



Effectiveness of the 2004-2008 Strategic Plan

An Evaluation Plan

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This Evaluation Plan seeks to provide the context, objectives, criteria, methodology and timelines for an evaluation of the effectiveness of Champlain Regional College's 2004-2008 Strategic Plan. It represents the initial framework upon which the evaluation will be conducted. Aspects of the framework may be subject to change in light of emerging issues as the data analysis unfolds.

The evaluation will be conducted during the 2008-2009 academic year, with a preliminary draft report completed in time for consideration in the finalization of the next multi-year strategic plan. A final evaluation report and action plan will be produced in Fall 2009.

1.1 Evaluation Team

This evaluation shall be conducted by the Coordinator of Strategic Planning (Brian Denison) and the Planning and Evaluation Analyst (Josée Bouchard) of Champlain Regional College.

1.2 General Context of the Evaluation

1.2.1 The Champlain Context

Champlain Regional College's current strategic plan was created as a result of modifications made to the General and Vocational Colleges Act (C-29) in December 2002. These modifications required all colleges in Quebec to develop strategic plans no later than July 1, 2004. For each college, the strategic plan was to

- cover a period of several years
- take into account the situation prevailing at the particular college
- take into account the strategic plan established by the *Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport* (MELS)
- clearly state the objectives to be pursued and the measures to be implemented in fulfilment of the college's mission, and

- incorporate a student success plan intended to improve student success at the college.

Champlain's strategic plan was originally designed to cover a three-year period from 2004 to 2007, but was subsequently extended to include the 2007-2008 academic year.

We are now in the final year of the current strategic plan and a new multi-year strategic plan will be developed over the course of the 2008-2009 academic year. Given the importance that strategic planning has for shaping Champlain's future, sound planning practice requires that this new plan be informed by our experiences with the current plan. An evaluation of the effectiveness of the current strategic plan is therefore necessary.

1.2.2 The Provincial Context

In January 2008, the *Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial* (CEEC) announced a province-wide follow-up to their 2005 initial evaluation of college strategic plans. The guidelines document accompanying this announcement¹ indicated that all colleges would be required to conduct a self-evaluation of the effectiveness of their strategic plans. It further stipulated that

Each College should assess the effectiveness of its particular strategic plan by comparing the results obtained with its initial objectives. Colleges should take a close critical look at their plans and the results achieved, taking into account both the context in which the plans were developed (from the initial analysis to the selection of performance indicators) and their actual implementation. These assessments should also enable each Cegep to analyze the extent to which indicators selected as tools for evaluating progress toward objectives were appropriate to needs. In some cases, the assessment should also allow them to determine the effectiveness of the means chosen to achieve those objectives. (p. 9)

...

For this operation, Cegeps should assess their results in relation to their specified objectives and, at the same time, carry out a critical analysis of their particular plans and their development, implementation, updating and monitoring. This process will give each College, as preparation for the development of its subsequent strategic plan, the opportunity to review its own particular situation, identify what it was able to accomplish and assess how it monitored the use of the strategic tools it selected to implement the plan. (p. 11)

1.3 Purpose and Objectives of the Evaluation

1.3.1 Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation is two-fold. First, and foremost, the evaluation is being conducted to meet the College's own planning and development needs. Second, the evaluation is being conducted in order to comply with the requirements of the CEEC's province-wide evaluation of the effectiveness of strategic plans in the college network.

¹ *Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial* (December 2007). Evaluating the effectiveness of strategic plans in the Cegeps—Guidelines. Québec: Author. (http://www.ceec.gouv.qc.ca/publications/ORIENTATION-DOC/EffecacitePS_anglais.pdf)

1.3.2 Objectives

This evaluation will seek to meet the following objectives:

1. To assess what we actually accomplished (and what remains outstanding) in order to finally wrap up the 2004-2008 plan;
2. To identify what aspects of our initial engagement in strategic planning worked and what did not;
3. To facilitate improvements to the process of developing the next plan based on our experiences with the first plan;
4. To facilitate the production of a second strategic plan that is more effective than the first;
5. To facilitate improvements in the College's ability to successfully implement a strategic plan;
6. To meet the expectations of the CEEC-mandated evaluation of the effectiveness of our strategic plan.

2.1 Primary Considerations in the Establishment of Evaluation Criteria

As mentioned above, the purpose of this evaluation study is two-fold. Consequently, we needed to develop a comprehensive set of criteria that would enable us to satisfy both purposes.

The CEEC's 2005 evaluation of our strategic plan focused on its compliance with the Colleges Act and its potential effectiveness. In contrast, this evaluation is focused on the actual effectiveness of both the plan itself and the College's strategic planning efforts.

In order to identify potential criteria that would meet the needs of the College, we consulted a range of references on strategic planning and particularly strategic planning in non-profit and higher education organisations. For example:

- Allison, M., & Kaye, J. (2005). *Strategic planning for nonprofit organizations: A practical guide and workbook* (2nd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Bryson, J. M. (2004). *Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organizations: A guide to strengthening and sustaining organizational achievement* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Dooris, M. J., Kelley, J. M., & Trainer, J. F. (Eds.). (2004). *Successful strategic planning*. New Directions for Institutional Research, no. 123. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Olsen, E. (2007). *Strategic planning for dummies*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Rowley, D. J., Lujan, H. D., & Dolence, M. G. (1997). *Strategic change in colleges and universities: Planning to survive and prosper*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Rowley, D. J., & Sherman, H. (2001). *From strategy to change: Implementing the plan in higher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Ruben, B. D. (Ed.). (2004). *Pursuing excellence in higher education: Eight fundamental challenges*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Sevier, R. A. (2000). *Strategic planning in higher education: Theory and practice*. Washington, DC: Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

- Tromp, S. A., & Ruben, B. D. (2004). *Strategic planning in higher education: A guide for leaders*. Washington, DC: National Association of College and University Business Officers.

These references were supplemented by a review of both the CEEC Guidelines² and Analytic Framework³ for the current project, as well as the CEEC's initial evaluation of Champlain's strategic plan⁴ and the synthesis report, *Les plans stratégiques des cégeps: Un premier bilan d'évaluation*⁵.

2.2 General Criteria and Considerations

Based on our review of the strategic planning literature and CEEC documents, we have identified the following five criteria to be used in this evaluation exercise:

- Assessment
- Alignment
- Involvement
- Communication
- Management

We believe these five criteria will accommodate both the College's needs and the CEEC's expectations.

It is important to note that these criteria are not mutually exclusive: depending on the context, these criteria may sometimes overlap or may influence each other. Examples of the kinds of considerations associated with each of these criteria are presented below, organized in terms of three general phases of strategic planning identified both in the literature and in the CEEC documentation. Not all criteria are equally relevant for each of the phases (i.e., there may be more considerations pertaining to a criterion in one phase and fewer in another).

2.2.1 Illustrative Considerations in the Development Phase

ASSESSMENT

- Thoroughness of the College's analysis of its current context, desired future, and emerging trends in the external environment (situational analysis)
- Goals and actions formulated in a way that their results could be measured

ALIGNMENT

- Identification of the strategic issues grounded in the situational analysis

2. http://www.ceec.gouv.qc.ca/publications/ORIENTATION-DOC/EfficacitePR_anglais.pdf

3. <http://www.ceec.gouv.qc.ca> (forthcoming)

4. <http://www.ceec.gouv.qc.ca/publications/PlanStrategique/Champlain.pdf>

5. http://www.ceec.gouv.qc.ca/publications/Autres_documents/PlansStrategiquesDesCegeps.pdf

- Goal development grounded in the results of the situational analysis

INVOLVEMENT

- The College community was involved in a meaningful way in the development of the strategic plan
- Persons who would have to actually carry out the actions were consulted in the formulation of goals and actions

COMMUNICATION

- Persons identified as being involved in the implementation of actions were aware in advance, of their involvement
- A clear public version of the final plan was made available

MANAGEMENT

- Responsibilities concerning the strategic plan are clearly defined
- A clear and realistic calendar for the implementation of actions was developed

2.2.2 Illustrative Considerations in the Implementation Phase

ASSESSMENT

- Key performance indicators permitted the assessment of progress toward goal achievement
- Data relevant to monitoring progress and effectiveness were gathered

ALIGNMENT

- Implementation of planned actions was conducive to the achievement of goals
- Planned actions were generally implemented as scheduled

INVOLVEMENT

- Members of the College community felt engaged in the implementation of the strategic plan
- Persons with identified responsibilities or involvement in the implementation of actions felt committed to the strategic plan

COMMUNICATION

- Students, faculty, and staff understood the College's student success plan (note: the Colleges Act, Article 16.2, requires that a document explaining the success plan be distributed to students and staff)
- Members of the College community were kept informed about the implementation of the strategic plan and progress in achievement of goals

MANAGEMENT

- Persons responsible for the carrying out of actions fulfilled their responsibilities
- The necessary resources were allocated to the implementation of actions

2.2.3 Illustrative Considerations in the Updating and Revision Phase

ASSESSMENT

- Mechanisms were in place for monitoring and evaluating the achievement of specific goals and actions
- The strategic plan was reviewed on an annual basis (Colleges Act, Art. 16.1)

ALIGNMENT

- The strategic plan was revised, as needed, in light of changing circumstances and/or experience
- The implementation schedule for the strategic plan was revised, as needed, in light of changing circumstances

INVOLVEMENT

- Persons identified as being involved with the implementation of actions were consulted on needed modifications and revisions to the plan.

COMMUNICATION

- Members of the College community were kept informed about modifications to the strategic plan

MANAGEMENT

- The parties concerned with the updating and revision of the strategic plan fulfilled their responsibilities

2.3 Global Judgements of Effectiveness

Based on the evaluation analysis and the results for the above criteria, a series of global judgements need to be made about the overall effectiveness of the strategic plan and our strategic planning efforts.

- The development process used by the College contributed significantly to the effectiveness of the strategic plan
- The implementation process(es) used by the College contributed significantly to the effectiveness of the strategic plan
- The monitoring mechanisms used by the College contributed significantly to the effectiveness of the strategic plan
- The review and revision mechanisms/procedures used by the College contributed significantly to the effectiveness of the strategic plan
- The goals set forth in the strategic plan were achieved
- The College understands the reasons why goals were not achieved (as the case may be)
- The means (actions) chosen for achieving the objectives (goals) of the strategic plan were effective

- The College is aware of the unplanned-for results of the strategic plan
- The student success plan facilitated and enhanced academic/course success
- The student success plan facilitated and enhanced student persistence
- The student success plan facilitated and enhanced student graduation
- The strategic plan was effective in addressing outstanding recommendations from the Institutional Self-evaluation (ISE).
- Communication regarding the development, implementation, and updating and revision of the plan was effective.
- The parties concerned fulfilled their responsibilities
- Members of the College's management team have the skills and knowledge necessary to engage in effective strategic planning
- The student success plan was effective.
- The strategic plan was effective.

3.1 Participants

Participants in the evaluation will include different members of the College community who were touched by and/or involved in strategic planning and the implementation of the strategic plan. Focusing primarily on the three campuses and the Administrative Offices, these participants will include

- Management personnel
- Faculty
- Non-teaching personnel
- Students
- Groups (Commission of Studies, Executive Committee, Board of Governors)

3.2 Data Sources and Instruments

Where possible and feasible, multiple data sources will be used in order to triangulate the collection of relevant information.

3.2.1 Documents

At each College location, the existing documents and data pertaining to the initial development of the Strategic Plan, its implementation, and updating will be gathered. Among are documents such as:

- Strategic Plan (several versions)
- Strategic Action Plan (several versions)
- Annual Reports on the Strategic Action Plan
- DGAC Fall 2007 Review of Planning Priorities
- Situational Analysis documents
- Local annual or evaluation reports concerning student success initiatives

These documents can be supplemented by additional information contained in the College's planning database.

3.2.2 Instruments

The experience and knowledge of various people about the College's strategic planning efforts will also be documented and captured via surveys. These surveys will be validated prior to their administration. It is anticipated that these surveys will be Web-based, using the services of Survey Methods⁶. An externally-hosted Web-based administration was deemed to be the optimal means for dealing with such issues as:

- maintaining integrity of data
- maximizing ease of access to the survey (in light of four different campus and College websites, each with different structures and using different software)
- minimizing printing and mailing costs
- maximizing reliability and accuracy during data entry
- facilitating transfer of data to analysis software

3.2.3 Student Success Data

Data concerning student success outcomes (academic success, persistence, and graduation) will be obtained from two College databases: Gestion Pédagogique and STAR.

3.3 Analyses

A combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches will be used to analyse the data. Analysis of qualitative data from surveys and textual data from documents will be facilitated by the NVivo⁷ software application; analysis of quantitative data concerning student success as well as any quantitative data obtained from surveys will be facilitated by the SPSS⁸ statistical package.

3.4 Timelines

Several important considerations guided the development of the timelines for this evaluation study. These include the following:

- the need to keep DGAC informed about progress
- the need to provide a draft report early enough that it could be used to inform the finalization of the new strategic plan
- sufficient time for DGAC to formulate an action plan that responds to the report's recommendations

6. <http://www.surveymethods.com/index.aspx>

7. http://www.qsrinternational.com/products_nvivo.aspx

8. <http://spss.com/spss/index.htm>

- allow sufficient time for College-wide consultation on the report and accompanying action plan
- allow sufficient time to prepare the documents necessary for submission to the CEEC

Step	Evaluation Phase	Notes	Deadline
1	Preparation of Evaluation Plan		11-May-2008
2	Submission of Evaluation Plan to DGAC		12-May-2008
3	Finalization of Evaluation Plan	Incorporating any necessary revisions arising from review by DGAC.	20-May-2008
4	Consultation on the Evaluation Plan	This consultation is intended to seek feedback on the documents, not their approval by any particular group or groups. A PDF version of the Evaluation Plan will be made available on the main CRC website, with links from each of the campus websites and CRC Web Services. Members of the College community will be invited to communicate their feedback to either their representatives (Commission of Studies, Board of Governors) or directly by email to a member of the evaluation team.	13-Jun-2008
5	Presentation of Evaluation Plan to Commission of Studies	Document needs to be mailed out one week in advance (i.e., 21-May-2008).	28-May-2008
6	Presentation of Evaluation Plan to Executive Committee	Document needs to be mailed out one week in advance (i.e., 4-Jun-2008).	11-Jun-2008
7	Presentation of Evaluation Plan to Board of Governors	Document needs to be mailed out one week in advance (i.e., 13-Jun-2008).	20-Jun-2008
8	Specification of evaluation questions and indicators + development of Questionnaires	Can be started prior to final approval of Evaluation Plan by the Board, and overlaps with the commencement of data collection. This includes identifying exactly what kinds of questions need to be asked of what participants, specification of SQL queries, and determination of most appropriate statistical analysis methods.	19-Sep-2008
9	Data Collection		14-Nov-2008
10	Data Analysis	Can be started prior to the completion of data collection, particularly in relation to existing documents and reports.	13-Feb-2009
11	Draft Report 1		27-Mar-2009
12	Draft Action Plan (possible actions)	This will be essentially a set of suggested actions for DGAC to consider	3-Apr-2009
13	Submission of Draft Report + Draft Action Plan to DGAC		10-Apr-2009
14	Cross-referencing with New Strategic Plan by DGAC	The objective is to inform finalization of the new Strategic Plan based on evaluation findings and recommendations.	12-Jun-2009
15	Development of Action Plan by DGAC	Likely to continue through to at least the end of May 2009 while the new Strategic Plan is being finalized.	12-Jun-2009
16	Draft Report 2 + Preparation of Action Plan Document	Incorporating any necessary revisions arising from the DGAC cross-referencing with the new Strategic Plan.	11-Sep-2009
17	Review of Draft Report 2 + Draft Action Plan by DGAC		18-Sep-2009

Step	Evaluation Phase	Notes	Deadline
18	Consultation (College-wide) on the Draft Report + Action Plan	This consultation is intended to seek feedback on the documents, not their approval by any particular group or groups. Will need to allow approximately one month in F2009 (e.g., October 2009). Consultation methods would/could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDF on CRC website (with commenting feature enabled) • consultation space on Confluence wiki (with anonymous access enabled + page comments) • HTML pages on CRC website • paper copy available for review in designated campus offices (e.g., Campus Director, Dean, Pedagogical Counsellor) • open forum or Q&A session on campuses • focus group sessions on campuses 	23-Oct-2009
19	Preparation of Final Evaluation Report	Incorporating any necessary revisions arising from the College-wide consultations.	06-Nov-2009
20	Preparation of Final Action Plan by DGAC	Incorporating any necessary revisions arising from the College-wide consultations.	06-Nov-2009
21	Final document draft assembly		11-Nov-2009
22	Review of Evaluation Report and Action Plan by DGAC		16-Nov-2009
23	Final document printing and assembly		18-Nov-2009
24	Presentation of Evaluation Report and Action Plan to Commission of Studies	Documents will need to be mailed out 2 weeks in advance (i.e., by 18-Nov-2009).	02-Dec-2009
25	Presentation of Evaluation Report and Action Plan to Executive Committee	Documents will need to be mailed out 2 weeks in advance (i.e., by 18-Nov-2009).	02-Dec-2009
26	Presentation of Evaluation Report and Action Plan to Board of Governors	Documents should be mailed out 2 weeks in advance (i.e., by 4-Dec-2009).	18-Dec-2009
27	Submission of Evaluation Report and Action Plan to CEEC	Allows sufficient time for any necessary revisions following Board meeting and production of final documents and submission package.	19-Mar-2010

NOTE: Dates involving meets of DGAC, Commission of Studies, Executive Committee, and Board of Governors are tentative at this point. They are based on an extrapolation of meeting dates during recent years.

4.1 Two Different Audiences

It is important to bear in mind that there are two different audiences for the results of this evaluation, each with different priorities and information needs. The primary audience is the College community, particularly the members of DGAC, the Pedagogical Group, the Commission of Studies, and the Board of Governors because of their direct involvement in the development and adoption of the next Strategic Plan (including the Student Success Plan). For the College, emphasis is likely to be on such issues as what did we achieve, what worked, what did not work so well, and what can we do to improve our ongoing strategic planning efforts.

In contrast, the CEEC is likely to be more concerned that we have indeed engaged in a critical self-evaluation of our strategic planning efforts, that the evaluation was thorough and methodologically sound, that we have learned from our successes and failures, and that we have committed to a clear plan of action for making improvements in our implementation of strategic planning.

4.2 Anticipated Structure of the Report to the College Community

The most appropriate report structure will only begin to crystallize as analysis progresses and results begin to emerge. However, it is anticipated that the report will likely be organized in a manner such as the following:

1. Introduction
2. Methods
3. Results and Interpretation—Success Plan
4. Results and Interpretation—Non-success Portion of the Plan
5. Discussion and Recommendations
6. Action Plan (could also be produced as a separate document)

4.3 Action Plan

The Analytic Framework of the CEEC stipulates that the College must produce an action plan describing the measures it intends to take, in response to the evaluation, in order to improve the effectiveness of its strategic planning. This action plan must include clear information about the assignment of responsibilities for the various actions and the schedule for their implementation. It needs to be submitted to the CEEC at the same time as the evaluation report.

Given the scope and importance of this action plan, its drafting is beyond the mandate of the evaluation team and will be prepared by the Director General's Advisory Committee (DGAC).