What Strategic Planning is and what it is not

Action required: SPC members are asked to:

- Discuss and approve the definitions of what strategic planning is, and what it is not, for publication onto the strategic planning website
- Approve the key strategic planning terms and definitions

1. Introduction

There is no one internationally agreed upon definition of strategic planning so at their first meeting, Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) members sought to define the process for themselves by brainstorming what strategic planning is, and what it is not. Based on the outcomes from that activity, section 2 proposes definitions of strategic planning for UH Hilo in terms of what it is and what it is not. The original outcomes are available in the minutes of the first meeting. Section 3 outlines the key terms that the SPC will be using during development of the strategic plan. These terms were noted at the first meeting and the definition for ‘mission’ has been updated to include ‘who we serve’.

2. Proposed definitions

2.1 What strategic planning is?

Strategic planning at UH Hilo is the process by we define what we, as an institution, do (our mission), what we strive to be (our vision), and our aspirations (our goals). We will seek common ground to develop a strategic plan that is evidence-based, targeted, specific and concise, and takes into account the context and constraints within which we operate. We will ensure that the resulting plan is measurable and as such effectively implemented, monitored and reviewed so that we can determine if we’ve been successful or not and identify where changes may need to be made.
2.2 What strategic planning is not?

Strategic planning is not driven by one goal, one idea, or one set of demands, nor is it about trying to form a plan that is all things to all people. The plan itself is not about everything we do. It should not be full of jargon. It should not be ‘left on the shelf’.

3. Strategic Planning Terms and Definitions

**Strategic Plan** – a guide that defines UH Hilo and sets out what our priorities are and how we intend to meet them.

**Vision** – an image or description of the university community we aspire to become in the future. It answers the question, ‘if we can achieve what we want to do, what will we look like in X years time?’

**Mission** – a foundational statement that describes the purpose of the university’s existence. It answers the questions ‘why do we do what we do’ and ‘who do we serve’. For UH Hilo, the mission statement should distinguish us from other universities within the UH System and highlight our unique attributes.

**Strategic issue** – a fundamental challenge that could affect UH Hilo’s mission, service level, stakeholders, budgets, costs, organization or management.

**Strategic goal** – a broad statement of a core area on which the University will focus its energies.

**Action** – a measurable step that will be taken to accomplish a strategic goal.

**Institutional Key Performance Indicator (KPI)** - a measure of institutional level performance (e.g., graduate rate, freshmen retention rate) in relation to a strategic goal or action.