Core College's Planning Process

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<center>**Core College's Planning Process**</center>

Following the report of an external consultant, the Provost has requested the institutional research (IR) department develops a program prioritization plan to reallocate resources from the current unbalanced and incoherent program offerings to purposeful investment in Core College's popular career-oriented programs. The report of an external consultant has confirmed that the college is properly sized given its mission and market. Therefore, the prioritization process is not an emergency, but should be completed within an academic year by following a vigorous three-phased approach (Dickeson, 2010). In phase one, the core prioritization team will be assembled, the purpose and process of prioritization will be announced to the college and its constituents, and the prioritization criteria will be determined. Phase two will involve gathering and analyzing relevant program data to construct a narrative of each program's alignment with the prioritization criteria. Finally, in phase three, the executive leadership will determine which programs they will invest in, maintain, or disinvest resources from (Dickeson, 2010).

<center>**Phase One**</center>

The Program Prioritization Team

The program prioritization team must include members of faculty and staff characterized by a "trustee mindset" meaning they value the overall success of the college over their personal advancement (Northern Illinois University [NIU], 2015). In addition to members of executive leadership, the team must include members specializing in communications support and data support (NIU, 2015). Specifically, the communications support should include a staff member from the office of the provost as well as a staff member from the marketing and communications department (NIU, 2015). The data support team should involve faculty or staff specializing in institutional research, registration and records, academic analysis and reporting, and program assessment for accreditation (Dodd, 2004). Some team members should be nominated by peers while others should be selected by the President, Provost, or a member of the Core College Board of Trustees (Dickeson, 2010; NIU, 2015).

Dickeson (2010) believes that the opinions and concerns of faculty, staff, the student body, the alumnae association, and other external constituents should be valued because, "people tend to support

that which they help create" (p.105). However, their input should not be valued so heavily that decision making becomes convoluted or delayed, nor can it be ignored without the risk of backlash or loss of confidence in the executive leadership (Dickeson, 2010).

Communication of Purpose and Process

The President should publically introduce the members of the core prioritization team and announce the purpose, goals, and value the process. A communication plan including awareness meetings and regular updates should be explained (Dickeson, 2010). Finally, the president should emphasize the executive leadership and the prioritization team's commitment to "transparent, comprehensive, consistent, inclusive, demand-driven, and data-based" guiding principles (Dickeson, 2010, pp. 120-121).

The Prioritization Criteria

Core College's prioritization team must evaluate its programs and resource allocation according to criteria specifically tailored to reflect the college's mission, traditional strengths, and market demand of the region it serves (Dickeson, 2010). These criteria must be approved and assigned weight by the executive leadership prior to data collection.

<p align="center">Phase Two</p>

Gathering and Analyzing Data

The IR data support team must collect and analyze both qualitative and quantitative data to develop a clear, logical narrative of institutional programs according to the prioritization criterion. This data will be presented to the executive leadership as an accessible report for use in phase three. The selection of data to be collected and analyzed will be reliant on the chosen criteria and its weight. Additionally, members of the executive leadership and prioritization committee must form a consensus regarding relevant data's usefulness in measuring chosen criteria.

<p align="center">Phase Three</p>

The Decision to Invest in, Maintain, or Disinvest Program Resources

Core College's executive leadership will evaluate the comprehensive program narratives resulting from phase two. The president, vice-president, and board of trustees must make data-driven decisions in

alignment with Dickeson's (2010) "guiding principles" when deciding which programs to invest in, maintain, or disinvest resources (p. 120).

Potential Process Issues

The prioritization team and the executive leadership should anticipate potential process issues because "change is unsettling; fear of change generates rumors, miscommunication, and distrust" (Dickeson, 2010, p. 110). Concerns surrounding job security, effect on students, increasing workload, violation of shared governance, and overall purpose is common and should be expected (Dickeson, 2010). The impact of these concerns can be mitigated through acknowledging Dickeson's (2010) process issues and communicating answers to these concerns before they arise. If decisions are data-driven, mission-oriented, and market-focused, executive leadership will be able to respond to prioritization process issues with integrity and open communication (Dickeson, 2010).

Necessary Data

Relevant data is reliant on the chosen criteria. Given that Core College aims to reallocate resources to support its historical emphasis on professional programs, data should have direct connection to historical mission and professional program enrollment.

- Yearly full-time student enrollments

- Number of student enrollment by program

- Yearly change of student enrollment by program

- Annual program expenditure

- Annual program revenue

- Total number of professional preparation programs

- Total number of non-professional preparation programs

- 4-year and 6-year graduation rates by program

- Yearly federal financial allotments

- Number of minority and underserved students per program

- Employment trends of the surrounding area by profession

- Financial revenue from restricted gifts and their corresponding programs

- Number of tenured, full-time, and part-time faculty employed per program

- Campus resources utilized by each program including but not limited to physical location, technology, additional supplies, etc.

- Alumnae donations by graduating program

References

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