



Annual Planning Guide

*for Administrative Services, Human Resources, President's Office
Divisions & Offices*

Revised March 2022

Purpose of the Annual Planning Guide

The following document serves to provide an overview of the Annual Planning process at El Camino College. More specifically:

- What is annual planning and why is it important?
- How to draft an annual plan?

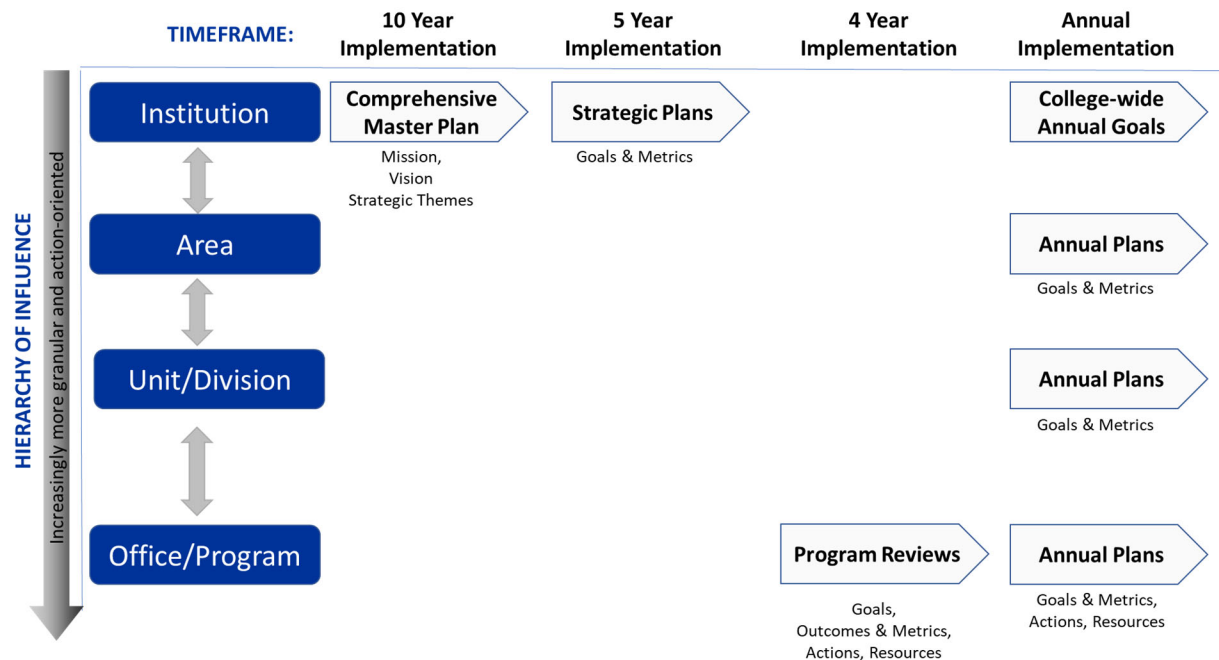
What is Annual Planning?

The annual planning process at ECC articulates the priorities that areas, divisions and programs will address within a *single academic year*. The priorities identified in the annual planning process will inform the annual budgeting process where the budget needs are articulated and prioritized to align to goals across the institution.

The annual planning and budgeting process begins in October of every year to plan for the following year. For example, 2022-23 planning would begin in October 2021. It involves all five areas of the College (President’s Office, Academic Affairs, Student Services, Administrative Services, and Human Resources) and every level within each area: programs/offices, divisions/units, and areas.

As presented in Figure 1 below, the areas adapt the College-wide annual goals to contribute to them from their unique role. The area’s annual goals provide direction to divisions/units as they articulate division/unit-level annual goals. Similarly, the division/unit-level annual goals will provide direction to the office’s annual goals. Each annual plan aligns and contributes to the annual plans at the next level and so on. In addition, Program Review documents (multi-year plans) serve as input into the annual planning process of programs and offices.

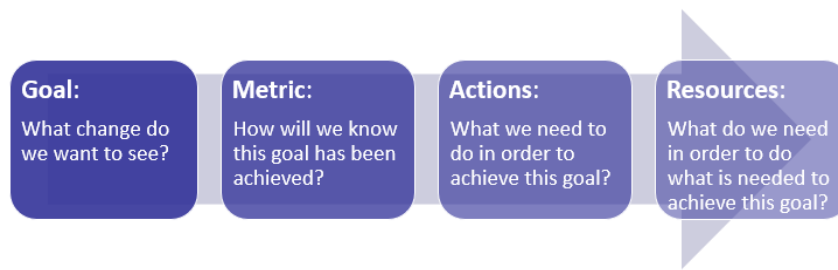
Figure 1: Alignment between ECC Planning Processes



How to draft an annual plan?

All annual plans should have the following four elements: goals, metrics, actions, resources (see Figure 2). *Nuventive* is the online planning platform where annual plans are documented and tracked.

Figure 2: Elements of an Annual Plan



Goals are statements that describe the change that is needed for greater impact. Essentially, what changes in the day-to-day operations can be made in order to more effectively or efficiently serve the needs of students. An action-oriented goal should start with a word such as: improve, increase, reduce, decrease, enhance, strengthen, grow, etc. to reflect progress towards the desired result. **These broad statements may or may not have budget implications.**

Example of a goal (from IRP): *“By Spring 2023, increase understanding of the annual planning processes so that all areas and division/units have clear annual plans.”*

Goals should be formulated in a collaborative environment to facilitate alignment vertically and horizontally (see Figure 1). Goals of the division or area should be drafted in consultation with the offices and programs that will be impacted by the goal. Planning processes break down silos and encourage communication throughout ECC for greater impact.

To develop annual goals, each office should review: 1) the latest Program Review document (if applicable); 2) annual goals of the College, area or division; and 3) any available data to determine how the office could make the greatest impact next year. Each office should:

- **Reflect on strengths:** Considering current strengths articulated in the last Program Review and identified from data sources, how can the office support the annual goals of the College, area or division?
- **Reflect on challenges:** Which challenges articulated in the Program Review and identified from additional data sources are the most critical to address in order to effectively contribute to the progress of annual goals of the College, area or division?

To ensure annual goals are informed by data:

- If applicable, refer to the last Program Review document if it is less than 2 years old. Use the analysis provided in the Program Review document as a starting point for further data analysis if needed.
- Use feedback from the office’s internal or external constituents. Refer to operational efficiency data. If applicable, use student data to identify trends for additional insight.

The office should complete enough data analysis to identify the most significant needs to address in the next academic year. The data may identify a variety of needs; however, no more than five goals is suggested in order to have the greatest impact. Consultation within the office may be needed to identify a realistic set goals that could be achieved in the next academic year.

In general, goals should be S.M.A.R.T. (Smart, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound).

- Ensure goals are quantified and are time-bound:
 - **Bad goal:** “Significantly increase X” (“significantly” is subjective and can’t be measured)

- *Good goal:* “Increase staff/faculty trained in ___ from 45% to 80% by June 2023.”
- A good goal should answer: How much? By when? Goals may be quantified by one of the following metrics:
 - Time – e.g., a decrease in time required to provide a service
 - Percentages – e.g., a 25% increase in the percentage of faculty/staff who _____
 - Numerical count – e.g., reduction in number of incidents to zero
 - A specific accomplishment is used to demonstrate that a goal has been accomplished (e.g. install new software, create a framework to improve coordination, etc.)

As with any of the planning processes within ECC, the activities involved in the annual planning process are cyclical. After these activities have been implemented, an assessment is needed to determine to what extent the goals have been achieved. The 2022-23 annual goals should be established with the expectation that assessment of their progress will be necessary in subsequent years.

Metrics are used to track progress towards achieving a goal. How will offices know the goal has been achieved? Most action-oriented goals should be bound by a baseline and target. What is the current state and what can each office reasonably achieve in the next year?

While metrics are usually quantitative, some goals may be linked to the successful completion of a project. In these cases, the metric is a qualitative achievement.

Example of a quantitative metric: *“Percentage of office managers who participated in the annual planning training who are comfortable articulating clear goals for their programs.”*

Example of a qualitative accomplishment: *“Materials and templates for the annual planning training were developed for all planning levels.”*

Actions are projects or tasks to complete in order to progress toward desired goals. Each goal could have one or multiple actions, although no more than three actions is recommended for the greatest impact. For example, actions could include updating procedures in order to contribute to the goal of decreasing the time required to provide a service.

Example of a goal: *“Decrease the time required to provide a service to staff & faculty”*
 Related action: *“Update procedures to streamline services to staff & faculty”*

To ensure that there is a clear connection between the action and the goal, ask *what are the results of the action* and *how do these results support the goal?* In the example above, the action (updating procedures) will contribute to the goal (decreasing response time).

Resources are assets needed to achieve the goals (e.g., dedicated staff for the project that contributes to the goal, access to new software/hardware/equipment).

After determining what actions are needed to achieve the goals for the next year, describe what resources are needed to accomplish these actions. These resources may be financial or non-financial and may be existing or new resources. Some annual goals may not need additional funding. The textual description of the resource requirements will inform the funding request process if a budget augmentation is needed.

If a budget augmentation is needed, reflect on each of the following types of resources: a) staffing, b) technology/software, c) instructional equipment, d) non-instructional equipment, e) furniture, f) facilities, and g) contracts/services/memberships/travel and conferences.

Example of resource requirements: *"Hiring an additional staff member to coordinate and facilitate training."*

Budget augmentation requests for operational needs do not need to be associated with an annual goal since operational needs are addressed by the budgeting process, although the annual planning and budgeting processes occur in parallel.

For budget augmentation requests that do support an annual goal, the rationale should include:

- How will this funding request support the annual goals of the College or area?
- If applicable, what rationale for the funding request was provided in the last program review? (Refer to the text from program review)
- If applicable, how does the funding request support the institutionalization of Guided Pathways?
- If applicable, what problem or need does this funding request help resolve? Who is impacted by this problem (entire College, specific division or program)? How long has this problem/need been occurring?

The funding needs of the offices would inform the funding prioritization conversations at the division and area levels. Thus, as annual plans and funding priorities are cascaded up from offices to divisions and from divisions to areas, there are intentional opportunities to confirm that the annual plans and funding allocations are fully aligned throughout the institution.