

# Strategic Planning

## Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles and Plans

# 8

### Vision, Mission & Goals- Where do you want to go?

The Sustainable Business Planning Guide's third task involves strategic planning. Determining the vision and mission early on helped shape the rest of the decisions made by the class as to what type of enterprise and place our farm would become. Prior to the class during a seminar open to students, faculty and staff ideas for guiding principles were solicited. These ideas ended up having similar themes to the ideas generated by students in the class. After the third week of class a few students self identified that they wanted to be involved and lead in the area of strategic planning or vision / goal setting.

During the fourth week of class two students lead the class in a brainstorming activity to determine guiding principles for the farm. The generated list (See Appendix page 140) was then posted on the course web site as a discussion topic, which students added further comments to during the week between classes. Students identified three over arching items from the list of ideas which became a foundation for the farm (See sidebar on the following page). The remaining ideas were then grouped into the areas of Education & Outreach, Production, Organization, and Science Philosophy & Research (See Appendix on page 140). From there students recommended suggested summaries for each area as a guiding principle statement.

Three weeks after the initial brainstorming discussion students broke into groups to identify goals and objectives for each guiding principle. Weeks later a few students worked on potential mission statements in small groups and they brought in samples for class discussion. This process ended up being extremely time intensive. Coming up with ideas was quick, it was the word smithing by consensus that took time. Some students did become frustrated with the process but most engaged in it to the end.

Eventually students took the goals, objectives and guiding principles and create plans for the areas of education & outreach, a web site and research. A plan for production come through the farm layout, farming systems, and system components. The organizational management was an area that took longer than the class had time to determine.

### This section:

Vision, Mission & Goals: Where do you want to go?	p. 53
Class Activity: What are your priorities for the Student Farm?	p. 54
Strategic Planning Time Table	p. 54
Over arching Ideas and Guiding Principles	p. 54
Strategic Planning Terms, Definitions and Process	p. 55
Goals and Objectives Worksheet	p. 56
Results of Strategic Planning	p. 57
The Importance of Strategic Planning	p. 57

## *Class Activity:*

What are your priorities for the Student Farm?

- 1. Brainstorm a list of guiding principles for our student farm.**
- 2. Then Prioritize your top three, which you will share with the class.**
- 3. Turn in your whole list at the end of the large group brainstorming, the remaining items will be compiled as a wish list that may or may not be incorporated into the mater plan later.**

### **Definitions for Clarification:**

**Guiding Principles:** General guidelines which set the foundation for how an organization will operate. (This is what we are brainstorming.)

### **Not to be confused with:**

**Mission:** A statement of overall purpose of an organization.

**Goals:** Broad, long term aims that define accomplishment of the mission

**Objectives:** Specific, quantifiable, realistic targets that measure the accomplishment of a goal over a specific period of time.

### **Your Ideas:**

## Strategic Planning Time Table

Week of Class	Activities
4 (30 Minutes)	Visioning Session part 1: Brainstorming Ideas
5 (35 minutes)	Visioning Session part 2: Refining, Word smithing and Approving Guiding Principles
6 (60 minutes)	Goals and Objectives for Guiding Principles
7 (5 minutes)	Updates
11 (15 minutes)	Approve Submitted Mission Statement & Plans

## Over arching Ideas:

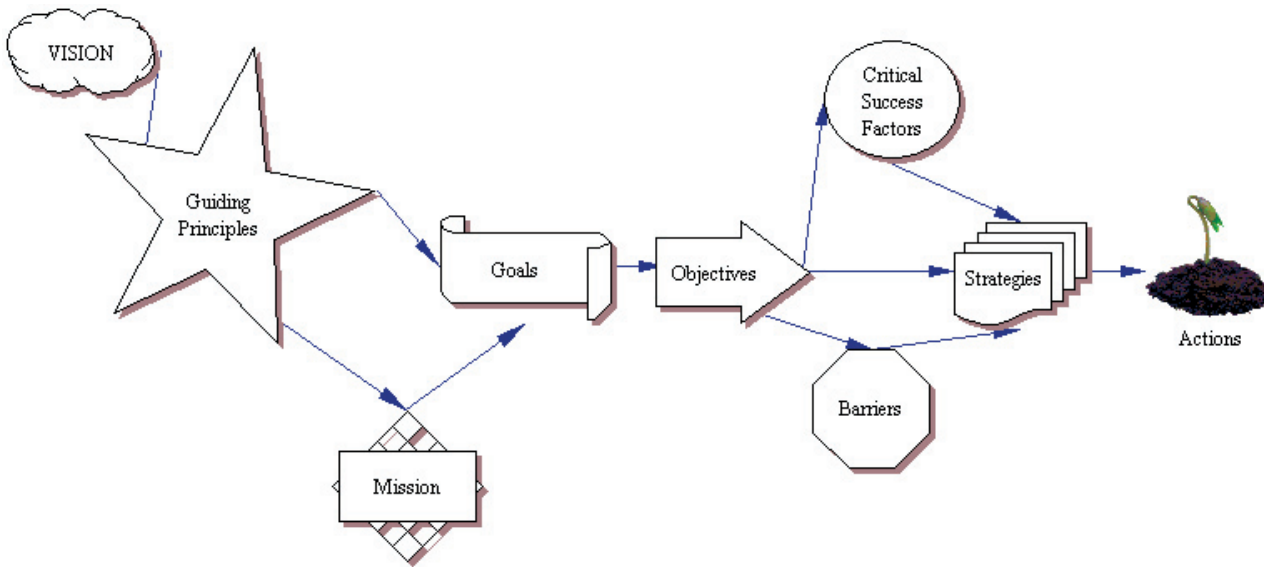
1. Use organic & sustainable practices
2. Be student run
3. Lasting into the infinite future

## Guiding Principle Areas:

1. Organization: Membership & Management
2. Production: Crop & Farm Management
3. Research: Science Philosophy
4. Education & Outreach

Final Guiding Principles can be found in the Appendix on page #.

# Strategic Planning Terms, Definitions & Process



## Guiding Principles:

General guidelines which set the foundation for how an organization or site will operate.

## Mission:

A statement of the overall purpose of an organization.

## Goals:

Broad, long term aims that define accomplishment of the mission

## Objectives:

Specific, quantifiable, realistic targets that measure the accomplishment of a goal over a specific period of time.

## Critical Success Factors:

Major items or issues that must be controlled to achieve one or more objectives.

## Barriers:

Existing or potential challenges that hinder the achievement of one or more objectives.

## Strategies:

Broad activities required to achieve an objective, control a critical success factor or overcome a barrier.

## Actions:

Specific steps to be taken, by whom and by when to implement a strategy.

**Group Members:**

## Goals and Objectives Worksheet

**Guiding Principle:**

**Goals:** Broad, long term aims that define accomplishment of the mission

**Objectives:** Specific, quantifiable, realistic targets that measure the accomplishment of a goal over a specific period of time.

Goal #1:

Objectives:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Goal #2:

Objectives:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Goal #3:

Objectives:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## Results of Strategic Planning

### Mission Statement;

"To steward a student managed, organic, sustainable farm that provides food, a place for community building, multidisciplinary education, research and outreach."

### Guiding Principles:

#### Management Principles:

"The student farm will be cooperatively planned and managed by a core group of students in collaboration with MISA, University faculty and other organizations".

#### Crops & Farm Management Principles:

"The student farm through its operation will grow, harvest and market a diversity of crops using sustainable organic practices that utilize local resources, reflect natural ecosystems and improve the quality of the farmland".

#### Science Philosophy & Research Principles:

"The student farm will encourage students to implement, monitor, and evaluate innovative and sustainable organic farming practices".

#### Education & Outreach Principles:

"The student farm utilizes and teaches sustainable organic farming practices to students, faculty and community members. It will serve as a gathering place for interdisciplinary learning communities and a resource for extension in sustainable organic agriculture."

## The Importance of Strategic Planning

Strategic Planning takes time especially when using consensus building to make decisions. In retrospect it was time well spent even though it may have discouraged the students involved. By laying down a solid foundation of guiding principles and mission statement in later seasons with new student farm planning classes, students were able to review this quickly and move on to more hands on activities of greater interest. Numerous students from other schools involved with student farms on their campuses have indicated that they wished they would have taken the time early on to determine their mission statements and guiding principles. How important are the goals, objectives and strategies to accomplish each and outlining each of them before you begin? For our project given the time restraints of a semester letting the action happen has been easier and more important than spending long hours in discussion. With the guiding principles and mission statement as guideposts its been fairly easy to stay on track and let the action happen- sometimes a bit hap-hazard but effective nonetheless.