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PSC 525.01: Strategic Planning and Leadership

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Political Science 525
Strategic Planning and Leadership
Fall 2004

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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 and actions 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 relies upon.
4. To learn how strategic planning can contribute to principle-centered, visionary leadership.

Required Texts

Steven R. Covey, First Things First (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994).

John M. Bryson, Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995)

Bert Nanus, Visionary Leadership (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992).

Course Requirements and Grading

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

A+ = 196-200	B+ = 176-181	C+ = 156-161
A = 188-195	B = 168-175	C = 148-155
A- = 182-187	B- = 162-167	C- = 142-147

Note: You are required to choose a government or non-profit agency with which you are familiar and write a strategic plan for it (you won't actually submit it to the agency). For purposes of this course you are to **pretend** that you are the staff person entrusted with facilitating the planning process. You will lead your staff through the various steps of the process and write up the results of your group's analyses.

Reading Assignments

- Sept. 9 **Introduction to Strategic Planning**
 1. Bryson, Chapter 1.
 2. Strategic Plan, City of Missoula (www.ci.missoula.mt.us). There is a link on the left side of the Missoula homepage. Just skim this 46 page document. Note how it moves from vision and mission, to goals, objectives, and strategies.
 3. Dawson Community College Strategic Plan. (**Note:** rather than a real plan, this is an example of a plan "invented" solely for the purposes of this course). On electronic reserve and hard copy reserve in the Mansfield Library. (For electronic reserve, connect to the Mansfield library, then "library catalog", then "course reserves", then search list of courses for PSC 525, and click on "search." Where the first item on the next page says electronic reserve, click on the number in front of it, then click on the blue link to electronic reserve. Click on the article and type in psc525 as your password.)
- Sept. 16 **Strategic Planning as a Theory of Organizational Excellence**
 Bryson, Chapters 2 and 3.
- Sept. 23 **Strategic Planning in a Political Environment**
 1. Arie Halachmi, "Strategic Planning and Management? Not Necessarily." On electronic reserve and hard copy reserve in the Library.
 2. Barton Wechsler and Robert Backoff, "Policy Making and Administration in State Agencies: Strategic Management Approaches." (Also on reserve).
- Sept. 30 **Visionary Leadership and the Empowerment Paradigm**
 1. Bryson, Chapter 8.
 2. Nanus, Chapters 1 and 2.
- Oct. 7 **Learning to Put First Things First**
 Covey, Chapters 1-5.

Oct. 14 **Vision-driven, Principle-centered Organizations**
Covey, Chapters 11-13.

Oct. 21 **Developing a Vision of Excellence**
Nanus, Chapters 3-6 and Appendix.

Oct. 28 **Mandates, Mission, and Stakeholder Analysis**
Bryson, Chapter 4.

Assignments # 1 and #2: Conduct interviews and obtain documents as needed to learn about your agency, including its mission and mandates, stakeholders, SWOTs, and strategic issues. Write drafts of two sections of your strategic plan: 1) Agency Mandates and Mission, and 2) Stakeholder Analysis. Each section is typically 2-3 pages in length. **Due Friday Nov. 5.**

Nov. 4 **SWOT Analysis**
Bryson, Chapter 5.

Assignment #3: Write the SWOT section of your plan, identifying each in two or three sentences. ****Due Monday, Nov. 15****

Nov. 11 ****Veterans' Day Holiday**** (Assignment #3 due Monday, Nov. 15)

Nov. 18 **Identifying Strategic Issues**
Bryson, Chapter 6.

Assignment #4: Write the plan's Strategic Issues section. Identify issues and explain why they are strategic to the agency. As Bryson writes, "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." ****Due Monday, Nov. 29****

Nov. 25 ****Thanksgiving Holiday****

Dec. 2 **Developing and Implementing Strategic Goals and Actions**
Bryson, Chapters 7 and 9.

Assignment #5: Write the plan's Strategic Goals and Actions section. Identify specific goals (or strategic initiatives) that will allow the agency to address each of its most important (2-4) strategic issues and the specific actions to be taken to realize each of these goals. Present these in outline form. ****Due Dec. 9****

Dec. 9 **The Importance of Leadership**
Bryson, Chapters 11 and 12.

****Final Assignment**** Write an Introduction for your Strategic Plan, polish all previous sections, and compile them in the following order: **Due Thursday, Dec. 16.**

Introduction
Strategic Issues
Strategic Goals and Actions
Appendix A: Agency Mandates and Mission
Appendix B: Stakeholder Analysis
Appendix C: SWOT Analysis