

# ***Collaborating for Excellence!***

## **Results of Faculty Day 2010: Defining Administrative Excellence February 16, 2010**

**Planning Input from Administrative and Technical Staff**

**Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering**

**University of Toronto**

**By: D. Scott Ferguson, B Com, CA, CMC, ACC  
Facilitator**

**Date: March 2, 2010**

## ***Collaborating for Excellence!***

### **Table of Contents**

Introduction	1
Significance of Academic Planning	3
Administrative and Technical Mission/Purpose	4
Vision of Administrative and Technical Excellence	5
Measures of Excellence	7
Benefits of Excellence	8
Examples of “Best Practices”	9
Gap Analysis: “What is” vs. “What should be”	12
Strategy Development	13
Action Planning Process	20
Reflections and Next Steps	23
Appendices	
A: Overview of Process	25
B: Four Levels of Planning	26
C: Summary of Workshop Evaluations	27

## ***Collaborating for Excellence!***

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Faculty Day 2010: Defining Administrative Excellence**

Faculty Day is a professional development day that provides an enjoyable opportunity for all administrative and technical staff to learn, network, and collaborate with colleagues across the Faculty.

Previous Faculty Days addressed the themes of Leadership, and Career and Personal Wellness.

The focus of the 2010 event is “defining administrative excellence”.

#### **Input from Administrative and Technical Staff for Academic Planning**

The Faculty Day 2010 event contributes to the current academic planning exercise taking place across the Faculty.

This past fall, the Faculty initiated our Academic Planning process to renew our *Stepping Up!* Plan, which draws to a close in 2010.

Accordingly, a cross-Faculty Academic Planning Steering Committee led the development of a planning framework that aligns with the University's *Towards 2030* strategic initiative.

The Faculty's *Academic Planning Framework* guides the development of our Departments', Institutes', Divisions' and Administrative Units' Plans. Within the Framework, we build on recently-launched initiatives and consider different topics from Culture of Excellence to Student Experience, Research Foci and Collaboration to Resource Allocation and Influence. Together, these Plans will create the foundation of the Faculty's Academic Plan for the next five to seven years.

Aspects of the *Academic Planning Framework* that are particularly pertinent to administrative and technical staff are:

- Positioning – Defining our “Excellence”
- Culture of Excellence – Creating a Culture that supports our aspirations of Excellence
- Student Experience – Contributing to the successful development of future, global engineers
- Collaboration – Achieving excellence through collaboration
- Resource Allocation – Making optimal use of available resources for maximum impact
- Priorities – Doing what matters most.

#### **Format Faculty Day 2010**

Faculty Day 2010 was an all-day workshop held February 16th where participants used case studies, interactive discussion and breakout groups to:

- Define administrative excellence,
- Exchange “best practices”, and
- Develop plans to promote and sustain excellence and to improve as professionals.

## A Three-Phase Process

Faculty Day was one of three primary phases of our administrative planning.

- The event was preceded by a half-day design workshop where approximately two dozen administrative and technical representatives developed key strategic concepts for Faculty Day to consider, and
- A follow-up session is needed to identify faculty-wide initiatives to transform the input from Faculty Day into action.

A diagram of this process appears as Appendix A.

## Professional Facilitation

The three phases of this process were designed, facilitated and reported on by Scott Ferguson of *Progress Consulting™*, who works extensively with the education sector in Ontario and who facilitated our development of the *Academic Planning Framework*.

## Topics

The topics addressed by this process and the format of this report are:

- Participants' perspective on the importance of academic planning
- Defining our administrative and technical mission/purpose
- Creating a shared vision of administrative and technical excellence
- Identifying important measures of excellence
- Articulating the benefits of excellence – to us and to our stakeholders
- Sharing examples of administrative and technical “best practices”
- Conducting a gap analysis: “What is” vs. “What should be”
- Strategy development – proposals to “close the gaps”
- Launching an action planning process
- Sharing reflections and articulating next steps.

## Terminology

In this document:

- “Faculty” refers to the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering, and
- “faculty” refers to individual or groups of professors.

## The Emerging Theme

The primary theme that emerged from these discussions was the vital role that collaborating plays in the pursuit of administrative and technical excellence – reflected in the title of this report.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF ACADEMIC PLANNING

### Participants' Perspectives

Participants were asked their views on the Faculty's 2010 academic planning process. The following key themes emerged.

### Key Themes

From participants' perspective, academic planning is very important, both:

- Periodically, such as a formal revisiting of academic strategy and priorities every 5 to 7 years, and
- On an ongoing basis, through continuous refinement in response to rapid change.

First and foremost, academic planning should build on our momentum and protect and further advance our high standards and academic success.

Our present academic planning should not merely replace *Stepping Up!*, but also build upon it where appropriate.

The process is an important opportunity to integrate our own wisdom accumulated over the years with the best thinking and input of recent newcomers (faculty and staff) and our external stakeholder community, including alumni and industry. The process also has a galvanizing potential, to bring us closer together as colleagues both within departments and across the Faculty.

Our Faculty faces many changes – demographic, economic, technological, to name a few – and we need effective Faculty-wide planning to help us agree on how we'll navigate such changes.

Accreditation criteria are changing. We need a plan to position our Faculty accordingly and to align with the new criteria.

The plan should be a valuable and flexible framework to guide decision-making and resource allocation. It cannot be static.

It should:

- Help us to attract the best possible students, faculty and staff
- Provide important context for individuals and groups to understand their role and how best to contribute to the fulfillment of our academic mission
- Provide strategic guidance to be proactive in evaluating and seizing appropriate opportunities as they arise
- Guide our efforts to make the best use of resources
- Contribute to our efforts to keep the Faculty financially sound and strong, and
- Provide a basis for monitoring our quality and progress in achieving our academic mission.

## ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL STAFF: MISSION/PURPOSE

### Mission/Purpose

The exercise answers the questions, “*Who are we? Why are we here? Thus, what is our Purpose?*”.

While this process did not include the drafting of a formal mission statement per se, participants discussed and agreed upon the following important themes.

#### *Administrative and technical staff:*

- *Are essential*
- *Are innovative professionals*
- *Act as agents of change*
- *Collaborate with and support students, faculty, alumni and industry to implement our Academic Mission.*
- *Provide a stable, reliable, safe and efficient environment for academics, administrators and students to achieve their goals*
- *Contribute to and implement Faculty guidelines and policies*
- *Provide the necessary technology, records, advice, integration, service and support for research and learning*
- *Play a vital role in fostering and enhancing the Faculty's financial health*

## VISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE

### Four Key Aspects

Participants developed a shared vision of administrative excellence, which comprises:

- *Providing quality service*
- *Demonstrating high values*
- *Going above and beyond*
- *Creating a positive work environment*

Details appear on the chart on the next page.

Positive Work Environment	Quality Customer Service	Demonstrating High Values	Going Above and Beyond
Theme "A"	Theme "B"	Theme "C"	Theme "D"
Attracting Top Notch Administrative and Technical Staff	Timely, responsive customer service, and anticipating needs	Caring	Set standards as a team
Rewarding and supporting career paths	Up-to-date knowledge and access to relevant information	Ethical	Exceed expectations
Personal empowerment, motivation and vision	Good listening and communicating	Integrity	Courageous, risk taking
Respect for the person, work, development & health	Empathetic	Globally responsible	Flexible
Creative solutions are encouraged, recognized and rewarded	Resourceful: Providing valuable and definitive answers to stakeholders	Transparent processes	Involvement in setting and implementing policy
Fairness	Share best practices collaboratively	Dedication to Excellence	Model of skill, professionalism and effectiveness
Healthy and safe environment	One stop shop for students, faculty and staff		Contribute to effective inter-departmental collaboration (among students, faculty and staff)
No barriers to opportunity or success	Clients' needs are satisfied, goals are met; students feel well supported		Improve the resource base
Strong leadership	Approachable and friendly		
Managerial excellence	Technology advances collaboration		
A sense of community	Responsible		
	Accountable		

## MEASURES OF EXCELLENCE

### Twelve Key Measures

Participants identified twelve important measures for measuring and recognizing excellence, and indicated the applicability of each across the four themes of their shared vision, as follows:

	Positive Work Environment	Quality Customer Services	Demonstrating High Values	Going Above and Beyond
	Theme "A"	Theme "B"	Theme "C"	Theme "D"
a) Quick response		√		
b) Satisfied Client		√		√
c) Enhanced accessibility (eg: of information)		√	√	
d) Ease of use (time savings)	√	√		
e) Fewer misunderstandings	√	√	√ (Transparency)	
f) Fewer errors – fewer opportunities to make errors	√	√		
g) Consolidation: reduced duplication	√	√		
h) Improved communication (eg: through promotion)	√	√	√	√
i) Reduced downtime	√	√	√	√
j) Reduced costs		√ (others' downtime)	√	√
k) Proactive response		√	√	√
l) Stakeholders' confidence in our Service	√	√	√	√

## BENEFITS OF EXCELLENCE

### Overview of Process

Participants identified the following benefits of administrative and technical excellence.

#### To Academic Staff

- a. Smooth co-operation between faculty and administrative staff; enhanced relationships
- b. Enhances productivity and achievements of faculty
- c. Improved communication

#### To Students

- d. Generally, if the goals and needs of academic staff are satisfied, there are fewer problems for students
- e. Enhanced student experience
- f. Enhanced pride in the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering

#### To the Engineering school as a whole

- g. Reputation – raised profile for recruiting academic staff
- h. Reputation – raised profile for recruiting excellent students
- i. Reputation – raised profile for recruiting excellent administrative and technical staff

#### To Administrative and Technical Staff

- j. Positive work environment
- k. Rewarding career
- l. Pride
- m. Career advancement

#### To Others

- n. Civic pride (community's pride in U of T Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering)
- o. Society: Contributing to knowledge of society
- p. Other Faculties: demonstrating high standards

## EXAMPLES OF “BEST PRACTICES”

Examples appear in no particular order, and are labeled (“A”, “B”, etc) merely for easy reference.

### **A. Assessing New Ideas against Overall Objectives**

As new ideas arise, we immediately assess them against our unit’s or project’s overall goals and objectives. The new idea must be supportive of our overall direction in order to move forward. This helps us place “ends before means” and reduces the risk of a new and intriguing idea allowing us to drift away from our priorities.

### **B. Effective Collaboration**

Once we adopt a new idea, we agree on the allocation of responsibilities among us, both those aspects each of us will do alone and those on which we will collaborate.

As the idea is executed, we maintain constant communication and collaboration via a variety of media such as MSN, facebook, texting, pinging, etc.

### **C. Lunchroom Networking**

We make deliberate use of our lunchroom for networking and informal information exchange.

### **D. Using On Line Web Tools**

We enhance productivity and reduce the probability of error by collaborating and managing calendar events through on-line web tools such as Google docs, Google calendars, Meeting Wizard, etc.

### **E. Using A Common Contact Management Software**

We use “single point of contact” software, in this case “Place Pro” that connects employers, administrators and students. Collaborating using a common database enhances timeliness (of information and action) and reduces the risk of error or omission.

### **F. Getting Control Over Email**

Instead of responding to every email message that comes in, we set aside certain parts of the day to do so. This creates larger blocks of uninterrupted time to concentrate on complex assignments.

Another possibility is to agree to code all emails (ie” subject line”):

- “411” – for information only
- “611” – help or information required
- “911” – emergency! <sup>1</sup>

Agree on practices to eliminate all unnecessary “cc’ing” of emails. <sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> This suggestion was contributed by the facilitator

<sup>2</sup> This suggestion was contributed by the facilitator

### **G. Formalized PDF Request Form**

To reduce the risk of service requests getting lost or not getting costed back to appropriate budgets, we created a “fillable” form in pdf format that gets exported (an automated process) into an Excel spreadsheet that is shared among those who require access to it.

### **H. Weekly 30-Minute Information Exchange**

The team meets weekly, limited to 30 minutes, to bring team members up-to-date on current projects and shared issues.

### **I. Internal Department Website**

We have an internal, central, website that contains photos and bios of all members, commonly used forms, frequently-used policies, practices, and templates, room bookings, POs, etc. This enhances efficiency for all staff and fast-tracks the learning and orientation of newcomers to our department.

### **J. A Common, Centralized Email Address for Students**

Students are instructed to make their enquiries by using an email address that is shared by those who are providing service. Thus, all those who are in a position to respond have access to all requests in one place.

### **K. Dedicated Workstations**

We assign a unique number to the workstations in our lab. At the beginning of the term, each student is assigned to a specific workstation. Given that students have a vested interest in the availability of their particular station, they tend to take care of them.

### **L. Weekly Capture and Exchange of “Lessons Learned”**

Each week, members of the machine shop meet to discuss “lessons learned” from the past week. This helps prevent repetition of mistakes and facilitates “continuous improvement”.

### **L. Meetings – Staying On Topic**

We have a bell at our meetings (similar to a hotel check-in bell). Whenever someone gets off topic, or begins “a side conversation”, anyone present may hit the bell. This reduced the length of our meetings by 75%.

### **M. Making Multiple Uses of Requested Information**

Multiple information requests were replaced with single requests that addressed many different information needs. For example, a single request of faculty members can be used to inform the range and weighting of research activity, annual activity reports, awards co-ordination, etc. This both enhances efficiency and has led to the winning of additional awards based on more extensive information about existing research activity.

## N. Converting “Errors” into “Continuous Improvement” and Enhanced Excellence <sup>3</sup>

When an error occurs, use the event as an entry point for continuous improvement by applying all three of Deming’s “Three Levels of Fix”:

- Level I: Acknowledge the error and apologize to those affected
- Level II: “Make it up to” those affected (ie: if they lost data, help them recover it)
- Level III: Redesign the process to address the cause of the error so no one will ever be affected by the same error in the future.

---

<sup>3</sup> This suggestion was contributed by the facilitator

## GAP ANALYSIS

### *“What is” vs. “What should be”*

#### Overview of Process

Participants identified the gap between “what is” (today’s situation) and “what should be” (their shared vision), the gap to be closed through the design and implementation of Strategies and Action Plans.

The following table tallies the reports of eighteen discussion groups, each with approximately 8 participants, shown as a percentage of the total number of groups.

GAP ANALYSIS					
VISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE	TODAY’S SITUATION				
	Always/ Virtually Always	Most of the Time	More often than Not	Less Often than Not	Seldom or Not at All
	A	B	C	D	E
A) Positive Work Environment	5%	73%	22%		
B) Quality Customer Service	5%	62%	33%		
C) Demonstrating High Values	5%	62%	33%		
D) Going Above and Beyond	10%	45%	45%		

#### An opportunity to expand the perspective

Administrative and technical units can develop a broader perspective on this gap analysis by using the detailed version of the shared Vision (see page 6) to survey the units’ constituents in a similar way.

# STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

## Overview of Process

Discussion groups were assigned pertinent themes from the Academic Planning Framework, being,

- A. Positioning – Defining our “Excellence”
- B. Culture of Excellence – Creating a Culture that supports our aspirations of Excellence
- C. Student Experience – Contributing to the successful development of future, global engineers
- D. Collaboration – Achieving excellence through collaboration
- E. Resource Allocation – Making optimal use of available resources for maximum impact.

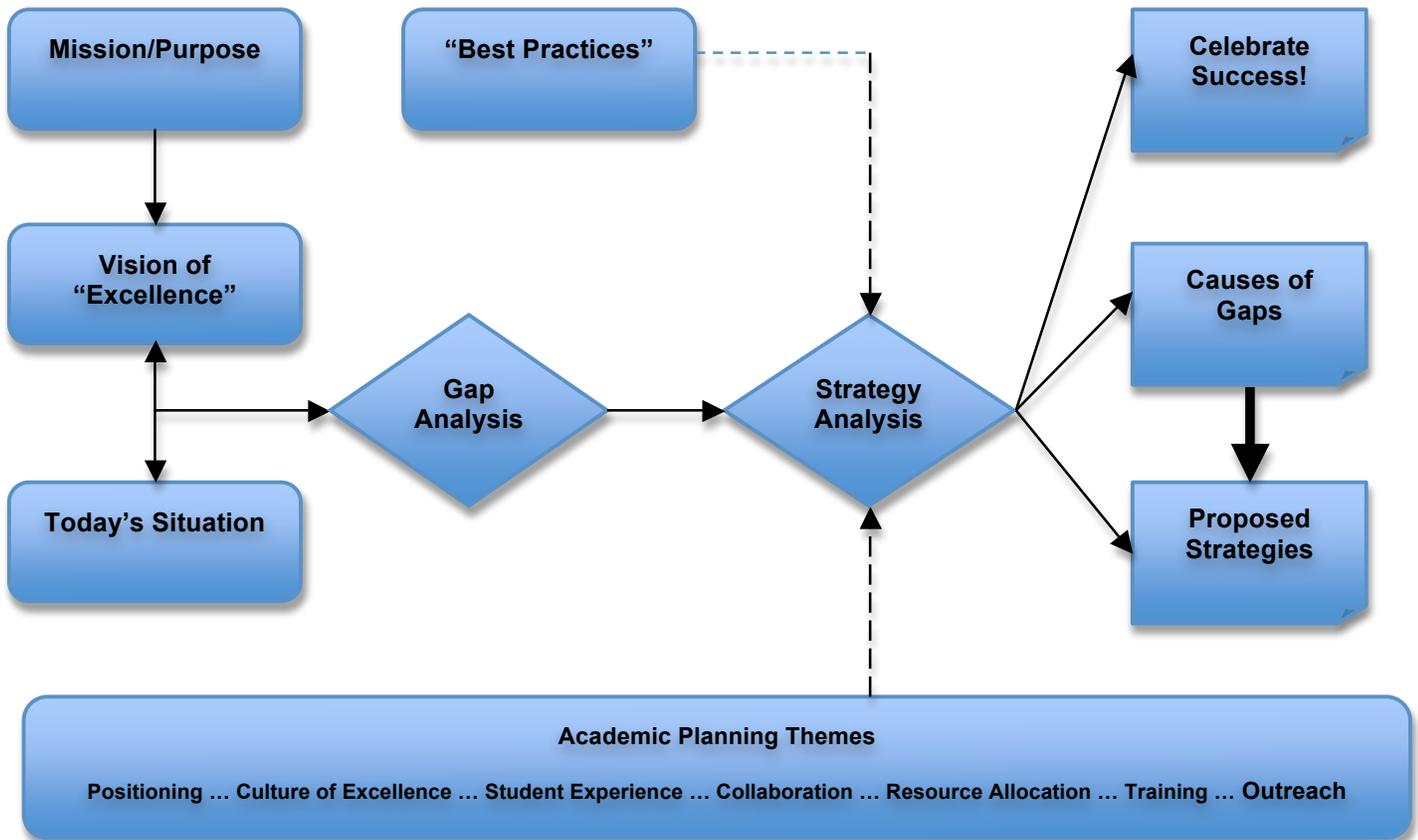
They added two topics to this list:

- F. Training
- G. Outreach (to alumni, industry).

For the topic assigned to them, they were asked to respond to the Gap Analysis in the previous section, and on their reflection on “best practices”, in three ways:

- Celebrate success
- Explain what causes the gap
- Propose Strategies to close the gap.

This logic path can be drawn as follows:



Results of Analysis

Topic	“Celebrate Success”	Possible “Causes of Gaps”
Positioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International rankings</li> <li>• High expectations</li> <li>• Open door policy</li> <li>• Technology kept up to date</li> <li>• Encouraging innovation</li> <li>• Staff awards program</li> <li>• Positive messaging</li> <li>• Effective branding</li> <li>• Ambitious targets</li> <li>• PEY expanding</li> <li>• Increased student standards and retention</li> <li>• Track One</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited resources (money, space, people)</li> <li>• Quality of space</li> <li>• Pessimistic view/attitude</li> <li>• Too focused on backlogs</li> <li>• Don't see the whole process; only the small part of the process that involves us</li> <li>• Lack of understanding of Faculty process</li> <li>• Heavy workloads</li> <li>• Lack of opportunity for planning, training or orientation</li> </ul>
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Celebrate our success” awards</li> <li>• ECE Community Connection: faculty informing others regarding their research</li> <li>• Efficient team work</li> <li>• New, streamlined, internal reservation booking system, linked to calendars for all to see</li> <li>• Internal website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disconnect between faculty and admin staff in terms of accomplishments</li> <li>• Faculty technology is further ahead</li> <li>• Different email addresses for faculty and administration</li> <li>• Located in 5 different buildings</li> <li>• State of tools, especially computers</li> </ul>
Student Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biweekly meetings with student groups ensure that their expectations are met</li> <li>• Machine shop emphasizes students first to ensure good experience</li> <li>• Ombudsman in one department</li> <li>• Students sit on department and faculty committees to ensure education needs are met</li> <li>• Continuously evaluating at staff meetings re: “lessons learned”</li> <li>• Programs offered, such as study groups, pre-admission courses, employment, etc.</li> <li>• We provide students with several options for getting in touch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate information sharing</li> <li>• Inadequate resource sharing (RMS)</li> <li>• Needs a hybrid of centralized and decentralized structure</li> <li>• Constraints on resources (people, time, etc)</li> <li>• Lack of technical equipment to ease processes</li> <li>• Some lack of understanding of students' needs</li> </ul>
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hosting a focused Faculty Day</li> <li>• Defining the Mission Statement of the organization</li> <li>• Developing institutional memory</li> <li>• Availability of central technical data</li> <li>• Supportive environment, helping each other during peak times</li> <li>• Monthly meetings/information exchanges</li> <li>• Allowing time and flexibility to celebrate success</li> <li>• Out-of-office meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited capability website</li> <li>• Language barriers</li> <li>• Heavy workloads</li> <li>• Some unclear roles/functions</li> <li>• Possessiveness of jobs</li> <li>• Stress levels</li> <li>• Interdepartmental differences</li> <li>• Delays in information transfer</li> <li>• Email overload</li> <li>• Some disinterest in working as a team</li> <li>• Lack of understanding of other roles, therefore not knowing where collaborations can be optimized</li> <li>• Highly specialized positions and roles</li> </ul>

Topic	“Celebrate Success”	Possible “Causes of Gaps”
Resource Allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New budget model, rewarding departmental enrollment</li> <li>• ECE linking faculty and staff through meetings</li> <li>• Managing space effectively in a constantly changing environment with constantly changing space</li> <li>• Finding ways to recognize staff through administrative awards with minimum cost</li> <li>• Collaboration/centralized purchasing sharing discount</li> <li>• Collaboration among researchers and departments through the new engineering “MINNS”</li> <li>• Faculty wide newsletter</li> <li>• Understanding the priorities of the Faculty</li> <li>• Transparent and functional methods for establishing priorities</li> <li>• Understanding the big picture, including what other programs/departments do</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Silos/empire building (eg: room bookings)</li> <li>• Duplication across departments-processes reinvented rather than shared</li> <li>• Supply and demand (students) shift focus from department to department from year to year</li> <li>• Decentralization</li> <li>• May not have resources to fulfill all priorities</li> <li>• Some difficulty navigating how/where to access some resources</li> <li>• Conflicting agendas</li> <li>• Communication breakdowns</li> </ul>
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External and in-house training offered multiple times a year</li> <li>• Human resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While offered multiple times, some training is not convenient relative to workload peaks</li> <li>• In an ever changing highly technological environment, courses are not always up to date</li> </ul>
Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our reputation as number 8 in the world</li> <li>• Our faculty has industry ties</li> <li>• Our annual report highlights our success to our external stakeholders</li> <li>• Faculty Advancement has identified key prospects/alumni for giving to the alumni</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media: rigid outdated perception of engineering</li> <li>• Size of our alumni group</li> <li>• Limited resources (eg: writers to make the case for support)</li> <li>• Industries suffering economically</li> <li>• Advancement (fund-raising) has not been a priority for all departments</li> <li>• Duplication of what the departments are doing vs Faculty</li> <li>• Out of date contact information for alumni</li> </ul>

Participants continued their analysis with Proposed Strategies in the tables that follow.

## Eighteen Proposed Administrative and Technical Strategies

Position of Excellence (includes Training)				Culture of Excellence	
Staff Recognition of Success	Improve Input	Further Training Opportunities	Optimize Processes	Define Problems and Metrics	Improve Training
Staff recognition: feedback, engagement and awards	Soliciting suggestions from staff	Formal orientation to faculty (big picture)	Manual/process on intranet	Prioritize and devote resources (time, money) to innovation	More Faculty Day
Building community relationships: "happy hour"	Inter-department, inter-disciplinary cooperation, collaboration, coordination and mentorship	Job shadow and/or secondments	Document processes	Celebrate leadership and innovation	More resources and t
Public recognition of success		More employee input, timing topic delivery eg. Mid-month vs. first and end of month		Aim for clearly defined and measurable problems	
Positive reinforcement		Ensure courses are relevant and up to date, especially important for high tech equipment and skills		Ensure diversity in the workplace	
Recognition and awards (micro level and macro level)		Centralized website: Interdisciplinary, feedback forum for courses			
Diversity of staff					

**Eighteen Proposed Administrative and Technical Strategies, *continued***

Student Experience				Collaboration		
Develop a Culture of Student Service	Use Technology More Effectively	Increase Communication & Collaboration	Obtain & Provide Feedback & Evaluation	Share Information	Facilitate Communication	Provide Networking Opportunities
Uniformity of procedures	Technology current (website) and user friendly	Spend more time with students face to face and in virtual environment	Obtain feedback using student friendly technology	Systems and procedures training	Short face-to-face subject area meetings to share information and needs	Host open houses between departments
Develop philosophy for serving students that recognizes service vs. education delivery	Integrate technology for easier access to information	Interdepartmental collaboration and communication	Continuous re-evaluation of processes and goals	Use information to enable strategic connections	Meeting often to establish current roles and projects	Charity team building events
Provide ongoing training to student services staff	Expand online process to reduce reliance on "counter" service	Better access to faculty members	Polling surveys and questionnaires for feedback		Create a faculty wide intranet creating interdepartmental collaboration	More workshops and professional days
		Audit current communications processes and refine, enhance and improve (quality vs. quantity)	Act on feedback from students			Encourage positive attitude toward collaboration and sharing

**Eighteen Proposed Administrative and Technical Strategies, *continued***

Resource Allocation			Outreach
Resource Mining	Resource Integration	Resource Sharing	
Meetings: what did we learn?	Integration of data systems	Faculty wide web portal for resources and tools	Comprehensive alumni database
Ways of getting input from different areas (what works and what doesn't work)	Inter-departmental linkages across functions	One stop shop to access resources (centralized web)	Improved access to information: faculty website, department websites
Look outside our own faculty for best practices/ networking- within UofT and outside; increase collaboration and communication among departments	Share resources and expertise among departments	Improve communication between and within departments (know who does what)	Celebrating our successes through stories of success: Story library
More faculty days like this	Let go of old processes when new ones are adopted		New open house events: Public, media, alumni
Formal networking opportunities	More cross disciplinary hiring		Internal directory for industry contacts

**Proposed Strategies: Significance and Insights**

Participants reviewed the panel of Eighteen Proposed Strategies and identified the following examples of significance and insights.

- a. All proposed strategies are very relevant to achieving our objective of Excellence
- b. As we anticipated, there is significant crossover – strategies that span across several gaps, over many work units, etc.
- c. The need to improve communication is fairly pervasive ...
- d. ... as is the need to improve training
- e. There are important opportunities for single solutions to multiple problems or objectives
- f. Opportunities for Leverage: many of our objectives can be met by us working in a more collaborative, integrated way (versus “as silos”)
- g. With the ever-expanding size of U of T, it is easy to work within our own areas and forget to collaborate across the Faculty and with others; these Strategies cry for more effort to be aware of what other units do and to seek ways to enhance effectiveness through enhanced collaboration
- h. Perhaps we should institute a “Frosh Friday” for staff where everyone brings a lunch and professors present the types of research they are engaged in to help us think about ways we can contribute to research success
- i. In the midst of rapid change, the evolution and improvement of our processes need to be managed (in an intentional way) continuously
- j. Some of the process improvements implied in these Strategies, and described as “best practices (previous section), require an investment in management tools, especially software
- k. We see some challenges in implementation
- l. We should have exercises like this more often.

## ACTION PLANNING PROCESS

### Overview

Action planning, to transform these Proposed Strategies into action and results, will take place at two levels:

- Within work units, and
- Cross-Faculty.

The results will be separate from and beyond the scope of this report.

Participants have been provided with:

- A format they can apply (see next two pages) and
- A model of Four levels of Planning, which appears as Appendix B.

Regarding Appendix B, Action Planning should aim to achieve Level Four of the four levels of planning.

## Proposed Action Planning Worksheet

<b>Unit:</b>	
<b>Reporter:</b>	<b>Reporter's Contact Info:</b>

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Strategy Name</b>
<b>Gaps To Close</b>	<b>Describe affected Gaps (Vision vs. Situation Today)</b>

**Suggestions:**

In MOST cases, it is most effective to develop an Action Plan dedicated to ONE Strategy.

In SOME cases, one Action Plan effectively addresses MORE than one Strategy.



List one or more Strategies that this Action Plan is to address

In MANY cases, one Strategy can help close MORE than ONE "Gap".



List one or more GAPS that this STRATEGY will help to close.

**Continued on next page**

**Proposed Action Planning Worksheet, *continued*****Action and Implementation**

Step	What (Aim for the 4 <sup>th</sup> Level of Planning)	By Whom <sup>4</sup>	By When
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

**Describe the Successful “Outcome”!** (ie: Measurable or Observable achievement of “Excellence”)

---

<sup>4</sup> Also mention (in brackets) “with whom” – ie: potential for effective collaboration + avoid duplication

## REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

### Reflections

Participants reflected on this event and offered the following surprises, important learnings and enduring messages from today's event.

#### Surprises Today

- The intensity of the day's agenda
- How many new people we met today – yet we share common issues and concerns
- Even those of us who do and do not work a lot with students nonetheless share the same issues and concerns
- We learned a lot about work that others here do that we weren't well aware of
- The positive energy in this room here today
- The extent of engagement in this room here today
- How much all of us here really care!
- Our differences across our departments
- The similarities among departments and units – we face similar issues and obstacles
- The fact that “we are not alone” – that others too (both our colleagues and faculty) work in silos and want to collaborate more
- The extent of consensus and agreement we reached here today

#### Important Learnings Today

- Bottom lines are important – money talks – that's how to get results
- We learned where our strengths are – which we wouldn't have been able to do as effectively without being here and collaborating like this here today
- The facilitator's techniques and tips for conducting effective meetings, especially the 30 second rule
- The facilitator's techniques for distilling many varied ideas into a manageable number of specific concepts
- The facilitator's suggested “Three Levels of Fix” and email “411/611/911”
- That in order to define or improve a process or a plan, one needs to know “where we are” and “where you want to go” such as by conducting “a gap analysis”
- We emerge with a sense of an overall process for managing change
- The importance of information sharing across units and departments
- We need to collaborate more

#### Enduring Messages Emerging from Today

- We need to “go above and beyond”
- Collaboration within, and especially beyond, units is integral to achieving Excellence
- Communication is key to many improvements
- This type of cross-unit collaboration is helpful
- It is good to see everyone together – it is important to collaborate; seeing everyone here together today reinforces that
- We should try to have more events like this
- The voice of administrative and technical staff is strong and valuable
- Our opinion matters!
- Our voice contributes, not merely to the achievement of Administrative and Technical excellence, but also to overall Academic Planning and the achievement of our Faculty's Mission
- What we contributed today will be used in a constructive manner

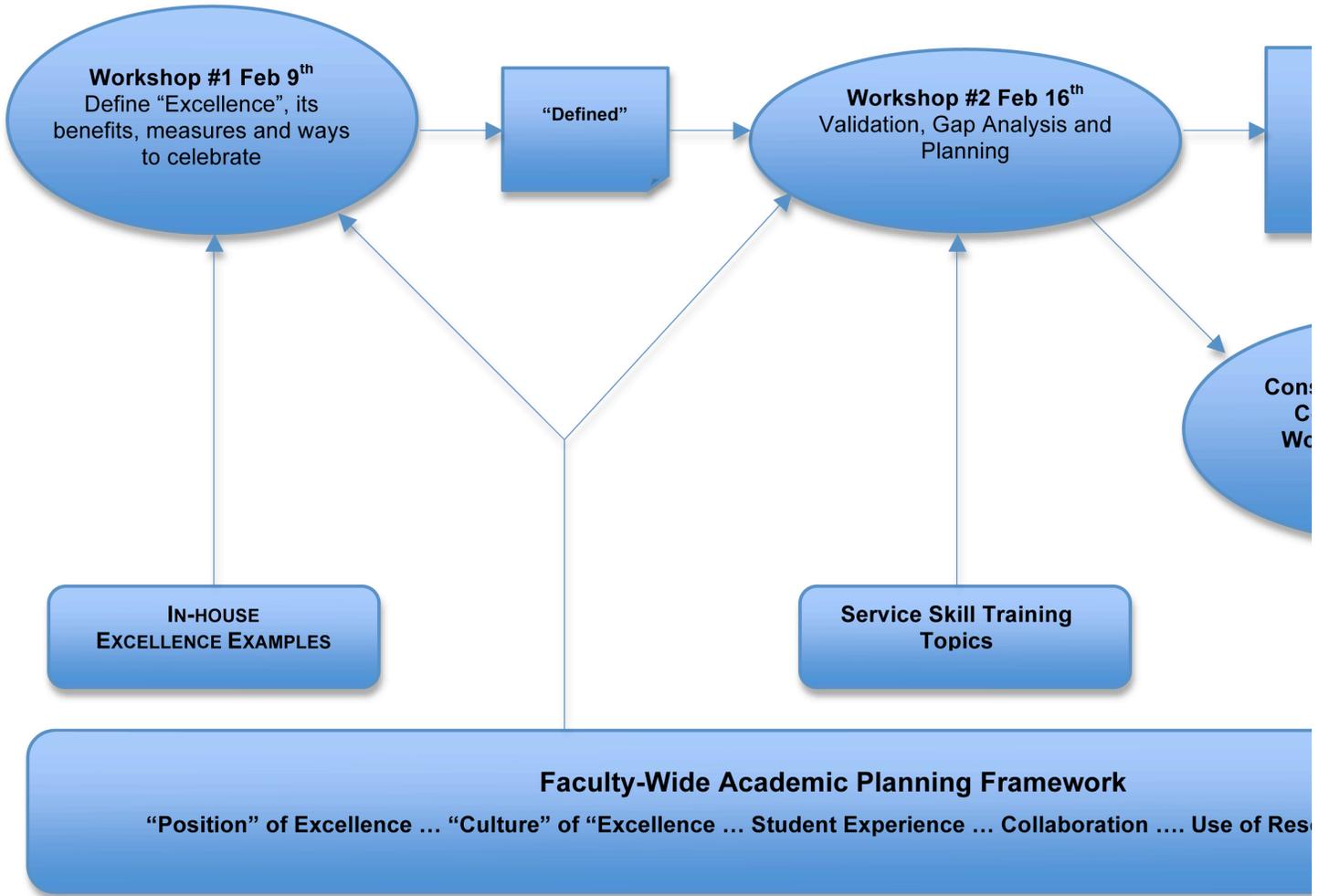
- In some cases, the issues facing technical staff are more similar to faculty than to administration
- Despite our strengths, we can always improve
- We all want the same things
- Everything we want to accomplish is possible if we collaborate and listen to one another.

### **Next Steps**

Following this February 16<sup>th</sup> 2010 Administrative and Technical Faculty Day there are three subsequent steps:

1. Encouragement of unit planning, including inter-unit collaboration, in response to the gaps and strategies outlined in this report
2. Cross-Faculty Administrative and Technical planning, and
3. Contribution of the insights and conclusions from this planning process to the Faculty's 2010 Academic Planning.

# OVERVIEW OF PROCESS



## FOUR LEVELS OF PLANNING

### Level One

A "Plan" =  
An **Objective**

**Examples:**

*"Our plan is to improve service"*

*"Our plan is to be more collaborative"*

*"Our plan is to enhance the student experience"*

*"Our plan is to innovate more"*

### Level Two

A "Plan" =  
A **Process**  
To Meet The  
**Objective**

**Examples:**

*"Our plan is to conduct a needs analysis to determine how to improve service and then to make those changes necessary to fulfill our service goals".*

*"Our plan is to establish a task force to identify, recommend and implement actions necessary to improve collaboration".*

### Level Three

A "Plan" =  
A **Decision**  
That Meets The  
**Objective**

**Examples:**

*"To improve service, we will change the way we do X from the Y approach to the Z approach"*

*"To enhance collaboration, we will compare our service goals with our counterparts in Faculty X and find ways to streamline and deliver our similar services together".*

### Level Four

A "Plan" =  
**Actions to**  
**Implement**  
**The Decision**

**Example:**

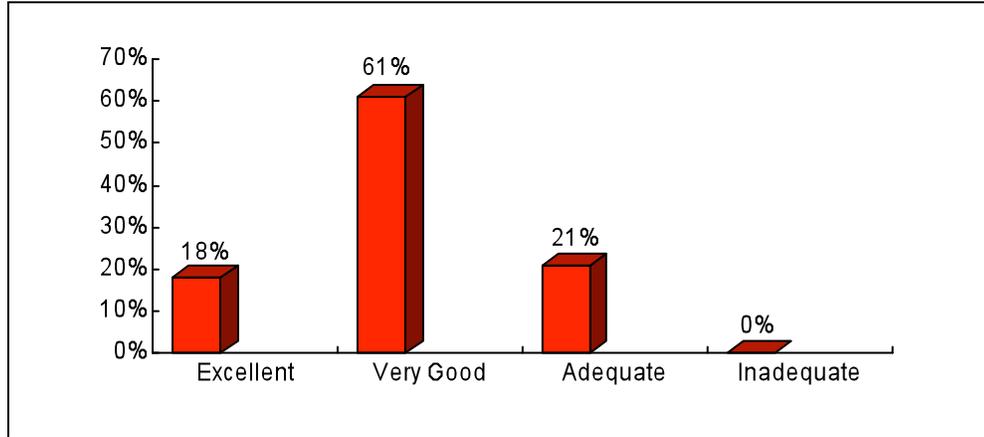
*"In order to make the changeover from the old service approach to the new approach, the following people will do X using Y resources and be finished by the Z target date."*

(Note: "Actions" usually include tasks, target dates, assignment of responsibility, resources, desired products, reporting responsibilities, etc.)

## SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP EVALUTIONS

### 1. Meeting the objectives of the workshop

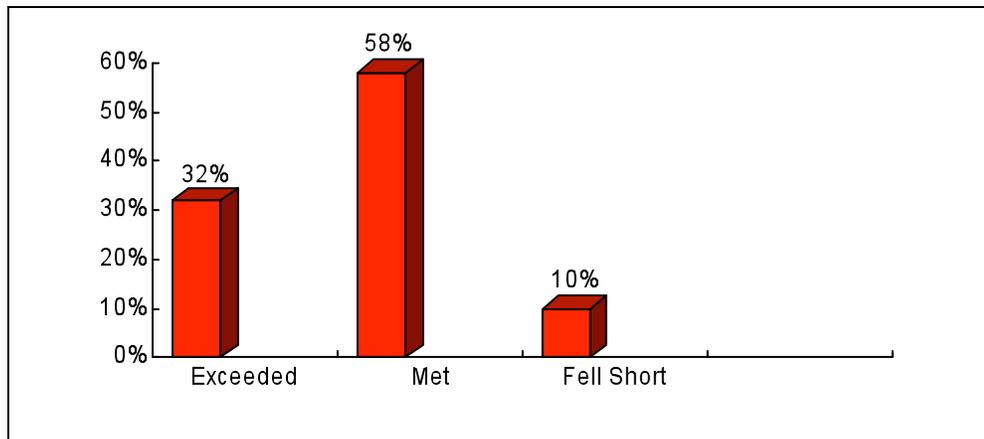
Several objectives for this workshop were identified at the outset. Please indicate how well you believe they were met. How was the workshop in meeting the objectives?



**79% said "Excellent" or "Very Good". 18% said "Excellent".**

### 2. Meeting your expectations

Based on your answer to #1, how did this workshop compare to your expectations?



**90% said met or exceeded expectations. 32% said "Exceeded"**

3. **What contributed to the success of this workshop?** (check marks “√” indicate frequency of comment)

- Organized facilitator, clarity of instructions √√√√√√√√√√√√
- Excellent facilitation, leadership, pace, and focus to keep us on track √√√√√√√√
- Facilitator's energy √√√
- Facilitators tips, resources and logic path √√√√√
- Variety of facilitated activities √√
- High turnout, diversity and broad representation √√√√√
- Opportunity to exchange both common and diverse views and ideas and learn about other units √√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√
- High energy and engagement of participants √√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√
- Participants' candour, honesty and willingness to share √√√√
- Collaboration and teamwork √√√√√
- Mixing the participants √√√√√
- Clear table assignments √√√
- Leadership roles and discussion guidelines √
- Facilitated work completed with small group before hand √√√
- Recognition of group who organized work before hand √
- Interactive discussion √√
- Participants' attitudes √
- Surprisingly good buy in among us √√
- Positive, non threatening attitude √√√
- Networking √√√
- Clarity brought about by gap analysis - we have lots of room to close gaps √
- We all learned something √√
- Allocating homogeneous versus heterogeneous groups, depending on the topic √
- Some exercises were somewhat challenging and complex, but I like that they were not “trivial” - do not want to “dumb down” the exercises √
- The opportunity to contribute directly to strategic planning √
- The hotel story - fun and instructive √√√

4. **What would have made this workshop more successful?**

- The day was lengthy and somewhat complex; many were tired by the time we got into the afternoon agenda; consider splitting between two half days √√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√√
- There should have been more time working as a unit √√√
- There should have been less time working as a unit - that part should have been a take away √
- Distribute more background information before the meeting √√√√√
- More opportunity for fun; less structure √√√√√
- Longer breaks for networking √
- Clearer instructions √
- More brainstorming √
- More specific topics √
- More real world examples √
- More mix of administrative and technical staff √

- More separation of administrative and technical staff ✓
- Prefer topics like past Faculty Days - health and wellness - we work hard ✓
- More specific breakout groups for targeted areas ✓
- Less mixing of groups ✓
- More collaboration ✓
- More specific objectives; the last exercise was “a big step” from the previous exercises ✓
- It was difficult to relate issues in our unit compared to issues in other units ✓
- More opportunity to acquire new knowledge ✓
- More moving around to try hands on tools ✓
- More focused discussions of the student experience ✓
- The topics were subjective ✓
- Following the handouts more strictly ✓
- Smaller, more unit-specific groups ✓✓✓
- Make it more all encompassing, better recognizing alumni and friends as a strategic group ✓
- Add a question, “Describe the nature of the gap” ✓
- Handout # 10 should be clearer ✓
- More referenced definitions ✓
- More presentations ✓
- More groups doing similar work; business officers; space managers; undergraduate and graduate assistants and counselors ✓
- More air, windows ✓✓
- Success of the day depends on follow up and implementation ✓✓
- The hotel story - inappropriate ✓✓✓

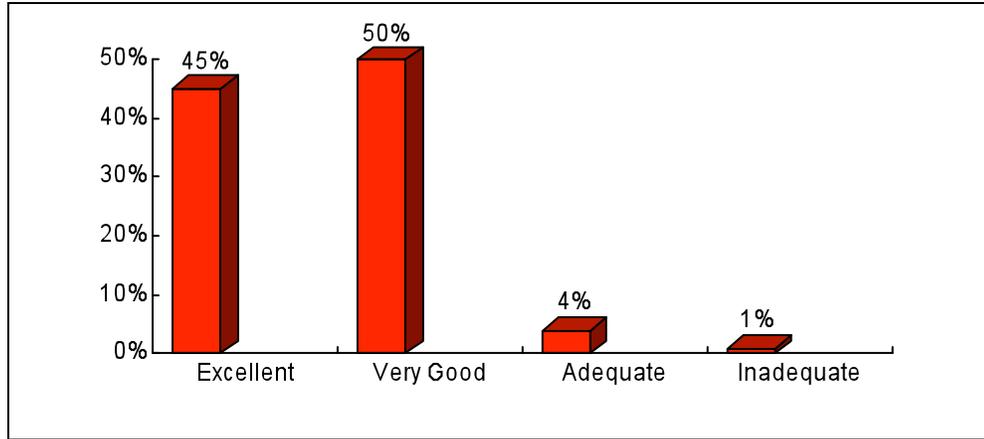
#### **Stated reasons for rating workshop “fell short of expectations”<sup>5</sup>**

- The hotel story - inappropriate ✓
- The day was lengthy and somewhat complex; many were tired by the time we got into the afternoon agenda; consider splitting between two half days ✓✓
- It was difficult to relate issues in our unit compared to issues in other units ✓
- More specific objectives; the last exercise was “a big step” from the previous exercises ✓
- More opportunity to acquire new knowledge ✓
- More opportunity for fun; less structure ✓
- Distribute more background information before the meeting ✓

<sup>5</sup> These are not new comments; that are comments from above that caused a participants to say that the event “fell short” of their expectations.

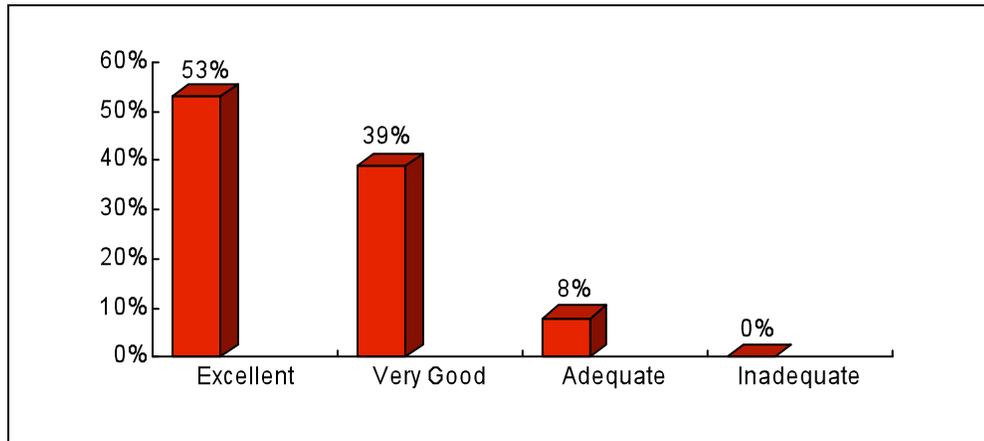
**5. Venue**

How was the facility in contributing to our success?



**95% said "Excellent" or "Very Good". 45% said "Excellent".**

How was the food?



**92% said "Excellent" or "Very Good". 53% said "Excellent".**