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ABSTRACT
        This paper discusses strategic planning for quality
in higher education and provides specific examples of institutions
working to adopt strategic quality planning. In particular the paper
looks at institutions adopting the Continuous Quality Improvement
(CQI) principles. A section on early lessons notes common obstacles
to CQI implementation in higher education: impatience, failure of top
leaders to "walk the talk," top administrator unwillingness to
relinquish authority, failure to adapt business principles to
academic settings, and absence of a widely accepted and understood
institutional mission. A discussion of strategic planning's part in
CQI adoption argues that successful efforts should "begin with the
end in mind." Another section describes current new efforts at
Western Michigan University and Florida State University to implement
CQI planning. Lessons from their initial efforts are to start in
administrative areas, to employ a "small gains" strategy, to make
participation voluntary, to lead by example, to "just do it," to let
people choose their own projects, to avoid using business buzzwords,
to maintain a low initial profile, not to promise big cost savings,
and to celebrate successes. (JB)

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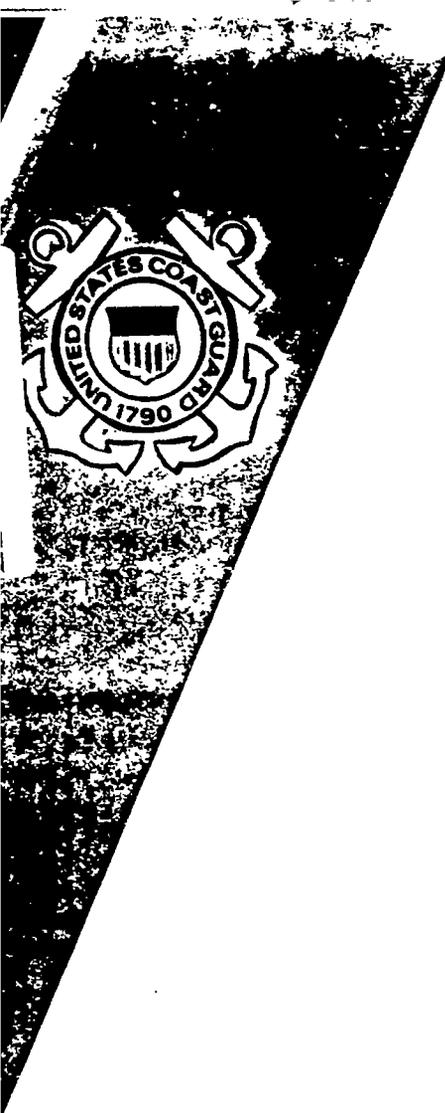
PLANNING

STRATEGICALLY

FOR QUALITY

T. Haas and R. Holkeboer

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The idea that the needs of the customer are primary and that quality products and processes can be continually improved through the use of statistical tools and a team approach to problem solving was introduced in postwar Japan by two Americans, statistician W. Edwards Deming and engineer Joseph M. Juran. Deming's ideas on statistical process improvement and Juran's on quality management revolutionized Japanese industry. The Japanese approach to manufacturing was reimported by American business and industry in the 1970s as a means of regaining its competitive edge. In the 1980s the movement was popularized in the U.S. under the acronym TQM (Total Quality Management) and has been co-opted and broadly adapted by many types of complex organizations including federal and state agencies, the Department of Defense, hospitals, K-12 school systems, and nonprofit organizations.

While no panacea, quality programs — if carefully introduced, supported, and sustained over time — have succeeded in measurably improving the quality of goods and services, cutting costs, and improving staff morale. Occasionally, the results have been spectacular.

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Planning Strategically for Quality

by Thomas Haas and Robert Holkeboer

About the Authors

Thomas Haas, who holds the rank of Commander in the U.S. Coast Guard, is Associate Professor and Associate Dean of Academics at the Coast Guard Academy. Robert Holkeboer is Professor of English and Director of the Eastern Michigan University Honors Program. Both were selected as American Council on Education (ACE) Fellows for the 1992-93 academic year. The ACE Fellows Program, administered by Dr. Marlene Ross, annually identifies and trains about thirty faculty and mid-level managers who demonstrate leadership potential. ACE Fellows are released for one year by their home institutions to study current issues in higher education while observing and participating in institutional decision making at their adopted host institution. Dr. Haas served his ACE Fellowship at Western Michigan University under President Diether Haenicke and Provost Nancy Barrett. Dr. Holkeboer was invited to Florida State University, where his mentors were President Dale W. Lick and Provost Robert B. Glidden. As part of their internship responsibilities, both Haas and Holkeboer were asked to develop quality-improvement programs at their host institutions. The following is an account of what they learned.

Introduction

Stephen R. Covey, in his remarkable book <u>The Seven Habits of Effective Leaders</u>, suggests that one such habit is to "begin with the end in mind." For most academic leaders, the central task for higher education in the 1990s — perhaps the <u>only</u> task — is stewardship and accountability. To achieve this end — the satisfaction and delight of its customers — colleges and universities are turning increasingly for guidance to business and industry and, in particular, to the principles of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI).

Background

The idea that the needs of the customer are primary and that quality products and processes can be continually improved through the use of statistical tools and a team approach to problem solving was introduced in postwar Japan by two Americans, statistician W. Edwards Deming and engineer Joseph M. Juran. Deming's ideas on statistical process improvement and Juran's on quality management revolutionized Japanese industry. The Japanese approach to manufacturing was reimported by American business and industry in the 1970s as a means of regaining its competitive edge. In the 1980s the movement was popularized in the U.S. under the acronym TQM (Total Quality Management) and has been co-opted and broadly adapted by many types of complex organizations including federal and state agencies, the Department of Defense, hospitals, K-12 school systems, and nonprofit organizations.

While no panacea, quality programs — if carefully introduced, supported, and sustained over time — have succeeded in measurably improving the quality of goods and services, cutting costs, and improving staff morale. Occasionally, the results have been spectacular.

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The Quality Movement in Higher Education

With the exception of a handful of entrepreneurial community colleges (e.g., Fox Valley, Delaware County) and four-year institutions (e.g., Samford, Oregon State), higher education has been a late arrival in the quality classroom but is rapidly catching up on missed work. By the end of the 1992-93 academic year, well over half of the 3500 colleges and universities in the U.S. had either implemented or were seriously considering CQI programs, including comprehensive research institutions like Michigan, Pennsylvania, Cornell, and Wisconsin. CQI was a major theme of the American Association of Higher Education annual meeting in 1993. Numerous articles and several books have been published in the last two years on CQI in higher education.

Adapted to a higher-education setting, quality programs offer tantalizing benefits in the 1990s as universities are being increasingly called to account by their various constituencies: students, parents, alumni, taxpayers, legislators, boards, business and industry, employers of graduates, foundations, and private and federal granting agencies.

Early Lessons

Efforts to transpose the principles of CQI from a corporate setting to an academic one have enjoyed uneven success. Quality programs may be sabotaged from a number of directions:

1. *Impatience.* Quality doesn't happen overnight. It's not a "quick fix" or "instant cure" but an ongoing process that requires an implementation period of at least five years.

2. *Failure of top leaders to "walk the talk."* Central administrators must lead by example and be prepared to devote 15%-25% of their work week to quality initiatives.

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3. *Unwillingness of top administrators to relinquish authority.* CEOs and vice presidents must exercise leadership but not control. Teams must be empowered to make consequential decisions and take responsibility.

4. *Failure to adapt business principles to an academic setting.* Faculty, especially in arts and sciences, can be brutal critics of CQI. Wise leaders will focus initially not on academic departments or classroom teaching but on support service areas (e.g., housekeepers, admissions) with layered bureaucracies, heavy paper flow, and time-encrusted procedures. As these accumulate a record of success, academic departments should be encouraged (but not required) to form quality teams. Simplistic language, false analogies, and business jargon, which antagonize faculty, may be avoided by using terms like 'constituents' or 'beneficiaries' or 'those we serve' instead of 'customers,' 'outcomes' instead of 'products.'

5. *Absence of a commonly understood, widely accepted institutional mission.* Quality-improvement efforts are most likely to be successful when they are tied to a deliberate process of strategic planning led by the institution's chief executive officer. The planning process is complete and successful when everyone knows where the ship is headed, everyone holds an oar, and everyone is pulling in the same direction.

Integrating CQI with Strategic Planning

Institutions embarking on a major quality initiative would do well to follow Covey's advice by "beginning with the end in mind," that is, by articulating a statement of purpose or mission. The vision of the institution must be firmly rooted in its own values (or what is sometimes called the "institutional culture"). All in the organization must feel welcome to express their different

views and be invited to come together to create something greater than any one of them could create alone.

The chief executive officer must lead the way by convening influential groups (including vice presidents, deans, department heads and major directors, faculty senate, union leaders and employee groups, student government, emeritus faculty, alumni and friends) and inviting answers to difficult and probing questions:

- Where is the institution now?
- What values do we share in common?
- What has been our historical mission?
- What external and internal forces are influencing our values and mission?
- Whom do we serve? What do they need and want from us?
- Where and what do we want to be in five or ten years?

An important role for the President during this process of self-scrutiny is to "drive out fear" (a central principle in Deming's work) by encouraging free debate about the institution's strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and desired outcomes and possible assessment measures. This "situation analysis" not only allows an institution to validate its current mission but also to express its collective anxiety about the external forces that threaten it and to begin the slow, painful contemplation of change. From this open discussion a shared understanding of the institutional culture will emerge that will ultimately affect decision-making and resource allocation.

Institutions that are already engaged in academic program review, self-studies for accreditation purposes, learning assessment, or accountability programs would be wise to bring all of these processes under the single mantle of CQI, rather than present CQI as "just one more thing we have to do." At the

same time, they need to persuade the consumers of these reports (e.g., accrediting bodies, boards, government agencies, and foundations) to accept a single reporting mechanism that is developed and owned by the persons being evaluated.

CQI Planning Initiatives at Western Michigan and Florida State

Western Michigan University (WMU) and Florida State University (FSU) are both comprehensive, publicly supported universities (WMU is Doctoral I and FSU is Research I in the Carnegie Classification Categories) with approximately 28,000 students. Both are in the early stages of implementing quality programs in conjunction with strategic planning, accountability, assessment, self-study, or program-review processes already underway. Both have identified a small number of major goals to guide their development through the 1990s. Both have forceful, effective presidents, provosts, and vice presidents for business and finance who see continuous quality improvement as an effective response to demands for accountability by both internal and external constituencies.

For the quality initiative at Western Michigan University (WMU), President Diether Haenicke proposed a midrange planning horizon of three to five years. As a first step, all major administrative and academic units were asked to prepare reports listing their accomplishments during the past year, their midrange goals, and any potential barriers to achieving those goals. Three major ad hoc committees, focusing respectively on academics, administrative support, and tuition and fees and reporting to a Central Planning Committee, were created and charged with developing recommendations on institutional directions and priorities, with maximum input from their constituencies.

At Florida State University (FSU), President Dale Lick commissioned a comprehensive study of the effectiveness of quality-improvement efforts in

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business and higher education, and an assessment of the viability of such an initiative at Florida State. Provost Robert Glidden simultaneously administered in all academic units a self-study required for its ten-year SACS accreditation and an accountability plan that had been mandated by the Florida Board of Regents. Meanwhile, John Carnaghi, Vice President for Finance and Administration at FSU, met face to face in small groups with each of the 1000 employees in his division, asking just three questions: What do you like about working at FSU? What do you dislike? and, What can we do better?

Colleges and universities that have not yet launched quality initiatives will discover that a good deal of CQI activity, interest, and expertise already exists on their campuses. WMU's planning committee identified areas of the university where CQI initiatives had already begun, as well as units that had shown an interest in forming teams, and started there: financial aid, computing, College of Business advising, health center, account, receivable, housing, maintenance, and admissions. At FSU independent, entrepreneurial quality programs were already functioning in the library, the health center, accounting, and at a branch campus. In addition, more than twenty faculty and staff were identified who had acquired CQI expertise on their own initiative. Some were teaching CQI in their business, education, or statistics classes; others were consulting; and many had published books and articles on the subject. They became valuable resources.

But CQI programs that try to function independently within a large organization will inevitably encounter resistance from above. At FSU, for example, a CQI team in the health center decided it could not achieve quality if it had to select only vendors who submitted the lowest bid. And team members balked at board-mandated performance evaluations by their supervisors; they felt they should be trusted and empowered to evaluate each other. Unable to

circumvent university and systemwide rules and regulations, their morale sagged.

For this reason it is important that CQI permeate an entire organizational structure, and that goals be aligned throughout the institution. The "situation analysis," therefore, should be followed by a series of strategic-alignment sessions in which the President and Vice Presidents (now seen as a "Quality Task Force") identify the institution's beneficiaries (both internal and external) and articulate the institutional vision, mission, goals, critical success factors, and strategic plan. This should be followed by a similar process carried out by each Vice President in his or her division. The purpose of these meetings is to make sure that every member of central administration is moving in the same direction. The objective of the Quality Task Force should be to produce a strategic planning document that contains the following elements:

- A Statement of Purpose (Why we exist. Our *raison d'etre*.)
- A Statement of Vision (Where are we going? How will CQI change the way we do business by the year 2000? What is our preferred future?)
- A Statement of Values (What principles will shape our behavior as we progress toward our goals?)
- A Situation Analysis (Where are we now? What kinds of problems would CQI address? What changes are needed? What are the benefits of change? What are some possible obstacles to change? What resources are available?)
- A Statement of Goals and Objectives (Where are we going and how will we get there exactly?) Goals and Objectives should be accompanied by Timelines, Accountable Persons/Teams, and Indicators of Success. (When, how, and by whom will the goals

and objectives be accomplished? How will we measure their accomplishment?)

In a complex institution the process of strategic alignment — getting all oars pulling in the same direction — may take anywhere from six months to a year. Using the planning document as their fixed compass point, vice presidents, deans, department heads, and major directors must carry out the same planning process in their own divisions and departments until institutional goals and strategies are understood, owned, and aligned throughout the institution.

As more and more colleges and universities become involved with CQI, they will become a valuable resource for each other, reducing training costs and early mistakes. Expertise is also available from business and industry, which have a vested interest in hiring college graduates who are already familiar with CQI practices. President Haenicke invited representatives from the Haworth Company, Upjohn, and Wayne State University, who addressed large audiences of interested WMU staff. FSU also conducted discussions with CQI leaders at comparable universities and in business and nonprofit organizations. Through its Center for Professional Development, quality experts at FSU conducted a series of eight training seminars for interested persons both inside and outside the university.

Both WMU and FSU developed and shared campuswide the basic tenets of their CQI initiatives. Here is WMU's statement:

1. TQM positions WMU as an institution of higher education which delivers excellent service to diverse customers.

2. TQM strengthens the institution by developing the potential of individuals and supporting their achievements.

3. TQM is an intentional process which requires strategic thinking by everyone to seek continuous improvement of services, programs, and facilities.

4. TQM is designed to make the University more flexible and competitive with the effective use of resources compatible with the University's mission.

In a planning document called Florida State Quality: An Action Agenda, FSU's program — called FSQ — was described as follows:

1. *FSQ is a constant commitment to quality in everything we do.* Quality is not a fixed destination but an ongoing process, one that we pursue intensely and systematically.

2. *FSQ is a team effort.* We share a common vision and make decisions as a team: everyone understands the process; everyone agrees on the strategy; everyone performs tasks essential to our success. And when we succeed, everyone shares the credit.

3. *FSQ can and must be measured.* We use statistical measurements — not intuition, guesswork, or wishful thinking — to document and evaluate what we do.

4. *FSQ is defined by the people we serve, not by us.* We know the people we serve. They tell us how we're doing. And if they don't tell us, we ask.

The differences between Florida State and Western Michigan account for their different rates of progress and degrees of success over the course of the initial planning year. The process was more deliberate at FSU, partly due to a new cast of top administrators and partly to its role in a centralized statewide system.

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While FSU is one of nine public universities in a centralized statewide system with its own layer of bureaucratic codes and regulations, WMU, like the other fourteen public universities in Michigan, enjoys a large measure of individual autonomy. WMU was founded in 1903 as a normal school, emerging in 1957 as the Michigan's fourth public university with a substantial graduate component and research mission. FSU was a liberal-arts college for women until the end of World War II, when it first admitted men and began to pull alongside the University of Florida as one of major research universities in the state. FSU's national visibility increased dramatically in the 1980s with the remarkable success of its athletic programs, while its identity as an important research center was heightened by the addition of a Supercomputer Computations Research Institute and by being selected by the National Science Foundation as the leadership site of the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory.

CQI represents a major paradigm shift for American higher education. While it presents an exciting opportunity for positive change, it is also an undertaking full of risk, especially for leaders who are new to an institution and have yet to establish the widespread confidence and trust of the university community.

Florida State's administrative team has undergone a major overhaul in the last two years. Dale W. Lick was appointed President of FSU in August 1991, having previously served presidencies at Georgia Southern University and the University of Maine. His predecessor, Bernard Sliger, had been a popular president with a lengthy fifteen-year tenure. President Lick's first major appointment, as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, was Robert B. Glidden, who had been Dean of the School of Music and a strong candidate for the FSU presidency. John Carnaghi, Vice President for Business and Finance, had arrived at FSU only six months earlier. And a new Vice President for

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University Relations, Beverly Spencer, was appointed in late 1992, completing the vice presidential team.

WMU's president, meanwhile, has an eight-year tenure and enjoys a wide base of support in the university community. Diether Haenicke came to WMU in 1985 and was formerly the Provost of The Ohio State University. He has succeeded over time in building a capable, stable, and widely supported team of top administrators.

The rapid evolution of both WMU and FSU, from small colleges with narrowly defined missions to large, comprehensive research universities serving increasingly diverse populations has created for each of them a major challenge: defining their complex missions in simple terms.

In 1990 WMU endorsed a mission statement with five major components:

1. High quality instructional programs whose outcomes can be assessed.

2. Expanded research outcomes.

3. Contributions to the economic development of the region and state.

4. Community service.

5. Increased diversity among students, faculty, and staff.

President Haenicke endorsed these goals in a major international address in 1992, stating that accountability to the people we serve must be the primary concern of higher education in the 1990s and that WMU was about to embark upon a systematic, university-wide strategic planning process and to adopt the principles and practices of CQI, defined as "doing the right thing in the right way the first time."

At FSU, President Lick articulated the "Visions and Aspirations" of the university to the Florida Board of Regents in June 1992. On the basis of five years of program-review documents and accountability reports by all academic units, President Lick identified three major goals for the balance of the decade.

1. Achieve a level of quality that would place FSU among the top 25 public universities in the U.S. by the year 2000.

2. Become a model university for service to the people of Florida.

3. Become a model community.

In his inaugural address, President Lick stated bluntly that public education had lost the trust of American society and would need to work hard to regain it. He proceeded to link the university's three goals with a major quality initiative: "We can begin," he said, "by making quality the criterion of all we advocate and do."

Neither WMU nor FSU was in a state of local crisis when it turned to CQI. In the words of Karl Menninger, "You don't have to be sick to get better." Both were motivated instead by the larger, more global crisis facing American higher education, loss of faith among those we serve, and by the desire to position themselves more competitively among their peer institutions.

Early Lessons

Although their quality-improvement initiatives are not yet fully operational, both universities have made a good start, and have learned some valuable early lessons in the process. Here are some of them:

1. *Start in administrative areas* (e.g., computing services, accounts payable and receivable, health center, and auxiliaries).

2. *Employ a "small gains" strategy.* Select a few strategic areas with high visibility and begin with three to five small-scale projects with a high likelihood of success.

3. *Make participation voluntary,* not mandatory, even among central administrators.

4. *Lead by example.* Prior to launch, each Vice President should identify a problem in his/her area and address it using CQI principles, training

modules, statistical tools, and methodology. In this way, top
administrators get "just in time" training while communicating an
important message to their staff: we aren't asking you to do anything we
are unwilling to do ourselves.

5. *Just do it.* Plan carefully, of course, but don't talk the program to death.
Take the plunge and learn by doing. Colleges are great places to make
mistakes and learn valuable lessons.

6. *Let people choose their own projects.* Administrators should avoid the temptation
of rushing to identify projects, which implies top-down judgments. Empower
the people in the trenches to identify their own problem areas and work toward
their own solutions.

7. *Avoid using business buzzwords* that evoke a negative kneejerk response,
especially in academic circles. The University of Michigan, for example,
calls its program "M-Quality." Use 'constituents' or 'those we serve'
instead of 'customers.' Refer to 'outcomes' instead of 'products.'

8. *Maintain a low initial profile.* Instead of launching the program with
trumpets and fanfare, start small, gradually enlarging the program's
public profile as its successes may justify.

9. *Don't promise big cost savings* or characterize the program as a budget-
cutting tool, even though efficiencies may result in real savings. Instead,
focus on improving services.

10. *Celebrate successes* and reward teams rather than individuals.

Both WMU and FSU have a timeline to insure that momentum is
maintained in the coming year. President Haenicke has named the Associate
Vice President for Human Resources to lead WMU's quality effort. A Q-Council
consisting of the President, Provost, Vice Presidents, and Advisor for Quality will
monitor the program's progress over the next several years. A Quality Steering

Task Force composed of representatives from the pilot teams, Faculty Senate, and bargaining units will receive CQI training, evaluate progress, identify resource needs, and report successes to the university community. After two years a major program evaluation will take place.

At FSU, orientation sessions have already taken place among the Vice Presidents and the President's staff. A major retreat has been scheduled for Vice Presidents, Deans, Department Heads, and major Directors. The agenda of the retreat will be to enroll top administrators and provide Level I training for them. This phase is to be followed by a series of strategic alignment sessions, leading to the creation of an FSQ strategic plan. FSU would then create a larger, more representative Quality Council which would oversee pilot projects and conduct periodic evaluations.

WMU and FSU, like many other American colleges and universities, have taken a new path leading to a future ripe with potential. Strategic planning enables an institution to think about what it wants to be, build on its strengths, and seize new opportunities. CQI gives it a workable, proven strategy for marshalling its collective intelligence, skills, and values in the service of students and society.