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### PSC 525.01: Strategic Planning and Leadership

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Political Science 525  
**Strategic Planning and Leadership**  
Fall 2006

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### **Course Description**

For over a decade a movement has been underway to shift the focus of management from administering programs to achieving results. Strategic planning is an important tool in accomplishing this paradigm shift. Bryson defines it as a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it.

But, despite its importance, strategic planning is only a tool. This course is organized around the theme that strategic planning cannot realize its fullest potential unless it is put into the service of vision-driven, principle-centered leadership. Although strategic planning can help us align organizational mission, internal capacities, and environmental realities, it is ultimately leadership, not planning, that makes organizational excellence possible and achievable.

### **Course Objectives**

1. To understand strategic planning as a decision-making process.
2. To understand the theory of organizational excellence on which it is based.
3. To develop skill in conducting the forms of analysis that strategic planning requires.
4. To learn how strategic planning can contribute to the success of visionary leadership.

### **Required Text**

John M. Bryson, Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004).

### **Course Requirements and Grading**

Students are required to read all reading assignments, be prepared to discuss them in class, and write a simulated strategic plan for a government or nonprofit agency. This plan will be submitted in five installments (20 points each), with the final draft being worth 100 points.

A = 186-200   A- = 180-185   B+ = 174-179   B = 166-173   B- = 160-165  
C+ = 154-159   C = 146-153   C- = 140-145.

You are required to choose a government or nonprofit agency with which you are familiar and write a strategic plan for it (you won't actually submit it to the agency). You are to pretend that you are a staff person entrusted with facilitating the planning process. You lead your staff through the various steps of the process and write up the results of your group's analyses as follows:

- Introduction
- Agency Mission, Vision, and Values
- Strategic Issues, Goals, and Actions
- Appendix A: Mandate and Mission Analysis
- Appendix B: Stakeholder Analysis
- Appendix C: SWOT Analysis

### **Weekly Assignments**

- Sept. 7      Introduction to Strategic Planning**  
Read Bryson Chapters 1 and 2, and Chapter 1 of Michael Allison and Jude Kaye's Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations, on electronic reserve.
- Sept. 14     Underlying Theory of Organizational Success**  
Read Bryson Chapter 3. Skim the following to get a sense of what a strategic plan might look like: 1) U.S. Forest Service's Strategic Plan at [www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us) (you will find it under the "pubs, regs & manuals" link); and 2) the PSC 525 student example on electronic reserve by Karen Edmonds (Password = psc525). Notice how these plans move from vision and mission, to goals, objectives, and strategies.
- Sept. 21     Strategic Planning in Political Environments**  
Read Barton Wechsler and Robert Backoff's "Policy Making and Administration in State Agencies" on electronic reserve.
- Sept. 28     \*\* No class today but you do have an assignment\*\***  
  
Read Bryson Chapter 4 and begin investigating your agency's formal-legal mandates, i.e., those things you are formally charged with doing.
- Oct. 5       Creating Public Value**  
Read Mark Moore, Creating Public Value, Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 13-43), and Nanus and Dobbs' Leaders Who Make a Difference, Chapter 2 (pp. 27-51) on electronic reserve.

- Oct. 12      Mandate and Mission Analysis**  
Re-read the sections of Bryson, Chapter 4, and of Allison and Kaye (electronic reserve) dealing with mandate and mission analysis, and submit writing assignment #1 by Monday, Oct. 16.
- Oct. 19      Stakeholder Analysis**  
Re-read Bryson Chapter 4, read Burt Nanus' Visionary Leadership pp. 62-69 on electronic reserve, and submit writing assignment #2 by Monday, Oct. 23.
- Oct. 26      Visionary Leadership – Developing a Vision of Excellence**  
  
Read Nanus and Dobbs Chapter 4, and Allison and Kaye Chapter 3.
- Nov. 2      Vision, Values, and the Organization's Success Strategy**  
Read brief excerpt from James Q. Wilson Chapters 1 and 2 (electronic reserve), re-read the last 9 pages of Allison and Kaye Chapter 3 dealing with guiding values, and submit assignment #3 by Monday, Nov. 6.
- Nov. 9      SWOT Analysis**  
Read Bryson Chapter 5 and submit writing assignment #4 by Monday, Nov. 13.
- Nov. 16      Strategic Issues**  
Read Bryson Chapter 6 and Nanus and Dobbs Chapter 5 (pp. 97-117).
- Nov. 23      \*\*Holiday\*\***
- Nov. 30      Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Actions**  
Read Bryson Chapter 7 and submit writing assignment #5 by Monday, Dec. 4.
- Dec. 7      Implementing and Revising Strategic Plans**  
Read Bryson Chapters 9 and 10, and submit the final draft of your Strategic Plan with appendices by Thursday, Dec. 14.

### **Writing Assignments**

#### **Writing Assignment #1. Appendix A: Mandate Analysis and Agency Mission**

Write a summary statement (perhaps 3-6 pages in length double-spaced) that 1) establishes the importance of mandate analysis and mission clarification, 2) identifies your organization's formal mandates (not informal mandates); and 3) clarifies the organization's fundamental mission (e.g., what it does, why it exists, what public value it seeks to create). Do not write a formal mission statement at this time.

Advice: 1) Take general guidance from Karen Edmond's paper on electronic reserve, but be mindful of the fact that it is not a "perfect model" .

2) If your organization is a nonprofit, you will not have formal statute-based mandates; nonetheless, your "unconstrained field of action" may be restricted by tax codes, articles of incorporation, by-laws, etc.

3) Whenever possible, provide brief quotes that capture your agency's mandated purposes and scope of authority as cited in the law, articles of incorporation, etc.

4) When clarifying your mission, be sure to clarify what public value your organization exists to create. (How might society be diminished if your organization ceased to exist?)

5) You need not offer a formal mission statement in this appendix; rather, provide one in the body of the final report.

6) Remember that your primary purpose is to determine how much autonomy your agency has to define its mission and its path to organizational excellence (its "unconstrained field of action"); thus you need to close by drawing out the implications of your mandate and mission analysis for your unconstrained field of action.

### **Writing Assignment #2. Appendix B: Stakeholder Analysis**

Write a summary statement (perhaps 4-8 pages) that 1) establishes the importance of stakeholder analysis, 2) identifies your organization's 5 or 6 most important stakeholders, and 3) draws out the implications of your stakeholder analysis for your organization's vision and strategy for success.

For each stakeholder, clarify a) what the stakeholder needs or expects from your organization, b) what criteria the stakeholder uses to evaluate your performance, and c) how dependent your organization is on the stakeholder and the extent to which this limits your "unconstrained field of action" in pursuing your vision and strategy for success.

### **Writing Assignment #3. Vision, Values, and Strategy for Success**

[You will later incorporate this assignment into the body of your strategic plan (rather than into an appendix)]

Write a summary statement (perhaps 3-4 pages) that:

1) explains your strategy for becoming the best organization of your kind in the nation; what basic things will you need to do to achieve a state of excellence??

2) describes your vision of excellence. Envision your organization five years in the future after it has attained its desired state of excellence. Proceed in the following kind of

way: We envision an organization that is recognized for excellence in x, y, and z. We envision an organization that is guided by x, y, and z values. We envision an organization that is structured and managed in x, y, and z manner. (Other than 'guiding values,' I don't mean to imply that your vision has to include specific things. Your vision of excellence may include such things as what the agency is achieving five years from now, how it is addressing its "critical environmental problem" (see James Q. Wilson), what its distinctive competencies are, what it is doing to balance stakeholder expectations without straying from its mission, the way staff members relate to each other, the way staff members relate to clients, the nature of the physical and social environment at work, etc.

#### **Writing Assignment #4.    Appendix C: SWOT Analysis**

Write a summary statement that 1) establishes the importance of SWOT analysis, 2) describes each of the most important 6-10 SWOTs facing your organization, and 3) draws out the implications of this analysis for achieving your vision and strategy for success.

Remember that this analysis relates to strategic planning's underlying theory of organizational success, i.e., finding the optimal alignment between the agency's mission and vision of success, its internal capacities, and its external realities. Thus, your summary analysis should capture patterns in your SWOTS that point the way to the desired alignment.

#### **Writing Assignment #5.    Strategic Issues, Goals, and Actions [Body of Plan]**

Write a "strategic plan" that 1) identifies the most critical 3-4 strategic issues facing your organization as it pursues a state of excellence, and 2) identifies the goals, objectives, and/or actions you have decided upon for address each strategic issue.

Remember Bryson's advice: "An adequate strategic issue description 1) phrases the issue as a challenge that the organization can do something about and that has more than one solution, 2) discusses the confluence of factors (mission, mandates, and internal and external environmental aspects, or SWOTs) that make the issue strategic, and 3) articulates the consequences of not addressing the issue."

Finally, see if you can add a brief conclusion to the plan that somehow ties things together -- perhaps by clarifying how resolving your strategic issues will help the organization realize its vision of excellence.

#### **The Final Strategic Plan**

Rewrite assignments #1-#5 based on the provided feedback and compile them into a single document as indicated above. Note that assignments #3 and #5 will become the body of the plan, whereas the remaining assignments comprise Appendices A, B, and C. Take general guidance from Karen Edmond's paper on electronic reserve.