzed articles with a quantitative research focus using panel data and that focused on trajectories as a longitudinal concept (continuities and discontinuities in the process of acquiring degrees). Studies were excluded if they focused only on the occurrence of single events within the trajectory (dropout, transfer). The authors identified only 18 articles in English, published in peer-reviewed journals, written over the past two decades (1999-2018) in the United States. The conclusion was that research on college students' trajectories "remains scant." Despite the paucity of this research and corresponding methodologies, we assert that the collection and subsequent effective use of data on student learning and development is the mechanism through which students' developmental needs will share at least equal attention with institutional needs, especially financial ones.

A tension exists, however, between the need for long-term studies and an institution's pressure to quickly see the impact of a new program or campus initiative. This tension may be exacerbated by results after a short period of time that appear to suggest that the new program is not meeting expectations. It is for this reason that articulating a "life cycle" of assessment and planning makes sense.

Consider, for example, a completely revised general education program. At first glance, possible stages in the life cycle may include planning, faculty development, implementation, and institutionalization (when the "new" general education program is no longer "new" and it becomes "that's just the way that we do things around here"). For a while, a college or university may maintain two distinct general education programs: the previous program for juniors and seniors along with a new general education program for incoming students. Sometimes scores on metrics decrease after the first year of implementation of a new program because change brings hidden tensions to the surface. Also, some faculty members may resist modifying their courses thereby preventing full implementation. Thus, a life

cycle needs to take all this into consideration by defining cycle milestone (e.g., if 35% of the faculty enthusiastically modify their courses, then a low or moderate level of outcomes may be observed; if 75% of the faculty enthusiastically modify their courses, then more positive outcomes may be seen).

Three years after implementation, administrators, faculty, and staff may try to explain away disappointing results by declaring that the new general education program was never fully implemented as designed. Yet, these disappointing results could be avoided through use of IP. Lessons from change management and implementation science research align with IP principles and show that educational program initiatives can have strong fidelity to implementation plans (Bauer et al., 2015; Metz & Easterling, 2016). Fruitful outcomes can be achieved when implementation plans are supported by senior leaders, communication about why changes are needed is clear and consistent, and active data-driven approaches are used to inform changes throughout the program's life cycle. Thus, it is worthwhile to widen the frame for a moment to consider how evidence may inform how decisions are often made on campus.

Focusing on individual students may stretch the capacity of an institution of higher education. It is more effective to engage in IP that is preventive rather than providing support student-by-student. If, for example, data findings and assessment strategies are discussed only in the context of faculty professional development or accreditation, then opportunities are missed to place student learning and development at the forefront of the institution's planning. The limitation of discussing data findings only in the context of faculty professional development is that the most effective leverage of change may not necessarily be more faculty workshops. It is for this reason that longitudinal, cohort studies are conducted to identify patterns and anomalies in student persistence and graduation. The scope of a longitudinal, cohort study is the university in all its entirety, and not just one aspect of the institution or a particular initiative.

It is during a period of rapid change in which institutions are required to quickly make many decisions where in which assessment and cohort databases, and not anecdotes of unusual cases, are needed the most. An institution that is using an IP mindset will find that when task forces and committees need assessment results to make decisions, there is no need to scramble to access this information because cohort datasets have already been created and are ready to be mined for actionable data.

The Connection between Assessment, Integrated Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness
This focus on the essential contribution of assessment to integrated planning (IP) will require a re-defining of institutional effectiveness (IE) to what Knight has proposed as the Integrated Institutional Effectiveness Office (Knight, 2015). Here, Knight (2015) argues for broadening the work of IE in the manner we have suggested, namely, to include, "The functional components of IIE units typically include institutional research, assessment of student learning outcomes, academic (and sometimes administrative) program or unit review, strategic planning, and accreditation. Not all of these functions are always present. Less common additions to the IIE portfolio may include institutional budgeting, analysis and allocation of space, and development of new academic programs" (page 4).

The Integrated Institutional Effectiveness Office would serve as the steward of documenting a host of institutional activities and serve as an initiator for institutional progress. For example, assessment now becomes part of the design process of new initiatives and related discussions (including budget and related resource allocations) to ensure improvement instead of after-the-fact discussions on how to determine effectiveness because accountability measures require an evaluation. In this context, Ewell's (1987) distinction between assessment-for-accountability and assessment-for improvement is pertinent. Assessment for improvement encompasses all aspects of students' experiences on campus and over time. Rather than

assessing specific learning outcomes in isolation (e.g., written communication, critical thinking), this approach calls for identifying the most effective leverages for managing change both at the institutional level and within students. Development is about change and an immediate outcome of IP is an increased intentionality to take emerging adulthood into consideration in manifold forums on campus.

The Association for Higher Education Effectiveness (AHEE 2021) defines integrated institutional effectiveness (IIE) as follows: IIE is *the purposeful coordination and integration of functions that foster student success and support institutional performance, quality, and efficiency; those functions include strategic planning, outcomes assessment, institutional research, regional/specialized accreditation, and program/unit review.* Upon further examination of the functions of various IE offices, this definition can be expanded as follows: IE is the purposeful coordination and integration of institutional functions and processes that support institutional performance, quality, and efficiency. Within the framework of the triad of teaching and learning, discovery, and engagement, those functions and processes include strategic and operational planning, outcomes assessment, institutional research, regional and specialized accreditation, and program/unit review as seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2

A Model of Institutional Effectiveness
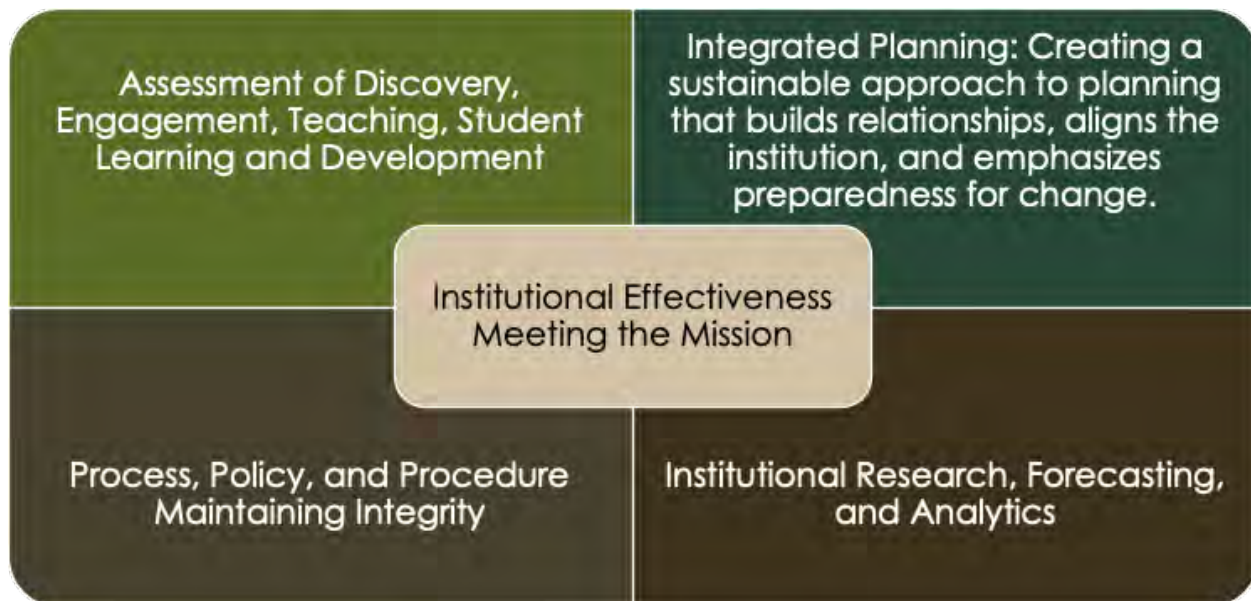
Note. This figure demonstrates the purposeful coordination and integration of institutional functions and processes that support institutional performance, quality, and efficiency.

On the implementation side, this means that IE is the sum of IP plus the longitudinal assessment of multifaceted student development. This can be operationalized through the comprehensive alignment of strategic and operational planning, assessment (academic, co-curricular, and administrative), as well as program and administrative functional review to enhance effectiveness and efficiency while reducing the duplication of effort. As discussed in detail later in the paper, this requires IE to be situated where strategic, tactical, and annual academic departmental planning converge, and should render IE experts initiators and champions for student success and institutional thriving, not simply suppliers of data (Volkwein, 2010).

Furthermore, as stated previously, IE may be both an institutional entity (noun) and an institutional practice (verb). As an *institutional entity*, IE is the office most responsible for monitoring or leading: the assessment of student learning and development, as well as academic and administrative program review; IP; oversight of the development and implementation of institutional processes, policies, and procedures, and; engaging in the institutional research and analytics that provides the necessary evidence to support institutional thriving. As an *institutional practice*, IE includes the routine collection of institutional performance data used to support: routine compliance reporting, such as IPEDS; creation and maintenance of institutional dashboards; supply evidence for progress on strategic and operational integrated plans; support the assessment of student learning and development; creation of institutional reports,

such as, factbooks, economic impact studies, annual reports, and research and engagement activities.

The dual purpose of IE creates particular challenges for those professionals charged with establishing IE offices on campuses and the practice of IE on campus. For IE to thrive on campus it is important that institutional leadership recognize the form and function of IE is *institutional* in scope and exists to promote *effectiveness* in operations, policies, procedures, and data governance.

Recommendations for Advancing Institutional Effectiveness through Integrated Planning
The Society for College and University Planning (SCUP, 2015) asserts that seven "successful planning" processes undergird integrated planning (IP), which are: an emphasis on "good planning"; ensuring university stakeholders, leaders, staff and faculty are "trained in how to plan effectively"; shared "beliefs regarding what constitutes effective planning"; deliberating and agreeing upon "planning prioritizations"; "integrating campus plans" effectively (i.e., linking the budget to academics, facilities and other university priorities); "managing change" effectively; and planning in a manner that is responsive to, and can be easily adapted to, change (p. 33). Given the centrality of these factors in successfully enacting IP along with the focus on assessing learning and development over time, pertinent procedural questions emerge that would help to improve institutional effectiveness (IE), as IE professionals become more closely involved in institutional planning.

Specifically, "What does it look like" to emphasize good planning and being able to enact the seven factors above?
1. Good planning is an active process that includes feedback from a diverse audience. It is neither an exercise used to meet a compliance-based requirement, nor a static document that "sits on

a shelf" (SCUP, 2015, p. 10). Planning should also be supported by senior leadership as an ongoing process oriented towards establishing long-term goals that are endorsed by all constituents.

2. Defining effective planning requires constituents to "understand and agree on" what it "looks like" to be efficacious (SCUP, 2015, p. 13). Effective plans are transparent, comprehensive, actionable, measurable, and clear. In the absence of this, planning will be disjointed, rudderless, non-strategic in nature, and enacted in fits and starts.

3. Stakeholders have to agree on institutional priorities and do so according to knowledge of finite fiscal resources and time constraints. Agreement and adherence to plans requires they be coordinated, according to the reconciliation of diverse priorities, using a disciplined approach.

4. Plan integration requires coordination within and across organizational units; campus planning should not be separate from strategic planning, academic planning, fiscal planning, and facilities. This is especially important given the complexity of student learning and development. As shared above, student learning and development is not the responsibility of one unit or plan. As a result, IP should include a diverse array of stakeholders from across the campus community.

5. Knowing how to plan effectively is not intuitive, and all who conduct planning need explicit training in how to do so. Thus, learning how to plan is not a skill set that should be completed as quickly as possible, learned once and never revisited. Sadly, those most involved in strategic planning are often the least likely to be trained on how to enact master planning, capital planning, space management planning, and the like. In addition, training on how to specifically enact IP is needed.

6. Planning must occur according to shared understanding of the real costs associated with change and a commitment to incurring them to meet institutional goals. Having said that, all institutions will be confronted with unexpected threats and opportunities, and a culture of IP will facilitate their ability to responsively and flexibly adapt to those changes.

7. As noted above, change is inevitable, but IP facilitates proactive, not reactive responses to multiple shifts ranging from changing learning and/or demographic changes in the student populace, among other things (Santilli, 2020).

An understanding and consideration of these seven factors enables an institution to fully utilize IP to support IE. IE can then better focus on its purpose and function to provide ongoing, integrated, collaborative, substantial mechanisms to promote and ensure the quality and effectiveness of all aspects of an institution so the institution accomplishes and stays true to its mission (Gadia & Mendoza, 2020). To fully actualize these goals, IE should be repositioned so that it is at the forefront of strategic, tactical, and annual academic departmental planning. This shift represents assigning circumscribed roles for IE experts in data assessment, planning, program review, and research to one that is focused on integrated leadership and facilitation (Salem et al., 2020). Thus, IE offices, staffed by experts in data analysis, through the use of student information systems and programming languages, creating data dashboards, completing state and federally-mandated reports, and completing assessments for accreditation and program review should serve as a "command center" within an institution's infrastructure. In contrast to common practice, in which IE is brought in at the end of the strategic planning process to develop metrics, IE experts need to be part of

the original team, and perhaps even guide the process. To do true IE planning, IE offices need a seat at the table with senior leadership to conduct the internal and external analyses that inform strategic, tactical and departmental plans (Wall et al., 2014; Welsh & Metcalf, 2003). IP is about people as much as it is about data. As such, collaborative governance is key.

IP will, in turn, improve IE as IE professionals become more closely involved in institutional planning. The needs of universities as a whole will become clearer to IE professionals and as such allow more targeted collection and use of the data. Optimal use of data depends upon the degree to which institutions longitudinally track student affairs with metrics such as engagement, experiences, student learning and development, advisor notes, student tutoring, student appointments, student intake questionnaires, and student risk flags, among other things. This illustrates again that data that are segmented and/or exist in silos preclude universities from improving their IE via integrated planning (Ellison et al., 2020). Issues related to student, faculty, and staff privacy can be mitigated through technological solutions. Thus, as IP serves as the connective tissue among disparate institutional planning efforts, integrated data collection provides the information systems that inform coordinated, campus-wide initiatives to increase its IE.

IP provides higher education institutions with tools to build a sustainable approach to planning and managing change while working towards shared values and goals related to student learning and development. Through active engagement towards these shared goals, faculty and staff can leverage their commitment to student learning and development to inform the planning process. Faculty and staff engagement in the IP process benefits the institution in that it leads to

commitment at different levels and provides multiple pathways to engagement; for example, aligning course-level learning outcomes with institutional learning outcomes. Welsh and Metcalf's (2003) research substantiates that faculty and staff commitment to the planning process can contribute to departmental and institutional improvements, more in-depth implementation of plans, and a greater focus on outcomes -- as opposed to a singular focus on resource allocation discussions.

The multiple pathways for engagement benefit the institution by creating a more collaborative governance approach to decision-making, thereby increasing faculty and staff commitment, transparency, and trust with senior leaders. Through the use of numerous sources of data -- such as assessment, learning outcomes, and longitudinal cohort studies -- the integrated planning process also enables a scholarly approach to planning that can shape departmental priorities. By enabling a process of inquiry and leveraging both quantitative and qualitative data, faculty from different academic disciplines can actively contribute to innovations in IE.

Future Considerations

Integrated planning (IP) for the purpose of creating shared values and goals related to student learning and development calls for intentional collaboration across organizational units. Collaboration is needed to effectively address student learning and development holistically. Data, perspectives, and knowledge from not only academic units, but also from student affairs, operations, and the like, provide a more robust and meaningful understanding of student learning and development. Although these assessments are essential to conduct, this paper incites additional insights to consider when engaging

in IP for the purposes enumerated above, and introduces considerations for future research. Such considerations include, how should we engage students purposefully and strategically in the process, and two, how do we ensure an equitable process that leads to equitable outcomes? Although the scope of this paper does not allow us to explore these queries in depth, it does offer salient insights for practitioners and scholars to consider.

Drawing on literature that demonstrates the value of engaging students in the assessment process, we assert that engaging students throughout institutional IP efforts is necessary. Best practices in academic assessment call for formative evaluations that enlist student feedback throughout their learning process, such as self-assessment via journaling (Bioxham & Boyd, 2007). Institutions also encourage student involvement in assessment outside the classroom by inviting them to attend assessment skill development workshops or creating roles for them to engage in these evaluations at the institutional or academic level (Blaich & Wise, 2011; Blaich et al., 2019; Truncale et al., 2018; Werder et al., 2016). All too often, however, assessment is done to students rather than with them (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017).

As suggested above, the same can be said about institutional planning. If we consider institutional effectiveness to include championing student success and institutional vitality (Volkwein, 2010), and consider IP as a process that engages multiple facets of the community, then we must also consider whether students are situated at the center or periphery of these processes. We assert they are at the center: They are not only experts on their own learning and development but are also able to engage as co-inquirers (rather than subjects) in addressing problems and questions

within the community of concern (Frank, 2020; Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017). In the spirit of doing planning with students rather than to students, we argue for further scholarly consideration in how to engage students purposefully and effectively in the IP process beyond completing surveys, using their data, or participating in focus groups (Asperin et al., 2021).

Hand in hand with engaging students in the process, is consideration of how to approach IP through an equitable framework. Considerations for multiple as well as oppressed voices throughout the planning process is essential to effectively address holistic student learning and development. The body of literature addressing equitable assessment practices in higher education is growing (Dorime-Williams, 2018: Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017). In addition, the Grand Challenges in Assessment Project has identified increasing equity as an essential challenge to address through unified efforts by national and international organizations (Singer-Freeman & Robinson, 2020). According to Dorime-Williams (2018), a social justice approach considers how "issues of power, privilege, and identity impact the experiences and perceptions of students and educators" (p. 43).

Equity and the social justice lens can be applied beyond assessment to IP practices. In what ways might IP perpetuate systems of oppression, widen equity gaps, or harm underrepresented students, faculty, and staff (Asperin et al., 2021). Perez (2020) offers using theories, like critical race theory (CRT), to help expose inequitable practices in planning processes. Drawing on Perez (2020), Asperin et al. (2021) challenges colleges and universities to have a plan that engages communities that have traditionally been excluded and oppressed in order to address injustices. They explain not

having a plan that does this is exclusionary in and of itself. Considering the call for more equitable practices in higher education assessment and drawing on frameworks like social justice and CRT, we propose further examination of ways to approach IP that results in increasing equity and minimizing oppression.

Conclusion

In summary, integrated planning (IP) provides higher education institutions with tools to build a sustainable approach to planning and managing change, while working towards shared values and goals related to student learning and development. The multiple pathways for engagement benefits the institution by creating a more collaborative governance approach to decision-making that focuses on student development and learning, thus increasing faculty and staff commitment, transparency, and trust with senior leaders. Through the use of multiple sources of data, such as assessment, learning outcomes, and longitudinal cohort studies that are reflected in a diversity of student-centered metrics, the IP process also enables a scholarly approach to planning that can shape departmental priorities. By enabling a process of inquiry and leveraging both quantitative and qualitative data, faculty, staff, administrators, and other stakeholders can actively contribute to the innovations in institutional effectiveness (IE). This is particularly salient in this age of contradictions, with higher education facing greater threats just as its assets -- realized through IE -- become all the more vital to our societal, and our literal, health.

References

Association for Higher Education Effectiveness. (2021, March 12). About AHEE. www.ahee.org/about/

Asperin, L., Santilli, N. R., and Thomas, M., Eds. (2021) Five ways to advance higher education for future viability (Report). Society for College and University Planning. https://www.scup.org/resource/five-ways-to-advance-higher-education-for-future-viability-pa20/

Astin, A. W. (1984). Student involvement: A development theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Development*. 40. 518-529.

Baer, L. L. (2019). The rise of analytics in higher education. In Baer, L. L., Carmean, C. (Eds.). *An Analytics Handbook: Moving from Evidence to Impact* (pp. 3-9). Society for College and University Planning.

Bauer, M. S., Damschroder, L., Hagedorn, H., Smith, J., Kilbourn, A. (2015). An introduction to implementation science for the non-specialist. *BMC Psychol* 3(32). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-015-0089-9

Ben-Avie, M. & Darrow, B. (2018a). Malleable and immutable student characteristics: Incoming profiles and experiences on campus. *Journal of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness*, 8(1-2), 22-50.

Ben-Avie, M. and Darrow, B. (2018b). Using longitudinal cohort datasets. *Intersection*. Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education (pp. 3-6).

Blaich, C. F., & Wise, K. S. (2011, January). From gathering to using assessment results: Lessons from the Wabash National Study. (Occasional Paper No. 8). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).

Blaich, C., Franzek, S., Murray-Chandler, L., Waterman, R., & Wise, K. (2019). *Engaging students as partners in the assessment process.* Workshop, IUPUI Assessment Institute. October 13, 2019. Indianapolis, IN.

Bloxham, S., & Boyd, P. (2007). *Developing effective assessment in higher education: A practical guide.* McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (undated). Solutionitis. Available at: https://carnegienetworks.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/115001233068-Solutionitis

Carnevale, F. A., Collin-Vézina, D., Macdonald, M. E., Ménard, J. F., Talwar, V., & Van Praagh, S. (2020). Childhood ethics: An ontological advancement for childhood studies. *Children & Society, 35*(1). https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12406

Dorimé-Williams, M. (2018). Developing socially just practices and policies in assessment. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, (177), 41-56.

Ellison, B., Braxton, J., Lang, M., & Grant, K., (2020). Toward an institutional databases audit to improve college student persistence. *Strategic Enrollment Management Quarterly, 8*(1) 3-20.

Ewell, P. T. (1987). Assessment, accountability and improvement: Managing the contradiction. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED287330.

Frank, M. (2020). *Theory to practice: Partnering with students for co-curricular assessment.* Presentation. NASPA Virtual Conference on Student Success in Higher Education. July 1, 2020. Virtual.

Gadia, E., & Mendoza, K. J. (2020). Impact of organizational culture on institutional effectiveness in a local higher education institution. https://ssrn.com/abstract=3549697

Haas, C. & Hadjar, A. (2020). Students' trajectories through higher education: a review of quantitative research. *Higher Education* (79), 1099–1118. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-019-00458-5.

Hutchings, P., Ewell, P., & Banta, T. W. (2012). AAHE principles of good practice: Aging nicely. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA). http://go.roguecc.edu/sites/testgo.roguecc.edu/files/dept/OutcomeAssess/pdf/KeyElements_AssessmentPractice.pdf

Kinzie, J., & Kuh, G. (2016, November). Report prepared for the Lumina Foundation – Review of student success frameworks to mobilize higher education. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, Center for Postsecondary Research.

Klor de Alva, J., & Christensen, C. (2020). Winners and losers: Universities and the pursuit of the American dream. *American Enterprise Institute*. https://www.aei.org/research-products/report/winners-and-losers-universities-and-the-pursuit-of-the-american-dream/

Knight, W. E. (2015). Developing the integrated institutional effectiveness office: White Paper. *Association for Higher Education Effectiveness*.

Kuh, G. D., Ikenberry, S. O., Jankowski, N. A., Cain, T. R., Ewell, P. T., Hutchings, P., & Kinzie, J. (2015). *Using evidence of student learning to improve higher education*. John Wiley & Sons.

Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J. L., Buckley, J. A., Bridges, B. K., & Hayek, J. C. (2006). *What matters to student success: A review of the literature*. (Vol. 8). Washington, DC: National Postsecondary Education Cooperative.

Metz, A., & Easterling, D. (2016). Using implementation science to translate foundation strategy. *The Foundation Review, 8*(2). https://doi.org/10.9707/1944-5660.130

Montenegro, E., & Jankowski, N. A. (2017, January). *Equity and assessment: Moving towards culturally responsive assessment* (Occasional Paper No. 29). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).

O'Keeffe, P. (2013). A sense of belonging: Improving student retention. *College Student Journal*, *47*(4), 605-613.

Patton, L. D., Renn, K. A., Guido, F. M., Quaye, S. J., Evans, N. J., & Forney, D. S. (2016). *Student Development in College: Theory, Research, and Practice: Third Edition*. Jossey-Bass.

Perez, A. H. (2020). 'Colorblind-Spots' in campus design: Planners and architects can offer solutions that center on social justice. *Planning for Higher Education*, *49*(1), 21-26.

Rizvi, S. A., & Jacobsen, T. E. (2018). Linking resource allocation and budgeting to assessment through integrated processes: Integration of goals at micro and institutional levels. *Journal of Academic Administration in Higher Education, 14*(1), 59-64.

Salem, D., Itani, H., & Hajj, A. E. H. (2020). A guide for optimizing resource allocation: Link assessment, strategic planning, and budgeting to achieve institutional effectiveness. *SCUP Planning for Higher Education Journal, 48*(2), 8-19.

Santilli, N. R. **(**2020). Integrated planning in a VUCA environment: Advice you need in the age of COVID-19. White paper published by The Society for College and University Planning. https://www.scup.org/resource/integrated-planning-in-a-vuca-environment/

Singer-Freeman, K., & Robinson, C. (2020, November*). Grand challenges in assessment: Collective issues in need of solutions* (Occasional Paper No. 47). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).

Society for College and University Planning. (2015). *Succeeding at Planning Survey Report*. https://www.scup.org/resource/succeeding-at-planning-survey-report/

Society for College and University Planning. (2021). *Trends for Higher Education Spring 2021*. www.scup.org/trends

The Chronicle of Higher Education (2020). *The post-pandemic college*. Washington, D.C.

Truncale, N. P., Chalk, E. D., Pellegrino, C., & Kemmerling, J. (2018, March). *Implementing a student assessment scholars program: Students engaging in continuous improvement.* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).

Volkwein, F. J. (2010). The assessment context: Accreditation, accountability, and performance. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 2010* (S1): 3–12.

Wall, A. F., Hursch, D., & Rodgers, J. W. (2014). Assessment for whom: Repositioning higher education assessment as an ethical and value-focused social practice. *Research & Practice in Assessment*, 9, 5–17.

Welsh, J. F., & Metcalf, J. (2003). Faculty and administrative support for institutional effectiveness activities. *The Journal of Higher Education, 77*(4), 445-468. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2003.11780856

Werder, C., Thibou, S., Simkins, S., Hornsby, K., Legg, K., & Franklin, T. (2016). Co-inquiry with students: When shared questions lead the way. *Teaching & Learning Inquiry, 4*(2). http://dx.doi.org/10.20343/teachlearninqu.4.2.4

About the Authors

Justin P. Hoshaw is an Associate Professor of Biology at Waubonsee Community College. He can be reached at jhoshaw@waubonsee.edu.

Dr. Michael Ben-Avie is the Senior Director of Learning Assessment and Research in Office of Academic Innovation and Effectiveness at Quinnipiac University.

Dr. Kimberly K. Daugherty is Professor and Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs and Assessment for the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences at Sullivan University.

Dr. Nicholas R. Santilli is the Senior Director of Learning Strategy at the Society for College and University Planning and Emeritus, Department of Psychology, John Carroll University.

Dr. Megan Schramm-Possinger is the Director of Student Success and Analytics at Winthrop University.

Dr. Lina Di Genova is the Director of Strategy, Assessment and Evaluation in Student Services at McGill University.

Dr. Robert Wilkinson is the Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness at Bemidji State University.

Ashli Grabau is the Director of Strategic Initiatives and Assessment for Student Affairs at the University of Missouri.

Erin M. Isaacson is the Assistant Director of Institutional Effectiveness at Liberty University.