

## TPS1807 - Strategic Planning for Postsecondary Systems

**Fall 2010**  
**Mondays, 5-8 pm**  
**Room 4-426**

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### **Overview of the Course**

This course is about system-wide planning in higher education. The primary goal of this course is to help you understand how to conduct sound analysis of major policy issues at the system level, and make well-grounded recommendations on how to address them.

From Alberta to Abu Dhabi, strategic plans are used to articulate government policies and influence the development of postsecondary education systems. These efforts build on the premise that as individual institutions pursue their own goals, they do not always address broader policy problems and public interests. System-wide planning is advanced as a corrective to that tendency (as well as for other policy and political purposes). In this course we will explore how planning relates to the policy process. We will also examine how planning may be a critical source of information for policy makers and institutional leaders on how to achieve desired outcomes.

This course is organized around a realistic planning exercise following a problem-based approach. You will work collaboratively in teams on the research and analysis needed to address a planning mandate. Doing that will involve reviewing relevant literatures, gathering data and evidence, assessing the merits of different policy alternatives, and formulating feasible recommendations.

This course is intended for graduate students interested in academic, administrative, and policy careers related to postsecondary education. It aims to help you:

- Develop analytic, problem solving, and teamwork skills relevant for planning and policy research

- Become familiar with the application of strategic planning to postsecondary education systems
- Consider the scope, complexity, and processes of system-wide planning
- Identify and assess the assumptions shaping current efforts at system-wide change
- Understand how system-wide planning relates to policy-making and politics

### **Course Format and Expectations**

This course is student-centered and process oriented, as opposed to instructor-centered and content oriented. The problem-based approach adopted in this course allows *students* to formulate and address learning needs related to the theory and practice of strategic planning. The instructor's roles will be to help groups assess and evaluate their efforts, offer guidance, and facilitate discussions. The format of the course provides learners a structured opportunity to pursue materials and draw on resources in ways that best help them respond to the problem posed to the groups.

There will be three types of activities during the term: problem solving, colloquia, and mini-lectures/discussions. Students will spend most of the time on *problem solving* in groups. Time for the problem solving process/planning exercise is built into the class schedule, and the expectation is that students will *fully engage* in the team planning effort. *The productive use of class time for teamwork on the planning problem is a core expectation and requirement of this course.*

In a problem-based course, most readings are pursued as learners gather information and materials necessary to solve the problem posed. Detailed information about the planning problem will be presented in the beginning of the course. There is no single solution or hidden formula for the strategic plan. Teams may diverge substantially in the approaches used, the strategies adopted, etc. However, teams are expected to ground their work on the relevant scholarly literature, draw on relevant resources, and use data and evidence that correspond to the reality of the problem posed. The plan and its presentation should be prepared and conducted as if the audience included government officials, university and college presidents, etc.

Some sessions include scheduled time for *colloquia*: discussions led by teams on issues related to system planning in higher education. Each group will 'lead' one colloquium by posing discussion questions, and raising puzzles or dilemmas derived from their exploration of the literature and their own planning process. Relevant readings selected from the group's annotated bibliography should be made available by the team through Blackboard. The expectation is neither that teams will make a 'group presentation' nor a 'progress report to the instructor'. Rather, the purposes of this activity are to stimulate groups to think critically about systems planning, to engage deeply with the materials and resources used to solve the problem, and to foster inter-group learning. One way to think about this activity is to consider what the group and others can learn from the exchange

of ideas, experiences, and views on a particular issue that can inform the team planning process. Teams are free to define the specific format of the session.

Finally, there will be a few mini-lectures/discussions led by the instructor. We will discuss readings assigned by the instructor on relevant cases and concepts. Please note that these discussions will supplement rather than substitute for the activities above. Students are expected to read assigned texts in advance and participate actively in the discussions.

Students will be able to use the resources available on Blackboard for online collaboration, information sharing, and bulletin board discussions. Planning teams are strongly encouraged to document their work electronically on Blackboard (uploading relevant documents, sources, draft documents etc). Please make sure that you can access Blackboard. If you have any technical questions about accessing Blackboard, please access the website's "help" feature contact the technical support staff.

Upon request, we may use OISE computer labs to facilitate group work that requires computing and Internet capabilities. Beyond class sessions, the instructor will be available during office hours (by appointment) and through e-mail.

### **Course Evaluation**

**Participation.** Given the format described above, class participation is key in this course. Students are expected to contribute critically to group and plenary discussions based on readings, drawing from other resources, and from their own professional experiences in their respective fields. Contributing to the learning of others is also part of student's participation – and an excellent way to deepen your own knowledge. Attendance is crucial in this course. If you anticipate having to miss more than 1 class, please discuss this with me in advance. Participation will contribute to 35% of the final grade.

**Group assignment.** As indicated above, the team planning exercise is the core activity in this course. Every team member is expected to contribute substantively to the problem-solving process and the final product – the actual strategic plan. The instructor's roles do not include monitoring or controlling the contributions of each individual to the team effort, but rather working in close interaction with the groups to help them succeed. All team members are also expected to participate in the colloquium and final presentation of the plan to the class. The total team planning exercise will contribute to 55% of the final grade (details below).

**Individual Reflective Memo.** The problem-based approach involves encouraging reflective learning. While this course is certainly taken by individuals that already possess strong analytical and problem-solving skills, this is an opportunity to sharpen those skills in the context of system planning in post-secondary education. The goal of this assignment is to allow individuals the opportunity to step back from and reflect on the problem-solving experience and analyze his or her learning process during the course. What did you do that contributed to your and your group's learning? What could you (or

the group) have done differently? How do you interpret the final product of the planning exercise, considering the process that led to it? These are some of the questions that might be explored in the memo. This assignment will contribute to 10% of the final grade.

### **Graded Assignments and Due Dates.**

Assignment	Due Date	Contribution to Grade
Participation	On-going	35%
Group assignments:		
<i>Colloquium</i>	November 1-15	10%
<i>Plan presentation</i>	November 22	15%
<i>Written plan</i>	November 29	30%
Memo	December 6	10%

**Grading.** The OISE/UT grading system has a primary classification of A, B, and FZ, which have the following meanings:

- A: original work, very well organized and expressed, sound critical evaluations, clear command of techniques and principles of the discipline, etc.
- B: good grasp of the topics, accurate knowledge, some evidence of critical evaluation, ability to synthesize and to discriminate relevant issues, etc.
- FZ: glaring inaccuracy and confusion, little or no grasp of techniques and principles, trivial and irrelevant treatment of topics; in general, a failure to demonstrate the minimal knowledge and skills for effective work in the discipline.

Grades of A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, FZ are possible in the course.

### **Class Schedule**

Starting in the first class session, we will use some class time for teamwork related to the planning problem. Time allocated to teamwork will increase as we progress through the term.

<p><b>September 13</b></p> <p>Introduction to the course Problem-based approach The planning mandate</p>	<p><b>Assignments</b></p> <p><i>Due: Draft outline of team's work plan for the term</i></p>
<p><b>September 20</b></p> <p>Case study: The California Master Plan</p> <p>Douglass, J. A. (2000). Earl Warren's New Deal: Economic transition, postwar planning, and higher education in California. <i>Journal of Policy History</i>, 12(4),</p>	<p><i>Due: Identify and bring to class 1 strategic plan for a higher education system other than Ontario</i></p>

<p>473-512.</p> <p>Kerr, C. (1992). The California Master Plan of 1960 for higher education--An Ex Ante view. In Sheldon Rothblatt (ed.), The OECD, the Master Plan and the California Dream: A Berkeley Conversation. Center for Studies in Higher Education, University of California, Berkeley.</p> <p>Douglass, J. A. (2010). From Chaos To Order and Back? A Revisionist Reflection on the California Master Plan for Higher Education@50 and Thoughts About Its Future. CSHE Research and Occasional Paper Series CSHE.7.10. Berkeley: University of California.</p> <p>(Skim) The History of the California Master Plan. UC History Digital Archives.</p>	
<p><b>September 27</b></p> <p>Weimar, D. &amp; Vining, A. (2005). Policy analysis: concepts and practice. Chapters 2 &amp; 14.</p>	<p><i>Due: Revised outline of team's workplan</i></p>
<p><b>October 4</b></p> <p>Case Study: British Columbia</p> <p>Skolnik, M. L. (2006). Postsecondary System Design and Governance: A Background Paper Prepared for the Ministry of Advanced Education Campus 20/20 Project Regarding The Future of British Columbia's Postsecondary Education System. July 31, 2006.</p> <p>Metcalf, A. S. (2008). The geography of access and excellence: Spatial diversity in higher education system design. Higher Education, 58(2), 205-20.</p>	<p><i>Due: Annotated bibliography</i></p>

<p>Fisher, D., Rubenson, K., Jones, G. &amp; Shanahan, T. (2009). The political economy of post-secondary education: a comparison of British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec. <i>Higher Education</i>, 57(5), 549-66.</p>	
<p><b>October 11</b> (Thanksgiving) Research/Library Week</p>	<p><i>Groups will schedule a work session during the week. I will be available for consultation hours with each group.</i></p>
<p><b>October 18</b> Weimar and Vining, (2005). Policy analysis: concepts and practice. Chapter 1</p>	<p><i>Due: Draft outline for the plan</i></p>
<p><b>October 25</b> Guest lecture:</p>	<p><i>Due: Topics and reading assignments for colloquium</i></p>
<p><b>November 1</b> Colloquium readings TBA</p>	
<p><b>November 8</b> Colloquium readings TBA</p>	
<p><b>November 15</b> Colloquium readings TBA</p>	
<p><b>November 22</b></p>	<p><i>Due: Plan presentations</i></p>
<p><b>November 29</b> Self and group assessment, and ways forward</p>	<p><i>Due: Written Plans</i></p>