

Dashboard

System

Decide

PDAD

Assess

Strategic
Policy

Daily
Actions

Operational
Procedures

Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Model



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Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Model

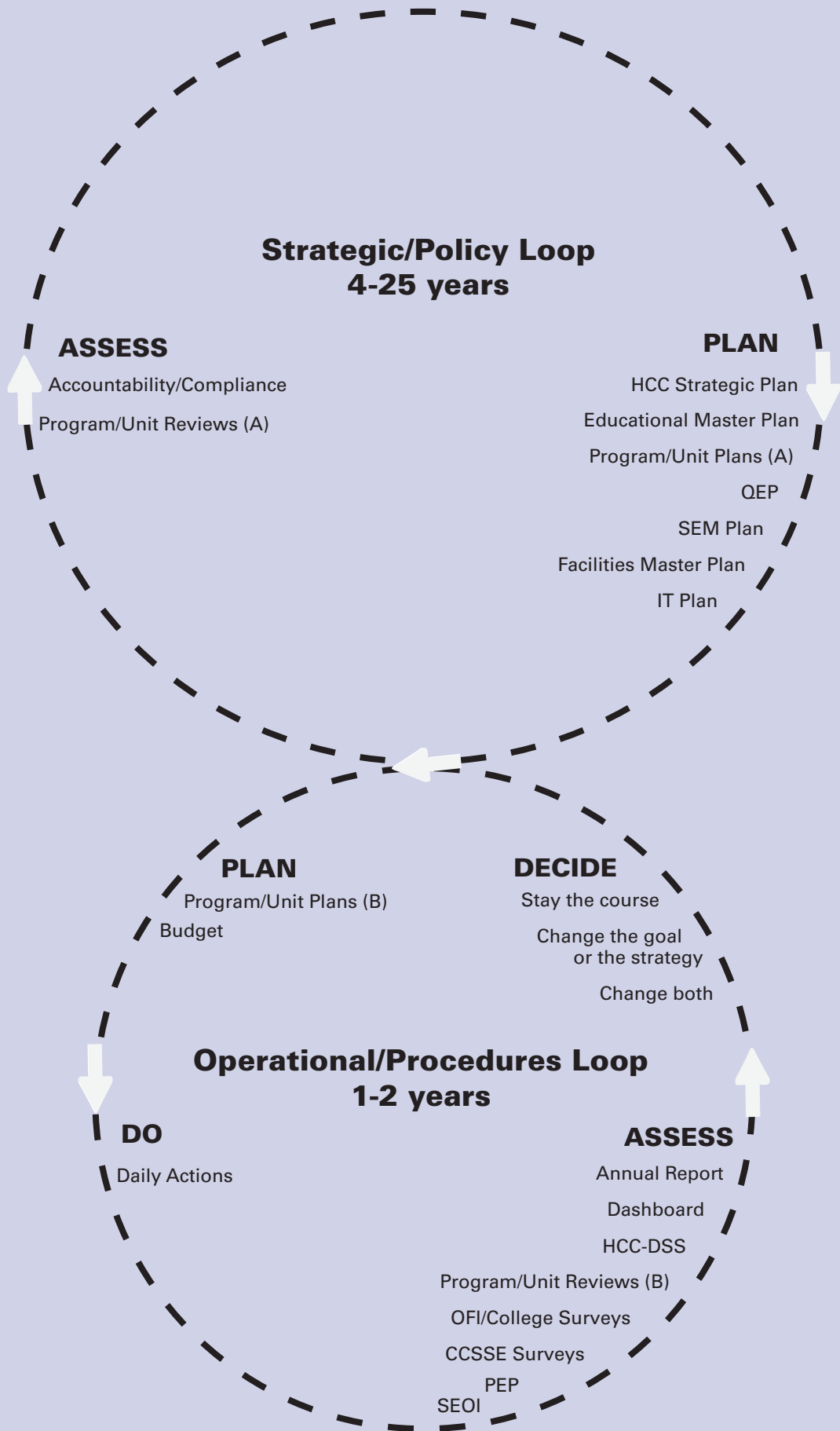
Houston Community College's Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Model is like any other model—"a simplification of reality intended to promote understanding." Such a model is needed because we are a large, complex organization that is intentional—we are intent on creating our own future. HCC's IE Model is how we actually do it. It is based upon two organizing principles: (1) a reinforcing systems loop and (2) a Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle.

- A **system** is an entity which maintains its existence through the mutual interaction of its parts. In our case, we see those parts interacting in two loops (known as a "reinforcing systems loop"): the top loop is strategic and revolves at a four to 25 year rate; the bottom loop is operational and revolves every one to two years. The loops move in clockwise and counter-clockwise directions and—like any set of gears—magnify change over time. For a further description of the language of systems thinking see: <http://www.solonline.org/practice/tool/loops.html>
- A **PDCA cycle** is an iterative four-step approach to problem solving: **Plan**—recognize an opportunity and establish objectives; **Do**—implement an action to meet those objectives; **Check**—measure the impact of the action and compare against the expected results; and **Act**—engage in any changes that are needed in order to improve—i.e., either change the "Plan," change the "Do," or both. This process is based upon the scientific method and has been used to drive improvement at many different types of organizations. The most important aspect of a PDCA cycle is that it is never-ending. For a further description of the PDCA concept see: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PDCA>

We have chosen to combine and adapt these two principles at HCC in order to create a visual schema that reflects our commitment to realizing our vision of becoming "the most relevant community college in the country." Further, the Model serves two very specific purposes. The first purpose is that it responds directly to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) core requirement concerning institutional effectiveness (2.5): "The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission."

The second, purpose is to present a methodology to drive continuous improvement at HCC. As such, we have chosen to adapt the language of PDCA to reflect our unique situation—PDAD. The first two steps are the same—Plan followed by Do. In the third step we will Assess—again, this is a step where we engage in evaluation using a wide range of action research and data-gathering tools to derive analytics. Finally, we will Decide—this reflects an understanding that we need to overcome the inertia that is built into the culture of any institution. We need to be intentional about "closing the loop" by making the research results in the "Assess" step actionable; hence, we need to decide what to do next. Together, the Decide step and its predecessor, the Assess step, encompass the "action analytics" that drive performance improvement through cycles of innovation.

Mission/Vision/Values



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The **Strategic/Policy Loop** is based upon regional accreditation and strategic planning efforts. In our case, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) uses a ten-year cycle. The strategic plans are varied and run from three years (*HCC Strategic Plan*) to 25 years (*HCC Facilities Master Plan*). Also, the activities that occur in this loop tend to be governance-related and policy-making (Board of Trustees) —e.g., “clarify the mission of the institution, approve long-range plans.” This loop contains only two steps in the PDAD Cycle—Plan and Assess—because implementation (Do) and any course corrections to long-term plans (Decide) occur in real time in the Operational/Procedures Loop.

Mission/vision/values—Our mission statement answers the question “Why do we exist?” while our vision statement answers the question “What are we trying to create?” Our values respond to the question, “How do we treat each other?” As such, the mission/vision/values represent our long-term aspirations and operating philosophy.

Strategic Plan (3 years)—A *Strategic Plan for Our Future (2008-2011)* is a three-year plan with six goal areas that serves as the “umbrella” for our planning efforts. All other plans should align with the strategic plan.

Educational Master Plan (3 years)—This plan focuses specifically on academic and workforce courses as well as certificate and degree programs.

Program/Unit Plans (A) (4 years)—This effort reflects the strategic aspect of “engaging in integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning” as noted in SACS Core Requirement (2.5) and Comprehensive Standards (3.3). Our institutional assessments will include education programs (3.3.1.1), administrative support services (3.3.1.2), educational support services (3.3.1.3) and community/public service (3.3.1.5). The plans are on a four-year cycle; also, there is an annual component that is in the Operational/Procedures Loop and is linked to Budgeting—Program/Unit Plans (B).

Quality Enhancement Plan (5 years)—This plan will be developed as part of our 2011 SACS accreditation. The QEP is a “carefully designed course of action that addresses a well-defined and focused topic or issue related to enhancing student learning.”

Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (3 years)—This plan, aligned with HCC’s strategic plan, establishes comprehensive goals for the number and types of students needed to fulfill our mission and vision.

Facilities Master Plan (25 years)—Again, aligned with strategic and enrollment management planning efforts, this long-term plan coordinates the College’s investment in real assets and the ability to provide appropriate scheduled maintenance on those real assets.

Information Technology Plan (10 years)—A ten-year information technology plan, *Road Map 2015*, was developed in 2005. In 2010 an *Information Technology Progress Report* describes updated infrastructure projects and corresponding timelines.

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Accountability/Compliance—The main external compliance function that requires us to evaluate ourselves is regional accreditation. Accreditation by SACS signifies that the institution (1) has a mission appropriate to higher education, (2) has resources, programs, and services sufficient to accomplish and sustain mission, and (3) maintains clearly specified educational objectives that are consistent with its mission and appropriate to the degrees it offers. The College is also involved in approximately 20 specialized accreditations. Other external compliance-related assessments on the strategic level relate to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the State of Texas.

Program/Unit Reviews (A)—This is the main vehicle by which academic/workforce programs and service unit plans are assessed and strategically improved over time.

The **Operational/Procedures Loop** revolves every year or two. This loop focuses on the administration of the institution through operational procedures and practices. It has all four elements of the PDAD cycle.

Program/Unit Plans (B)—This effort reflects annual operational plans for education programs (3.3.1.1), administrative support services (3.3.1.2), educational support services (3.3.1.3) and community/public service (3.3.1.5).

Budget—The College’s budget is associated with “Plan” because it is the allocation of scarce resources to the planning efforts enumerated in the strategic loop. Through the two-year budget process (aligns with the State budget cycle) the focus is consciously linking, planning and budgeting in order to achieve the mission and pursue the vision of HCC.

Daily Actions—This critical aspect of the IE Model simply says that the decisions made each day need to be consistent with the mission, vision, values (where we are going) and plans (how we are going to get there). Also, this “Do” highlights that this is how the action item in various planning activities get implemented. The emphasis here is on consistent execution.

Annual Report and the HCC Academic Dashboard—These are two institution-wide accountability efforts. The annual report tracks major accomplishments for the year and the dashboard is a set of ten key performance indicators aligned with our mission and vision. Both of these efforts are responsive to external stakeholders.

Decision Support System (DSS), Program/Unit Reviews (B), Opportunities for Improvement (OFI) and College Surveys, Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) —These evaluations are used to assess and improve academic programs and a broad range of functional areas. Program/unit reviews at this level are annual data-driven exercises that focuses on action research to develop the analytics that drive continuous performance improvement.

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Performance Evaluation Program (PEP) and Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEOI)—These final two assessments are focused on individuals and their contributions in advancing the effectiveness of the institution.

Stay the Course, Change the Goal or the Strategy, Change Both—After the evaluation or “Assess” step, the main purpose of the “Decide” step is to make a conscious decision. This analysis—e.g., post survey action plans in various surveys—is what drives organizational learning by asking and answering the following questions: (1) Is everything working well and are there no opportunities for improvement at this time?, (2) Are there opportunities for improvement and do they involve changing the goal, the strategy, or both? This is the critical final step of the Operational/Procedures Loop and, if done well, this “closing the loop exercise” reinforces the next iteration of the Strategic/Policy Loop by being intentional about creating our own future.

This Model is based upon the research and practice originally described in D. Seymour, “Linking Planning, Quality Improvement and IR: Los Angeles City College,” New Directions for Higher Education, no. 116, Fall 2002.



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