I'd like to go around the table and briefly have you tell me a little bit about yourself. First names are fine, what you do at the college, how long you've been here? Whatever you feel like talking about. I always start on this side, you probably should have stayed over there.

(Introductions removed)

Everybody has to talk louder, sorry folks. What I'd like to open up with is, in your opinion what was the purpose of environmental scanning? What's the purpose of environmental scanning now, before, however long you've been involved in it? As you see it, what's it's purpose?

As you see it or what the announced purpose was?

Tell me both. Let's start with the announced purpose.

I do believe it is so that you can filter information from the process into our Strategic Planning for future programming what not. I think we're in a process of working toward that. I'm not sure that it is necessarily being effective as it could be.

In what way?

In getting to the decision makers.

Okay, so it's purpose was to? I don't want to put words in your mouth. The purpose of the process was to find information that was relevant to the strategic plan.

And to help develop it.

To help develop the strategic plan. It's lacking because?

Some of the mechanisms to get to the decision makers and to implementors.

Oh, you're handing off.

I'm going to hand it over to you.

Well the way I saw environmental scanning and still is, is sort of the dance scout and wagon train. They're just out there looking to see what the train is like and giving that information back to the wagon train as it moves across to decide what is the best way to go. I think that's been the purpose all along. I agree that the problem is, I don't think it's just strategic planning. I think that information should be fed into all decision making. The problem has been all along, but I'm not real clear or sure how much of the information is used. We've never been able to find what we

felt, those of us who have been on environmental scanning I or II or Ib or whatever it is, felt that we had adequate mechanisms for that to happen in a smooth way.

It's like if you're trying to create some protectional awareness for people in Environment Scanning and alert them to the fact that you know there is a large lake in front of us and we have to turn the wagon train to the east to get around it. Turning the wagon train is very difficult.

Getting people to even pay attention to the lake is difficult.

So this sense that you have of what you're doing in terms of trying to be out there, trying to think forward, trying to feed that information back into the organization in a way is very difficult.

Okay, I'm an outsider, you have to help me understand. There is this group of people and you scan the environment. I understand you search the literature, you filter through and then what do you do with it?

I get a report back. Nice little thick report that has all kinds of demographics and statistics and just general statements about what trends are happening.

We have a newsletter that is sent out in paper form. ITS of it are sent out electronically.

To who?

Everybody at the college.

But it's sporadically. I don't think you could say, oh it's third quarter, it's time for our environmental scanning report. I think the process has been streamlined over time, but it's pretty cumbersome. It's reading, a lot of reading, writing abstracts, trying to figure out a way to put the information in some format that can then be distributed to the rest of the organization. I think part of the frustration is,is that a lot of this information comes with ill content. So, what does it help me to know that "the cutting edge is technology". I don't know really understand what that means directly for my area. How people who teach biology and going to, you know, are changing the way they teach based on the way technology is evolving, the way libraries are shifting gears because of the advances in those areas. If I don't have context, it's very hard to take information and apply it to my own situation. So we get a lot of information, but it's kind of hard sometimes to connect it directly to what people do.

My involvement in Environment Scanning was two or three years ago for maybe a year or two or three. I haven't been involved in the last year or two or three. That's why I was sort of surprised I was invited, but here I am. There is a certain type of Environment Scanning I've always been doing because I'm a counselor and I teach career planning. That is anything to do with careers, the work, what's going on out there, what are the jobs, what are the directions. I've always kept up with that. I think in meeting with the group I end up being a little frustrated because everything seems so nebulous. You couldn't really grab on to it. So I became sort of disenchanted and stopped attending.

When you say nebulous, to you mean to big picture and not specific enough or just too fuzzy in general?

Fuzzy in general.

Which group, when we had separate committees for each area?

Actually we met with *** and I remember *** and ***. I don't know if you were there.

We had two versions. Some of have been in either or and some of us have been in both. The first was, it was committeed by a specific area. Like maybe funding or work.

*** and I chaired the enrollment trends for one.

So you were on that one.

How many people were on these committees?

Eight or ten at least.

Yeah.

On a topical committee?

Right.

Then did the topical committees have chair people?

They met as a coordinating group, yes.

You were supposed to write abstracts on materials.

Then did the chairs report to some bigger committee? Then who did that committee report to?

The chancellor's council.

Chancellor's council.

It's a lot of layers for information to get through.

But some of the people who were on the environmental scanning coordinating committee were also on the Strategic Planning committee.

That was true. They thought of the environmental scanning in one sense, almost a sub-committee

of the Strategic Planning. A lot of the people who chaired Scanning committees also were part of the Task Force.

Part of the problem that makes Environment Scanning kind of iffy in terms of you fail to see where the applicacy of it is. It's not strategic and often not planning, so I don't mean to be harsh but we've been a crisis organization for many years who are very reactive. Our planning systems are not responsive to changes in the environment.

The budget isn't responsibility for any planning we do.

The budget is not responsive to any planning at all. Every year we go through this wonderful charade with our department chairs and say, okay put down all the things you want to do this year and tie your budget to that and then we turn around and give them ninety five percent of what we had last year, most of which is in salaries and no monies available for initiatives. People who manage care, manage to ninety five percent of their budget and expect it, get rewarded by being cut to ninety percent. We don't have a responsive budget process. We don't have a planning process that's really articulated well. Right now what we're doing is we're asking everybody turn their budgets in for next year. We don't ask them to turn their annual schedules in which drives the budget until March. So we have this entire instructional arena that's trying to budget two months of when we actually know what it is that instruction is really going to use.

And we haven't asked them for their department goals at all.

So the environmental scanning committee tends not to be advantageous. You can feed into a planning process, but people generally don't see the planning processes as being effective. So you can read a lot of stuff and have a coterie of people who kind of are in the know and know this big snowball is coming at us out of the future and we're not prepared to deal with it because we can't seem to get the rest of the organization to pay attention.

A case in point was enrollment. We were picking up question marks that seemed to indicate something was going on with enrollment. Then especially 92-93 when we were hitting our peak enrollments, we were seeing strange things happening in the summer and we really couldn't say that there was going to be a drop. I remember going to our campus administrative team planning and saying, I don't know what this means, but we should be looking at this. Everybody budgeted on a five percent increase in enrollment which was a linear trend and then followed 94, took a nose dive. No one paid any attention. So we were really caught naked out there.

That is a very good example. Probably, it was probably in the early 90s, 1993, we did a report that said, what has inflated our numbers has been a participation of the golf learner. But the percentage of the golf learner will really be constant, so the percentage is not wrong it's this baby boom bulge, it's moving through.

You and I wrote that, didn't we?

We wrote this and so we said, for us to maintain our current levels of enrollment, the actual

percentage of participatory involved would have to increase. The single biggest age group we discount after 65, were 45-55, is the age group least likely to participate in education because they're mid-career, they have children, they're kids are in college. There are all of those kind of mid-life issue going on.

That was the bulge, the bulge was moving into that.

As our bulge moved into that age group of 45-55 we couldn't reasonably predict that enrollment boundary. It would have to matched by increased percentage in a high school market, by doing more outreach for the senior citizen. We had a whole list of things.

Our another major recession.

The information was out there, this downward trend should not be surprising anybody because the data is there to look at, but it doesn't get factored into a planning process that says, well then lets predict a flat enrollment. We predict a flat enrollment on this campus two or three years ago starting in our budget plan which meant that we didn't have quite as much deficit to make four or five percent below reduction. It was really difficult. It was difficult at the district level because they kept saying, we can't do it. It's like, we have to otherwise we're going to be in trouble.

That's one of the fundamental problems with Strategic Planning anyway. More often than not you're looking linear trends and now with the top level we're saying our enrollment dip is going dip is going to continue forever. Well at some point you go into the negative and you have fewer students than zero. I mean that's not possible. You go out of business at some point. The business with the board and their retreat saying, well it's going to keep dropping. Well that means the next millage we'll be down to around 70,500 students college wide. If that happens I think we go major problems. How do you in Strategic Planning take account of discontinuities, which is really the biggest challenge. That's what that was in 94, was a discontinuity and when it flattens or goes back or something else happens it will be another discontinuity. You know when it comes.

Lets like use that as an example. This is exactly what I mean when the information is out there but it's not effective in the planning process. What we have is a presentation to our board which says, well our boycotts are going to continue to go this way. We're not going to account for retirements and replacement of the older more expensive workers with younger less expensive workers. We're just going to project the straight line. We're going to project a straight line in enrollment down trends. We know the high school numbers are increasing. It started increasing two years ago and we have a nice kind of steady through 2008?

Right around there in Oakland County.

If our percentage of penetration in that market remains steady, we should see an increase of enrollment in that particular group because that's like math. It's just math. On this campus we have seen one of the things that's called cushions, other kinds of enrollment down trend, is the student who are interested in English as a second language, our immigrant population. Anyone

who's scanning understands the growth of immigrant population in Oakland County and then believes that that particular group is requiring, understands that that's a huge potential fund to that market. That doesn't get factored in anywhere in terms of long range planning. The whole process that corporate america would go through is identifying the markets, identifying where they have not been at. We can identify that by an environmental scanning piece, but the translation (inaudible).

I think I, that's what I mean by I sort of left scanning. The idea was when we were scanning I thought we were going to look over and come up with programs and ideas and thoughts and within a year or two we'd have these programs and we didn't have, nothing really developed or nothing ever happened. This is not a good example, but lets say for example the people of Detroit were in favor of casinos. Then Wayne County decides to offer training to work in the casino. That seems logical. They send people to Las Vegas to find out what they need to do and so forth and so on. So they do something about it. We see it and say, that's nice.

I'm trying to get a feel for the environmental scanning process and what I'm hearing is, you scan. There is lots of people doing that either on individual committee levels or those committees for another committee and you scan and you make recommendations and then?

Well there were actually at least a couple versions. First there were these separate sub-committees of people who read and digested and wrote abstracts, then came together in a big group and said what are the implications of this. From that a report was generated that said here is some data, here's a possible implication, at least some questions. Then that was distributed to everybody as well as carried by those individuals. In some ways, that process was real inefficient and frustrating because we spent a lot of time abstracting and so on. Looking back on it, my feeling is that the advantage of it was there were a lot more people were doing it, so at least the consciousness was there among those forty people or so. They were often active people, faculty, committees or administrative committees or whatever. So they at least individually carried and seeded that information out there. The advantage we have now, the smaller group of. What is it around ten or so?

Uh-huh.

And with students coming from U of M or where ever and doing the abstracts, is that our work load is less. We can concentrate more on the bigger picture or what ever, but we have a lot fewer people now that are actually doing it systematically and we're not doing the abstracts. So I think our reading level is not what it once was, so we're more efficient, but maybe less effective than we were before.

The other piece that I think we discount is that how much environmental scanning occurs.

Anyway?

Anyway. Like *** said, he teaches career class. It's very important and there's a lot of broad based reading because of that experience. We have a lot of faculty that may be narrowly defined

in the context of their own discipline, but who understand that there are changes coming in this arena and they need to move a department or it requires some equipment or it requires technology support whatever. Part of what we don't do very well is harness that information that people do who are just committed, caring, professionals who want to stay current.

That was going to be my question. I'm hearing that there's this stuff out there that goes on, but how does it get assimilated and communicated to somebody that can make a decision?

We're trying to work on a five day plan that would assign certain members of the current scanning committee to sort of get it to a narrative and make sure that that information is out to that interested party that they are responsible or parties that they are responsible for.

Let me try to give you an example, lets say the (inaudible) chair councils meets, he says, we're looking at our enrollments over. I'm looking at what's occurring out there in the community and where I stand, lets use the art department as an example. What I see is that we're not doing enough courses in jewelry, that's a big department, big demand (inaudible) or some of the other resources. I think we could do very well there and help strengthen our growth. We don't have anybody on the faculty currently with an expertise in non-western art and art (inaudible) and I'd like to at least start looking toward bringing action into the process so that we can (inaudible). So he and I sit down and because he's done this scanning this scanning piece that he's done on his
. position and we build a budget that puts in additional adjunct money to hire that person, that creates some capitol resources that installs jewelry and buys equipment for them. Okay, then the dean is responsible for taking that to the campus level and arguing this case and making the case. So maybe that information makes it as far as the president's level. He understands the context of why we're asking for this increase in the art budget and how it is a response to the changing market courses and demands. Once it moves off the campus it becomes a negotiable item, like everything else, it becomes a set of numbers on a budget and the people who are looking at it do not necessarily have all that data that I might have put into a proposal to help support. All it becomes then, is a set of numbers on a report. It becomes a trade-off. Well, you know, you guys want an extra faculty member in the art department, you got to give something else up. It is not a response to a strategic process that wants to build enrollments in this area, we need to have certain capitol investments in order to do that. It just becomes a number. That to me where the break point is. The campus may understand the strategic pieces of what they're trying to do, making that translation to the larger college and institutional contact is usually.

Just a couple of thoughts related to that. When they're in the budgeting process and they have such a huge plate of items to look over, there isn't the time to assimilate all the details that goes into this background. I don't know how you deal with that. Then on the other level, I was just thinking also that I don't even personally know what the current structure is. It's a surprise to me that you only have ten people on an Environmental Scan committee. If I don't understand what's going on probably a lot of the other faculty don't. Even when we come up with an idea that we might like to give to an environmental scanning committee, we don't know who to give it to.

We've been talking about that very thing.

But, it's not because we haven't done some announcing.

No, no, there's been tons of materials sent out, but it gets lost in that mass of information that just falls into people mailboxes.

It's related to, in my personal case, a lack of understanding of what the current committee structure is at the college at the larger level and which individuals are on those committees. I know that they're still working on the organizational aspects, but.

That's a really good point because, we're kind of moving a little far from the environmental scanning.

I'm going to rope you back in in one minute.

Part of the reason why it is difficult to access environmental scanning information or a lot of other information, we just did this big re-organization of council structure. You could stop at any half dozen people in the hallway and ask them if they understood what that meant and what the implication was and they wouldn't be able to tell you and wouldn't be able to tell you who actually sits on any of these councils. They most certainly couldn't tell you who at the college can do environmental scanning. They really don't know that they could call *** up, call.

(Inaudible)

The feeling is that, they don't know that they could call *** and say, *** I think that there is a real potential here in my area for blah, blah, blah, but I don't really have the time necessarily to do all the research, can the environmental scanning committee help me.

Right, that's something we've never worked on until recently. It's always been, we gather the information in environmental scanning and then we try to give it to you in some digested form without telling you what it means that at least asking some tough questions from it. But we've never had the process of, I need some questions answered and I'm going to do some work on my own, but I'd like some help. People run to the library and say, you have a question, run over to *** and say can you help me, fine. That's what scanning is for too.

Let's not forget that we have institutional planning and analysis. They are quite able to do. I think we have a fairly sophisticated department for that. Look at OU, for instance, it's a tiny thing.

Well, compared to what we had when we started here, which was zilch.

Oh yeah, it's fabulous.

We can do that. It's people point that this is how we should be operating.

It hasn't permeated the departments.

Alright, I think I understand what you do in environmental scanning.

Good, explain it to us.

Where the break occurs, but I want to know what you think environmental scanning has accomplished? With all of it's flaws, what has it accomplished thus far? I'd like to hear from everybody.

Well, that's tough. A personal list.

Yeah, I mean from, let me take it one step further. Is the process relevant to your day to day responsibilities? Does it effect what you are responsible for day in and day out? Why or why not?

Probably not. It doesn't effect our particular unit from committee using you know the bigger picture in institutional planning. Some of those things that we've got. So the scanning process having surveys done for us, certainly does have impact at times. So that part of it. But as an organizational effort, which I would think that our Scanning committee wants to move that, no I don't think it has an impact.

Which is looking for program development. You know, we do our own. We have to be responsible for our own. We have reasons why we're probably more proactive in the year because we're accountable and we won't give money and we won't survive. So we are very proactive in our own environmental scanning.

Separate from the committee?

Yes, just for our own unit. I left this morning attending a meeting that I prefer not to, they start at 7:30, if I don't, if I'm not there listening all the time and what's going on in our area. I mean in a minute, we're out of the picture. There has to be responsibility at every level. I think there needs to many.

Well, that goes back to my point earlier that I think a lot of this purse in individual units. There's an accountability attached with it. It will happen. Let's use my own department as an example, we have just undertook to do a pretty serious review of all the assessments that we do of the students, the ability to update, to work, look at some of the newer stuff that's on the market. They are bringing presenters in to talk about newer therapies and newer developments, you know cognitive behavioral stuff so that we understand that this is A: aggression that the health profession moves in, but that also in order for us to be current and to be doing the most effective necessary we have understand and know about those things. That we have to be kind of out there in terms of what are new programs. What's the shift in welfare situation in the state in terms of how people fund their education, finding the resources necessary to these students here. All of those kinds of things. So we do a lot of that within our department because we need that. That's the stuff that comes to us every single day.

What is useful to other areas (inaudible). For instance I could have been saying to you about welfare that that's going to make the big impact, because that's something that is a constant everyday.

Right but how does *** get her information that she's picking up about the welfare situation to us in a way that we can see as usable and workable.

How does she? Does the process allow for that?

No, but you know she's busy and I'm busy.

And *** wouldn't necessarily say, you know I've read this really interesting thing about the way new welfare is going to work that probably has implications for the people at counseling and maybe I should call them. That part doesn't happen.

Or you may not know what implications it has for whom.

How would you know necessarily?

I'm trying to go back and it seems like it has had some impact. When we developed the first strategic direction and visions and values, it seems like the environmental scanning report that year was used a lot during that process. It seems like it had some real impact on some of them. I'm trying to remember. Wasn't the last one about the safe and healthy environment, a large part of result is some of the information that came out of that. It effected the way they were all written and phrased. Some attempt was made to do those seven things, I think with varying success, some high success, some not so high. So I think it has had an impact there. I've been a lot of committees where we used the information, but it's often hard to tell where it came from because we're all professionals and we should be doing our own scanning anyway. So when people talk about this, they don't always pull the newsletter out and wave it and say, that's where I got it. I think the problem is it's hard to document what it's going to measure and monitor what effect it's having if any.

Was the process evaluating in anyway? The environmental scanning process?

I don't think it was evaluated in any systematic way. It's seat of the pants evaluation.

We move in a direction, there's no systematic.

I agree with ***. I do think that there is a larger institutional sense impact. Whether or not every single individual walking the hall can talk to you about environmental scanning, there is certainly, I think a larger consciousness in the organization now then there was five or ten years ago that change was inevitable and change will happen and that we must be responsible.

We're less inward looking and more outward looking, not enough.

Not enough. Most people, except maybe some highly faculty, but most people understand that we should be a market responsible organization and that a lot of what we do must rely on the demands of our community. So there are, I think, the impacts may be more cultural in a sense, day to day, work related.

I agree with that.

But if this is a process, if this is a college wide process that has not been evaluated in any formal way, then the changes that have been made have been evolutionary. Somebody decided that well we need to go off in this direction? But not a formal. You evaluate, you take what you learn and incorporate it.

We're typical organizational creatures. We've made decisions based on no data.

Alright, if you compare what the purpose of environmental scanning to the results that you are seeing, to what degree to you think it's been successful? Now I heard you say that over a fairly long period of time you have seen cultural changes that may or may not be directly attributed to Scanning. Have you seen other changes? Help me understand those?

I think you can point to anything visual, because there's individual successes but you can not in any sense say they are a direct result of environmental scanning. The example I would say would be the ESL, certainly from an environmental scanning where there is a formal one or an informal one, we understand that there is a group of students out there that need english as a second language services. Understanding that is one thing, having a set of faculty and staff who say, we can make this happen, we can write the courses, we can do the political maneuvering, we can push this through the curriculum committee, we can find people to teach them, we can put the services together, is what ultimately makes that piece happen. So environmental scanning can be a chunk of that.

Yeah, and that was high-lighted in our report about five years ago before we really had much in the way of ESL. So how much effect did that have on the fact that we now have ESL?

It's hard to know, but it was sitting out there and some set of people said, we're going to respond to it.

But I think it was because it was at our doorstep and that's when we responded.

We respond when people are beating the door down.

Educational institutions, there's actually a fairly significant body of research on this, saying ten years at a minimum for significant change culturally to occur. Depending on the kind of change we're asking for it may take another twenty five.

Or fifty.

Or fifty, right. But they're not recommendations that. I'm not putting any value judgement on it. They are simply organization that culture takes longer to change.

Conservative.

They are conservative. They are people for the most part, by individuals who are highly skeptical of fads and the things that they perceive of this fad. They want to see data and research and proven ability and that other kind of stuff.

Alright, lets try this one. How do you make environmental scanning more successful at this college? What do you do? How do you do it? Who do you do it to? What do you do?

One of the things we explored and I don't know where it's going was something like scenario planning, which is where we in our group either do it ourselves or hire people or train people to be facilitator, like you. We come in with some of this information, data, potential trends that we're seeing and we throw it up visually and in data tables, whatever. Then we say to this group of decision makers, how does this impact what you have control over.

Now who are these decision maker?

Everybody. We would take a certain group. Let's say we take the curriculum committee of the college or of a particular campus and we'd say a discipline, the english department or the culinary arts, all of them. The ones we think are more susceptible to this first. We throw this stuff out there and we say, now what are the possible scenarios, at least somewhere around three. What could come from these trends.

Here's what we're seeing, here's what we're reading, here's the facts, here's the data. Now what do we do with this data?

Now what do you do.

Is that the whole right now?

Is there a step in between. First you say is, now where could this possibly go. It could go in a good way, it could go in a terrible way or it could go in some other way, which we want to get the middle road, maybe good and bad. Now, think about the implications for your program, your decision making set of things, what ever it happens to be from all three of those angles and then what are the trends in the environment that will, the size of the environment that will tell you whether one of those journeys is the closest path that we're on in time so that you can respond accordingly. That's basically what scenario planning is. Then we'd be acting more as a catalyst for people to think about. So we're confronting them with good news, bad news, in between news, good and bad news and then saying, we don't know what the implications are for you, counseling discipline, but these are the things that are going on, what do you think now? Then maybe you feedback to the environmental scanning committee. These are trends that if they occur, these are signs in the environment, that if you see, tell us right away because it will mean this.

Then we'll know and so it becomes a process that goes back and forth. Facilitative, catalyst kind of process.

And that's out there now or it's being thought about?

Well, we've been thinking about it for over a year now trying to figure out how to do it. I don't know where it's gone.

You almost have to look at your institutional effectiveness and it seems to me identify those areas that need help. You've got to create a list of critical and soon to be critical and you can manage for a few more years without much attention and people who are doing fine and probably don't need any help right now.

Based on trends?

Based on your trends, the kinds of people that you think need the most assistance.

I agree but I think we have to also focus on the ones with the big opportunities too.

Sure. But we're trying to create a process that people who are most likely hear what you have to say are the ones who are likely to be in crisis.

Clear pain or clear gain.

That's right. I think too, what this kind of thing does is, it takes it back to why I should care about it. How does it impact without coming into everyday of my life.

Scenario planning impacts that?

Something like that.

Engages a significant set of stake holders.

Confronts them with the information.

One of the things that's really interesting about the way the information is disseminated is that more than half, sixty percent of the freshmen, first time at any college, can not meet our standards for freshmen composition. Now there are faculty members who read this data that comes out of a report and throw their hands up in the air and say, this is terrible, these students shouldn't be here, we're not mediators. Four percent of the freshmen class last year at MIT couldn't pass freshmen composition. So you know what I'm saying? It's how you conceptualize the information. Too much information flows here, so if you can create through a scenario planning or some other way to contextualize the information in ways that they can make use.

That would be a good example. So those who went to english throw that out, but we also throw

out the fact that the high schools (TAPE END)

Side B

Let me hear from some of the rest of you.   What can be done to make environmental scanning more successful?

I agree with what ***. I think (inaudible interviewee spoke too low to transcribe).

How about some of the rest of you?

I'm just wondering what the library could do to help with this process. You're out-sourcing for the initial information now for scanning, I'm wondering the committee?

Where do you get your sources of data from? Anywhere?

Is it just *** office or?

No we obtain stuff from the library and stuff that *** office provides, but also we go on our own to things that we subscribe to.

We identify certain resources that are familiar to each of us and we try to get those to *** office.

Does the process work better at the campus level or the college level? Are there two separate processes? How do they get communicated or intertwined? What does no mean?

It's just individual. In mean, in the beginning I was going to be a part of environmental scanning (inaudible, interviewee spoke to low)

I think every technical program has their own environmental scanning and it's immediately connected to their programs and courses. It's bread and butter so it has immediate impact. I think the idea of certain scenarios of working with different groups within the college would be very good. Apparently the impact is there because we had the research which didn't have before ***. Now we're looking for a marketing director which will be another step forward. So something seems to be happening. I guess because it's a matter of bread and butter that's usually a dramatic impact. I think some of the ideas you expressed would be good. To bring it to the people in that way, it has much more meaning than you just read the report. Although, I read all the reports of the technical areas, I think they're beneficial.

Almost like this advisory committee which is in fact an environmental scanning function. Like right now the senate is struggling with this issue of experiential credit. Well, if this is an issue that's coming to us from the Senate, does not it make sense that we should have some process that does an environmental scan for that, that says, part of your consideration of this issue you should know that so many four year schools in your service area provide this opportunity. That community colleges do it this way, that because of the increased availability with extended or

accelerated degree programs this has become a key component. But it helps contextualize for them the threats and opportunities in that particular topic.

Roughly how many people that are out there that might be interested.

Right. So that's a process that we didn't learn in the textbook courses. Whatever it is they do a study, they talk to people in the industry. I think for me, environmental scanning in a sense, is supposed to take that place for those things that don't neatly slide into the automotive technology man, but that are the broader issues or have broader institutional application. So if maybe environmental scanning is across, I could say this is what I do. If the environmental scanning process were tied to these issues that bubble up to the surface in the institution,

But is that as an outsider is that environmental scanning issue, is that a research issue or is that a librarian issue?

You mean how the mechanism works?

Yeah. Tell me what role do you play as the library in this whole function? Do people call you and say, I need some facts?

Members of the environmental scanning committee might call up and say, I'm looking into general education or whatever, a particular trend that they're talking about. Then we do literature searches based on those concepts and give them citations or documents that correspond to the citations that basically gather the raw materials for them to digest. We, at this point, have not done any abstracting or trying to sift through that information. That's something that in corporate libraries that they do on a regular basis. It hasn't traditionally been something that we do at academic institution's libraries. I think it's very interesting the idea of doing something along the lines of the advisory committees or individual disciplines and for individual units, such as libraries, for example. Needs assessment, what's going on particularly in the immediate community. I'm thinking about some of the institutions like Wayne State, right across the street from us here at Orchard and how they're competing with us. That kind of information, I think would be useful to everybody. I'm not really sure what role the library could have in that, other than our own individual contacts of people at those institutions who are our counterparts. How we find out a lot of our information, just by personal contacts.

Compared to some of the other processes that you've seen at the college, how does this environmental scanning process measure up? How does it compare?

Other processes such as?

Well, earlier on you talked about Strategic Planning, you talked about budgeting?

I would say in some ways it's better.

Why?

Because at least there has been an effort.

A finished product.

A continuous effort to improve.

Yes, there is a continuous effort to improve.

You are right, something actually does happen. Something comes out at the other end.

You just don't know where it goes?

Not enough about where it goes or what happens to it.

If I could go back just a little bit to the topics that are being covered. To me it seems like we expand at many levels.

What levels would those be?

At the department levels, the individual level, the administrator level. Each, you know the council, the chancellor's council should have had standing process and then that's what we're thinking about what other things. Being involved in various committees, I'm seeing that one committee will have a task but they don't have all the information so they're going to someone else and saying, can you tell me what you're doing in this area so that I can bring it into our process and see how that fits. I think that kind of thing and just hearing from other institutions. Doing our research out of printed material is one way and it's effective, but I don't think it really encompasses all the information. The contextual kinds of things that we might need.

If I go back to the point of about how you don't know how the information is being used. I read the report and I subsequently engage someone in conversation and in that conversation I state a condition from that report or I help raise the consciousness about some of those issues. That person then turns around and goes somewhere else. You can be two or three generations away from who actually read the real report, but the influence of the report has started to penetrate into the system. That's one of the reason's why it's very hard for us to assess.

That should happen.

Right. And it's supposed to work. We're a highly oral culture at OCC and so probably a number of contacts. We share a lot of information verbally. A lot of people get their information verbally from other individuals who they trust. They may never be able to trace back what they know to a piece of paper or a document that came from an environmental scanning report, but it made it's way out into the world.

So is there a direct link between the environmental scanning process or the environmental scanning committee and anything else in this institution?

Structural link, you mean?

Yeah, I guess.

Or effective link?

Both, because I'm hearing there's gaps.

There is a structural link.

But it stops, at what point does it stop?

It goes to the Strategic Planning committees senate.

At a campus level?

Campus and college. It goes to the senate formally and officially. Well there's the council.

It's not a Strategic Planning council then.

There's planning and budget and then the campuses have their own planning councils, planning budget councils and the senates.

So this information out of environmental scanning would go to those different councils?

Yes.

Okay.

I just don't, again, the problem is how effective that dissemination is. Giving them a report is good in and of itself, but not enough. I think we have to find different channels, different media, and more proactive ways of confronting them with the information at a time when they can effectively use. That's the challenge.

environmental scanning committee is comprised of individuals and some of them does this because they believe change is necessary in the work in the organization.

Probably.

Part of the reason we do environmental scanning is to change programs, to change behavior in terms of our response.

Or to justify prejudice.

But at the policy level of the institutional a requirement for change or the impetuous for change,

the pressure for change does not help. Environmental scanning material can go out but it will not get the accountability because it will not leave the real pressure in the system.

See it's funny you said that because as I'm sitting here and I'm thinking about what you say. What I'm hearing is that this is a bottom up kind of thing, but it stops. It doesn't go all the way up, it stops at some level. So how do you get it to be a top down.

Circulatory.

Yes, more circulatory exactly. If I didn't have arms I would be able to talk.

That's a regular issue at the institution, no matter what. I ran into it with CQI, that's one of the reasons it died. Anything, any of the issues, there are no clear channels or bubbling up information ideas into a decision flow. There is no clear way for decision makers to tap into any of those channels in a systematic way. It happens to any of us. Is that fair? It's a structural problem as much as it's anything.

That's kind of what I'm hearing and I know I'm on the outside looking in. What I'm hearing is, you have this process that we're trying to focus on, environmental scanning, then you have individuals, departments, campuses, colleges and then beyond that. But if it doesn't go beyond that it's not going to come back around and I'm just. With you being so intimately involved in it with each of you, however limited you think your experiences, how do you see linking the process to the institution? What are the next steps that need to be taken? If you had a blank sheet of paper, no rules, what would you do to make it work better?

No budgets approved and no strategy is approved unless you back it up with data.

Yes and no. Then you're clogging the organization. Part of the problem I have of the strategic directions is that we torque people a lot about saying, well relate you're secretary to what strategic directions can support. She's supports of the office, she answers the phone, she does her typing. There are certain things in the organization that perhaps we don't have to do on an annual basis tieing it to the strategic plan. We sometimes go too far in the other direction.

Is there a need for this process to continue? I'm going to play devil's advocate. Should this process continue? Do you see a need for it?

I think so, definitely.

Yeah.

How do you convince others to buy into it?

Everybody wants information. Everybody complains all the time they don't have enough information and not enough communication goes on. So the desire is there.

Throughout management.

Right.

Management suggestion, how do you manage it better? This is your big shot folks.

This is an issue I've been wrestling with for ten years in this organization and other people have been doing it longer than that. When I was a dean, the stream of information that came across my desk was a large problem. You couldn't manage it, you couldn't assimilate it, you couldn't possibly read it all. There just wasn't any way to deal with all of it. The week I changed jobs, it was like someone shut it off. I got written out of the process. It's so interesting to me that on one hand structurally defined only certain people can have it because it's dangerous to give to the rest.

It's not like most of what you get is proprietary or anything like that or really secretive stuff.

Whereas, actually if *** was getting more data and *** could do more abstracting for her dean or supervisors so that he wasn't the one responsible for processing it in some way, the information might, but we really created this skip in the organization.

How do we get everybody to actively environmentally scan and then whenever possibly feed anything interesting to someone. That's bottom up, so that everybody is a scanner anyway. A maintenance person goes out and talks to maintenance people from other institutions and finds out something about the environment and feeds something in there as effectively as any instructor or dean or anybody.   Who knows where it will come from. It doesn't even have to be about maintenance, they could hear something from the local high school about enrollment trends, it doesn't matter. So break that barrier that only certain people have the right to see. How do you that, how do you get that expectation but then how do you also this group that's still going to coordinate, how do they then drive information flow everywhere. And hit people at a point when they are going to make a decision.

I think one thing is that, you know, the people have to have confidence that something will be acted on. It's just information and it never comes back. Gosh, some of the work that we do with our students, we preach all the time that you're getting a lot of information, but that's all it is. It's information until there's action. I want to take some of this away from OCC and see the culprit of this whole kind of system. This is just not indicative of our educational system. We have evidence that we're very content heavy, more than other countries. They may be less content heavy than we are, but showing that they can apply their knowledge.

Same problem occurs in the private sectors though. There's people sitting around tables and business meetings asking the same questions right now, or there wouldn't be all these books on planning and scanning. No one really knows how to manage the information. Some organizations are much more departmentalized than we are, believe it or not.

That's true, it's not like this is case and point. You guys are off in left field somewhere, but

the fact of the matter is, is that you have to work within this environment, how do you break down those invisible barriers to disseminate information?

Well, that whole budgeting process is part of the trouble was the limitations of the funds that are available for new initiatives and so forth. I also think that sometimes folks are not realistic in expectations about what, you know, if I just throw a little more money at it and that will solve the problem. That's not the answer either.

I think of a Hundred Miles Per Hour by Bill Cosby. He did it in the sixties. He bought a car and he didn't know where the gas tank was, so he drove it to a station that wasn't self serve to ask someone, thinking that gasoline as the information, you know where is the gas tank. Well the guy at the gas tank didn't know either. Bill Cosby said, pour it all over and some of it will find it's way in. I think really the ultimate answer is that's what we have to do. We have to pour the information all over in multiple ways. Maybe we need a web page for scanning. Continue to do the e-mail. Go to the meetings with scenario planning or presentations of information. Ask people, maybe in environmental scanning we haven't done that enough. We need to say, Work Force Development, what do you think is going on out there and what questions should we be looking at. Just pour the information all over and the questions all over. I don't think any one way is going to do it for everybody.

Think of ourselves as people who understand how to educate. We know that everybody in the classroom wants different things. We've all had the experience of coming upon new work for the first time in our entire lives. Suddenly, you see it eight thousand other places and you never would have notices before because it's not (inaudible). So the brain takes it in and builds upon the kind experience in your head, otherwise the brain can not make sense of it. I think that you're right. I think that it's the delivery of information in lots of different ways as tolerance in the organization understands it. Because I come to understand something three years after we hear and you say, like geeze, I knew this like three years ago, what's the matter with you. I know have a contact for that information system and I know have a need to know it and a way to learn it and apply in my environment. We have to have less of an expectation that everybody is going to board on the same time on the same page.

But how do you determine those, I'm going to be the brat, how do you determine those pieces of information that have to be expedited right away? We don't have time for you to wait, we don't have time to wait for you to get it contextually? This is a major trend that's going to effect us whether we like it or not. How do you bring those to the forefront and make people pay attention?

Go to the ones that do and start moving. That's the first layer. As the other's start to move in.

Something that is that important you get it to the board, the chancellor's council, you get it to key decision makers. The problem with what you are saying, there's is multiple contents. The problem is, the idea that this environmental scanning group is going to be the group that sees this vital piece of information that's a clear threat or a wonderful opportunity, that's part to compartmentalizing and we dust away. Somehow we got to get that back and forth thing because

who knows where it may see something before any of us do. How do we get them fed in to the process. Then the environmental scanning group would say, oh wow you're right and then start spreading things. So it's up and down, back and forth has to be done. What you're saying it has to be done multiple ways.

As being part of the Work Force Development service we've been very proactive in thinking about how we market this unit internally. We think we've already done a fair job externally. Internally, in that process we just spread out our book, because they got to hear it in a different way. They've got to hear it in a context that makes sense to them. Faculty is not going to care that our image out in this world is going to be great for anyone else, no what's it going to do for me. Until we can find that place. How should we present it to people who need to pay attention to it.

I like the idea of multiple ways of getting the word out on these trends. In addition to the written reports that everybody receives if we could put that information on web pages along with the names of the individuals who could be contacted if somebody sees an interest in this issue.

Hyperlinks to.

Hyperlinks, e-mail addresses, then also presenting on a regular basis in the academic senate. Say you take one or two trends a meeting and just discuss it generally. Spread it that way.

Maybe campus and college?

Yeah, right, both.

Or a standing report like they do for north central.

What was he suggesting.

Exactly that.

Oh, okay, okay.

Identifying influential bodies because learning whether you like the idea or not signifies a tremendous of agenda for the institution. You want to be informing that agenda.

What about being part of the agenda for president's cabinets, chancellor's council, where there's environmental scanning report, fifteen minutes for this months item. Throw it out on the table and see what happens.

That allows them that give and take because they would become the resource for the council. In particular, you mentioned this a couple months ago, or I've read or I've heard and I'm particularly concerned, what do you know about it.

Two ways. They may say, well you missed this.

In your opinion, what was the purpose of environmental scanning?

I think the purpose was to try to identify demographic trends and to make more positive contributions and posture the college in its strategic planning and future thinking.

In your own words, can you explain the process used in environmental scanning?

Process as I saw it: 1) the committee was formed, 2) not sure if groups were formed or not, but we all sought information sources valuable to strategic planning, 3) there were monthly meetings where we discussed what we had read and 4) we compiled a list of recommended readings.

What do you feel environmental scanning accomplished?

Accomplished more for me personally. Broadened my perspective in planning. Allowed the group to have some good futuristic discussions. Served as a catalyst for the change process that some are attuned to and others are not.

Do you feel that this process helped you in accomplishing your day to day responsibilities? Why or why not?

Yes, mainly because of the reading portion. Reading is critical to education. Led us to a process for strategic planning.

When you compare environmental scanning's purpose to it's results, to what degree do you believe it was successful?

If actual results are measured by where we are today, then I don't think it was as successful as it might have been because the college is not in as competitive a position as it should be.

What about environmental scanning was not successful? In your opinion, what caused the problems with environmental scanning?

What happens is that ideas float around and a lot of individuals gain new insights but don't take it to the next level to act on. There was no mechanism for implementing.

How could environmental scanning have been more successful at OCC?

By going back to the fundamentals. The committee should have listed those critical issues that would shope strategic planning. Process had no conclusion. No direct link into the writing of the strategic plan.

In your opinion, what was the purpose of the Calkins model?

I can't identify what that was. Never referred to any process in that manner. If we did a model, I'm not aware of it.

[Interviewer tried to re-explain as the processes Patsy Calkin initiated but was no help to respondent]