Annual Planning Guide

Revised December 2023

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/units, and programs/offices 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 with goals across the institution.
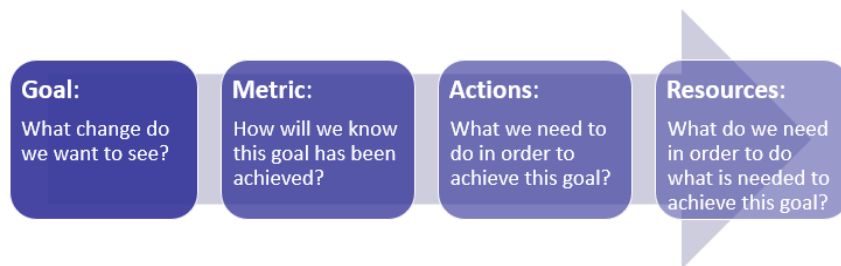
The annual planning and budgeting processes in the current academic year create plans and budgets for the next academic year. For example, in **2023-24** ECC will plan and budget for the **2024-25** academic year. Annual planning and budgeting involves all five areas of the College (President's Office, Academic Affairs, Student Services, Administrative Services, and Human Resources) and every level within each area: programs/offices, divisions/units, and areas.

Each area, division/unit, and program/office adapts the College-wide goals to contribute to them from their unique role. In addition, Program Review documents (multi-year plans) serve as input into the annual planning process of programs/offices. As with program reviews, annual plans should be developed in a collaborative environment to facilitate the alignment of priorities at all levels of the College. In this way, planning processes break down silos and encourage communication throughout ECC for greater impact.

How to draft an annual plan?

ECC's annual plans should have the following four elements: goals, metrics, actions, and resources (see Figure 1). *Nuventive* is the online planning platform where annual plans are documented and tracked.

Figure 1: Elements of an Annual Plan

Goal:
What change do we want to see?

Metric:
How will we know this goal has been achieved?

Actions:
What we need to do in order to achieve this goal?

Resources:
What do we need in order to do what is needed to achieve this goal?

Goals are statements to describe a desired change or improvement. For the 2024-25 Annual Planning & Budgeting process, ECC will continue to support the same goals used in the 2023-24 Annual Planning & Budgeting process (see Figure 2) while the Comprehensive Integrated Plan (CIP) is in draft form. These goals are adapted from the 2022-25 Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEMP). They also include two additional goals to: 1) support operational efficiency and College sustainability; and 2) address risks, safety, and liability issues. In future years, the goals of the Comprehensive Integrated Plan (CIP) will inform the annual planning and budgeting efforts across all areas of the College.

Figure 2: 2024-25 Annual Planning & Budget Goals

To help identify the resources needed for 2024-25, each area, division/unit, and program/office should first reflect on how the area, division/unit, or program/office plans to contribute to these College-wide goals. This will also help clarify and strengthen the rationale for the funding request. Note: **Goals may or may not have budget implications**, as some goals can be addressed by reallocating existing resources*.*

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.

> Example of a goal (from IRP): *"By Spring 2024, increase understanding of the annual planning processes so that all areas and division/units have clear annual plans."*

To determine where to focus efforts for 2024-25, each program/office should review the latest Program Review document (if applicable), the annual goals of the College, and any relevant data. Each program/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?
- *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 the annual goals of the College?

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. The disaggregation of data for subpopulations of students is especially recommended to develop goals that prioritize interventions for vulnerable student populations, which supports ECC's vision of creating equitable opportunities.
- 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 program/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 priorities are suggested in order to have the greatest impact. Consultation within the office may be needed to identify a realistic set of 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 the 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 annual goals should be established with the expectation that an assessment of their progress will be necessary in subsequent years.

Metrics are used to track progress toward achieving a goal. How will programs/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 program/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 are 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

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."*

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, 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.