INTRODUCTION

What are the challenges today’s Business Schools administrators face? Business Schools are undergoing changes as profound as those that transformed to day's businesses and industries to the dynamic and global enterprises that they have evolved. These changes are part of a larger transition in our society-the transition of strategic planning in higher education into the “information age” as well as transition into the “global age”. The influence of economic, social and cultural forces, some friendly and some hostile, is growing at an exponential rate. Today, however, business schools have to be more competitive and, as a result, have become more quality driven and assessed on the basis of value added per dollar of student investment in tuitions.

Today’s dean has to be not only an academic leader, but also an entrepreneur, a financial analyst, a market and competitive analyst, and a public relations specialist. Additionally, a dean is expected to be a general manager and a team builder. It is evident that traditional methods of short range-planning, with their focus on budgets, staff, tuition, grants, etc, have become inadequate for our business schools. Faced with much the same situation, the profit sector institutions have over the past decade, developed a body of concepts and techniques known as “strategic management”. Strategic management provides a framework for expanding the dean’s role and helps them respond to a rapidly changing technological and competitive global environment.

As business school needs change, the most successful schools will be those that respond proactively to the new demands. In addition, changing social values and increasing governmental interaction will demand response from business schools if they are to thrive and succeed, instead of being reluctantly carried along into the twenty-first century.

Contemporary strategic management differs from traditional long-range planning in that it emphasizes discerning and understanding an organization’s external environment, including competitive conditions, threats, and opportunities. Strategic management helps managers develop a greater sensitivity to the changing external world and helps an organization to thrive by capitalizing on its existing strengths and avoidance of potential threats.

In its simplest form, the strategic management process can be structured round six basic questions and processes.

ABSTRACT

In the face of stiff completion for scarce funds to effectively navigate the affairs of business schools, college deans have to come up with strategic plans to ensure that various opinions and inputs of stakeholders including faculty and staff are accommodated. Additionally, such deans are expected to come up with goals and objectives designed to strengthen their colleges, and at the same time satisfy the internal and external constituents about the feasibility of such a plan. One of the popular approaches used is through strategic plan as deployed by Nikita college of business.
Strategic Planning for Academic Administrators; Panning in a College of Business: The case of Nikita College of Business

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 Strategic management and planning will enable an institution to attain desired goals, meet community and societal expectations, anticipate future problems, take advantage of "profitable" (in the larger sense of the word) opportunities, in short, it can provide the member of the institution with a "game plan." It should be pointed out that the most difficult stage in strategic management process is strategy implementation. Successful strategic implementation hinges upon the ability of managers and deans to motivate their subordinates, which according to David (2011) is more an art than a science. It also involves adopting the right leadership style (Watkins, 2009), determining the necessary cornerstone in the implementation process (Crittenden, 2008), as well as those involved in the strategy implementation (Miller and Wilson, 2008).

These questions are consistent with Drucker’s (1974) question, “What is our business?” Strategic management implies more than just the construction of plan for directing the business schools. It is, more importantly, an approach to management that encourages key administrators and faculty members to think innovatively and act strategically with the future in mind. It is a way of thinking that can best be compared to that of sailboat skipper who checks the conditions, knows his craft’s capabilities, senses opportunities and threats, and, based on this information, continually repositions its craft in a manner gauged to make the fastest progress towards a changing destination.

Strategic management is especially relevant in the business schools because of the dramatic changes taking place in the world of business and industry who hire the business schools because of the dramatic changes taking place in society and the environment faced by the business schools and institutions in the higher education sector. The validity of the hourglass model framework is not affected by the complex, often vague, and sometimes contradictory functions of the education sector; rather, it can be used to show how these complex functions are related and interact with each other.

**THE HOURGLASS MODEL**

The hourglass model depicting strategic planning and implementation process, received its name precisely because it is the shape of an hourglass. The inputs (inputs or "inputs," and the system produces actions or "outputs") which, in turn, affect the environment and, as a result, the inputs. The dynamic nature of the model is well-suited to the diverse and ever-changing environments faced by most complex organizations, particularly the turbulent environment faced by the business schools and institutions in the higher education sector. The stakeholders represent the local and federal governments, the general public, politicians at the appropriate levels (federal, state, and municipal), and other members of the government involved that monitor the educational services, students and alumni, university officials and other colleges in the university, and members of the profession. Stakeholders may be either individuals or groups, and their relative power can and does change over time, as do their expectations and values.

Deans (the agents of the stakeholders) must assess the impact of forces on their college and maintain a delicate balance among them in order to achieve optimum efficiency and effectiveness in setting goals and in formulating and implementing an appropriate strategy. Simyar (1985), refers to this as a "balancing act" or even "balancing art." Successful strategists are those who reach a level of competence (or perhaps perfection) in this "art" given a specific context or environment. Figure 2 illustrates how the hourglass model can be adapted to a particular environment and characteristics of any college of business (COB), and how it is utilized for strategy formation and implementation.

The Model's Components and the Criteria Utilized in Strategic Planning and Implementation

Effective planning and strategy implementation require providing answers to all the relevant questions (a = h) asked hereunder. The responses provide perspective, and
FIGURE 2

Strategic Planning at the College of Business

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

College of Business Environment
General Environment
Economic changes
Political changes
Technological changes
Sociological changes
International

Student Population, Student Organizations

Academic Units
Business & Professional Community
Local, National & International
Globalization of Business
ACBSP Accreditation Standards

The University Environment
Political Uncertainty
Low and Declining
Government Funding
Multicultural and Minority
State University
Declining Enrollment

INTERFACE

Assess External Environment
Mission Objectives Goals
Feasible Strategic Options (See Attached)
Prioritized Strategic Plans (See Attached)
Organizational Design
Control System
Tactical Plans Resource Allocations
Operational Plans (Budgets)

IMPLEMENTATION

COB MISSION:
• Academic Excellence
• Academic Leadership and Scholarship, Promotion of Relevant Research Activity
• Service to Immediate and Distant Community
• Development of Professional Skills, Competence, Equity & Equality

College of Business Operational Plans (Budgets)

The Environment
External
Internal

FEASIBLE STRATEGIC OPTIONS

Accreditation
Innovative and New Graduate Programs with a Niche
International Partnerships
Promotion of Research and Scholarly Work Relevant to the Needs of Society
Review Evaluation and Revision of Current Programs
Promotion of Outreach and Professional Services to Community and Society
Recruitment of Outstanding Faculty
Promotion of Equity, Equality and Non-discrimination Policy
Promotion of Teaching Excellence and Innovative Approaches to Teaching
Promotion of Curriculum Development and Innovative Pedagogical Material
Promotion of Inter and Intra Disciplinary Programs, Research and Teaching
Promotion and Rewarding of Support Staff Members
Invitation of Visiting Scholars, Business and Community Leaders
to Share knowledge and Experience
Organizing International and National Conferences
Further Promotion and Rewarding of High Achieving Students
Internal Efficiency of Operations
Continuous Stride to Meet Higher Accreditation Standards

DEAN

Catalyst For Implementation

Chairs & Directors
Faculty Members
Staff Members
Student Representatives

Support of the Partners
Business Community
Government Sectors (State and Federal)
Student Population, Alumni
Other Units of University

Tools of Successful Implementation
Organizational Structure
Team Work
Continuous and Two-Way Communication
Strategic Funding and Budget Allocations
Development of Reporting, Evaluation and Reward Systems
Maintenance of high Morale
Maintenance of ACBSP Standards

SUCCESS OF OPERATIONS

Feed-Back

Operational Environment
External
Internal

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Table 2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Strategic Choices</th>
<th>Implementation Tableau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ACBSP Accreditation</td>
<td>To be granted accreditation from ACBSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Design and Implementa-</td>
<td>MS Accounting and MBA Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tion of Graduate Pro-</td>
<td>Completion of Programs and implementation, conditional upon approval by appropriate state Board of Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>grams</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. International Partnership Programs</td>
<td>Joint Venture and Exchange with overseas universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Outreach and professional services</td>
<td>To offer certificate and non- certificate programs to the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Promotion of Scholarly Activities and Research</td>
<td>To motivate and encourage faculty members research and other scholarly activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Design and Implementation of Graduate Programs</td>
<td>Implementing such measures as monthly luncheon research presentation, Best researcher of the year award, conference travel funding, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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8. Have you communicated your objectives, action plans, and measurements to all the faculty, staff, and stakeholders as appropriate?

The Dean and the strategic management sub-committee have just prepared and presented the framework of "hourglass model" in order to synchronize, harmonize and enforce goal congruence among the various taskforces. The appropriate taskforces are expected to work on their goals and objectives, strategic action plans and implementation timelines during the two days of the retreat. Each taskforce is expected to make a presentation of its proposals, action plans and timelines as well as constraints facing the particular strategic choice. Each proposal should be discussed thoroughly prior to presentation to the members of the college of business and necessary modifications made and approved by group members. The process was participatory, shared vision and ideas, and accepted commitment by members of the college of business. The first four strategic options can be identified as "Short Term Strategies" and the balance of strategies as "Long Term Strategies", to be implemented upon the actualization of the short term strategies. It was agreed that at a later time, the prioritization may be revised or re-prioritized as the case may be.

The Components of the "Hourglass Model"

Mission
The mission of Nikita college of business is a sub-mission of that of Bueca State University (BSU). There should be complete congruence and harmony among the two missions, if not, the conflict and lack of harmony will be dys-
Objectives

Objectives are simple expressions of the desired future states of an organization. Achieving objectives moves an organization closer to achieving its overall purpose or mission. Objectives can be classified into one of three categories: primary, development, or maintenance.

Primary objectives focus on performance improvement. Development objectives focus on the development of new programs and services or existing duties that require reorganization. Maintenance objectives are used to ensure that existing programs and service levels do not deteriorate due to emphasis on new areas. A hierarchy of objectives in the rank order of importance is produced in the hourglass model (Figure 2) should be recommended by the faculty and staff at the end of their retreat. However, given the dynamic nature of the environment and the stakeholders, the order and composition of objectives could change.

As previously noted, the achievement of objectives moves an organization closer to achieving its overall purpose. Therefore, objectives should follow the initial purpose or mission of the university as well as the college of business and should not chart new and independent paths. Any one purpose or value can give rise to several objectives and should not chart new and independent paths. Any objective may involve the creation of new sections to more effectively handle problem areas. Nikita College of Business at its October 2005 retreat. However, further restructuring is a must prior to implementation of its new initiative to succeed, the administrator must identify control mechanisms and decisions based on these studies:

1. Management’s strategic choices shape the organization’s structure.
2. Strategy and structure must be properly aligned if the organization is to be successful in achieving its objectives.
3. Organizational structure constrains strategy.
4. An organization can seldom veer substantially from its current strategy without major alterations in its structure.

Because structure and strategy are so closely linked, a formal strategic management process must involve choosing a structure that will enable an organization to implement plans and attain desired goals. The appropriate structure may take the form of proper reporting relationships or may involve the creation of new sections to more effectively handle problem areas. Nikita College of Business at BSU has recently gone through an organization change to facilitate implementation of its strategic options adopted at its October 2005 retreat. However, further restructuring is a must prior to implementation of its new initiative and implementation of new graduate programs.

Control Systems

In order for strategic management and its implementation to succeed, the administrator must identify control mechanisms which will ensure that planned activities are not only carried out, but are also helping the college move toward the attainment of its objectives. It is crucial that deansery develop a means to accurately assess measures and identify deviations. Sometimes, the manner in which controls are instituted results in antagonisms, non-compliance, and poor performance on the part of faculty and staff, thus requiring closer supervision of individuals, and high administrative and monitoring costs. One control system which is becoming increasingly popular is the “identification” with performance goals. Not only is this method more cost-effective than bureaucratic or forced compliance controls, it is also well-suited to educational services because individuals can readily identify with and support the societal objectives behind the performance goals they are expected to pursue.

Resource Development

Changing educational needs (for example, increased demand for a fifth year of accountability to be able to sit for CPA exam) means that accounting education and training programs must be altered to ensure that colleges of business will be able to satisfy student demands. Facilities must also be altered (or new ones established) and, in time of inflation and fiscal constraint, the new measures must be taken to find the amount and appropriate resources for these activities. In other words, there is need for resources to be allocated in ways that are consistent with meeting the needs of the program and all the stakeholders. In this context, the resources required may include human, financial, physical, and technological resources, and their allocation must be prioritized to achieve the desired objectives.

Strategy Implementation

Implementation is the most critical component of strategic management. This can be explained by McConkey’s (1988) assertion that change comes through strategy implementation and evaluation, not through the plan. During each step in the process of formulating, evaluating, and selecting strategic alternatives, deans must carefully consider the implementation requirement. They should also consider the possibility that stakeholders and other external groups as well as funding agencies may resist a new plan, and determine the optimum way to cope with such resistance, should it occur. Any resistance and the reasons for making them, should be communicated to all stakeholders. Administrators and stakeholders should then agree on the best way to accomplish the changes. Participation in the planning process by representatives of all forces in university or the college will result in understanding, buying into and commitment, improved motivation, productivity, internal job satisfaction, and ultimately, efficient implementation and operation of programs.

Qualitative goals should be used only when:
1. The desired results cannot be expressed in quantified terms, or
2. The desired results can be quantified, but cannot be measured except with considerable difficulty or expense.

Like quantitative goals, qualitative goals can be classified into primary or maintenance categories. Again, the major difference between quantifiable and qualitative goals is that with qualitative goals, the desired results cannot be measured (that is, it is not easy to define how any existing condition is expected to change). Further, it may not be as easy to define as it is to be changed.

Indicators can be used to assess progress in achieving qualitative goals. Indicators are easily quantifiable results which have a logical relationship to the qualitative goals. Administrators must make sure there is a definite relationship between indicators and a qualitative goal, because while it may be difficult to measure performance improvement using indicators, it may be difficult to justify new programs or the continuation of existing programs in the absence of quantitative data.

ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN

Many researchers have studied the relationship between organizational structure and strategy. As early as 1954, Peter Drucker carried out a research study involving two organizations and concluded that it took these organizations years to develop the structures they felt best enhanced the implementation of their strategies. Later in 1962, Chandler concluded that, when a business introduces a new strategy, it must also change its structure accordingly if it is to operate at optimum efficiency. More recent studies (Raymond and Snow, 1978) acknowledge that the relationship between structure and strategy is very complex. Byars (1984) states that “a chosen strategy cannot be effectively implemented without developing a sound organizational structure.” He draws four general conclusions based on these studies:

1. Management’s strategic choices shape the organization’s structure.
2. Strategy and structure must be properly aligned if the organization is to be successful in achieving its objectives.
3. Organizational structure constrains strategy.
4. An organization can seldom veer substantially from its current strategy without major alterations in its structure.

The results specified by goals should be measurable. Those that can be measured directly such as a target number of students to be recruited or a retention rate, are classified as quantifiable goals. “Qualitative goals” must be measured indirectly through the use of indicators. Quantifiable goals permit administrators to measure not only the direction of change in a variable, but also the precise magnitude. Qualitative goals focus on specific portions of objectives. One objective can give rise to several goals, and it should be assumed that goals will focus on specific portions of objectives. One objective can give rise to several goals, and it should be assumed that several goals, and it should be assumed that, in turn, its purpose
This outcome, undoubtedly, requires a supportive culture, and if none exists, should be cultivated to avoid strategy implementation becoming a paper tiger, or buzz word. Once decisions have been made about its future direction, a college must implement a plan, continuously evaluate its progress, and alter it if conditions so dictate.

**Output and Feedback**

The main function of strategic planning is to satisfy the long-term needs of community and society in general and the stakeholders in particular. The output in the hourglass model can be classified into major groups: community-oriented and stake-holders –oriented. The continuous feedback shows how the outputs affect community, the external and internal environments, and the stakeholders, which, in turn, affect each other, and eventually go back into the system as inputs through the feedback loop. Theoretically, this impact on the system and environment completes the input-output loop of this dynamic hourglass model.

**CONCLUSION**

College of Business Deans must give more attention to the formulation and implementation of strategies that will put their college in the best position to be proactive to the changes in their environments. Irreversible societal, economic, political and technological trends indicate that universities and colleges must restructure, reorganize, and reconceptualize their strategies and organizations. Strategic management is one approach that any college of business can use to achieve this reorganization and restructuring. A dynamic and complex process, strategic management requires the involvement and commitment of all levels of stakeholders, faculty and staff. Deanery, in particular, must put a great deal of effort into the process if it is to succeed. The utilized model of strategic management is a valuable tool that has enabled the Nikita college of business (COB) to match its strengths and weaknesses with environmental opportunities and threats, and, finally, with the expectations of the stakeholders, to implement its strategies to achieve its objectives and goals.

**REFERENCES**


