

# 5 tips for building a solid strategic plan

## Foundations for success in higher ed continuous improvement

Strategic planning is a crucial part of the continuous improvement process in higher education – and solid plans require solid foundations. As your higher education institution embraces new strategies for success, it can be helpful to return to simple principles for complex processes. Explore these five simple tips to guide you in building a strategic plan at your college or university.



### 1 ••• Planning makes perfect.

#### **Recruit a diverse planning team.**

Create a comprehensive planning team, with representation from the board, administration, and faculty.

#### **Engage a wide stakeholder group.**

Gather feedback from a broad range of stakeholders and involve them in the implementation process.

### 2 ••• Dream big.

#### **Define your ideal vision.**

Imagine vividly your institution's desired future state and develop strategies that can make it a reality.

#### **Anticipate future trends.**

Plan for the evolving educational landscape, preparing for future challenges and opportunities.

### 3 ••• Be specific.

#### **Set clear metrics to stay on the right path.**

Establish measurable indicators to track progress and encourage accountability.

#### **Assess current performance.**

Use key metrics such as graduation rates and student retention to understand the current situation.

### 4 ••• Prepare for the long haul.

#### **Create long-term budgets.**

Develop multi-year financial plans focused on strategic priorities.

#### **Align departmental plans.**

Ensure departmental strategies align with the overall institutional plan and include detailed implementation structures.

### 5 ••• Risk-ready, set, go.

#### **Plan for risks.**

Identify potential roadblocks and develop mitigation strategies.

#### **Launch campus-wide rollout and review.**

Implement the plan across the campus and review the plan annually to ensure ongoing relevance and improvement.

**Last – but not least – celebrate your successes along the way!**

Ready to get aligned with your strategic plan while unifying outcomes and results? [Learn how Watermark Planning & Self-Study can help.](#)

