Strategic planning is a popular activity among businesses and public entities. Although the outcomes are often evaluated the planning process itself is seldom examined. Researchers have even suggested that muddling-through is as effective as a complicated, elaborate planning process. This case study examines the perceptions of the senior leaders of Oregon’s 16 community colleges and the State Board of Education’s Office of Community College Services (OCCS). Interviews were conducted after the planning process that created the state-wide database, the Oregon Community College Unified Reporting System (OCCURS), was completed.

Directed by the 1992-93 Oregon Legislature, the OCCS led a stakeholder planning process that required nearly 80 people from each of the 16 community colleges to meet over a period of 13 months. College presidents, vice presidents, deans, staff members, and technicians staffed the four main committees. OCCS hired a former community college information systems director to manage the planning process. Thousands of hours were invested.

This study of the OCCURS planning process examined two questions. Does a state-wide planning process among 16 community colleges generate support for a
decentrally collected, centrally state administered database project? Does such a planning process help shape the perceptions of senior decision makers?

The researcher, from a participant-observer vantage point, interviewed 23 individuals who were key in the development of the system. These study participants had significant impact on the success or failure of the system. Examining their perceptions regarding the planning process will help predict the viability of the OCCURS project. The interview questions centered on the participants’ involvement in the planning process, how they felt going into the process, how they felt about the outcomes, and their predication as to the future success of the data collection system. OCCS staff were also interviewed.

This study found stakeholder planning was an effective tool to garner top management support for multi-stakeholder, complex issue, rapidly changing environment projects. The largest predictor of whether the study participant felt that the planning process was successful and the outcomes viable was their level of trust in the people carrying out the implementation. The study examines how OCCS attempted to generate that feeling of trust. The perceptions of the participants were shaped by the planning process. In most cases, the techniques used by the planners helped foster support for the outcomes.
Shaping the Perceptions of Senior Decision Makers at Oregon Community Colleges: A Case Study of a State-wide Planning Process

by

Patrick D. Schwab

A DISSERTATION submitted to Oregon State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

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Patrick D. Schwab, Author
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The Oregon State University Community College Leadership Program (CCLP) is a remarkable program designed to help community college professionals excel and reach a higher, more mature level in their careers. As a member of the first cohort in a new program, my colleagues and I helped the OSU School of Education faculty work through the agony and the ecstasy of creating a new, university based program. I would especially like to thank Drs. Carpenter, Parnell, and Daugherty for their vision that helped create the OSU CCLP. I would also like to thank Dr. Sam Stern, my major professor, for his added knowledge and patience that helped us make this a study of which we could both be proud.

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Large scale planning is especially important when it involves many organizations, complex relationships, and the use of technology. In such cases, when planning goes wrong the results can be catastrophic. A recent example of large scale planning that involved many organizations and computer systems gone wrong was reported in the Oregon newspapers in the spring of 1996. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), specifically the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) attempted to redesign their entire computer system with disastrous results. In a Statesman Journal newspaper article (Bender, 1996) Governor Kitzhaber bluntly criticized the ODOT management saying:

The main problem seemed to be poor, very poor communication and cooperation between top management in the Oregon Department of Transportation and the DMV. But also it was an attitude by top management at ODOT that they were a separate entity essentially from the rest of the state government, which raises very serious questions of accountability. (p. 2A)

Three top ODOT administrators have recently left their positions. Director Donald Forbes and chief information officer Craig Holt returned to the private sector and Jane Cease, the manager of the Driver and Motor Vehicle Services, resigned but will remain at
ODOT in a different capacity. It has been reported that many more ODOT managers will be replaced because of the total collapse of their planning process, the lack of trust, and the failure of senior management to listen to the feedback of the mid-level workers.

The computer project ran out of control, resulting in a 300 percent cost overrun. The computer system is years behind schedule and the organizations have been seriously damaged. A Governor’s Task Force on the Motor Vehicles’ Data System discovered an atmosphere of suspicion, mistrust, and hostility in the organizations. The planning that had been done was characterized by fear and intimidation (“Task force’s key findings,” 1996).

Can planning with complex relationships and complex technology be effective? Can the pitfalls of the Oregon Motor Vehicles system be avoided? The 16 community colleges of Oregon tried to plan for a complex database system. The study reported in this paper examines this planning process. The intent of the community college planning was to develop a single data system that the colleges would use to collect information about student outcomes and costing information. Oregon has a very decentralized community college system. The planning needed to create a reliable database of information about Oregon’s community colleges, assist the small Office of Community College Services (OCCS) answer legislative questions in a timely manner, and assist the colleges to improve their effectiveness.

Overview of Problem

Strategic planning programs are some of the least evaluated, and probably least accountable, activities in most organizations (Gray & Ellefson, 1991). Strategic planning,
according to Gray and Ellefson, should help to improve the performance of the organization, develop agreement on goals and objectives, increase shared commitment, improve coordination and consistency among programs, and enhance communications and information flow. Despite a general consensus in traditional management literature that formal strategic planning is an essential element of success (Cope, 1987; Gluck, Kaufman, & Walleck, 1993; Mintzberg, 1994), critics continue to question its value. Some researchers argue that the process of strategic planning creates little more than an illusion of control, especially when complex systems are involved (Hogarth & Makridakis, 1981; Mason & Mitroff, 1981). They maintain that decisions reached through planning are not better than those reached through adaptive, muddling-through processes (Wildavsky, 1973). Besser and Bishop (1983) further contend that strategic planning might engender dysfunctional effects in some organizations, leading to poorer performance.

Most authors see strategic planning in a more positive light than Wildavsky (1973), Besser and Bishop (1983), or Mason and Mitroff (1981). Strategic planning can, according to Thomas and Jones (1993), enable an organization to take advantage of new and different opportunities in the future, especially in areas of information technology, while minimizing the negative impact of unexpected challenges along the way. The purpose of strategic planning, according to Boar (1993), is to provide direction, concentration of effort, consistency of purpose, and flexibility as an organization continually strives to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.
Planning for information technology related issues such as computer databases possesses its own set of problems. Technology often changes before comprehensive planning can be conducted. Planners need to anticipate technology that does not yet exist to meet a future need (Yourdon, 1992). In these times of rapid technological change, strategic planning can also provide great opportunities in the use of information technology to support the mission and goals of the organization. The planning effort must, according to Thomas and Jones (1993), be conducted within the framework of a holistic planning process and must consider the organizational culture, history, and resources. Markus & Robey (1988) suggest research on the impact of such planning “... has produced conflicting results and few reliable generalizations” (p. 584). In spite of the lack of evidence about effectiveness, a considerable amount of research has been done to determine how strategic planning might be improved. To this end, researchers have developed a number of structured decision aids to help managers recognize and overcome the human deficiencies in decision making (Huff & Reger, 1987). Information technology has recently been heralded by many as a decision aid with significant potential for improving both the efficiency and effectiveness of strategic decision making (Molloy & Schwenk, 1995).

To capitalize on the use of information technology in decision making, the State of Oregon and its 16 community college districts attempted to plan and execute a decision support data collection system. The Office of Community College Services (OCCS) under the direction of the Commissioner of Community Colleges (Roger Bassett) with agreement of the 16 college presidents embarked on a planning process that
would take more than 13 months (June, 1993 through July, 1994). Planning a common
database system intended to serve the various decision making needs of the State
Legislature, a decentralized community college system, and the Office of Community
College Services was a major challenge. Thomas and Jones (1993) suggests that planning
projects that must meet many constituencies as well as anticipate changing technology
creates serious problems for the planners. Meeting the varied needs of a broad
constituency in a changing landscape of new technology and shifting expectations is the
kind of planning environment that gives computer professionals heartburn. It is the
planning process of a decision support information technology venture that was examined
in this study.

Purpose and Research Questions

Planning for large multi-organizational systems has not been researched at great
length. Much of the research and writing has been about single-site planning (Armstrong,
1982, Donsky, 1992; Farrell & Gring, 1993; McCredie, 1983). This current study
examines one effort in the planning for a state-wide, multi-college, project. To implement
a plan, especially when it comes to integrating the use of technology such as computers,
the process must help generate support for the venture (Thomas & Jones, 1993). Along
with a careful detailing of the events and process of the creation of OCCURS, the
question of senior management perceptions of the outcomes of the planning process was
studied. Even though some of the senior managers may not have attended meetings or
been intimately involved in the planning of the OCCURS system, the planning process
should create a common vision and support for the project. It is this common alignment of vision among the senior administrators at the colleges that was examined. The following are the questions that were investigated.

**Does a state-wide planning process among 16 community colleges generate support for a decentrally collected, state administered database project? Does such a planning process help shape the perceptions of senior decision makers?**

**Case Study Context**

Oregon's community colleges are operated as independent taxing districts. Each community college has its own publicly elected board of education. Currently, there are 16 independent community college districts. The Office of Community College Services (OCCS), an agency of the Oregon Board of Education, is charged with providing some oversight and coordination. Oregon community colleges are a very loose confederation of independent districts. There is very little central control by the Oregon State Department of Education. With a total of 17 employees, according to Debbie Lincoln, former Deputy Commissioner of the Office of Community College Services, OCCS is not in a position of providing strong central guidance (personal communication, December 12, 1994).

On November 6, 1990 Oregon voters limited property taxes ("Officials begin to wrestle," 1990). This property tax limitation measure altered the funding ratios of Oregon's community colleges. Historically, the State of Oregon provided about 20 percent of the dollars, the local property taxes provided about 60 percent, and the student made up the rest. Over a five year period, Measure 5 shifted the funding for community
colleges from mostly local to predominately State funded. The Oregon State Legislature funded about 18 to 20 percent of the colleges’ budgets in 1990 and by 1996 the State funded over 50 percent of the colleges’ budgets. This increased share of the budget by the State was required by the Measure 5 initiative. The shift in funding created a new dynamic between the State Legislature and the locally elected community college boards of education. As one college president said:

The State has a right to demand, and ask for this information. It’s only the most extreme caricature of an Oregonian, the populist, individualist mentality and the fear of government that would argue differently. I just think it’s silly. Not even worth talking about. You’ve got to be accountable. You’re not going to get any money, not going to get any support, unless you’re accountable. And half the money comes from the State, the State has every right to demand that we be accountable. Part of that is reporting information and data in a way that can be compared to one to the other.

It was in this atmosphere of shifting control, growing State power, and some support for accountability that the planning for a major database system took place. There was much motivation, both internal and externally, for the colleges to develop a system to help answer the colleges’ accountability needs. In January, 1992 the college presidents agreed to fund a database system, including an extensive planning process.

Definition of Terms

Database-- A database is a collection of information pertinent to a particular subject (Pfaffenberger, 1987). This collection of information provides a base or foundation for retrieving information, drawing conclusions, and making decisions. A database management system (DBMS) is a computer program for managing (that is,
storing, organizing, and retrieving) the information in the database. There are many DBMS software packages on the market. Programs such as dBase IV, Visual FoxPro, Paradox, Access, Clipper, Oracle, Informix, and DB4 are just some of the DBMSs currently on the market. DBMSs were originally designed to meet the data crunching needs of large organizations. A DBMS can deal with several databases at once, linking the data needed by many locations into a single information system. Updates made at one location are immediately reflected in the information available to the other locations.

With the more sophisticated DBMS packages, hundreds of users can simultaneous share a truly massive reservoir of data.

**Information Technology (IT)** - IT may be defined as computer-based technology for storage, accessing, processing, and communication of information.

**Stakeholder** - Any entity having a particular interest in the “products” of the institution becomes a stakeholder (Mintroff, 1983).

**Strategic Planning** — The definition of strategic planning is defined over the next six pages. The following is the short definition. According to Goodstein (Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1992), “. . . strategic planning is the process by which the guiding members of an organization envision its future and develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future” (p. 34).
Chapter 2- Review of Literature

Overview of Business Planning Literature

In his book *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning: Reconceiving Roles for Planning, Plans, Planners*, Henry Mintzberg (1994) raises the question, “What is planning anyway?” (p. 5) This may seem like a strange question to ask as the twentieth century draws to a close, “. . . given the long popularity of planning, especially (ironically) in both Corporate America and Communist Europe” (Mintzberg, 1994, p. 6). Largely a budget exercise in the America of the 1950s, planning began to spread quickly, having become firmly installed in most large corporations by the mid-1960s (Chamberlain, 1968; Gilmore, 1970). The notion of strategic planning took hold in the mid-1960s and within a decade planning became a virtual obsession among American corporations and in American government.

The concept of strategic planning dates back much further than the 1950s. There is even a reference to a “Director of Strategic Planning” in Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War* (1971), originally written about 2,400 years ago. Henri Fayol (1949), writing of his experiences as a French mining chief executive in the last century, noted the use of ten-year forecasts that were revised every five years. Despite all this attention, the fact remains that the question, “What is planning?”, has never been properly answered or seldom seriously addressed, in the planning literature according to Mintzberg (1994).

Aaron Wildavsky (1973), a political scientist well-known for his criticisms of planning, concluded that in trying to be everything, planning became nothing:
Planning protrudes in so many directions, the planner can no longer discern its shape. He may be economist, political scientist, sociologist, architect or scientist. Yet the essence of his calling—planning—escapes him. He finds it everywhere in general and nowhere in particular. Why is planning so elusive? (p. 127)

Planning as Future Thinking

Some authors have characterized planning as simply taking the future into account. "Planning denotes thinking about the future," wrote Bolan (1974, p. 13). Similarly, Sawyer (1983) suggested that planning was action laid out in advance. The problem with this definition is that there are no boundaries. What organizational activity, no matter how short-term or reactive, does not take the future into account? Newman (1951) acknowledged the problem when he quoted Dennison that "Almost all work, in order to be done at all, must be planned, at the least informally and a few minutes ahead" (p. 56). By this definition, all activities are planning. Nothing is excluded. In fact, Fayol (1949) understood how broad the term planning was back in 1916 when he wrote: "The maxim, 'managing means looking ahead,' gives some idea of the importance attached to planning in the business world, and it is true that if foresight is not the whole of management at least it is an essential part of it" (p. 43, published in French in 1916).

But if management and planning are synonymous or as Dror (1971) put it, "... planning, in a word, is management", why bother to use the word "planning" when "management" works just fine (p. 105)?
Planning as Controlling the Future

Planning, according to Forrester (1969), is not just thinking about the future but acting on it. “Planning is the design of a desired future and of effective ways of bringing it about” according to Ackoff (1970, p. 1). Ozbekhan (1969) expressed the same thought when he defined the purpose of planning as “. . . to create controlled change in the environment” (p. 152). John Kenneth Galbraith (1967) argued in his book, The New Industrial State, that big business engages in planning to “. . . replace the market,” to “. . . exercise control over what is sold . . . and what is supplied” (p. 24).

This definition has the same problem as “planning as future thinking.” Controlling the future is just synonymous with the word “management” and so loses distinctive meaning. Wildavsky (1973) suggested:

Since practically all actions with future consequences are planned actions, planning is everything, and non-planning can hardly be said to exist. Non-planning only exists when people have no objectives, when their actions are random and not goal-directed. If everybody plans (well, almost) it is not possible to distinguish planned from unplanned actions. (p. 130)

Planning as Decision Making

Still, we need a definition of planning that tells us not that we have to think about the future, not even that we should try to control it, but how these things are done. In other words, planning has to be defined by the process it represents. In this regard, a number of writers have proposed that planning is decision making. As far back as 1949, Goetz, as cited in Steiner, (1979) defined planning as fundamentally choosing and Koontz
(1958) defined it as “... the conscious determination of courses of action designed to
accomplish purposes. Planning is, then, deciding” (p. 48). Likewise, Snyder and Glueck
(1980), without labeling it decision making, defined planning as “... those activities
which are concerned specifically with determining in advance what actions and/or human
and physical resources are required to reach a goal. It includes identifying alternatives,
analyzing each one, and selecting the best ones” (p. 73). Similarly, in certain literature of
the public planning, the term planning has been used as a virtual synonym for decision
making and project management (Nutt, 1983, 1984a). Others tried to tweak this
definition: Drucker (1959), for example, by discussing the futurity of present decisions,
and Ozbekhan (1969), by describing the future-directed decision process.

Since decision making process is all future-directed, these nuances are of little
help. Assuming that decision means commitment to action (Mintzberg, Raisinghani, &
Théorêt, 1976), every decision takes the future into consideration by a vow to act,
whether it be to market a product in ten years or ship one in ten minutes. Rice (1983)
recognized this when he argued that “... all decisions are made with forethought,” that
every decision maker has “... a reason for making his decision,” which amounts to a
“plan” (p. 60).

Thus, this third definition becomes, according to Cooper (1975), everything
managers do, “... part of the intellectual process the policy maker employs to reach his
decision,” even if “... informal, unstructured” (p. 229). In fact, to make their case that
managers do indeed plan, Snyder and Glueck (1980) used the example of a school
superintendent dealing with the efforts of a councilman to disrupt school board meetings.
The school superintendent created an elaborate plan to discredit the councilman. If planning is reacting to such pressures in the short term, then what isn’t planning? Snyder and Glueck stated, “Planning, of course, is not a separate, recognizable act . . . Every managerial act, mental or physical is inexorably intertwined with planning. It is as much a part of every managerial act as breathing is to the living human” (p. 75).

If planning is every managerial act then why describe what organizations do as planning, any more than describe what people do as breathing? In other words, who needs the planning label when decision making or even managing does the job? As Sayles (1964) noted, planning (presumably by any of these first definitions) and decision making “. . . are inextricably bound up in the warp and woof of the [manager’s] interaction pattern, and it is a false abstraction to separate them” (p. 287).

Planning as Integrated Decision Making

To Schwendiman (1973), planning is an “. . . integrated decision structure” (p. 32). According to van Gunsteren (1976), it “. . . means fitting together of ongoing activities into a meaningful whole . . . Planning implies getting somewhat more organized . . . It means making a feasible commitment around which already available courses of action get organized” (p. 2).

The last definition may seem close to the preceding one. But because it is concerned not so much with the making of decisions as with the conscious attempt to integrate different ones, it is fundamentally different and begins to identify a position for planning. According to Ackoff (1970), “Planning is required when the future state that we
desire involves a set of interdependent decisions; that is, a system of decisions . . . the principal complexity in planning derives from the interrelatedness of the decisions rather than from the decisions themselves . . .” (p. 3).

This view of planning finally takes us into the realm of strategy making, since that process also deals with the interrelationships among decisions (important ones) in an organization. But because this normally has to take place over time, such coordination among decisions is rendered difficult. Planning as integrated decision-making imposes a particularly stringent requirement. The decisions in question must be “batched” — be drawn together periodically into a single, tightly coupled process (Mintzberg, 1994). As Ozbekhan (1969) noted, “‘Plan’ refers to an integrative hierarchically organized action constraint in which various kinds of decisions are functionally ordered” (p. 153).

It is this requirement that may help to explain why planning is sometimes treated as synonymous with decision making. If different decisions have to be batched, they may come to resemble a single decision. Hence planning writers have tended to confuse decision making with strategy making by assuming that the latter necessarily involves the selection of a single course of action—the choice of an integrated strategy at one point in time. Normann (1977) made this point about Igor Ansoff’s (Ansoff, Avner, Brandenburg, Portner, & Radosevich, 1970; Ansoff & Brandenburg, 1967; Ansoff, Eppink, & Gomer, 1975; Ansoff & Hayes, 1975) well-known writings on planning:

Ansoff regards the choice of strategy and the formulation of policy chiefly as a decision process: first, goals are established, after which (using a series of analytical techniques) alternatives are evolved and (still using analytical techniques) a choice made among them, possibly after some adjustments in the original goals. (Normann, 1977, p. 8-9)
Thus, just what planning is becomes clearer. However, it is still not clear enough. Visionary leaders likewise integrate decisions in their cases informally. Yet to encompass their behavior under the planning label would again seem to broaden it beyond reasonable (and current) usage. Something more is needed to identify planning.

Planning as a Formalized Procedure to Produce an Articulated Result, in the Form of an Integrated System of Decisions

The final component that needs to be added to understand a fully developed model of planning is “formalization” (Mintzberg, 1994). The emphasis on formalization, the systemization of the phenomenon to which planning is meant to apply, is clearly distinguishable in the literature. Bryson (1988) referred to strategic planning as a disciplined effort, in fact, “… simply a set of concepts, procedures and tests” (p. 512), while in some of the research literature the term “Formal Strategic Planning” was substituted (Pearce, Freeman, & Robinson, 1987).

Formalization would seem to mean three things: (a) to decompose (breaking tasks down into their component parts), (b) to articulate, and especially (c) to rationalize the processes by which decisions are made and integrated in organizations. An emphasis on formal rationality permeates the planning literature. Denning (1973) contrasted the “systematic” with the “haphazard”, while Steiner (1979) argued that “Plans can and should be to the fullest possible extent objective, factual, logical, and realistic in establishing objectives and devising means to obtain them” (p. 20). Similarly, Dror (1971) claimed that in the public sector “… planning is at present the most structured
and professionalized mode of policy making," given its "... explicit attention to internal consistency" and its "... effort to supply structured rationality" (p. 93).

Rationality of this formal kind is rooted in analysis, not synthesis, according to Mintzberg (1994):

Above all, planning is characterized by the decompositional nature of analysis—reducing states and processes to their component parts. Thus the process is formally reductionist in nature. This may seem curious, given that the intention of planning is to integrate decisions. Planning can be characterized by the nature of its process, not by its intended results. In fact, the key assumption underlying strategic planning is that analysis will produce synthesis: decomposition of the process of strategy making into a series of articulated steps, each to be carried out as specified in sequence, will produce integrated strategies. Along with rationality and decomposition, articulation is the third key component of formalization. The product of planning — the plans themselves — after being carefully decomposed into strategies and substrategies, programs, budgets, and objectives, must be clearly and explicitly enumerated. (p.13)

So now we have an operational definition of planning. Planning can be identified with two observable phenomena in organizations — the use of formalized procedures and the existence of articulated results, specifically concerning an integrated system of decisions. As Goodstein put it (Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1992), "... strategic planning is the process by which the guiding members of an organization envision its future and develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future" (p. 34).

General Planning Literature

In *Strategy and Structure: Chapters in the History of the Industrial Structure* Alfred Chandler (1962) summarized the history and expansion of 100 of the nation’s
largest firms during the previous 100 years. This is the first scholarly work that
demonstrates firms prosper more as they anticipate opportunity in future environments.

The book, according to Cope (1987), built on the relations between economic and
business history. This was a seminal work in the general management literature.

Organizational innovation, according to Chandler, became apparent as he concentrated
his study on four major companies. General Motors, du Pont, Jersey Standard, and Sears
were the first American companies to initiate major reorganizations to create a multi-
revisional structure. Chandler’s major points were:

First, a meaningful analysis of the creation of the new
administrative form called for accurate knowledge about the firm’s
previous organization and in fact about its entire administrative
history. Second, changes in organizational structure were intimately
related to the ways in which the enterprise had expanded. An
evaluation of administrative change, therefore, demanded a detailed
understanding of the company’s methods of growth. Third, these
patterns of growth, in turn, reflected changes in the over-all
American economy, particularly those affecting the market or
demand for the enterprise’s products. Finally, the reorganizations
were influenced by the State of the administrative art in the United
States at the time they were being carried out. (p. 3-4)

Chandler’s book is significant because it advanced the proposition that an
organization’s success results from how well it reads the environment (Rouleau &
Séguin, 1995). Some organizations are more responsive to the environment. It is those
organizations that make better strategic decisions.

The next important body of work was that of Igor Ansoff. Beginning with
Corporate Strategy (1965). Ansoff named three kinds of decisions: strategic,
administrative, and operating, each related to different aspects of converting resources.

Strategic decisions, Ansoff pointed out, are concerned primarily with external rather than
internal processes, such as what widget to manufacture. Administrative decisions emphasize internal hierarchical and structural dimensions, while operating decisions maximize the profitability of current operations. Most of what is written today in business literature, according to Cope (1987), is similar to what Ansoff outlined in 1965 (also see Ansoff & Brandenburg, 1967; Ansoff & Hayes, 1975; Ansoff, et al., 1970; Ansoff, et al., 1975).

Strategic Planning Evaluation Literature

Research relating formal strategic planning to organizational performance is limited in numbers, inconclusive in judgments, and often conflicting in results (Armstrong, 1982; Markus & Robey, 1988). Very often, case studies of strategic planning are seriously flawed, especially with respect to assessing planning contexts and processes (Hogarth & Makridakis, 1981; Nutt, 1984). Among the many deterrents to effective evaluation of strategic planning is the lack of well-defined outcomes or products from planning processes and the very limited theoretical or conceptual basis for undertaking such evaluation. No single approach to evaluation of strategic planning has been agreed on, although that has not prohibited analysts from carrying out general administrative reviews and critiques of planning programs (Baltic, Hof, & Kent, 1989; Office of Technology Assessment, 1990; Forest Service, 1990). Such difficulties aside, the need for a systematic approach to evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of strategic planning programs continues. Research agendas for doing so have be identified by many, including
managers within the information technology management community (Molloy & Schwenk, 1995; Penrod & West, 1989; Thomas & Jones, 1993).

King (1983) suggested a promising conceptual approach for evaluating strategic planning. King argued that since strategic planning is advocated because of a wide variety of potential benefits that accrue to multiple stakeholders, evaluation should assess the degree to which these diverse benefits (or costs) are actually acknowledged by such stakeholders. From a stakeholder perspective, it is suggested that strategic planning be evaluated from four perspectives, namely (a) the context within which planning is undertaken (e.g., previous experience with planning, resources available for planning, technical complexity of planning, political support for planning), (b) the process used to guide planning (e.g., mission definition, issue identification, resource assessment, strategy development, planning budgeting link), (c) the outputs of planning (e.g., long-term direction, public awareness, communication and coordination, anticipation, and response ability), and (d) the performance of planning (e.g., importance planning, adoption and use of plans, and the implementation of those plans) (King, 1983).

Computer Planning Literature

While some authors (Davis, 1984; Huber, 1984, 1990; Isenberg, 1984) have argued that the use of information technology will affect strategic decision-making performance, others (Dearden, 1983; Wildavsky, 1983) have argued that the use of information technology has little, if any, effect on senior management activities. King
(1985) went so far as to argue against the use of information technology by chief executive officers (CEOs).

Researchers expected that information technology would increase the amount of information available for strategic decision making. However, the soft, personal information often used by management (El Sawy, 1985; Kotter, 1982; Mintzberg, 1975) is not easily captured by a computer-based system (Karten, 1987). Drucker (1992) argued that the impact of information technology on strategic decision making is limited by the inability of the information technology to access the relevant strategic information. This information generally exists outside of the organization. As noted by Huber (1984), information technology may allow more efficient scanning of quantitative data, allowing managers more time to personally gather soft, qualitative data.

Information technology (IT) may improve managers' understanding of problems. Jaques (1976) and Mintzberg (1973) both note the importance of executives’ mental models in the processing of information. Mintzberg (1973) suggested the effectiveness of the manager’s decisions is largely dependent on the quality of his models. Because of the ability of information technology to process large amounts of data and test complex models the use of IT should, according to Mintzberg, reduce biases in managers’ conceptions of strategic problems.

Finally, information technology may improve problem-related communication. Kotter (1982) noted two key executive processes: agenda setting and network building. Network building often requires extensive communication to provide the information necessary for the development and implementation of the decision maker’s agenda. The
ability of information technology to efficiently and effectively communicate information should be expected to expand the human limits to communication (Molloy & Schwenk, 1995).

Senior administrative support for the planning effort is essential. Gray and Ellefson (1991) found that support for planning programs by key planning constituencies is an important contextual element of strategic planning programs. Thomas and Jones (1993) were very specific in their findings that the support of the key decision makers, as it relates to technology planning, is key to the success of the planning process. Penrod and West (1989) in “Strategic Planning for Computing Communications” wrote at great length about the need for senior management support and leadership to construct a workable, successful plan. Yourdon (1992) found that without support of the Chief Executive Officer many attempts at changing technology are doomed to failure. Several authors (Carter, 1971; Mintzberg, et al., 1976; Quinn, 1980; Shrivastava, 1985) demonstrated the need to involve other managers rather than just the CEO in the planning of decision support systems.

Education Planning Literature

Educational planning has been part of the planning literature for quite a while. George Keller’s *Academic Strategy* in 1983 was an extensive treatment of educational strategic planning. Keller proposed that it is through strategic planning that higher education can strive to excellence. Keller did not exactly provide a “how-to” book but did
present a number of well-developed case studies that showed that planning and vision can have some remarkable outcomes.

Many reports have been published by participants in planning processes in the college and regional educational planning environment. In the article “Effective planning and management: Methods and tools for times of declining resources” Wilhelm & Adams (1992) used Indiana University as a case study on how planning tools can be used effectively to meet high-priority objectives on day-to-day basis. Detweiler, Beyer, Conley, Falduto, & Golden (1992) described opportunistic planning at two liberal arts colleges. Although presented without much analysis of the outcomes, the Detweiler et al. article does a good job looking at the value of strategic planning processes to capitalize on curricular and technology opportunities.

According to McCubbin (1992), planning must be representative and evolve from the constituencies of the institution. Decreasing funds, increasing student bodies, and competition, according to McCubbin, propelled information technology planning into a primary role in the overall strategic planning process at Christopher Newport University.

Using planning to anticipate changes in the culture and technological landscape is a theme iterated by Beltrametti in her article “Computing services planning, downsizing and reorganization at the University of Alberta” (1992). Beltrametti examined the details of University of Alberta’s planning process. She concluded that the process was a success because the University’s Computing and Network Services department was emerging from a chaotic period and more of the institutional goals were being realized.
Articles such as “Participative Planning: A tool for building partnerships for change” (Donhardt, 1993) and “Method for planning administrative information systems development” (Bent & Enright, 1990) take a more general approach to educational planning. They are “cookbook” articles that step the reader through a particular planning method. These articles are focused on the educational setting and how to implement the processes.

The missing element of the educational planning literature is a concerted effort to evaluate the results of implementing the strategic plan. Little has been written on what the stakeholders thought of the process or how the planning actually impacted the further development of the organization. The conclusions were mostly based on the people who did the planning, looking back at their accomplishments, and congratulating themselves on how wonderful things were going. Although many articles have been written describing the planning processes, few could be identified that actually evaluated the results of the planning.

**Literature Summary**

Much of the literature shows little attention to evaluating the planning process. Although planning has been a part of the corporate and the public culture for fifty years few people have looked closely at the planning process. Most of the planning literature is case studies of how the planning was accomplished. Little attention had been given the participants of the planning. The people who do the yeomen of conducting the meetings, providing support, and the participants who travel long hours are most often not even
mentioned. One of the organizations that looks at their long term planning methods is the forest products industry (Baltic, et al., 1989). Baltic found that trust in the process, in the people running the process, and among the participants were key factors in the success of the planning process.
Chapter 3 - Research Methodology

Yin (1984) describes the case study strategy as an investigation of "... a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (p. 13). He explains that case studies are the "... preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" (p. 14).

Many organizations do planning but few planning events are examined and evaluated. A case study methodology was used to investigate the questions that shaped this study: Does a state-wide planning process among 16 community colleges generate support for a decentrally collected, state administered database project? Does such a planning process help shape the perceptions of senior decision makers?

This study was designed to let the voices of the senior managers and decision makers be heard. It is their words that are reported in the Findings chapter. The editing was in the selection of which quotes were used. They were selected to answer the research questions in the above paragraph. Long quotes were used to insure the words were not taken out of context and gives the reader the opportunity to fully evaluate the responses.
Methods of Study

Three major methods to study the OCCURS planning process were used. The first process was a series of interviews among three categories of leaders: Community College presidents (CEO), chief financial officers (CFO), and chief information officers (CIO). Along with the major stakeholders, the community colleges senior decision makers, four staff members of the Oregon Office of Community College Services, and selected key planning committee members were also interviewed.

The second method was the collection and analysis of a very large cache of documents. Minutes and reports generated by OCCS, the members of the planning committees, and the colleges were some of the materials analyzed. The material was collected at the time of the interviews. Most of the participants were asked if they had memo, letters, or documents that were pertinent to the planning process and if they could be borrowed. No participant who was asked refused to allow their written materials to be included in the study.

The third process involves the author as participant observer. To gain a clearer understanding of how the OCCURS planning process unfolded, the author represented Oregon Coast Community College (Newport, OR) on the Student Records Subcommittee. The subcommittee met for more than a year. The author attended all the meetings of this committee but one. This experience as participant-observer was utilized to complete the case study picture.
Case Studies Internal Controls

The challenge of case study research is to ensure that data collection and analysis meet tests of reliability, construct validity, and external and internal validity (Yin, 1984). Reliability was promoted by using a case study protocol in which all organizations and all informants were subjected to the same sequence of entry and exit procedures and similar interview questions (Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1988; Yin, 1984). All interviews were transcribed and recorded in a database to allow for analysis. The database was written by the author in Microsoft Access 2 and Microsoft Word 6.

Construct validity was enhanced by using multiple sources of evidence, establishing a chain of evidence at the conclusion of each interview (Bourgeois & Eisenhardt, 1988; Yin, 1984), and by using the case cluster method (McClintock, Brannon, & Maynard-Moody, 1979) in that, six institutions were examined with multiple respondents at each site. External validity was enhanced by the use of thick description (Guba, 1981; McClintock, et al., 1979). Internal validity was enhanced by the use of pattern matching data analysis (Yin, 1984) and triangulation (by source and methods) (Guba, 1981).

Participant Selection

The selection of the CEO, CFO, and CIO for interview was an attempt to triangulate the perceptions of senior management. Conventional wisdom and the strategy literature presume that strategic leadership of organizations is primarily provided by chief executives and presidents (Carter, 1971; Mintzberg, et al., 1976; Quinn, 1980;
Shrivastava & Nachman, 1989). The head of administrative services for the college, the CFO, is responsible for the largest uses of computing resources. The CFO is keenly interested in the results of a strategic planning process. McCubbin (1992) suggests that the head of administrative services is an important influence in the execution of any computer planning process. The CIO generally manages the computing resources for the college. They are responsible for the data integrity, computer resource allocation, and technical personnel. The CIOs were included in the study to give a good picture of the effectiveness of the planning process and its outcomes. Edward Yourdon (1992) suggests the CIO is in an excellent position to destroy any plans that might emanate outside of the Information Systems infrastructure. The CIOs were interviewed to determine, from his or her perspective, the effectiveness of the process, the involvement of information technology professionals in the planning process, and the perceived reliability the data generated by OCCURS along with its perceived value in the decision making process. The perceptions of the CIO were very valuable to the study.

Participant Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used with each of the managers to identify their part in the decisions and that individual's evaluation of the outcomes of the planning process. All but two of the interviews were recorded. Notes were taken in the cases of the two that were not recorded. The two who were not recorded had no objection to being recorded. They were not recorded because of mechanical problems. The recordings were transcribed by the author and Susan Schwab. The transcriptions exceeded 500 pages of
material. More than 1000 pages of supporting documents were collected from the study participants.

Senior Manager Perception

Senior manager perception or satisfaction with information technology systems has been used as a measure of their performance. Ives, Olson, and Baroudi, (1983) and Molloy and Schwenk (1995) noted the extreme difficulty of direct measurement of productivity benefits, or increased decision-making effectiveness, which results from the use of information technology. Senior manager satisfaction was used as an identifiable surrogate for utility in strategic planning.

As the responses were analyzed themes emerged around which the quotes could be organized. The author included the pertinent themes but left out some of the themes that had little bearing on the study.

Participant Description

Twenty-four community college professionals were interviewed for this case study. Six individuals were interviewed in each of the three categories (CEOs, CFOs, CIOs). This was a purposive sample that insured that major characteristics of the 16 community colleges were represented. Some of the characteristics used to select study participants were the size and location of the college as well as individuals who expressed support for the OCCURS project and those who felt at odds with OCCS and the handling of the OCCURS project. Although size and location was used as an initial selection
criteria, other individuals were added to the interview list during the course of the study. As the interviewing proceeded the participants recommended the addition of other individuals because of their knowledge of the OCCURS planning process and as key players in local campus planning as related to OCCURS. Several Institutional Researchers (IR) were added during the course of the study as were two Deans of Student Services and two business office managers.

College size has often dictated a whole constellation of issues that has been important to the leadership of Oregon’s community colleges. How money is divided, access to institutional researchers, giant student populations verses small, intimate campuses, resource rich and resource poor have been issues that magnify the differences between small and large colleges. It was anticipated that size may have been a factor that affect the participants’ views of the planning process outcomes. The differing concerns were examined by including a selection of small, medium, and large schools. The same was done for geographic location.

To protect the anonymity of the respondents they are referred to only as CEO, CFO, or CIO. In the case of the committee members who were Institutional Researchers and Deans of Instruction they will be referred to as “committee members.”

Interview Protocol

The semi-structured interviews (see questions below) that were conducted with each of the participants were used to determine if the OCCURS planning process generated support for the project and how the planning process helped shape the
perceptions of senior decision makers. The richest information from the participants was
gathered with general questions. In addition to the semi-structured interviews, most of the
participants were asked to provide any archival data that they had (memos, letters, etc.)
that served to document the decision process and/or their role in the process. Several
participants kept detailed records of the process and their reactions to the process. These
“journals” were very important in constructing the case study.

The following set of questions are an accurate representation of the questions
asked during the interviews. Because the interviews were conversational the exact
wording sometimes varied but all participants were asked questions similar in context to
the following:

- What has been your role in your college’s participation in the OCCURS
  planning process?
- In which meetings did you personally participate?
- When the project started, what contribution did you feel the OCCURS
database would make to the running of the college?
- Are there other ways to plan for state-wide efforts like OCCURS among
  Oregon’s community colleges?
- Was the OCCURS system necessary? Should OCCS be managing a central
database?
- Were the correct individuals involved in the planning process?
- Did OCCS have the right people facilitating the OCCURS planning process?
  Was there enough staff support?
Were the right people at the table to make the necessary decisions?

Do you believe the OCCURS central database system will meet the needs of the Legislature? Did the system help answer the questions posed by the Legislature during the 1995 session? Will it help in the future?

Has the OCCURS system created any deliverables back to the colleges or to the Legislature to this point?

How could the process have been improved?

With the expressed consent of the participants, the interviewer recorded all but two of the interviews as previously mentioned. Recording the interviews did not seem to interfere with the free flow of the ideas and opinions. No participant had any problems with recording the sessions. Several participants did want to make sure the interviews remain confidential. However, most did not care if their names were revealed. In this study the community college participants were treated as confidential. If the participants were individually identified in pertinent, public documents then they are identified by name. The interviews averaged about 60 minutes.

OCCS Staff Interviews

Interviews of the OCCS staff were key to set the history, define the process that was used for the planning process, and to respond to issues raised by the community college participants. Four staff members participated in the study. Dale Parnell, the Commissioner of Community Colleges from 1992-1993, was interviewed because the active planning to recreating a state-wide data system for Oregon’s community colleges
started while he was the chief administrator at Oregon’s Office of Community College Services. Debbie Lincoln, former Deputy Commissioner, was interviewed because she had direct, administrative over-sight of the planning process. When the committees needed philosophic direction they would ask Debbie to clarify various issues. Marilyn Kolodziejczyk, OCCURS Director, was deeply involved in the day-to-day planning and convened nearly every planning meeting, her input was essential. Roger Bassett, current Commissioner of Community Colleges, was chief administrator during virtually all of the active planning process.

The staff interviews were important to capture the details of the planning process and to get a feeling for the staff work necessary to facilitate such a wide-ranging planning process. The history of the OCCURS planning process was important to capture. That history tells the story of what motivated the community colleges to undertake a year long planning process to develop a centrally administered/decentrally collected database. Interviewing the OCCS staff provided the setting and the detail of the planning process.

The OCCS staff specifically agreed to have their names revealed. It would have been impossible to talk about the OCCS interviews without anyone familiar with Oregon’s community colleges to immediately guess the identity of the participant. For this small group anonymity was impossible.
Chapter 4 - Findings

Case Study Narrative

Community colleges in Oregon were founded with a good deal of autonomy. The 16 community districts are governed by local boards, funded by a combination of local taxes and state taxes. Because of the autonomy, comparable data between the colleges has been difficult to achieve (D. Parnell, personal communication, April 23, 1996).

The 1992 Oregon State Legislature, which, at the time, allocated about 20 percent of the colleges’ budgets, directed OCCS to create a centralized database with reporting by all the community colleges. The legislative intent was that the database should be able to address questions of student outcomes and program costs, according to Oregon State Representative Margaret Carter (personal communication, November 18, 1994) and Adrienne Sexton, Committee Administrator of the House Interim Committee on Education (See Appendix F). The database would be especially important while the Legislature was in session. Since the Oregon Legislature convenes every-other-year, the colleges had until January, 1995 to get the decision support database up and functional.

On August 8, 1993 State Senator Stan Bunn met with the OCCURS Over-Sight Committee to clarify legislative intent. He stated:

1. Legislators need to see that programs work.

2. Programs need to interact and coordinate with each other and produce measures that show which components of a students experience generate
success (internal and external to the community college). What activities made a difference in the outcome.

3. The State can’t afford to continue to fund programs that don’t work especially if measurement is possible. (Senator Bunn said that community colleges are a program that does work but documentation is still needed.)

4. Programs have a high opportunity of being supported in the Legislature if a good definition of success is presented along with supporting data. Legislators must depend on others to develop good policy and definitions.

5. Legislators need all the help they can get understanding the mission and what an organization (i.e. community colleges) is about. Legislators need to be “experts” on everything and don’t want to show ignorance.

In January, 1992 OCCS, under the direction of the college presidents, contracted with Executive Consulting Group, Inc. (ECG) management consultants to help define a direction for a central database system. In their August 14, 1992 final report (Executive Consulting Group, Inc., 1992), the consultants recommended a central database that, in the beginning, would be fed quarterly by the colleges via mailed disks or transferring the information by modem over telephone lines. On June 10, 1993, OCCS held a meeting of all the community colleges at Chemeketa Community College in Salem, Oregon (See Appendix B). At this meeting, Roger Basset, Commissioner of Community Colleges, outlined an extensive planning process that would involve a yet to be determined number of committees represented by all the colleges. Roger announced that Marilyn Kolodziejczyk, former Director of Information Systems for Rogue Community College,
would be the project manager. The database would be known as the Oregon Community College Unified Reporting System (OCCURS). From June, 1993 to July, 1994 five committees met on a regular schedule to design the OCCURS system. It is the planning process that is the subject of this case study.

**Timeline for OCCURS Planning Process**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>August 1992 ECG delivers report recommending a two phase project</td>
<td>Mountain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1993 Pro Con Meeting at Chemeketa</td>
<td>April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1995 Oregon Legislature Convenes 1995 Session</td>
<td>January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Attempts at Common Databases</td>
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In the 1980s, the community college system attempted to create a common database. This system was called the Oregon Community College State Information System (OCCSIS). In the late 1980s the community colleges stopped contributing data to it. In describing these early attempts one community college president said:

I was involved in two failed attempts at creating a state-wide reporting system for Oregon’s community colleges. One of them was called OCCSIS, Oregon Community College Student Information System, and the other one was called OIEP, the Oregon Information Exchange Program. Both of those were
attempts to create a unified reporting system of sixteen, independent, locally governed community colleges. Both failed for a variety of reasons. The key reason for the failure was that no one wanted to share their information and their data. They did not want to have the State or second or third party make discussions based on information that they might compare a locally governed, locally controlled community college versus another college in Oregon or Washington or anywhere else. Without any assurance that there weren’t going to be any comparisons, that they weren’t going to use data to make decisions on reimbursement or FTE or program approval or any of those things, no one was really willing to come together and say, we are going to look like a system, because we are not a system, there is nothing about Oregon that is a system. There are sixteen independently, locally governed community colleges. Local boards hire local presidents. There is absolutely no relationship, really, other than the State Board approving some programs that we have and by statute between the local boards and the State Board of Education.

The institutional researchers (IR) had been meeting to discuss the need for a new common database. Dale Parnell, former Commissioner of Community Colleges, recounted the meetings of the IR group. According to Dr. Parnell (D. Parnell, personal communication, April 23, 1996), “They sort of constituted themselves. Nobody had appointed them. And then when I appointed the task forces that was really one of the things that I thought, ‘Well, how do I get around that, in order to get presidents involved in this thing.’ I really felt presidents had to be involved.”

OCCS Commissioners’ Objectives for OCCURS

Dale Parnell was Oregon Commissioner of Community Colleges from 1991 to 1992. Roger Bassett was appointed to the Commissioner position after Dr. Parnell resigned to accept a teaching position at Oregon State University. A common data system
was high on the agenda of both of these two commissioners of community colleges.

According to Dr. Parnell:

It goes clear back to my work with the American Association of Community Colleges, that I always felt like we relied too much on anecdotal information and not hard information. I felt like we had hard information if we could get the colleges to collect it. But the colleges have been so busy doing, they haven’t taken the time to stop and design a good data collection system. So when I came here and did that fill-in job as commissioner for a year, I felt like at least in Oregon we ought to be able put it together. I can’t tell you how much resistance there was at that time to, almost anything that had to do with data collection.

Roger Bassett, the current Commissioner, felt the common database was very important for accountability. Roger stated:

Well, the short answer for me is, I insisted we do OCCURS because it was one of two things that nobody else had done. Everybody said we had to get to. One was information system and the other was equalization in the formulas. And having been on the state leadership scene for fifteen years and observed nobody else did them, even though we talked about it, I made it my purpose to get those things done, so they didn’t nibble at us. So in a management sense it was that they had been too long unattended. I did them because the demand for it hadn’t gone away. The demand came and comes most sharply from those who fund us and their desire to know something about us when they make those decisions, Legislature, governor, but especially Legislature.

The first order, purpose of the OCCURS system in my view is as a tool for our, what I call our OCCS responsibility for credibility management, that we know at least a little bit more about ourselves than they do. In other words, I didn’t set the bar real high, but that they want always to be in the lead, ahead of the legislative crowd in that arena. And very expensive failures, I can’t remember what it was called, OCCSIS I think, the trail was littered with efforts to do that in a very expansive, elaborate way.

My personal belief was that whatever we did should achieve the purpose of credibility management but should do so in the most minimal way possible, both in terms of size and intrusion in local systems, which is a reflection of how I view my role as
commissioner and the role of this office. We are a leadership resource, not a controlling resource. We are not the close supervisors of the community college system, I guess.

Obviously, credibility and planning go together. If we are able to anticipate the next order of demands or questions on community colleges well enough to have the data in hand when the questions are asked, we do better. And if we have the data in hand for those purposes, so can we have the data in hand to suggest whether, for example, do more, could do more, enroll more of the new college freshman next year. Or do more, dual credit, expand dual credit to engage community colleges in some defined role for the Certificate of Advance Mastery, for example. Strategic planning, not detail program.

The third purpose of it was not one I really had contemplated because of my desire to keep it small and aggregate was the value of it to the individual campuses. And the institutional researchers have developed that need, and have done a very nice job, in my view, of expressing that need. And it has been accommodated into the overall design, sometime resulting in an expansion of the data set beyond what I would have needed to do, the more narrow credibility managers job. And to me that's already, if it expands because those who are our partners and stake holders need for it to be expanded, I wasn’t against size for size sake, just I was against size for, as a symbol of the states role in community colleges, which I believe is a very limited role.

Initial CEO Perceptions of the Common Data System

Several presidents did feel very certain that Oregon’s community colleges needed a common data system. A president from a large community college stated:

I’m not sure you could find that documented in the minutes [discussion on the need of a unified data reporting system], but we used to talk around about that. It was important that we would have some kind of unified data reporting system for the State, and my first few years here I know we kind of debated that.

There were several presidents who were absolutely opposed to the creation of any kind of system. They did not believe that it was possible for us to have a product that would achieve that, because
there were too many differences in the definitions. We never could put it together, it cost too much, whatever.

There was a core group of us, probably the people from the larger colleges, who argued rather strongly that we should have that kind of a system. But it never kind of took off because of lack of will, lack of resources, timing wasn’t right, or whatever. But it was a persistent concern on the part of at least the larger colleges. I don’t think the smaller colleges liked the notion. I don’t know why, whether they didn’t feel they had the resources to put this sort of thing together, it’s going to cost them an exorbitant amount of money. I think flat out some of the colleges simply didn’t want to have their data looked at by other people. My honest conviction was that several of them simply didn’t want to share their data with anybody. But I think they were the minority, so my sense of how this thing came to fruition was, it was percolating among the presidents for years . . .

Other presidents were willing to go along with the OCCS leadership but they did have some reservations. They gave weak support to the project recognizing that the funding structure in the State had changed. A president of a small community college summed up the concerns with the following statement:

I think that the level of confidence was low. We were not counting things the same way and I think that’s part of one of the strengths and one of weakness of having the type of community college network that we have. We so much prize local control. A lot of times its hard to compare across the board unless there’s the, dare I say it, state system such as the other two educational partners have, K-12 and OSSHE [Oregon State System of Higher Education]. I guess there’s that fear in the way community college setup. I think it’s the time with Measure 5 that has made state control much more an issue and has brought it up into the forefront.

The decision to go forward on the database did not pass with a unanimous vote. Several of the presidents reported one of the college presidents voted against the project. OCCS named the project the Oregon Community Colleges Unified Reporting System (OCCURS). This was one of the few projects that the community college presidents’
group chose to move forward on without full consensus. According to one of the presidents, “This was one of the best things we did and it was without unanimous agreement. We hardly ever do anything without consensus but this was important.”

CFO Initial Perceptions

The planning process started without full consensus. The Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) were the least supportive of those interviewed. Many of the financial people were not even convinced that the kind of database proposed by OCCS was appropriate or even possible. One the CFOs from a large community college stated:

My involvement was basically arguing that we shouldn’t be doing a lot of it. That for a couple of different things: One is they were spending a lot of money on it. And that they kept saying they wanted cost data and stuff on it and I think the only purpose for it would be if they wanted to use it for assessment and accountability and programs in terms of follow-up of students and success rates and those kind of things. But what they were designing it all for was collecting information on costs and they wanted financial information on it. They wanted cost information, cost for different programs. So that is a big waste, it will be a big waste, they won’t get what they want and then they will think they will have what they want and then they will blow it.

A business office manager from a very supportive community college suggested in a memo dated June 10, 1993, before the planning started, that,

[The planned OCCURS database] looks a lot like OCCSIS [Oregon Community College State Information System] which failed for lack of standards. Why are we doing this? Don’t buy the accountability argument. Seen too many other things done in the name of accountability that really didn’t provide any additional useful information.
Another business officer from a large community college stated, "At the beginning this thing, it [OCCURS] had all the signs of being a Son of OCCLUS II."

OCCLUS was the database system, run by OCCS, that collapsed in the late 1980s because of a lack of standards. The same business officer went on to say the accounting systems were just too complicated and too different to create any meaningful comparative data.

CIO Initial Perceptions

Some of the Chief Information Officers (CIOs) had severe concerns that the individual data systems that they had set-up over the previous decade would fall to a centrally planned system. One CIO stated:

I mean [college name] is probably as ingrained in their system as any community college is. You would have to go in to every community college and say "We are giving you this equipment, we are giving you this software, we are giving you all the programs, and we are giving you people to help install, then that might have helped. Still they didn't talk about training all the staff and everything else and we didn't have the corporate will to change something we had been doing for 20 years or more just to go in and say it is going to be this way now. I just don't think it ever would have happened. I don't think there was enough money to make it happen.

Another CIO who was very negative about the system and went on at great length about the lack of support and how ill-conceived OCCURS was. At one point he suggested:

We enjoy the autonomy. We don't like the idea of Salem [capital of Oregon]-- we don't like the idea of them telling us how to run our school. Our board doesn't like the idea of being a puppet board and being told what to do because the money all comes from Salem, like the Measure 5 effect.
In the beginning the support for OCCURS was extremely weak. The presidents were not unanimous in their support yet they chose to support the OCCS leadership and move forward. Many of the financial people and the information systems people had grave reservations that OCCS should even be attempting to create a common database. It was in this atmosphere that ranged from tepid support to absolute opposition that the planning process began.

**Funding of OCCURS Initial Study**

The college presidents approved the initial research for the improved collection of comparable data in 1991. Dollars were set aside from the State funding allocation and channeled through Linn-Benton Community College to hire a consultant firm. This channeling of money, while very logical to most of the presidents created some concern among at least two of the presidents. One president stated, “I voted against it and spoke against it. I thought it was not done appropriately. That they did not have the authorization to do it and that they were hiding the process by channeling the money through LBCC.” Other presidents had no problem with the start-up of the planning process. One president reported:

It was a way in which for us to use state appropriated money. What we did was, the Legislature appropriated so much money to support community colleges. We agreed as a group of community colleges from that appropriation we were going to fund OCCURS. Now, we could have sent all the money based on the distribution formula at the time, which was not the funding formula, but another FTE driven formula, we could have distributed all the money to all 16 colleges and billed all 16 of them for their share. Then paid the consultant with 16 checks. The Offices of Community College Services didn’t get an appropriation to spend
their money for this. We spent college money for it. We spent Lane’s money, and Chemeketa’s money, and Mt. Hood’s money. It made no sense too . . . The decision was made before the money was allocated, so we simply allocated the amount of money that equaled the shares from all the colleges, to one college who wrote a check.

Executive Consulting Group, Inc. Report

Early in 1992, the Office of Community College Services (OCCS) contracted with ECG of Seattle, Washington to describe “. . . the data requirement for a standardized base of data for use in responding to state and federal reporting requirements” (Executive Consulting Group, Inc., 1992). This report recommended the colleges implement a data system in two phases. Phase I would be a diversified system which would allow for a centralized data repository. Phase II would replace the diversified system with common hardware and software across all campuses (see Appendix C).

The recommendation created much discontent among the community colleges. It was clear that requiring the colleges to give up their diverse computer platforms and software and adopt a single computer and software standard would be a clear infringement on their independence. The very first meeting of the OCCURS Oversight Committee adopted a statement advising OCCS to not pursue the adoption of a single computer and software requirement (OCCURS Oversight Committee, unpublished minutes, 7/8/93).

The recommendation of Phase II, the single platform recommendation, caused a significant loss in confidence in the project. A letter from Stephen Kridelbaugh, President of Southwestern Oregon Community College to John Keyser, President of Clackamas
Community College, is an indication of the concern over ECG’s Phase II recommendation. Dr. Kridelbaugh stated, “I fully support an integrated information system for state-wide planning and information, but I do not agree with the consultant that it must be based upon a common software system” (See Appendix A).

Other presidents strongly stated they were troubled by the ECG recommendation to go with a single hardware/software platform. The president of one of the larger community colleges stated:

I had a problem with that. I think like a lot of the other presidents, because we’re all heavily invested in our own systems. A lot of us had just invested in a new system. I think me and one of the other colleges, and so, I think we pushed pretty hard, a number of us did to get back to some kind of software connecting system that would serve a similar purpose. Washington, of course, has that uniform system, and that, I think, is an example of, in the minds of some presidents, I suppose myself included, with the step in the wrong direction for community colleges in terms of control. I mean, more and more, information, who has the information, also has the control. To develop an image of, hey, we’ve got to do it through centralized, with uniform hardware and software systems like Washington does, where mostly reports that I have anecdotally and, I’m not sure about the rest of them, but certainly the anecdotal reports that I have, is that our system works better than the Washington system because of local control, because of the flexibility that we have here. You talk to the folks up there, I’m sure you have. It doesn’t work that well. They’re always trying to get them into boxes. They’re always telling them what to do, not just from the informational framework, but that’s where a lot of it starts, but in terms of purchasing, salaries, enrollments, you know they punish them for over enrollment.

The CIOs were particularly concerned that OCCURS would result in their systems being replaced with something dictated by the State. In a survey conducted in January, 1993 by Dr. Paul Rothi, Director of Information Systems (IS) at Clackamas Community College, he found a great deal of concern among the IS Directors. (See
Appendix I) Dr. Rothi recorded a range of reactions from Portland Community College’s Sam Ellis saying he “. . . refused to be jerked around by the State,” to Ann Adams of Linn-Benton Community College reassuring suggestion that, “Phase II is not the intent of the committee.”

Another CIO believed there was a strong connection between the ECG report and ECGs desire to sell database products to the colleges. According to this particular CIO:

They [ECG] had a solution in mind. It was clear to me after making a few phone calls, checking a few things out, they had a solution in mind and they were simply using us as a way to get their market share up in a whole group of products. I basically told that to the president. I said it's not something we ought to buy into the way they're proposing it.

This confusion over the mission of the OCCURS project caused great trepidation about the goals of OCCURS. Many of the participants of the subsequent planning, along with the college presidents, continually worried about the project trying to answer perceived needs that were beyond the initial scope of the project. There was a sense that the objectives were unclear, the project wanted to grow beyond the original intent, and that the expectations of the system were not reasonable.

These concerns resulted in OCCS convening a Pro and Con meeting on June 10, 1993. (See Appendix B). This meeting was attended by more than 50 individuals. Most of the people attending were very concerned that OCCS was starting a project that had limited possibility for success. The presidents were sending letters to each other worried about Phase II, CIOs were feeling they were being pushed around by the State of Oregon, there was a general perception that OCCS was trying to force a system on the colleges
that would be untenable. It was from this point of extreme concern that the OCCURS planning process began in earnest.

The OCCS staff took on the task of convincing the colleges that the common hardware and software platform issue was off the table. Debbie Lincoln called many of the presidents and Oversight Committee members to assure them Phase II was no longer being considered.

Committee Structure

With the formation of the Oversight Committee on July 8, 1993 the committee structure was established. Five major committees were constituted. The Oversight Committee was comprised of sixteen members, one representative from each Oregon community college. The Oversight Committee worked in conjunction with the Office of Community College Services to set direction, outcomes, and scope of the OCCURS data collection and reporting system. This Committee set time lines and assisted in the coordination of the efforts of the OCCURS staff, contractors, and OCCURS planning committee members to accomplish OCCURS-related objectives. The Oversight Committee and subsidiary data standards committees operated by consensus when possible. If consensus was not possible then a ten-vote majority was required for passage of any issues. Each college had one vote.
Committee Composition

The OCCURS data standards committees were to collaboratively identify and define data elements necessary for the OCCURS system in their respective areas of responsibility. They suggested approaches of gathering, codifying, and reporting this data to meet OCCURS goals. The data standards committees were the Student Standards Committee, the Course/Program Standards Committee, and the Finance Standards Committee. The fourth committee, the Technical Standards Committee was formed later. The purpose of the Technical Standards Committee was to serve as an advisory body to OCCS regarding hardware, software, data structures, integrity and security, and other technical issues. The members of the Technical Committee were closely connected with the creation of OCCURS data submissions for their colleges.

The data standards committee members were to serve as communication links with their local campuses to ensure that definitions and procedures being worked out at the state level were accurate, adequate, and able to be implemented. The standards committees were responsible to the OCCURS Oversight Committee. Membership on the committees was to be representative of each community college and include adequate representation of the areas most affected by the data standards. (See Appendix K)

The five committees had a representative for each of the 16 colleges. Committee members were selected to create a cross section of the many constituent areas of the colleges. The Student Standards Committee, for example, was not comprised of just people who worked with student data. Membership was distributed among people representing Academic Services, the Registrar, ABE/GED, Counseling, Computer
Services, and Senior Administration. This gave the committees broad representation with multiple points of view.

Nearly all the study participants strongly felt that a stakeholder approach to planning was the most appropriate model to do large scale planning for Oregon’s community colleges. One of the CIOs stated that the composition of the committees was very important. He said:

We met with the OCCS staff to make sure this thing would be done right. People representing different parts of the college operations needed to be part of the committee structure. All sixteen colleges needed to participate in the planning. If we were going to have to do this it had to be done right with the right people at the meetings.

Nearly all the presidents had a strong perception that the most knowledgeable people with the ability to represent the college and make decisions were represented on the committees. Confidence in the committee membership was an important factor in senior management’s willingness to accept the outcomes of the planning process.

When specifically asked if the right people attended the meeting the answer was somewhat mixed. Many of the CIOs did not feel they were part of the initial planning. As one committee member stated:

Well, I think so for the most part. Now I know that I was in on some conversation about, for example, what kinds of folks should be in the oversight committee, in order to have a mix of people from different job types, and so on. And think that they were fairly successful at getting that initially, but I think one of the difficulties has been over time that a lot of key people have dropped off the oversight committee and kind of delegated it. There was a changing cast of characters, probably even more so at the Oversight [Committee] than some of the other committees. I think that has sometimes been a bit of a problem, that there are just a few people who’ve really been kind of with it from the beginning and
stayed with it in the oversight role. I think sometimes that has caused some confusion, and difficulty just because they constantly had to bring people up to speed.

Committee Mechanics

The committees established very firm standards. When a certain data element was proposed, a great debate would ensue. Was the datum collectable, why was it necessary, for what purpose would it be used, how would it be maintained, would the information be accurate? Many times the proposed field would be modified or rejected. To the credit of the OCCURS staff, they always listened and were always forth coming in their reasons for the need for certain data elements. Conflicts were negotiated at the Oversight Committee. In some cases the committees required Marilyn Kolodzieczyk, OCCURS Project Director, to ask Debbie Lincoln to clarify different positions (See Appendix E). In meeting after meeting Marilyn re-worked the various data element definition tables. She was meticulous in her record keeping. Changes made by the committees were always reflected in the new data element definition tables that she would send out prior to the next meeting. Several committee members noted this attention to follow through. One committee member observed that it was this attention to doing what the committee directed and reflecting the committee wishes in the outcomes that began to convince some of the people that had been unsure of the appropriateness of the OCCURS project that the goals were achievable and the results would be positive. It was very important for the OCCS staff to be true to the integrity of the process. The developing trust helped
move the perception of the participants from fairly negative to one of modest acceptance.

As one president put it:

> Even though I did not support the idea of OCCURS, at first, I think we will be better off than if we didn’t have it. I can now see that it should help. We cannot tell the Legislature that we don’t have basic accountability information. We have to be able to have some comparable information on student outcomes. I guess OCCURS will work and I didn’t think that a year ago.

Social Security Number Privacy

From the start of the project, OCCURS had a problem with Social Security Numbers (SSN). Much committee time was spent dealing with the issue of sending SSNs to other state agencies. According to the Oregon Attorney General (AG), the Privacy Act of 1974 prohibited colleges from using student social security numbers when providing information to OCCURS. The colleges needed to provide notice to the students that the Social Security Number would be used for research and statistical purposes. The AG required the schools to list the agencies with which the numbers would be shared and obtain specific consent for such use.

At one point the Oversight Committee sought a federal legislative solution that would allow the colleges to have freer access to agency data. The Committee asked Jerry Moskus, president of Lane Community College, to write Mark Hatfield, Oregon’s long time US Senator. They asked for help with the Social Security Number issue. The letter that Senator Hatfield sent back stated in no uncertain terms that he would not help. In the letter he wrote:
In the case of liberties and individual freedoms that distinguish Americans from other members of the human family, the more identification, the more uniformity, and the more centralization of information, the greater the relinquishment of these very liberties and freedoms we hold so dear. Each time a human being is equated with a number, and each time society pressures good citizens to comply with identification requirements mandated or even suggested by government fiat, then America becomes less free for all of us. (See Appendix G)

The Computer Matching and Privacy Act of 1988 which restricts the use of federal records, expressly exempts computer matches performed to "... produce aggregate statistical data without any personal identifiers." The Social Security Number problem added to the perception that the OCCURS project was too big and too unwieldy. Many Oversight Committee meetings involved hours of discussions about the Social Security Number issue. In the end, to satisfy the Oregon Attorney General's office, all the college admission forms and the registration forms were modified to include a Social Security Number disclosure statement. This solution did not allow for any historical data, old student records, to be included in the OCCURS database. This move helped limit the scope of the project but later would cause people to wonder why they were not able to obtain comparable data on historical records.

Problems with Meeting Schedule

By September of 1993 the burden of the extensive meetings created a problem. The president of Umpqua, Jim Kraby, announced that Umpqua could no longer participate in the OCCURS planning process. He cited time constraints and travel expenses. Two of Umpqua's staff had been very involved in the OCCURS process. John
Blanchard was doing significant work with the Financial Standards Committee and Dan Yoder was on the Student, the Technical, and the Oversight Committees. In response to President Kraby’s concerns, the committees began to use a state teleconferencing system so people would not have to travel as much. Dan Walleri, Chair of the Oversight Committee, wrote Dr. Kraby a letter suggesting ways that would allow Blanchard and Yoder to continue to participate. (See Appendix H)

The assumption was all 16 of the community college districts and service districts had to participate in the planning process. Umpqua pulling out of the process was seen as a failure of the process. As one president put it:

In Oregon you are not going to do it any other way. There is none of us that will let the other person make decisions for us. Look at us. We are not a system. There is no one that is going to allow three or four colleges to make a decision that will have an impact on the other 13 or 12 without them being at the table. That is the way it is here in Oregon.

The Oversight Committee did not want to lose Umpqua. OCCS pursued satellite teleconferencing and slowed the meeting pace. The teleconferencing allowed the more remote colleges to participate in the meetings without spending three days away from the office. Umpqua relented and allow their people to continue to participate. Some of the presidents reported that Umpqua’s threatened pull out was more gamesmanship than real. The response by the Oversight Committee clearly showed that the committee members had accepted the responsibility of completing the planning task. One committee member stated, “We had put just too much into the darn thing [OCCURS] to let it dry up and blow away.”
Convincing the Colleges that OCCURS Was Possible

Because a major planned outcome was to try to answer Legislative questions the interviewer asked if the OCCURS system would help answer questions while the Legislature was in session. Few thought the system would help answer those questions. One president stated:

You never know what kind of things they get tracked on. It’s sort of an open field, open season for anything, when they start asking questions about how you support athletics, and how many scholarships you give, or how many cell phones do you have.

A CIO who was generally supportive of the planning process wondered if answering legislative questions was all that important. That CIO stated:

Sometimes the questions that come from the Legislature are just tempest in a teapot and if we jumped every time that they said to, we would spend all of our time keeping track of how many thumbtacks we have on our desk, because at one point, somebody asked us that question. Well, you have to have not just a responsive relationship with any kind of a board or legislative body, but I think you have to have an understanding that they may be posing a question, you should be able to come back and say, “Why do you need to know this, and is there another way we can get the information? What are you trying to really get at?” Instead of just answering the question that was asked. I’m a little bit concerned about OCCURS answering those questions a little bit too fast. I think all the schools have a concern about that, because I’ve seen some conclusions jumped to, that “Oh, well, if they are not a credit student, then they must be here for personal enrichment.” Well, excuse me. I’ve got all this targeted training that we do for various companies around the area that’s zero credit. How am I going to report those people? They’re not personal enrichment, but they’re not degree seeking. Taking a very simplistic view of the data that we submit, I think, could end up answer some questions incorrectly that legislators may pose, and that concerns me. I’m kind of at a loss as how to get an understanding on the part of the folks producing the reports at OCCURS of exactly what it is that their looking at from a data standpoint.
Some CEOs felt the issue of accountability was very important. It was through a common reporting system that they could obtain that accountability. As one president put it:

It's important to be accountable, you cannot avoid that. And its a heck of a sad approach to say, we're not going to touch something, be accountable. The State has a right to demand, and ask for this information. Its only the most extreme character of an Oregonian, the populist, individualist mentality and the fear of government that would argue differently. I just think it's silly. Not even worth talking about. You've got to be accountable. You're not going to get any money, not going to get any support, unless you're accountable. And half the moneys come from the State, the State has every right to demand that we be accountable. Part of that is reporting information and data in a way that can be compared to, one to the other.

The tangible outcome of the business officers' group was a new Revenue and Expense (R&E) report. The original plan was to have financial unit records included in the database. This objective was most likely too ambitious. The planning process did allow for the change in expectations. All the business managers interviewed expressed satisfaction with the new R&E report. Many expressed uncertainty about being able to produce cross college comparable data for similar college programs. This issue remains unresolved. One president summed up the problem with comparable financial data with the following statement:

I think that is a whole issue of futility. I think they should stay out of it. I think it's... there are too many variables to track and it would be a mass of stuff that you would not even know what you had when you got it.

A good example could be maybe you have a manufacturing program with four faculty members. Just by seniority of the faculty members could show one program costing twice as much as another. Is that meaningful or not? Because if you don't know why is the cost is twice as much then the data is meaningless.
So I think the financial end of trying to compare program to program or institution to institution unless they did a simple thing which is here is your general fund, here is the FTE you produced, this is the cost per FTE, anything more than that is just somebody that doesn’t have enough to do. They don’t know what they are going to do with it anyway. Whoever ‘they’ is? The Commissioner or the State...

As the committee process continued through the year of 1993-94, the staff of OCCS built a certain level of trust. OCCURS was not going to turn into an out-of-control monster. The computer directors calmed down. Their systems were not being replaced. The presidents saw that OCCURS was not a threat to their independence. As one president said:

I think what they did was they got the word out that we were going to have OCCURS no matter what we did one way or the other. Therefore, we said fine let’s try to mold OCCURS into something we can live with and I think we did well on that. As far as significant stuff coming out of OCCURS I don’t believe it is. Is it even valid? I don’t know. But it is sort of the pact you make with the devil and I don’t mean it that strong but we know that the State needs something. The reason I think they got cooperation up front is that at least we can help define it a little bit. At the same time it won’t be so onerous that we can’t live with it. And I am glad Roger [Bassett] feels good about it. I hope Roger feels good about it. Because he will be less likely to think he needs something more significant. So, I love OCCURS!
Chapter 5 - Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

This case study was conducted to examine a specific planning process conducted by Oregon's 16 community colleges. The intent was to carefully describe the methods and events of the planning process. More than 20 interviews helped answer the question, "Does a state-wide planning process among 16 community colleges generate support for a decentrally collected, state administered database project?" and "Does such a planning process help shape the perceptions of senior decision makers?" Because this study was conducted as qualitative research there was no attempt to extrapolate the findings to a larger population. The following recommendations and implications apply to this specific case. Certainly some inferences can be made from the study. Those inferences appear later in this chapter.

Oregon Community College Unified Reporting System (OCCURS) was a response to several factors. This study identified three conditions that led to the colleges' willingness to create the database system. 1) A 1990 property tax limitation measure shifted funding formulas from predominately local support to mostly state support. 2) The colleges were looking for better ways to collect and share data. 3) The two most recent commissioners of Oregon community colleges reported they both had the common data system high on their agenda.

In November, 1990 Oregon voters passed a law limiting one of the sources of community college revenue, property tax. This forced the Legislature to change the ratio
from where the community colleges in Oregon received their funding. The Legislature funded less than 20 percent of college costs in 1990 and by 1996 the State was contributing about 50 percent of the colleges’ total revenue. With the additional contribution, the Legislature called for more tangible accountability.

The colleges did have a desire to pull together a central reporting system. The institutional planners from the colleges had been meeting to decide how to achieve some of their data requirements since the collapse of the previous community college data systems. Along with the institutional researchers, several key presidents felt strongly that a common data system was a very logical outcome of a mature community college system.

Adding to the atmosphere that led to the project was the last two commissioners of community colleges. Dale Parnell and Roger Basset, had not been satisfied with Oregon’s ability to collect and share comparable community college data. They both reported they felt performance, outcomes reporting, and lobbying could be improved with a unified strategy of data collection.

The OCCURS planning committees created a structure that could be characterized as stakeholder planning. All the community colleges had representation on each of the five committees. Each committee had people that represented a cross section of college interests. The Student Data Committee, for example, was not comprised with only Student Services personnel. The committee had people skilled in data issues, registrars, academic deans, directors of student services, and support personnel. This cross representational approach to committee membership helped create the perception that the
planning process outcomes were valid. Several individuals suggested that the presidents should have been more actively involved. None of those individuals were presidents. Nearly all the study participants reported that the right people from their campuses were involved in the OCCURS planning process.

The OCCS staff was initially distrusted in their motivation and their ability to create a database system that met the dissimilar needs and interests of the different community colleges. Even though the presidents approved the funding for the planning process, few were confident that the outcomes would be useful. As the planning process proceeded, the OCCS staff earned a sense of trust. The participants eventually saw that the direction of the planning process was positive and the outcomes were achievable. The work by the OCCURS planning staff and the OCCS staff was critical to the success of the process. On many occasions Roger Basset, the Commissioner of Community Colleges, repeated the goals of the OCCURS planning process. This helped ease the feeling that OCCS had motivations beyond the stated goal of creating a common database.

Many stakeholders were truly afraid the results would not be worthwhile when the planning process started. At the end of the planning process some people, especially the business office personnel were still unsure of the viability of the OCCURS database process. The financial portion of the database after two years of planning is still the least developed portion of the system.

Few of the participants felt the database would help answer legislative questions. Many also questioned the ability to use the common database for helping the colleges become more effective. The presidents were mostly worried about the independence of
their colleges and whether the project would negatively impact their staff and resources. Few participants felt the system would substantially improve local college operation or result in more dollars from the Legislature.

The planning process went as well as one could expect. Support, in the beginning, among the 16 community colleges was mixed. Two or three colleges argued in favor of creating a reporting system, at least two argued against it, and the remainder expressed concern that they were not sure the goals were achievable. Support among the participants improved as the OCCS staff was consistent in their objectives, there was strong and focused follow through, and the goals were being met. The level of support moved from minimal and in some cases hostile to reticent support. Support for OCCURS continues to improve but it is still relatively weak. At the time of the interviews, a year into the implementation phase of the project, all presidents expressed support to some degree for OCCURS. Some suggested that its value was that it caused people, such as the Legislature, to believe the colleges were cooperating as a system when they were really defending their autonomy.

The planning process did generate support for the database project. The participants began with a fairly negative perspective and ended up in a somewhat supportive position. The process helped cultivate a feeling of trust. The process was successful because of the trust the participants and the OCCS staff members were able to forge during the planning process. Without that trust the perceptions would not have move from negative to accepting.
Recommendations

The senior administrators, especially the presidents, need to be updated and apprised of the progress of OCCURS. As time goes on, the vote of support that was done in 1992 is not sufficient authority to proceed over a five year period. The support by the presidents is ranging from indifference to soft. If more extensive development is to be done, the college presidents need to reaffirm their support for both the process and the project.

Support will start to dwindle if tangible outcomes are not generated soon. The outcomes of future projects need to be carefully expressed to the constituents. A personnel file is being discussed. This will be difficult to achieve without creating more support among the colleges. A report should be presented at the Presidents’ Council and a large Pro and Con meeting should be held similar to the one held on June 10, 1993 at Chemeketa Community College.

OCCURS outcomes need to be promoted. A newsletter, professional meeting updates, and identifying data produced by OCCURS should be used to let the stakeholders know that OCCURS is producing results. If the stakeholders are unable to identify the direct results of their extensive time and resource investment, support will falter.

Implications

Forging a consensus among multiple constituencies, among 16 separate community colleges is a very difficult feat. Many projects such as distance learning,
education reform, and funding formulas all require diverse groups coming together over a long period of time. Communications, both intra and inter-college are crucial for large scale planning. Many colleges found a parallel on-campus committee was important to facilitate communications and gather accurate information about how the college’s data system worked and if a particular OCCURS committee proposal was viable. Mintzberg (1994) talks about collaborative planning and discusses the pitfalls of failed communications. The ability to build and sustain trust in a planning environment as well as the importance of effective communications is well articulated by Molloy and Schwenk (1995). Martinez (1994) in his article “Avoiding large-scale information system project failure” discusses how trust and communications is of paramount importance in the planning process.

This case study describes how the colleges approached one particular planning issue. Even though this particular stakeholder model would not be appropriate for all kinds of state-wide planning, the basic tenants of this model can certainly be used in all aspects of planning. Trust, consistency, follow-through, and continuous communications were without a doubt the most important aspects of the process. The participants have to feel that they are doing something important, that their recommendations will be acted upon, and their opinions are respected. There has to be sufficient resources to keep up the communications and support the planning process. Without minutes, committee generated documents, and good facilitation the process falls apart. Intermediate obtainable goals are important. The participants need to see results.
Stakeholder planning is labor and time intensive. It is not an appropriate planning model for issues that do not require multi-organizational consensus. Stakeholder planning is most valuable when: 1) a high degree of collaboration/coordination is required among peers; 2) the environment is highly dynamic such as in the case of technology issues; and, 3) the outcomes will be resource intensive. The issues at stake must be of sufficient magnitude that the participating organizations will be willing to commit enough labor and capital toward the outcomes of the planning process. Topics such as distance learning, FTE reporting, revenue distribution, workload issues, and intellectual property rights will need to be addressed among all the community colleges and other higher education schools. Using a stakeholder planning could be the most effective way to reach consensus on these issues.

The planning process described in this study can be replicated for other large scale issues. When opinions are wide-spread and there is not a clear center of control stakeholder planning could be an appropriate tool. Because of the many meetings required of stakeholder planning it is time consuming, requires much travel (or telecommuting), and consumes much paper in report iterations. However, when many people and organizations need to participate in the process stakeholder planning can be an effective way to successfully reach consensus.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study involved only post-planning perception interviews. It would be valuable to gather both pre and post-planning perceptions. Pre-planning perceptions
described in this study were gathered from documents, memos, and personal notes that were collected by the researcher. A study that captured the pre-planning perceptions with interviews or questionnaires could give a more complete picture of how perceptions are shaped by the planning process.

Stakeholder planning should be studied while it is being used for other topics. Issues such as distance learning, FTE reporting, revenue distribution, workload issues, and intellectual property rights are some of the topics previously mentioned that could be explored with stakeholder planning. Studying stakeholder planning while used with other high stakes issues would allow the research to create a clearer picture as to the overall effectiveness of this planning model.

At first glance it would seem stakeholder planning is very expensive. Bringing together many constituents, from all over the state, for multiple meetings, with support staff and senior management direction might be a very costly way to achieve planning results. Several of the study participants voice their concern about what seemed to be a very expensive way to get at a state-wide reporting system. A benefits cost analysis would be very interesting to determine if the outcomes justified the expense of the planning process.

An examination of actual uses of the OCCURS database would be valuable. King (1983) stated that “output” such as adoption and use of plans and the implementation of those plans should be evaluated. How do the colleges see the deliverable outcomes of the planning process? Are they getting what they expected? The planning and the implementation are sometimes dramatically different. What are the actual data being
collected? How reliable are the data? How are the data being used to generate new dollars, reduce workload, communicate to funding entities and constituencies? An analysis of outcomes information would be very valuable in determining if the planning process helped deliver a useful product.
References


Appendices
November 16, 1992

Dr. John Keyser  
Office of the President  
Clackamas Community College  
19600 S. Molalla Avenue  
Oregon City, OR 97045

Dear John:

I enjoyed the presentation on OCCURS at the President's Council, but I feel compelled to write to you about two concerns that I have on the matter.

First, it seems that when we talk about the new "MIS system" we always end up by saying that "they" are talking a hard consolidation line on authority, MIS, etc., in Salem, so we must too. I do not agree with that analysis.

I fully support an integrated information system for state-wide planning and information, but I do not agree with the consultant that it must be based upon a common software system.

The second phase of the OCCURS study is no-more and no-less than the Washington Community College Technical Center WCCTC {formerly called the Washington Community College Computing Consortium (WCCCC)}. That system now spends over $7.1 million {approximately $250,000 per institution} that comes off of the top of the community college yearly appropriation. I believe that they now have 29 community colleges (not districts) in their system. You should also be aware that the WCCTC is now looking at not only providing administrative services, but instructional services. Finally, the costs associated with OCCURS will not end in 1997. They will be on-going and they will grow.

The second reason that I am writing to you is that simply because some legislators are voicing their opinions and views on community college control does not mean that we should simply consider our wishes and viewpoints as impossible or ridiculous. It does not automatically follow that since fifty percent of funding for community colleges will come from the state that the state should control 100% of everything.

Sincerely yours,

Stephen J. Kridelbaugh
May 19, 1993

TO: Interested Community College Staff

FROM: Debbie Lincoln

RE: OCCURS: Oregon Community College Unified Reporting System

A number of you have expressed interest in having an opportunity to debate the pros and cons of developing a coordinated database and reporting system. As you recall, the colleges hired a consulting firm, Executive Consultant Services, to review colleges' existing capabilities and recommend a course of action. At the same time, discussions with the legislature make it obvious that improved information capabilities are essential. The community college system needs to be proactive in developing those capabilities.

You are invited to review proposals for implementing OCCURS on JUNE 10, from 1 to 3 p.m., at Chemeketa Community College's Northwest Center (Fireside Room), 3750 Lancaster Drive NE, Salem (Phone: 399-6444).

Copies of the ECG final report (draft dated 11/5/92) will be available at the meeting. If you'd like one ahead of time, call Joyce Graves at 378-8515.

Attached is a workplan which implements the diversified model described by ECG.

Please RSVP by June 1 to Joyce if you plan to attend and pass along this notice to anyone on campus who may be interested.

cc: Dave Cline, ECG
Appendix C - OCCURS Workplan - May 18, 1993

OCCURS WORKPLAN

Introduction

The Executive Consulting Group (ECG), the contractors hired to provide a plan for a coordinated database, recommended two alternatives: a common, centralized system and a diversified system which provided information from autonomous campus-based systems to a central repository. Their recommendation included a combination of both systems: Phase I would be a diversified system which allows construction of a centralized repository, while Phase II replaces the diversified system with common hardware and software across all campuses.

ECG predicts costs of the two systems would be roughly similar, if cost avoidance attached to a common system proves accurate; implementation of either one alone would take five years. By combining the two into a two-phase system, costs are more than doubled, because two separate systems are being built, and implementation takes seven years.

OCCS recommends the colleges implement the diversified model, without the expectation of implementing a common system in the future. Developing a diversified system does not preclude moving to a system based on common software at some time in the future if the colleges decide to do so. Conditions which may dictate moving on to a common system could include recurring problems with data consistency, the complexity and varying quality of interfaces, a lack of responsiveness to change, and the difficulty of moving the system towards implementation of new reporting requirements. However, the advantages of cost, implementation timelines, and college acceptance justify putting a common system on a back shelf in favor of developing a diversified, decentralized system.

Under a diverse system, responsibility for responding to central reporting demands is on the individual college. The oversight committee sets the standards and the requirements to which a college must respond; this system demands the ability of the network to ensure consistency of data and may involve some kind of sanctioning if a college does not respond.

The following workplan is presented in two steps. The first covers activities in the summer of 1993, which can be funded with Carl Perkins Professional Technical Education funds, and staffed by two contractors and a half-time secretary. The second encompasses the rest of the biennium (October 1, 1993 through June 30, 1995); we anticipate it can be funded with Perkins and other resources and staffed by employees appointed at least for the duration of the biennium. Attached is an activity chart and timeline, with responsibilities.

Summer 1993

The Office of Professional Technical Education is currently developing a student and program Management Information System, funded primarily with Carl Perkins money, that will provide student demographics and program information for professional technical education in high schools.

An initial assessment of elements identified by ECG and the OPTE-MIS indicated a number of similarities in the data elements. This should allow for OCCURS to be built on the work already accomplished. We anticipate in the early phases of the project, a community college focus can be added to the 9-12 component to begin to address the needs of the colleges and customize it to ensure special needs (employment outcomes information, identification of categorical programs, e.g.) are recognized.
Support is available immediately through Carl Perkins funding. Support is available immediately through Carl Perkins funding. The community college system will interface with the 9-12 system, so that information on common clients and shared programs is available to both systems. Work on standard student and program file formats and on data definitions is already in progress and could serve as the basis for the addition of a community college focus. Use of Carl Perkins funding limits us to developing a system directly related to professional technical and workforce programs; additional elements needed for transfer-related information needs to be supported with General Fund, not yet available. Choice and design of system is partially guided by what 9-12 has already done. The initial phase of the project must be completed by September 30, 1993, to make use of existing Perkins funds.

Time: June 1, 1993 through September 30, 1993

Staff: Two contractors, one half-time secretary

Fund Source: Carl Perkins funds from OPTE

Workplan:

- Focus on student demographics, program and course information, cost information
- Do not focus on facilities, faculty and staff in first phase
- Schedule a meeting for all interested community college staff first week in June, to review the plan and hear concerns and suggestions

First Contractor:

- Contractor organizes an oversight committee and a standards committee (bylaws, members, responsibilities)
- Contractor develops a long-range, detailed workplan for OCCURS implementation
- Contractor becomes part of the OPTE-MIS system design team (Tom Cook, Dick Juve)
- Contractor designs a Management Information System for student and cost databases:
  - Define data elements
  - Develop code tables
  - Develop file formats
  - Develop, with second contractor, registration and admissions forms that incorporate necessary data
  - Draft data collection policies, procedures and reporting schedules
  - Develop a simple standardized chart of accounts
  - Choose, purchase and install hardware and software
  - Recommend and organize communications links (bulletin board, EINES, etc.)
- Contractor ensures targeted workforce clients (e.g. skill centers, ATC, dislocated workers, JOBS, etc.) can be identified and tracked.
- Contractor works closely with second contractor to integrate course/program database
- Contractor organizes and oversees task forces of college staff to develop the chart of accounts, registration/admissions forms, etc.
Second Contractor:

- Contractor becomes a part of the OPTE-MIS system design team
- Contractor designs a Management Information System for course and program databases:
  - Define data elements
  - Develop code tables
  - Develop screen and file formats
  - Develop, with first contractor, common registration and admissions forms
  - Draft course data collection policies, procedures and reporting schedules
  - Draft course and program approval policies and procedures
- Contractor ensures targeted workforce clients (e.g. skill centers, ATC, dislocated workers, JOBS, etc.) can be identified and tracked.

Products:

By September 30, 1993, contractors will have developed or provided drafts of:

1. Functioning oversight and standards committees, with workplans through June 1995.
2. Overall OCCURS workplan for continuation of the project past September 30, 1993, with funding suggestions.
3. Data dictionary for community colleges, building on SIS, 9-12 dictionaries.
4. Common admissions and registration formats, with an implementation plan for all sixteen community colleges and all subject programs (developmental ed, customized training, categorical programs, as well as professional technical and other workforce programs) that ensures each college is collecting necessary data.
5. Standard file formats for submission of unit records, including student demographic information, program information and cost information.
6. A first draft of data collection policies, procedures, reporting schedules.
7. Simple chart of accounts.
8. Hardware and software purchased and in place.

October 1993 - June 1995

Permanent Staff

Activities of the permanent staff are diagrammed on the attached chart and include database construction, system testing, documentation and user training.

Costs:

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OFFICE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE SERVICES

May 18, 1993
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| **PS** = Permanent Staff, including future contractors; K1 = First Contractor; K2 = Second Contractor
June 17, 1993

TO: Presidents
FROM: Debbie Lincoln
RE: OCCURS Oversight Committee

As you will recall in our discussions of the OCCURS plan, the information system is to be governed by an Oversight Committee composed of representatives from each college. College representatives will be chosen from a variety of functions, so that each functional area (presidents, business managers, deans, etc.) as well as each college will have an opportunity to direct the development of the system.

Responsibilities of members of the Oversight Committee include:

- Representing and reporting back to his or her college staff
- Representing and reporting back to functional groups
- Chairing a steering committee on the home campus to ensure communication to campus staff

The Oversight Committee will elect a chair, vice-chair, and recorder; develop a purpose statement for OCCURS; develop a purpose statement and responsibilities for the Oversight Committee; identify outcomes and scope of the database; develop a timeline and workplan; and appoint and oversee the work of Standards Committees and any necessary ad hoc task forces. As an ongoing committee, it will also decide policy questions related to data collection and analysis.

Functional groups to be represented include presidents, deans of instruction, deans of students, registrars and admissions officers, professional technical deans, financial aid officers, developmental education directors, business/industry service departments, institutional researchers (one each from large, medium and small colleges), computer services directors (one each from large, medium and small colleges), and business officers.

I'll be calling you this week to discuss your appointments. Thanks for your help.
TO: Student Records Committee

FROM: Debbie Lincoln

RE: Categorical Program Data

At the December 2 Oversight meeting, Marilyn went over your draft student data elements, even though you have not yet finalized them. I appreciate the thorough attention which you have given to defining these elements, which are in fact the "heart" of the OCCURS system.

Most of the elements under discussion are already collected by the colleges; for those that aren't, it becomes a policy issue whether to agree to make the additional effort at the colleges to include them in our database. One of these potential issues concerns student data elements S44 through S49, which flag students as participants in various specially funded programs such as programs for displaced workers, welfare recipients, teen/single parents, etc. Since the legislature funds these programs individually, legislators are exceptionally interested in their participants - their numbers, demographics, and outcomes - and have asked questions about them in the past. Such questions created some of the impetus behind the "matrix from hell" of a few years past. Legislators' satisfaction with our progress in these programs sets the tone for their review of our entire budget. If we cannot convince them we do well with JOBS and dislocated workers, our overall funding level is at risk. I can't emphasize enough the importance of gathering this information.

For many colleges, this will require some additional work, but we can take a phased approach; there isn't an expectation that all the data elements will be available in the first few terms of OCCURS operation. What is necessary is that colleges begin to develop systems to gather this information in their central databases, for eventual submission to OCCURS. The system must be flexible, enough to pick up additional categorical programs and drop discontinued programs. It will do no good to develop a system that only answers the questions we can easily answer, if it does not address the legislative needs which will help us to represent the community colleges in a positive and successful way, and answer legitimate concerns of legislators.

Thanks for your help on this; please feel free to call me directly if you want to discuss this further. I'm at 378-8648, ext. 358.
Appendix F - House Interim Committee on Education Memo

Roger Bassett, Commissioner
Office of Community College Services
Public Service Building
255 Capitol Street NE
Salem, OR 97310-0203

April 19, 1994

Dear Roger:

Recognizing that you're working on budget and legislative concept development under pressing time lines, this letter will be specific, to help you plan for this committee's meeting on June 23.

At the meeting April 11, testimony on academic productivity at community colleges spoke to the schools' role and mission, and generalized discussion of outcome goals for each student's success. As you know, members' questions and comments indicated a desire to have tangible, quantifiable information. I believe the goal for the members on June 23 is to receive data with which they may draw conclusions on the policies, efficiency and effectiveness of community college programs and services.

It's understood that at this time there is no string attached to every student entering a community college which would keep us in contact for continued follow-up on individual accomplishments, including employment successes. I also recognize that there is a multitude of state agencies involved in some manner with education, job training and combinations thereof. That said, here is a guide to information I think is needed at a minimum.

- Characteristics of a representative sample of programs (length of time expected for completion and goal, i.e., associate degree, four-year transfer, apprenticeship, certification, qualification for licensure or other governmental sanction, etc.), with numbers/percentage of students and completion rates (if time exceeds that expected, was remediation involved?).

Has any school surveyed students after completion of any program for customer satisfaction follow-up or employment feedback?

- Student population (sample of schools, not cumulative) in categories of credit hours per term (.5-3, 4-9, 10-15, 15+) over the last five academic years. It would be useful
If this can be tied to students' stated goals for enrollment. Can the course load also be connected with GPA?

- Withdrawal rates resulting in a "W", relative to withdrawal policies for students on financial aid, and those who are not, and rate of withdrawals cumulatively resulting in student completing no courses.

Much of this information looks like it's the background of the Task Force report. Please give me a call to get together to review this outline...I'd like to include Karen Garst, and whomever you judge to be needed at this point. Rep. Oakley did indicate a wish to have Anita Decker and Steve Krindelbaugh at the hearing in June; I've set aside 9:00 to 11:30 for this part of the agenda.

Sincerely,

Adrienne B. Sexton
Committee Administrator
April 12, 1994

Mr. Jerry Moskus  
President  
Lane Community College  
4000 East 30th Avenue  
Eugene, Oregon 97405-0640

Dear Jerry:

I want to thank you for your recent letter regarding the use of Social Security numbers. I was interested to learn of your views and appreciate the time you took to write.

At the outset, let me tell you that I am familiar with the requirements under the Federal Privacy Act of 1974 and the amendments to the Social Security Act which limit the use and disclosure of social security numbers. I also understand and sympathize with the problems you face in working through the maze of seemingly contradictory requirements at the Federal and State levels in trying to track student performance and success.

With that said, however, I must confess that I have a long history of concern about the use of Social Security numbers for any purpose other than assisting the Social Security Administration identify one’s individual account. For years, I have resented the extent to which the social security card has become a national identifier. Currently social security numbers are used for draft registration, college ID’s, Senate ID’s, driver’s licenses and as a cross-reference for every business and governmental personnel or credit system imaginable and the list goes on.

The use of social security numbers as a matter of expedience, convenience and uniformity which have allowed these numbers to become a cornerstone in this Nation’s identification process must give way to more enlightened views of personal privacy and human integrity. In the case of the liberties and individual freedoms that distinguish Americans from other members of the human family, the more identification, the more uniformity, and the more centralization of information, the greater the relinquishment of these very liberties and freedoms we hold so dear. Each time a human being is equated with a number, and each time society pressures good citizens to comply with identification requirements mandated or even suggested by government fiat, then America becomes less free for all of us.
Although the potential for abuse by private or government interest remains strong in my mind, I am eager to work with you on solutions to the problems community colleges face.

Kind regards.

Sincerely,

Mark O. Hatfield
United States Senator

cc: Mr. Roger Bassett
    Ms. Cam Preus-Braly
    Ms. Karen Garst
Appendix H - Oversight Committee Letter to Dr. Kraby

OREGON COMMUNITY COLLEGES UNIFIED REPORTING SYSTEM

700 Pringle Parkway SE, Salem, Oregon 97310-0290
(503) 378-8560 FAX No. (503) 378-8434

October 13, 1993

Dr. James M. Kraby
President
Umpqua Community College
PO Box 967
Roseburg, Oregon 97470

Dear Dr. Kraby,

On behalf of the OCCURS Oversight Committee, we would like to express our appreciation to you for the time and expertise contributed by Umpqua staff, particularly John Blanchard and Dan Yoder, during the initial phase of the OCCURS data collection and reporting project. Their contribution to our progress in setting policy and data standards has been invaluable.

We recognize the burden that a collaboratively based system puts on participating colleges, particularly those for which travel distances are great; yet we want the OCCURS system to adequately represent the conditions and interests of every college. The only way we can see to do this is to have people from each of the colleges participate in setting standards, definitions, and reporting formats.

As the preliminary, most intensive phase of data definition draws to a close, we are exploring other options to the monthly meetings of each committee. The December 2 OCCURS Oversight Committee meeting is being scheduled on EdNet II, for example, and it is likely that other OCCURS meetings will have an EdNet option in the near future. As soon as feasible, we will be using mail and computer networking to poll committee members on issues; for the present, however, these issues are too numerous and divergently understood to approach in this way. Finally, some committee members have approached me to express their willingness to travel to Umpqua to meet with your staff in order to keep them “in the loop” of OCCURS development. Perhaps some of these options for participation will be of interest to you.

Again, thanks to you and your staff for a significant contribution to the OCCURS project.

Sincerely,

R. Dan Walleri
Chair, OCCURS Oversight Committee

Marilyn Kolodziejczyk
OCCURS Project Director
Appendix I - IS Director Survey Results by Paul Rothi

Occurs Survey

PCC       Sam Ellis    1/6/93
- Came from WA
- Real blunt with ECG consultant
- Unless SCT Banner does it - get out of my face
- Refuse to be jerked around by the state

Mt. Hood  Dan Wallrie  1/6/93
- Served on original committee to set up project
- Original premise was to allow OCCS to do their own thing
- Thinks OCCS will try to upgrade from phase ii
- Has received a letter from Debbie Lincoln indicating there is not consensus to go ahead - discovered a lot of resistance to Phase II

Linn-Benton Ann Adams  1/12/93
- 1st version reasonable - Phase I
- Phase II not the intent of committee
- Agrees about standard definitions issue
- Banner not a reasonable solution for the small college

Chemeketa Tom DePue  1/15/93
- Has not seen the ECG report
- Doesn’t think Phase II will happen
- Has serious concern re: SCT. They’ve had difficulty linking Banner to other systems
- Agrees on standards issue

Lane        Jim Keizur  1/13/93
- Not seen it yet
- Phase I was his understanding from initial conversation

Telephone survey of MIS Directors by Paul Rothi of Clackamas Community College
Oregon State Board of Education OCCURS Policy

The State Board recognizes the Oregon Community College Unified Reporting System (OCCURS) as a cooperative program involving representatives from each of the sixteen community colleges and state level staff. The purpose of OCCURS is to collaboratively define and implement a standardized base of data which will allow community colleges to:

1. Provide comparable data for effective and timely response to state and federal reporting requirements, to inform legislative and State Board of Education policy decisions, and for purposes of educational planning and improvement; and

2. Provide data back to the individual community colleges for use in educational planning and improvement.

OCCURS Governance

OCCURS is directed by an Oversight committee comprised of sixteen members, one representative from each Oregon community college. The Oversight committee works in coordination with the Office of Community College Services to set direction, outcomes, and scope of the OCCURS data collection and reporting system. This committee sets timelines and assists in coordination of the efforts of the OCCURS staff, contractors, and community college standards committee members in accomplishing OCCURS-related objectives.

The Oversight committee is responsible to the Office of Community College Services at least throughout the 1995-97 biennium, at which time OCCURS governance structure will be reviewed by the Commissioner and college presidents.

The committee shall operate by consensus when possible. Otherwise, a ten-vote majority will be required for passage. Each college shall have one vote.

Standards Committees

The OCCURS Data Standards committees collaboratively identify and define data elements necessary for the OCCURS system in their respective areas of responsibility. They suggest approaches for gathering, codifying, and reporting this data to meet OCCURS goals.

Data Standards committees now formed are the Student Standards committee, the Course/Program Standards committee, and the Finance Standards committee.

The OCCURS Technical Standards committee serves as an advisory body to OCCURS regarding hardware, software, data structures, integrity and security, and other technical issues. Technical committee representatives are closely connected with the creation of OCCURS data submissions for their colleges.
Standards committee members serve as communication links with their local campuses to ensure that definitions and procedures being worked out at the state level are accurate, adequate, and able to be implemented.

Standards committee members are responsible to the OCCURS Oversight committee. Membership on the committees shall be representative of each community college and include adequate representation of the areas most affected by the data standards.

These committees shall operate by consensus when possible. Otherwise, a ten-vote majority shall be required for passage. Each college shall have one vote.
The following is summary of the meetings held by the OCCURS Oversight Committee and the subcommittees. The information included such as committee membership and topics were gleaned from the various committee meeting minutes.

6/9/93 Attorney General Opinion OP-6467 AG opinion by Donald Arnold, Chief Counsel, responds to questions raised by the Workforce Quality Council (WQC). Those questions concern federal and state confidentiality requirements that may affect the proposed operation of the Shared Information System (SIS) by a group of state workforce development agencies, and the use of social security numbers in the SIS.

This opinion stated that matches with the SIS database must be done inside secure programs so no one can see the data, return aggregate, statistical data only, and the SSNs be stored in an encoded format. The clients of the participating agencies had to specifically inform individuals that their information would be used for research and the if they chose not to provide the SSN it would not affect the receipt of services.

6/10/93 Pro and Con debate at Chemeketa

7/8/93 OCCURS Oversight Committee constituted

Elected Chair and Vice Chair. Committee “... agreed that there should be an explicit statement to the effect that OCCURS would not involve the implementation of a standard software system across the colleges. Rather,
the colleges would provide needed data in a standard format.” (OCCURS Oversight Committee Minutes, 07/08/93)

The OCCURS Oversight Committee shall work in coordination with the Office of Community College Services to set direction, outcomes, and scope of the OCCURS data collection and reporting system. This Committee will set timelines and assist in coordination of the efforts of OCCURS staff, contractors, and community college standards committee members in accomplishing OCCURS related objectives.

The Committee shall be responsible to the Office of Community College Services.

The Committee shall operate by consensus when possible, otherwise, a ten vote majority will be required for passage. Each college shall have one vote. (OCCURS Reference Manual, Section I-C, Page 3)

7/22/93 OCCURS Course/Program Standards Committee constituted
Chair and Vice Chair elected

7/28/93 Student Standard Committee constituted
Chair and Vice Chair elected

Presentation by Dr. Dean Judson of Employment Department, State Information System. He outlined the State Information System (SIS) and how OCCURS was expected to tie into the larger SIS project.

8/5/93 OCCURS Oversight Committee
Presentation by Senator Stan Bunn--.

8/19/93 Finance Standards Committee (First meeting as OCCURS comm.)

8/26/93 Course/Program Standard Committee
8/30/93    Student Standard Committee
8/31/93    Finance Standard Committee

Chair and Vice Chair elected

9/9/93    OCCURS Oversight Committee
OCCURS Course/Program Standards Committee
OCCURS Subcommittee on Students Records Confidentiality constituted.

9/30/93    Student Standard Committee

10/7/93    OCCURS Oversight Committee - Letter from President Kraby (Umpqua) to Commissioner Bassett informing that committee representatives from Umpqua will no longer be attending meetings.

10/28/93    Student Standard Committee

11/1/93    Course/Program Standards Committee

12/2/93    OCCURS Oversight Committee (Ed-Net)
12/7/93    Student Standard Committee (Ed-Net)

12/30/93    Student Standard Committee

1/27/94    Student Standard Committee

2/3/94    OCCURS Oversight Committee
2/24/94    Student Standard Committee

3/3/94    Student Standard Committee (Ed-Net)

4/7/1994    OCCURS Oversight Committee (Ed-Net)
4/15/94    Student Standard Committee

5/5/94    OCCURS Oversight Committee
“The purpose of the OCCURS Technical Implementation Committee is to serve as an advisory body to OCCURS regarding computer and technical issues. The Committee meets quarterly and is co-chaired by Ann Adams of Linn-Benton Community College and Dan Yoder of Umpqua Community College.

The Committee will make recommendations and provide advice on such issues as:

1. Data integrity
2. Database structure
3. Logic for operational issues and access
4. Hardware requirements
5. Procedures for maintenance of Students IDs
6. OCCURS access and security for data transmissions
7. Enrollment file feasibility
8. Additional communications lines
9. Data submissions
10. Student ID security
11. Such other technical issues as may arise.”

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF THE OSU INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

Principal Investigator* Dr. Sam Stern

Department Education Phone 737-6392

Project Title Planning for a Decentralized, State-Wide, Community College Database: A Case Study

Present of Proposed Source of Funding No Funding Involved

Type of Project: X Student Project or Thesis*

Student's name Patrick Schwab Phone (503) 371-7580
Student's mailing address 195 Kevin Way SE Salem, OR 97306-1928

Type of Review Requested: X Exempt ___ Expedited ___ Full Board

The Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection Human Subjects is charged with the responsibility of reviewing, prior to its initiation, all research involving Human subjects. The Board is concerned with justifying the participation of subjects in research and protecting the welfare, rights and privacy of subjects.

All material, including this cover sheet, should be submitted IN DUPLICATE to the Research Office, ADS A312. Please call x7-0670 if you have questions. The following information must be attached to this form with each item identified and addressed separately or the application will be returned without review.

1. A brief description (one paragraph) of the significance of this project in lay terms.
2. A brief description of the methods and procedures to be used during this research project.
3. A description of the benefits (if any) and/or risks to the subjects involved in this research.
4. A description of the subject population, including number of subjects, subject characteristics, and method of selection. Justification is required if the subject population is restricted to one gender of ethnic group.
5. A copy of the informed consent document. The informed consent document must include the pertinent items from the “Basic Elements of Informed Consent” and must be in lay language.
6. A description of the methods by which informed consent will be obtained.
7. A description of the method by which anonymity or confidentiality of the subjects will be maintained.
8. A copy of any questionnaire, survey, testing instrument, etc. (if any) to be used in this project.
9. Information regarding any other approvals which have been or will be obtained (e.g., school districts, hospitals, cooperating institutions).
10. If this is part of a proposal to an outside funding agency, attach a copy of the funding proposal.

Signed ______________________________ Date __________________

Principal Investigator*

*NOTE: Student projects and theses should be submitted by the major professor as Principal Investigator.

7-93

mem
1. **A brief description (one paragraph) of the significance of this project in lay terms.**

This study will investigate a specific planning process conducted by the office of Oregon Community College Services and the 16 community colleges of Oregon. The study will describe the planning process used and examine the perceptions of the senior decision makers at the Oregon community colleges.

2. **A brief description of the methods and procedures to be used during this research project.**

In this qualitative case study the investigator will interview selected Oregon community college decision makers about their role in the planning process. Planning committee participants will be interviewed, as well as OCCS staff members. Documents and minutes will also be collected. All of the community college decision makers and the planning committee participants will remain anonymous. The employees of OCCS will be cited in the study when it comes to reconstructing the history of the planning process.

3. **A description of the benefits (if any) and/or risks to the subjects involved in this research.**

There are no risks to the subjects involved in this research. The benefits would be the clarity created by the study of the process in which most of the study subjects participated.

4. **A description of the subject population, including number of subjects, subject characteristics, and method of selection. Justification is required if the subject population is restricted to one gender or ethnic group.**

Of the 16 community colleges six will be studied. At each college three individuals will be interviewed. The people interviewed would be the senior decision makers involved in the planning process. Generally, the people that will be interviewed will be the President, the Chief Financial Officer, and the head of Information Technology. In this qualitative, non-generalized study the selection will be based on the experiences of the researcher and the recommendations of the participants. This population is based on the position of the individuals and is not restricted to one gender or race.

5. **A copy of the informed consent document. The informed consent document must include the pertinent items from the “Basic Elements of Informed Consent” and must be in lay language.**

See Attached consent form.

6. **A description of the methods by which informed consent will be obtained.**

Before each interview the researcher will present the form, give a verbal explanation of what the interview will entail, assure the participant of confidentiality, and have the participant sign the form.

7. **A description of the method by which anonymity or confidentiality of the subjects will be maintained.**

Although the interviews will by taped and transcribed only the researcher will listen to the tapes and will personally transcript the interviews. The report will not identify anyone individually and there are enough people in the sample that the identity of any one individual would be readily apparent.

8. **A copy of any questionnaire, survey, testing instrument, etc. (if any) to be used in this project.**

This will be a semi-structured interview. The following are some of the general questions that will frame the interview:

- What has been your role in your college's participation in the OCCURS planning process?
- In which meetings did you personally participate?
- When the project started, what value did you feel of the OCCURS database would contribute to the running of the college and answer questions posed by the Legislature?
- How do you feel about the potential of the OCCURS database?
- Was the OCCURS system necessary? Should OCCS be managing a central database?
- Were the correct individuals involved in the planning process?
- How would you evaluate the way the OCCS staff facilitated the OCCURS planning process?
- Do you believe the OCCS staff have achieved the goals set out for the OCCURS system?
• Do you believe the OCCURS database system will meet the needs of the Legislature? Did the system help answer the questions posed by the Legislature during the 1995 session?
• How could the process have been improved?

9. Information regarding any other approvals which have been or will be obtained (e.g., school districts, hospitals, cooperating institutions).

None needed

10. If this is part of a proposal to an outside funding agency, attach a copy of the funding proposal.

Not applicable
Informed Consent Statement

The planning that went into the OCCURS database system was quite extensive. The attempt to bring 16 community colleges to consensus on a particular topic is a very challenging effort. Patrick Schwab, under the supervision of Dr. Sam Stern of Oregon State University, is researching the details of state-wide planning processes and how such planning affects the perceptions of community college leaders. To do this, Mr. Schwab is interviewing at least 20 individuals who were involved or affected by the OCCURS planning that was done from June 1993 to July 1994. The interviews will be limited to an hour or less. The interviews will be taped but the participant may ask that the conversations not be taped. The tapes and the transcripts will be kept confidential. The answers provided will be held in strictest confidence.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may refuse to answer any question. You may terminate the interview at any time. No questions are intended to embarrass you and there will be no individual quotations that will be attributed to any one respondent in the report or any associated documents. Your responses, together with others, will be combined and used as summary information only. After the responses have been analyzed the tapes and the transcripts will be destroyed.

Although, you will receive no direct benefit from participation in this study we believe it will contribute to the understanding of large scale planning processes. Because the sample size in this study is so small your participation in this study is vital.

I have read the above statement and agree to be interviewed for the purposes of this study.

_________________________________________ Date _______________________
Signature

_________________________________________
Printed Name

For more information or any questions call Patrick Schwab at (503) 978-5344 (W) or (503) 371-7580 (H)