Synthesis of Critical Success Factors

Q1. What was the purpose of CSF?

CSF was a means to establish a viable definition of and measurement for determining the institution's quantitative effectiveness. It attempted to look at the values and goals of the institution and use these as a basis to measure the value of service of progress toward success during the educational process.

Q2. What was the process used in CSF?

The CSF process involved collecting data regarding institutional goals and daily activities through a series of interviews with college groups, and then developing a list of success factors to measure institutional effectiveness. Data was used to attempt to measure the effectiveness of the institution. Some felt that the process was heavily reliant on external consultants, and that there was very little ownership or involvement within the college after the initial stage of gathering information.

Q3. What do you feel CSF accomplished?

CSF provided a methodology and framework for defining institutional goal setting, planning, and effectiveness. It established a foundation of the concept of outcomes and long range planning, and helped to establish an institutional mindset to facilitate communication about institutional effectiveness.

Did the process help you accomplish your day to day responsibilities?

CSF was given very little credit for aiding in daily activities. Most interviewees thought CSF was probably beneficial to others but few felt it benefited them personally. Some thought CSF was useful as a general planning tool, and as a way of improving communication between employee groups.

In comparing purpose to results, to what extent was it successful?

CSF was not considered to be either a success or a failure. There was a good deal of enthusiasm about CSF, and the process brought about some much-needed dialogue within the institution. CSF caused a great deal of thinking and planning to take place, but the end product was not successful as it was too broad and general to be useful to most people.

What about CSF was not successful? What caused the problems with the model?

Those interviewed felt that problems with CSF arose for a number of reasons. First, some felt that the outside facilitators did not have an adequate grasp of the daily functioning and intricate activities of OCC. Others felt that the personnel changes occurring during CSF impeded the continuity of the process, while some believed that there were problems connecting the content of CSF to the day to day activities of college faculty and staff. Finally, there were a sense that CSF might have required a different mindset or institutional culture than was present at OCC.

How could the model have been more successful at OCC?

Generally, those interviewed believed that CSF would have been more successful had it been more clearly linked to the day to day activities of the college. In addition, some felt that the college community was not adequately prepared for the process, and that had there been a greater understanding of the project it might have been more successful. Finally, some believed that OCC culture was simply not ready for this kind of project.