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Inclusive, Participatory, and Research-Driven Approaches to Strategic Planning in Academic Libraries

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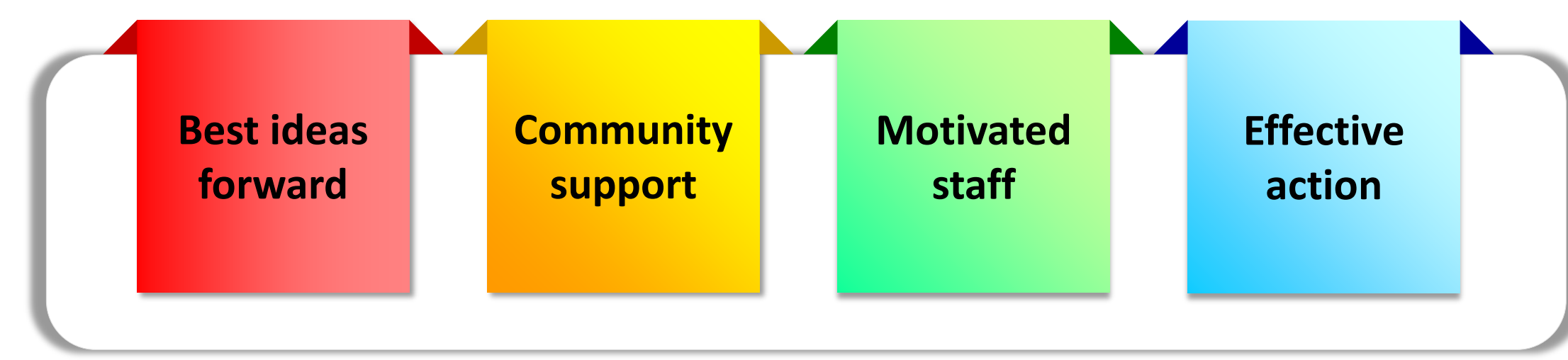
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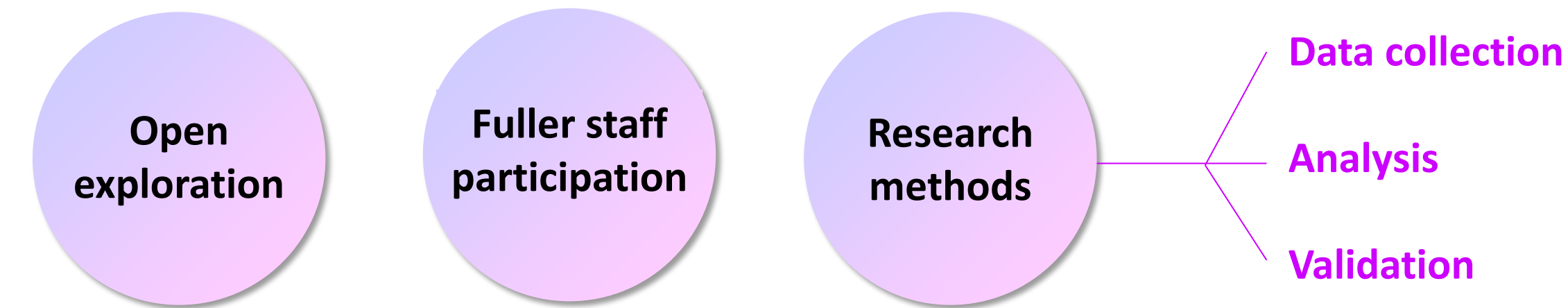
Inclusive, Participatory, and Research-Driven Approaches to Strategic Planning in Academic Libraries

Goal

Foster the following strategic planning outcomes.



Embrace these elements.



Timeline

Berkeley Strategic Planning, 2007-2013



Planning Approaches

	New Directions	Re-Envisioning	Academic Program Review (APR)
Driver	Reinvigorate library services and staff in light of new technologies and scholarship	Examine organization in light of budget reductions and reduced staff post-2009 recession	Align liaison services with changing directions of academic units
Process	<p>Data Collection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invited external speakers to share new knowledge with staff Conducted faculty and graduate student interviews about changes in research, teaching, and scholarship Staff proposed strategic actions and ideas through blog, town halls, and discussions <p>Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collected and categorized 165 "starting points" into themes Wrote 16 "snapshots" around strategic themes <p>Validation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff retreat to discuss strategic themes Summary report of priorities Library Administration selected 26 initiatives to implement 	<p>Data Collection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 internal self-study teams developed expertise in "librarian roles" or "library service models" SWOT analyses, mapping of staff domain expertise, literature review, campus planning documents, peer institution reports <p>Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed various organizational restructuring Self-study teams evaluated and prioritized proposed options Library administrators coached staff on the analysis <p>Validation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared preliminary findings with library groups and staff Campus-wide survey to confirm priorities Faculty commission on the future of the library began their analysis with these findings 	<p>Data Collection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library liaisons conducted qualitative content analyses of APR self-study reports, which detail the needs, experiences, and plans of academic units Liaisons identified relevant issues, determined potential library impact, and proposed library enhancements <p>Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content analysis of all liaisons' data conducted by research analyst Coded for collective themes and trends <p>Validation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library staff reviewed final report Held open meeting to determine collective priorities
Time & Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8-12 months Coordinating group of 8, but all librarians and staff participated Expansive faculty outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 ½ months, meeting bi-weekly 2 teams of 14 people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 months 15 liaisons for 18 academic departments that had APR reports 1 research analyst
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prolific idea generation Task forces formed to define new library services (e.g., GIS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devised and implemented a new library organizational structure Developed 3 staffing scenarios to address a range of possible headcount adjustments Clear and definitive report on the future of the library 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified shared liaison experiences among academic units Identified areas for greater mutual support and collaboration among library liaisons Discussed ground-up, collaborative approaches for implementing library enhancements
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moves library to a more risk-tolerant position: "perpetual beta" Raises staff understanding of trends across all units Generates staff enthusiasm; valuable for community building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Big picture" plans developed in short timeframe Representative – not comprehensive – participation of library staff Encourages identification of operating principles (e.g. closer librarian alignment with academic departments) Comprehensive plan that communicates critical library needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pathway for continuous assessment and self-directed planning Simple and efficient: least time and commitment, can be conducted individually or in groups Looks beyond the library: cultivates deep understanding of departmental and campus-wide initiatives in an unobtrusive way
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Without financial support, many priorities may not be implemented or may be implemented randomly Number of ideas may prevent organizational implementation without support and clear priorities from administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of full staff participation may make buy-in more difficult Short timeframe may alienate critical participants (faculty) Sense of urgency reliant on threat or crisis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-study reports may report niche issues or preclude the library Liaisons require training to serve as researcher-practitioners Generated ideas can be department-specific requiring individual liaison efforts rather than library-wide implementation
Comparative Evaluation	<p>Time Commitment: ●●●○</p> <p>Quantity of Ideas: ●●●○</p> <p>Feasibility of Ideas: ●○●○</p> <p>Staff Engagement: ●●●○</p>	<p>Time Commitment: ●●●○</p> <p>Quantity of Ideas: ●○●○</p> <p>Feasibility of Ideas: ●●●○</p> <p>Staff Engagement: ●●●○</p>	<p>Time Commitment: ●○●○</p> <p>Quantity of Ideas: ●●●○</p> <p>Feasibility of Ideas: ●●●○</p> <p>Staff Engagement: ●○●○</p>

Principles

- Be iterative, inclusive, and systematic. Build upon priorities identified in past strategic plans and by peer institutions.
- Research methods and brainstorming foster an open approach to idea generation.
- Early consultation with faculty is crucial for significant changes.
- Staff input and buy in are essential for successful implementation.
- Communicate strategic decisions early and frequently. Be two-way, evidence-based, and widespread.
- Commit time and resources to socialize and implement priorities.

Choose an Approach

Consider these issues.

Time Number of hours committed? Fast or contemplative?	Participation Full-community or focused-group effort? Level of administrative participation?	Intended Outcome Community building, re-organization, or identification of new initiatives?	Direction Outward- or inward-focused orientation of the changes?

Get Started

- To Raise Staff Knowledge**
Invite external experts. Otherwise, assign readings or recorded presentations to spark internal discussion.
- To Extensively Re-Organize**
Communicate a critical motivation – such as budgetary drivers – to justify intensive process and its significant outcomes.
- To Align with Academic Units**
Collect academic departmental planning documents. Alternative sources include departmental websites and annual reports.

Inclusive, Participatory, and Research-Driven Approaches to Strategic Planning in Academic Libraries

Which strategic planning approaches can motivate academic library staff to adopt new organizational structures and adapt to emerging library paradigms? Over the past 10 years, the library at a major research university has undertaken three separate strategic planning initiatives employing significantly different approaches. Each approach has shaped the library and its relationship to the campus community in positive ways. This poster will show that academic libraries have several options for engaging in strategic planning including inclusive, participatory, and research-driven options that can suit different institutional time and resource constraints.

In our first strategic planning initiative, we conducted a lengthy and highly inclusive process to educate library staff about emerging issues and inspire them to generate creative ideas from which library administration prioritized and implemented strategic directions. Our next planning initiative facilitated an expeditious self-study in which two core teams completed environmental scans and developed ideas for new service models and librarian roles. In our most recent planning initiative, liaison librarians conducted research-driven assessments of academic departments' internal reviews to identify new services that addressed emerging faculty and student needs. Common threads among these approaches were their inclusiveness, the participation of diverse library staff to build internal expertise, and a systematic examination of the data on local contexts in order to promote the successful implementation of new initiatives.

However, these approaches varied dramatically. Our comparison of these three strategic planning initiatives based on factors of participatory and inclusive information gathering techniques, research-driven methods, plan validation and implementation, time and resource constraints, outcomes, and challenges will show how these factors can be adapted in different institutional contexts.

Important principles learned from the three strategic planning initiatives include:

- staff participation, input, and buy-in are essential for successful implementation of new ideas, and there are a range of ways in which these can be achieved;
- success depends on the time and resources committed to socializing and implementing identified priorities;
- communication about strategic plans is a critical success factor - it needs to be early and frequent, coherent and two-way, evidence-based, and widespread through multiple channels;
- idea generation can be framed as research exercises to foster an open approach; this may be achieved through brainstorming, literature reviews, surveys, focus groups, or environmental scans;
- strategic planning should be iterative, inclusive, and systematic, building upon priorities identified in one's past strategic plans as well as those of peer institutions; and
- early and intentional consultation with faculty is crucial for significant changes.

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