

TIPS TO REMEMBER WHILE DEVELOPING YOUR STRATEGIC PLAN

- **Refer to the College's and Division's goals and mission/purpose/values** as you build your dept./unit plan **and then link your identified outcomes/objectives to those goals**. This will ensure that your plan aligns with the mission and purposes of the college and helps with compiling and summarizing the complete institution-wide plan.
- You don't have to plan and assess everything every year. However do **spend time identifying those things that are most important for your division or unit** and for the college at large and focus on these areas. To help with this you can ask yourself questions such as:
What is our current situation?
What did last years' assessment tell us?
What are we doing well? (Strengths)
What can we improve? (OFIs)
What is happening in the external environment, in the college, or across the district?
- **Keep continuous improvement in mind as you assess**. This means last years' analysis should influence this years' planning. If you have an outcome or objective that was "fully complete" last year, it means you should be assessing the results of that this year (to ensure the action creates the desired results over time). If you had something that was "partially complete" last year, you should still be tracking on it this year. But if there is something you attained several years ago and your division/unit has been successful in sustaining the results... that can either be retired and you can go on to other priorities, or if this remains a priority consider changing your target related to that outcome/objective.
- **Don't try to accomplish too much in any given year**. It is always a good rule of thumb to limit your outcomes/objectives to at least three but no more than 5 or 6 per year.
- **Think "integrated"**, for example if there is something you have been targeting through the 4DX process, be sure this is reflected in your Strategic Plan as well. 4DX shouldn't be a separate and unique effort...it should be way to really focus your actions related to an outcome/objective you are trying to attain anyway.
- **Think "on-going"**, for example don't create your plan and put it on the shelf. Be sure you implement the plan and monitor progress throughout the year.
- **Be sure for each outcome/objective you include that you define one or more measures**. Again, setting limits is important. Having measures ultimately results in data (evidence), so each outcome/objective has to have some identified means to assess progress. Sometimes having more than one measure offers a means to double-check (triangulate) your evidence to provide a more complete picture. But you don't want so much evidence that you are buried in data that then has to be analyzed and interpreted.