

Guidelines for CALS Operational Plans and Sample Completed College Level Plan

To be prepared annually with 3 year time horizon to support CALS Strategic Plan

February 2, 2010

Purpose

To implement the strategic plan and assist the college and departments in preparation for annual budget hearings.

Relationship to Dean's January 12, 2010 Memorandum on Annual Departmental Reviews

The operational plan should be consistent with the budget hearing materials prepared by units. A possible procedure is:

1. Dean distributes these guidelines to HODS prior to Spring 2010 budget reviews. A draft college-level Operational Plan would be included as an example.
2. Administrative units submit a draft Operational Plan prior to spring budget hearings. This submission would be optional this year because of the short time period before hearings.
3. Administrative units submit a revision when the FY 11 budget results are available.
4. CALS dean's office finalizes the college-level Operational Plan following all budget hearings and receipt of unit operational plans.
5. College-level Operation Plan is placed on the web and announced in CALS Weekly Bulletin.

These operational plans are brief so they can be easily prepared and understood in the context of change. However, they perform an important role – stimulating active thinking about future changes. In addition to these “brief plans” the college or units may wish to prepare a more detailed plan for their own use, with specific action steps, goals, and measures (but this would not be required).

CALS Operational Plan Rationale and Action Steps

- Describe the operational plans and how they will be used (e.g., preparing plans for individual units and the college, gathering new ideas, involving broad group of CALS administrators).
- Reference CALS Strategic Plan and UA Strategic Plan as background.
- Provide timeline for events described above.
- For both college and administrative unit, the plan should give some guidance, without excessive detail, on how we will manage the next 1-3 years.
- The initial period is FY 11- FY 13, and the following assumptions should be considered:
 - Budgets will decrease or remain stable (if it turns out budgets increase we still use these discussions as directions of priority use of funding).
 - We will change what we do and how we do it as a result of the financial situation and the strategic plan. How we change will in part be due to these plans.

Information That Will Assist in Development of Operational Plans

In addition to previous plans and reviews for the unit involved in preparing the plan, the Dean's planning webpage (cals.arizona.edu/dean/planning) includes the following:

1. These guidelines.
2. CALS strategic plan and relevant background material.
3. UA and ABOR strategic plans.
4. Driving forces of change and implications for the university
5. Scenarios done by others regarding university futures

The 6 CALS focus areas are listed in the Strategic Plan. The nine areas of UA priority (2011-2015 Strategic Plan) are:

1. Climate, Environmental, Water and Energy Sustainability
2. Southwest, Native American, Borderlands, and Latin American Studies
3. Biosciences and Biotechnology
4. Optics
5. Space Exploration and Observation
6. Creative Arts, Languages and Language Acquisition
7. Law, Public Policy and Entrepreneurship
8. Biomedical and Behavioral Health
9. Youth Development Programs

CALS LEVEL Operational Plan

The CALS operational plan will be the same format as the unit plans but focus on college-wide activities and college administrative roles; it will include the unit plans as attachments. The CALS plan should be similar in format and size to those prepared by the units. (note: there could be more detail but it may be better to provide guidance rather than specific requirements). Do not exceed three pages.

See Attachment 1 as an example of such a plan (2 pages).

Administrative Unit LEVEL Operational Plan

(a unit refers to the units that submit annual budget plans to the Executive Council.)

1. Summarize your strategic plan/choices/directions by listing 3-5 general areas of focus for the unit over the next 3 years, and identify what changes in direction or effort are necessary to achieve these focus areas.
2. Use as time frame the next 3 years but update this operational plan annually or as needed, and submit with materials for spring budget reviews
3. Identify the critical assumptions (e.g., enrollment, personnel, funding) for the unit
4. Describe how the unit will resource the critical activities and reduce or eliminate activities that are not critical. Assume the budget for FY 11 will be approximately the current budget, FY 12 may be significantly less, and FY 13 is uncertain but may restore some of FY 12 or be constant.
5. The format used in Attachment 1 for the college-level operational plan could serve as a guide for administrative unit plans. Do not exceed three pages.

Attachment 1

Example of CALS College-Level Operational Plan FY 2011-2013

(a similar plan would be prepared by each college administrative unit)

February 1, 2010

Overview and Relationship to UA and CALS Strategic Plans

The CALS Strategic Plan was revised in February 2010 and noted that we are entering a new era and universities will have to change. Part of this change is due to the current financial difficulties and that will impact the way we sustain ourselves in the short term while maintaining our ability to survive the longer term. In addition, the plan notes the role of technology and other changes in approaches to learning and engagement. The UA strategic plan has three priorities: academic excellence, access and success, and quality of life and societal impact (spbac.web.arizona.edu/).

Strategic Issues (as they relate to the College-Level Operational Plan)

The full college strategic plan is at cals.arizona.edu/dean/planning The key conclusions for this operational plan are:

1. The world we have become accustomed to is changing in many ways, with the next several years forcing change because of financial issues. But finances are not the only reason we need to change. To address this change we need to be flexible and innovative.
2. Specific objectives are listed below that relate to the four college challenges – Leadership, Learning, Discovery, and Engagement.
3. The six college focus areas were modified but remain similar. What will change is what we do and how we do it in each of those areas.
4. Similar to the approach in the strategic college strategic plan, there are no detailed objectives or metrics in this operational plan; the next few years are too uncertain to be too detailed in a plan.

Assumptions

1. The financial constraints will be significant at least for the next three years (federal not growing and state unclear but probably declining).
2. Changes are taking place in universities as the demographics, technologies, and economy change.
3. The UA is tentatively planning a new budgeting system (Responsibility Centered Management). This would be a major change and take several years to accomplish. Our college may be impacted to a greater degree than others because of our complexity.

Priorities

1. Get through this financially constrained three-year period with minimal negative impacts on the long-term future of the college.
2. Identify the non-financial trends and issues that are changing and define how we should adapt the relevant new approaches.
3. Communication and transparency will be important among administrative leaders in the college, departments, and the university.

Special Concerns

Change will not come easily and negative impacts on faculty and staff in the short term need to be minimized. It also requires extra effort with communication and rationale for changes.

Planned Activities

In addition to the normal operations of the college, the following activities will be emphasized:

1. Leadership
 - Engage the college and its constituents in understanding the strategic plan and our general activities. Seek feedback and assistance in the changes we will be making.
 - Develop options, in consultation with college administrative heads and other constituents, for possible budget reductions to sustain the college in the short term but also to prepare our approaches for resuming normal operations.
 - Work with departments and UA administration to evaluate and understand the Responsibility Centered Management (RCM) approach to budgeting.
 - Explore ways of increasing cooperation with community colleges, universities, and other campus departments.
2. Learning
 - Identify ways to create a mixture of alternative learning environments and approaches.
3. Engagement
 - Identify ways of working with client groups and Arizona citizens by alternative methods for group interaction and information dissemination.
4. Discovery
 - Identify ways to implement innovative, relevant, and contemporary research activities.

Timeline and Deadlines

1. Progress reports – appropriate decisions or general progress will be communicated to all concerned.
2. Meetings and Draft documents – major change issues will be discussed in appropriate meetings and draft documents.
3. This document will be revised following HODS budget hearings – July 1, 2010
FY 11 budgets distributed to HODS as soon as practical following UA finalization

Communication Methods

1. CALS Weekly Bulletin
2. HODS Meetings, all administrators meetings, and all-college meetings
3. CALS Dean's Planning Web Page – cals.arizona.edu/dean/planning

February 1, 2010