AN ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING PRACTICES AT ONTARIO COLLEGES OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY

By

DAVID HAROLD SHERIDAN

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education
Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

© Copyright by David Harold Sheridan 1998
The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author’s permission.

L’auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L’auteur conserve la propriété du droit d’auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-35419-9
AN ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING PRACTICES AT
ONTARIO COLLEGES OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY

Doctor of Education, 1998

David Harold Sheridan
Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

ABSTRACT

In the 1990s, Ontario's community colleges were faced with shifting legislative priorities, deteriorating funding and escalating demand. Many colleges adopted strategic planning techniques as a means of addressing their turbulent environments. This study combined the survey and case study method to analyse strategic planning practices employed at Ontario colleges in the context of organizational theory and the strategic planning literature. It focused on the relationship between internal factors such as size, structure and organizational culture, and environmental factors such as catchment area characteristics, government policy and applicant demand.

Reviews of published college strategic plans, key informant interviews and a province-wide survey of college registrars identified that about half of Ontario's 25 community colleges were utilizing strategic planning principles as described in the literature. Three colleges were subsequently selected for in-depth research. On-site case study research at the host colleges included interviews with stakeholders involved in the process, observations of planning events and reviews of relevant documents and records. A high degree of data convergence was obtained across sources and respondent groups.

Strategic planning at the colleges was characterized by limited amounts of formal environmental scanning, high levels of stakeholder involvement, low levels of conflict and an emphasis on value articulation, mission statements and broad strategic directions. External factors including catchment area characteristics, community linkages, learner profiles and competition shaped the outcomes of strategic plans. Internal factors such as organizational size and structure, process maturity and organizational culture and climate impacted on
the planning processes. Government policy had a major constraining effect on the strategic options available to the colleges.

All three colleges exhibited effective strategic planning processes, based on assessments of environmental relevance, stakeholder commitment and linkages to decision making. This is a particularly interesting finding in view of the fact that the three host colleges represented very different combinations of the four major institutional governance models described in the literature (bureaucracy, political federation, collegium and organized anarchy). No single governance approach appears best for strategic planning. Rather, the findings suggest that the match between planning process characteristics and organizational culture is the most significant factor in planning success.
# AN ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING PRACTICES AT ONTARIO COLLEGES OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY

## Table of Contents

### CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Purpose ................................................................. 1  
1.2 Problem Statement ........................................................................... 3  
1.3 Study Boundaries ............................................................................. 4  
1.4 Strategic Planning Defined ............................................................... 5  
1.5 Organization of the Thesis ................................................................. 6

### CHAPTER TWO - REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 The Nature of Planning
   2.1.1 Early Roots .................................................................................. 8  
   2.1.2 Planning’s Evolution ..................................................................... 9  
   2.1.3 Perspectives on Planning ............................................................. 13  
   2.1.4 Planning’s Revolution .................................................................. 22  
   2.1.5 Towards a Generic Model ............................................................ 32  
   2.1.6 Current Practice ........................................................................... 41  
2.2 The Nature of Governance
   2.2.1 The Notion of Culture .................................................................. 46  
   2.2.2 Approaches to Governance ........................................................... 48  
   2.2.3 Governance/Planning Interrelationships ....................................... 55  
2.3 Observations on the Literature .......................................................... 58

### CHAPTER THREE - DESIGN OF THE STUDY

3.1 Overall Methodological Approach ..................................................... 61  
3.2 Sample Selection
   3.2.1 Establishment of Sampling Frame ............................................... 62  
   3.2.2 Selection of Host Colleges ........................................................... 63  
   3.2.3 Selection of Respondents ............................................................. 66  
3.3 Field Methods
   3.3.1 Interviews .................................................................................... 67  
   3.3.2 Document Analysis ..................................................................... 69  
   3.3.3 Observations ............................................................................... 70  
   3.3.4 Follow-up Research .................................................................... 72  
   3.3.5 Case Study Data Base ................................................................. 73  
   3.3.6 Triangulation Procedures ............................................................. 74
3.4 Data Quality
3.4.1 Internal Validity ........................................... 74
3.4.2 Reliability .................................................. 75
3.4.3 External Validity .......................................... 75
3.4.4 Ethics ....................................................... 76

CHAPTER FOUR - DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 The Ontario College System
4.1.1 Characteristics ............................................. 77
4.1.2 The Environment .......................................... 78
4.1.3 System Planning Initiatives ............................. 80
4.1.4 Institutional Planning Initiatives ...................... 83

4.2 Centennial College Profile
4.2.1 Background ................................................. 88
4.2.2 Catchment Area ........................................... 88
4.2.3 Learner Profile ............................................ 89
4.2.4 Formal Structure ......................................... 90
4.2.5 Strategic Planning ....................................... 90
4.2.6 Culture and Climate ................................... 94
4.2.7 Stakeholder Perceptions ............................... 97
4.2.8 Organizational Transition ............................. 99

4.3 Confederation College Profile
4.3.1 Background ................................................ 100
4.3.2 Catchment Area .......................................... 100
4.3.3 Learner Profile ........................................... 102
4.3.4 Formal Structure ........................................ 103
4.3.5 Strategic Planning ...................................... 103
4.3.6 Culture and Climate ................................... 107
4.3.7 Stakeholder Perceptions ............................... 108
4.3.8 Organizational Transition ............................. 110

4.4 Georgian College Profile
4.4.1 Background ................................................ 112
4.4.2 Catchment Area .......................................... 112
4.4.3 Learner Profile ........................................... 113
4.4.4 Formal Structure ........................................ 114
4.4.5 Strategic Planning ...................................... 114
4.4.6 Culture and Climate ................................... 117
4.4.7 Stakeholder Perceptions ............................... 120
4.4.8 Organizational Transition ............................. 121

4.5 Cross-Case Comparison
4.5.1 External Factors .......................................... 123
4.5.2 Strategic Considerations ............................... 123
4.5.3 Internal Factors .......................................... 124
4.5.4 Approaches to Planning ............................... 125
4.5.5 Transition Tactics ...................................... 126
CHAPTER FIVE - ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The Research Questions Revisited .................................................. 128

5.2 The Nature of Strategic Planning
5.2.1 Applying the Generic Model .................................................. 130
5.2.2 Success Criteria and Outcomes ................................................ 131
5.2.3 Process Observations .............................................................. 135

5.3 Strategic Planning and External Factors
5.3.1 Catchment Area Characteristics ................................................ 136
5.3.2 Learner Profiles ....................................................................... 137
5.3.3 Competition and Demand ........................................................ 137
5.3.4 Government Policy ................................................................. 138

5.4 Strategic Planning and Internal Factors
5.4.1 Size .......................................................................................... 140
5.4.2 Process Maturity ....................................................................... 140
5.4.3 Culture and Climate ................................................................. 141

5.5 Implications
5.5.1 Implications for Theory: Towards a Blended Approach .......... 143
5.5.2 Implications for Practice: Advice for Boards and Presidents 145
5.5.3 Implications for Future Research .............................................. 147

5.6 Reflections on Learning ................................................................ 148

REFERENCES .................................................................................... 150

LIST OF TABLES

1. Perspectives on Planning ................................................................. 21
2. Strategic Planning vs Conventional Planning ................................... 25
3. Governance Models and Planning .................................................. 56
4. Application of Sampling Frame Inclusion Criteria .......................... 64
5. Characteristics of Host Colleges Selected ...................................... 65
6. Key Informant Matrix .................................................................... 67
7. Semi-Structured Interview Protocol .............................................. 68
8. Interview Protocol for Follow-up Research ................................... 73
9. Institutional Autonomy in the Ontario CAAT System .................. 81
10. Comparison of Strategic Scores .................................................... 85
11. Influence/Strategy Score Comparisons ........................................ 86
14. Composite SWOT Analysis - Centennial College ......................... 98
15. Composite "Wish List" - Centennial College .................................. 98
16. Elements of Confederation's Strategic Plan, 1995-98 .................... 104
17. Composite SWOT Analysis - Confederation College ................... 109
18. Composite "Wish List" - Confederation College ............................. 109
LIST OF TABLES (Cont'd)

20. Elements of Georgian's Second Strategic Plan, 1995 .................................. 117
21. Composite SWOT Analysis - Georgian College .......................................... 120
22. Composite "Wish List" - Georgian College .................................................. 121
23. Cross-Case Comparison ............................................................................. 127
24. Environmental Linkages ............................................................................. 132
25. Planning, Implementation and Organizational Effectiveness ...................... 133

LIST OF FIGURES

1. The Strategic Process .................................................................................. 34
2. Influence Score by Size of College ............................................................. 87
3. Schematic of Research Question Variables ................................................. 129
4. Determinants of Planning Effectiveness ..................................................... 142

APPENDIXES

A. Survey of College Registrars ....................................................................... 161
B. Letter to Host Colleges .............................................................................. 165
C. Positions of Respondents Interviewed ......................................................... 167
D. Sample Interview Questions ....................................................................... 168
E. Informed Consent Release Form .................................................................. 170
F. Interview Abstracting Form ......................................................................... 171
G. Documentation Reviewed ............................................................................ 173
H. Ethical Review Certificate ........................................................................... 175
I. College Enrolments, 1993-96 ..................................................................... 176
J. College Catchment Areas ............................................................................ 177
K. Organization Chart - Centennial College .................................................... 178
L. Organization Chart - Confederation College ............................................... 179
M. Organization Chart - Georgian College ....................................................... 180
Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION
1.1 Background and Purpose

"Cheshire-Puss, would you tell me please, which way I ought to go from here?"
"That depends a great deal on where you want to get to" said the Cat.
"I don't much care where" said Alice.
"Then it doesn't matter which way you go, said the Cat.
"So long as I get somewhere" Alice added as an explanation.
"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if only you walk long enough"

- Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*

Ontario's community colleges have been forced to take a planning stance very much like Alice in this frequently cited quotation from the Lewis Carroll classic. An environmental "witches brew" consisting of shifting legislative priorities, rapidly deteriorating funding and escalating demand has placed colleges in the position of having to continually react to external events. There is a well established body of strategic planning literature, but colleges have only recently begun to adopt and institute strategic planning principles.

This thesis combines the survey and case study method to examine the nature of strategic planning at Ontario community colleges. The study contributes to the theoretical and practical strategic planning knowledge base in three distinct ways:

1. It provides an objective analysis of the planning activities of Ontario colleges, viewed within a strategic planning perspective. Studies with similar objectives have been conducted in Quebec (Bailey, 1992), in Alberta (Knapp, 1991) and on Ontario Universities (Neufeld, 1990; Lang 1995; Ibrahim, 1997), but to date a systematic examination of college strategic planning practices in Ontario has not been done.

2. It articulates linkages between the literature on strategic planning and the literature on organizational behaviour by addressing planning issues in the context of organizational theory. The findings provide a microcosmic view of the internal social and political dynamics that transpire around formal planning in a community college.
3. It demonstrates the utility of combining survey techniques with the case study research method as a means of examining and elucidating strategic planning activities in complex organizations.

The study results should be of use to educators interested in educational planning, scholars exploring the linkages between strategic planning and different organizational theories, and administrators in higher education seeking ways to improve their planning initiatives.

My own personal, professional and scholarly interests in planning date back 30 years. Graduating as an economics major from Carleton University in 1967, I was fascinated and impressed with the quantitative models and methodologies offered up as planning tools by the discipline. I joined the Ontario Hydro Corporation and held a number of planning-based positions, assisting in predicting future electrical demands and planning generating station sites and power line corridor routes. I returned to academia in the mid-1970s, studying organizational theory at York University. That was a time when there was great interest in open systems theory. My Master's thesis (Sheridan, 1978) explored linkages between public bureaucracies and their environments, using Ontario Hydro's experiences with the ecology movement as a case study. In many ways this current dissertation represents an expansion of my 1978 work. My career then took me to Sheridan College, where planning continued to be a major component of my job responsibilities, initially in program and curriculum planning and then in institutional research and enrolment planning through my role as College Registrar. My present position as principal of an active and growing management consulting practice continues to keep me deeply involved in planning. In the past year, more than half of the client projects I carried out involved direct applications of planning techniques.

Throughout my professional career I have observed a gradual shift in the nature of planning, moving away from the tightly linked, linear and highly deductive approaches of the 1960s to the looser, more iterative, inductive approaches of the mid-1990s. My own thinking style is very much analytical rather than intuitive, and I greatly prefer dealing with matters at a cognitive rather than an affective level, so my inclination was towards the earlier, more conventional forms of planning. However, I witnessed (and participated in)
enough planning failures in my career to begin to question the traditional approaches. By the early 1990s, I had become fully converted to the more strategic approach to planning, with all its qualitative, intuitive and creative aspects. My recent experiences in helping some of my clients successfully apply strategic planning principles to bring about organizational change has underscored the utility of the methodology to me. Properly applied, strategic planning really can help organizations "create their future", and deal with the many political and emotional variables surrounding any planning process.

Planning has come a long way in 30 years and I have enjoyed growing and changing with it. Its potential for organizations is just starting to be realized.

1.2 Problem Statement

The objective of the study is to provide a descriptive analysis of strategic planning practices employed at Ontario colleges of applied arts and technology in the context of organizational theory and the literature on strategic planning.

In order to address this objective, the study answers three broad research questions:

1. What is the nature of the strategic planning process in colleges?

In addressing this question, the study gathers information on principal actors and their roles, perceptions and expectations about strategic planning and planning methods employed. The focus is on who does planning, how it is done, and its impact on the organization.

2. What is the relationship between strategic planning practices and external environmental factors?

External factors include catchment area characteristics, learner profiles, competitors and the impact of government policies.

3. What is the relationship between strategic planning practices and internal environmental factors?
Factors examined are forms of governance, the history and maturity of the strategic planning process within the college, size and structure and various aspects of the organizational climate including communication, management style and labour relations.

1.3 Study Boundaries

The study concentrates on:

- **Planning at the institutional level** rather than provincial planning of educational systems. Province-wide initiatives are examined only in terms of their impact on institutional plans.

- **Strategic rather than tactical or operational decisions.** Robert Shirley's (1982) criteria defining strategic decisions are employed:
  
  - Affect relationships between the organization and its environment
  - Employ the whole organization as a unit of analysis
  - Multifunctional nature
  - Directional influence on activities throughout the organization
  - Important to success of the organization

Examples include decisions on major organizational directions such as program development and termination, enrolment levels and resource priorities.

- **Strategic planning.** Conventional forms of planning such as incremental planning, rational planning, advocacy planning and organizational development planning (Neufeld, 1990) are also examined, but only in terms of their relationship to strategic planning.

- The **college sector** of the Ontario educational system. While some of the literature cited deals with universities, the thrust of the thesis data is on how Ontario colleges plan.

The study does not attempt to directly assess the impact of strategic planning on performance as this would require measuring changes in
organizational effectiveness that would go far beyond the scope of the dissertation. However, the findings do offer some insight into the perceived success of strategic planning in Ontario colleges and the extent that strategic plans impact on operational decisions. (Daniel Lang (1988, pp. 8-9) suggests that the degree to which planning and decision making are matched is the "ultimate test" of planning.)

1.4 Strategic Planning Defined

Contributors to the scholarly literature in strategic planning adopt slightly different stances in describing and defining the term. Some writers (Norris and Poulton, 1987; Gluck, Kaufman and Walleck, 1985) view strategic planning as the most recent stage in a process of evolution of planning theory and practice. Others (Neufeld, 1990; Shirley, 1988) describe strategic planning by comparing it to other forms of institutional planning. Chaffee (1984) and Keller (1983) focus their descriptions of strategic planning on specific characteristics. Finally, a large group of writers represent strategic planning as a process with a number of distinct, but interrelated steps (Bryson, 1988; Cope, 1985; Keller, 1983; and Kotler, 1981 for example).

There is also a body of literature that presents critiques of planning. A recent book by Henry Mintzberg (1994) entitled the Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning argues that strategic planning is a rigid process that constrains creative behaviour in organizations. This position is at odds with other writers such as Meredith, Cope and Lenning (1987) who describe strategic planning as vision directed, proactive, entrepreneurial, synergistic and innovative.

Consensus in the literature does exist on a number of points:

1. Strategic planning involves some form of environmental scan of internal and external factors.

2. It is an organization-wide process driven by senior management rather than technical planners.

3. The process begins with the definition of an institutional mission that is converted into desired goals and objectives
4. The process is iterative rather than linear and often affectively-based rather than rationally-based.

5. There is a distinction between strategic decision making and operational decision making.

The definition of strategic planning employed in this thesis reflects these characteristics. Essentially strategic planning is viewed as an activity involving the development and maintenance of an advantageous fit between an organization and its changing environment. This definition has been adopted because it captures the dynamic and externally-oriented nature of strategic planning.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

The dissertation is organized into five chapters.

Chapter One introduces the thesis topic, states the research questions and positions the research relative to other studies of strategic planning.

The relevant literature is reviewed in Chapter 2. The focus is on two major bodies of knowledge - planning and organizational theory. The review of planning literature traces the evolution of planning, examines different perspectives on planning, differentiates between strategic and conventional planning, and explores current practices in strategic planning by higher education institutions. A generic strategic planning model is extracted from the literature. Selected organizational theory references are then reviewed with a focus on governance approaches within higher education institutions and issues related to organizational culture and climate. The chapter concludes by drawing linkages between the literature on planning and the literature on governance and identifying some specific connections between organizational characteristics and the nature of planning.

Chapter Three describes the methodology employed in the study. The dissertation's findings are based on a survey of key strategic planning characteristics among all CAATs and in-depth case studies of three colleges selected on the basis of the survey. This unique combination of quantitative
and qualitative methodologies produced some very rich data with high internal and external validity.

Findings are reported in Chapter Four. The results of the province-wide survey of college registrars are discussed, and detailed profiles of the three host colleges - Centennial, Confederation and Georgian - are presented, supported with data in tabular and anecdotal form. The chapter concludes by comparing and contrasting the colleges along a number of dimensions.

The study results are analysed and interpreted in Chapter Five, and some general conclusions about planning at Ontario CAATs are presented. Findings from the previous chapter are analysed in the context of the literature presented in Chapter Two in order to provide answers to the dissertation research questions pertaining to the nature of strategic planning in Ontario colleges and the influence of internal and external factors.

Chapter Five also identifies significant implications for theory and practice and specifies areas where additional research is required. It concludes with some prescriptive statements about what has to be done if educational institutions are to fully utilize the potential of strategic planning to address ongoing environmental turbulence.
2.1 The Nature of Planning

2.1.1 Early Roots

Planning is rich in historical precedent that dates back to the Greeks, the Romans, the Chinese in the Han dynasty, and the Incas of Peru. These ancient civilizations planned cities and major construction projects. The strategic nature of planning has military roots evident even further back in history. Sun Tzu's classic *The Art of Strategy* (Wing, 1988), written in 500BC, is a seminal contribution to the strategic planning literature. Cameron Fincher (1982) explores the military roots of strategic planning in a 1982 issue of the journal *Research in Higher Education*, citing a number of classic military strategies from the 19th century as precursors of some of the aspects of modern day corporate strategic planning.

In the 20th century, large scale national planning became popular, starting with Lenin's new Economic Plan in 1928 and the subsequent Soviet five-year production target plans. Roosevelt's New Deal of the 1930s was an elaborate economic plan and subsequent US presidents engaged in ambitious planning projects (Keller, 1983, pp.100-101).

The application of formal planning techniques by educational institutions does not occur until more recent times, and it tends to parallel developments in the institutional research field. William Cowley studies the early historical roots of research in education and cites the founding of Yale with assistance from Harvard as the first true application of institutional planning in North American higher education (Tetlow, 1983, p.7; Dressel, 1981, p. 229). However, the systematic use of research and planning techniques in the management of institutions did not really come into vogue until early in the twentieth century when Frederick W. Taylor's groundbreaking book *Principles of Scientific Management* (Taylor, 1911) ushered in the belief in rationality, adoption of the scientific method and commitment to the utility of management science.
2.1.2 Planning's Evolution

Many writers have examined planning in terms of its evolution over recent times, particularly the post World II period. This section reviews the main contributions in this area and identifies some of the common trends noted in the literature.

Norris and Poulton (1987) provide an informative review of the different eras of planning and decision making in higher education institutions over the post-war decades. The 1950s were characterized by relatively unsophisticated planning approaches limited to studies of new facilities and institutions. Environmental pressures related largely to increased demand. The 1960s ushered in management science techniques, institutional research, physical master planning, and system-wide educational planning. During this period planning developed as a formal staff function in most higher education institutions. In the 1970s, as resources became scarce, the focus of planning shifted away from new programs and facilities and concentrated on efficiency and resource issues. Conventional planning oriented to growth and development lost some lustre during this period, and many institutional planning departments were eliminated or downsized. The continued decline of resources and increased competitiveness among colleges and universities led to a rise in the popularity of strategic planning in the 1980s. The emphasis shifted from techniques to applications, and the planning function became more broadly dispersed among academic administrators. (pp. 166-7)

Gluck, Kaufman and Walleck (1985) posit that planning systems evolved through four stages - financial planning, forecasting, externally oriented planning and strategic management. Financial planning has a short time horizon and a goal of meeting budget projections. Forecasting takes a longer view and attempts to predict the future. The forecasting approach eventually breaks down, and many organizations then make a "quantum leap", moving to externally oriented planning which analyzes and reacts to the future. The final phase, strategic management, is described as the management approach necessary to implement the thinking that has taken place. Writing in the 1980s, Gluck, Kaufman and Walleck suggested that most organizations were between the second and third stages.
Hax and Majluf (1984) take a similar view, tracing the evolution of planning through five stages - budgeting, long-range planning, business strategic planning, corporate strategic planning and strategic management. William Pfeiffer (1991, pp. 372-380) builds on this classification, linking the first stage with the production period from the turn of the century to the mid-1930s. Following World War II, companies became interested in long-range planning in order to exploit the post-war boom. One-year budgets were projected over several years, an approach that worked fairly well due to the stable economic conditions of the time. However, by the end of the 1950s businesses began to realize they could no longer extrapolate the future, and began to focus on "creating" the future through specific product-oriented aggressive marketing and business development strategies. This orientation expanded to corporate-wide strategic planning in the 1960s and 1970s.

In a 1986 article, Marvin Peterson also traces changes in educational planning over the post-war decades (Peterson, 1986, pp. 6-10). Referring to the 1950s as the embryonic period, Peterson identifies that the key environmental challenge of the time was responding to growth pressures. The 1960s was the emergent period where growth pressures existed but it was also necessary to respond to student dissension. Accommodation thus became an element of planning. Peterson characterizes the 1970s as a period of fragmentation and formalization. Environmental pressures related to constraint, reduction and efficiency, and planning consequently adopted a rational, problem solving orientation. The 1980s comprised a period of consolidation and sophistication characterized by decline and uncertainty, and planning began to adopt a strategic approach, concerned with the organization/environment "fit". Peterson thus sees an evolution of planning driven by changes in environmental demands. He goes on to identify four major environmental trends - demographic changes, educational policy, technology and competition - impacting on the shape of educational planning and calls for educational institutions to adopt a strategic, future oriented approach to their planning.

Winstead and Ruff (1986) trace the evolution of institutional planning from the 1930s. In the 1930s and 1940s the emphasis was on budgeting and reporting. Formal planning, with discrete documentation of planning was prominent in the 1940s, but gave way to long range planning in the 1950s. The
1960s were characterised by contingency planning and an emphasis on interrelationships. In the 1960s program planning and budgeting (PPBS) further shifted the emphasis of planning away from cost items and towards organizational activities. In the 1970s and 1980s Winstead and Ruff document the use of Delphi studies for consensus building, zero-based budgeting for program justification, the examination of alternative scenarios, staff input to decision making, and finally the move towards environmental assessment and strategic planning in the 1980s.

All of the above writers posit that institutional planning is strongly shaped by external environmental conditions, and identify some significant common trends in the evolution of planning:

1. An increased level of sophistication in planning techniques
2. A move away from planning as a formalized function to planning as a process dispersed across the organization
3. An increasingly intrusive and challenging external environment, creating a corresponding shift in the orientation of planning, moving from a focus on internal control to a focus on external adaptability.

In effect, planning over the past 50 years has passed through three distinct stages - a reactive stage with its focus on responding to predictable events, a reflective/proactive stage with a focus on analysis and forward strategy, and an adaptive phase with an orientation to strategic decision making.

These shifts are evident in the work of many of the seminal writers. For example, an analysis of the work of Robert Cope illustrates the evolution of institutional planning and his corresponding changes in conceptualization. One of Cope's early texts, Strategic Policy Planning: A Guide for College and University Administrators (Cope, 1978) is a guidebook containing information on a range of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and extensive case study material. The focus is on obtaining stakeholder input and on the organized long-range planning approaches that were common at the time. By 1981, the increasing importance of external environments becomes evident, and in an article published that year, Cope reviews techniques for analysing the external environment and utilizing the information in strategy.
formulation (Cope 1981). He goes on to write another important article in Planning for Higher Education (Cope, 1985) urging that planners adopt a more contextual approach. In that article he states (p. 13):

> It is the position of this writer that what institutions have called long-range planning was largely a waste of time, and, while strategic planning is an improvement, some of its assumptions, drawing as they do on the practice of military and business enterprise, are lacking appropriateness for institutions of higher education. Most fundamentally, the objective is to urge a change, from long-range and strategic perceptions, to perceptions of familiar information and values in newer ways, more in keeping with the nature and tasks of higher education.

Cope points out that academic institutions are closely linked to their environments and must operate within an environmental context. He posits a model which links strategic planning (strategic planning arising out of an organization's mission) with strategic management (goals, objectives and policies designed to implement strategic choices).

Robert Cope's contextual approach is further evident in his 1987 definition of strategic planning (1987, p. 3)

> Strategic planning is an open systems approach to steering an enterprise over time through uncertain environmental waters. It is a proactive problem-solving behaviour directed externally at conditions in the environment and a means to find a favourable competitive position in the continual competition for resources. Its primary purpose is to achieve success with mission while linking the institution's future to anticipated changes in the environment in such a way that the acquisition of resources is faster that the depletion of resources.

This definition is useful because it articulates the close linkage between environmental conditions and an organization's success in achieving its mission.

In a 1993 article, George Keller (p. 9) cites changes in the nature of planning over the decade since he wrote his classic 1983 work on academic strategy, reviewed later in this chapter.
When I first wrote about strategic management (Keller, 1983), no more than a dozen of the thirty-four hundred colleges and universities in the United States were practicing strategic management. Today, if I were forced to guess the number of academic institutions engaged in thinking and acting strategically, I would estimate that number at roughly one-fourth of all colleges and universities. Adoption has been widespread and swift.

Keller explains that the shift towards more adaptive approaches is due to changing economic and demographic conditions, increasing demands for public accountability, greater financial constraints and developments in information technology.

2.1.3 **Perspectives on Planning**

Many writers provide useful insights into the institutional planning literature by classifying it in terms of different perspectives. One of the first comprehensive classifications was offered by Marvin Peterson in an important text published in 1980 (Peterson, 1980, pp. 114-141). Peterson describes the myriad ways that planning approaches can be viewed and classified, and some of these are listed below:

- Dynamic vs static views of planning
- Planning as process, structure and technology
- Content of plans
- Purpose and motive of plan
- Internal or external orientation
- View of future
- Strategic, tactical and operational approaches
- Degree of organizational penetration
- Degree of integration, coordination or fragmentation

Peterson uses these variables to identify and describe six approaches to planning dominating the literature:

1. **Formal Rational Planning.** This approach assumes a logical sequence of planning and decision making events flowing from a mission and from strategic goals. It offers the advantage of clarity and continuity within an organization, but sometimes becomes overly complex and resource intensive. Critics of this approach argue that its assumptions of rationality
are not valid in higher education institutions, and use of the approach will produce only incremental changes at best.

2. *The Organizational Development Approach.* This approach starts with the formal-rational outlook on planning, but focuses more closely on the role and involvement of individuals in the process. Its orientation tends to be internal, with an emphasis on consensus.

3. *The Technocratic/Empirical Approach.* This approach emphasizes the use of sophisticated planning techniques such as systems analysis, forecasting, Delphi analysis, needs assessment, budget analysis, simulations, scenario development and a range of statistical techniques. It assumes that planning variables related to planning are quantifiable and measurable, an assumption which is not always the case. The precision of this approach is alluring, but it often fails to connect with the social and political realities of organizations and their environments.

4. *Philosophical Synthesis.* This approach adopts the perspective that plans must be built on the common values and beliefs of members of an organization. The focus is on developing consensus around basic questions of organizational mission. This approach is synchronized with the cultural leadership approaches of the late 1980s and 1990s (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Chaffee and Tierney, 1988), but it is time consuming, and doesn't always generate significant changes in the strategic behaviour of organizations.

5. *Political Advocacy.* The political advocacy perspective views planning in an institution as a process of accommodating diverse missions and goals. Decisions arise out of bargaining, negotiation, compromise and coalition formation. Proponents argue that this approach reflects the realities of most higher education institutions. Critics point out the difficulties in achieving agreement on common directions that benefit the organizational as a whole.
6. **Coordinated Anarchy.** This perspective draws on the work of Cohen, March and Olsen (1972) and views planning as a spontaneous, loosely coordinated process in which autonomous units engage sporadically.

Ellen Chaffee identifies linear, adaptive and interpretive approaches to institutional planning (Chaffee, 1985). Linear approaches are goal focused and assume that managers can readily change organizations and environments are relatively stable or controllable. Adaptive approaches are environmentally focused and concentrate on means rather than ends. They are "organismic" approaches, while linear approaches are more "mechanistic". Chaffee's third category, interpretive strategy, (the category in which she classifies her own writings) adheres to the open system assumptions of adaptive strategy, but focuses more closely on dealing with the environment. She summarizes the three approaches as follows (p.147):

In linear strategy, leaders of the organization plan how they will deal with competitors to achieve their organization's goals. In adaptive strategy, the organization and its parts change, proactively or reactively, in order to be aligned with consumer preferences. In interpretive strategy, organizational representatives convey meanings that are intended to motivate stakeholders in ways that favour the organization. Each model provides a way of describing a certain aspect of organizational functioning to which the term "strategy" has been applied.

Barbara Neufeld (1990, pp. 38-89) organizes the literature on institutional planning into five planning perspectives employed in varying degrees by higher education institutions. Her categories follow closely from Marvin Peterson's earlier work. The first approach identified by Neufeld is "incremental planning", which concentrates on short term decisions and emphasizes process. Marginal adjustments to current conditions are planned, and altered in response to environmental pressures. This is a reactive form of planning that emphasizes tactics over strategy. The underlying assumption of the incremental approach is that problems are ambiguous and poorly defined, and information is incomplete and constantly changing. Incremental planning can accommodate conflicting values, incorporate new information, and produce short term results. However, its conservatism is a major limitation as it fails to provide long term direction or identify actions required to confront major environmental threats.
Like Peterson, Neufeld also identifies a category called "rational" planning. This approach assumes that organizations and their environments can be conceived of in terms of rational and predictable cause/effect relationships. It is a comprehensive form of planning with a long-range time horizon. The approach emphasizes the end product (goals and action plans) over process. Methods are predominantly technical, with a heavy emphasis on data collection and the quantification of variables. Neufeld points out that rational planning is attractive because of its systematic procedures and concrete outputs. It can provide useful long range operating blueprints for educational institutions. However, its rationality assumptions are questionable, it does not address internal value conflicts within an organization, and it tends to downplay the significance of forces in the external environment.

Neufeld suggests that many higher education institutions employ a form of "advocacy planning" to accommodate competing interest groups. Advocacy planning assumes a plurality of values and a lack of consensus within an organization. Steps in advocacy planning involve identification of interest groups, development of positions, reaction to alternatives and preparation of regulations and guidelines to implement change. Advocacy planning is usually of a short-term nature. This is a practical approach which recognizes the political realities of higher education institutions and provides a forum for interest groups to advance their positions. On the negative side, it is time consuming, fragmented in its approach to issues, and can leave a residue of unresolved conflicts.

Neufeld also employs the term "organizational development planning". This approach planning adopts a humanistic perspective and views the well being of the organization and its members as the prime planning objective. Planning activities often start at lower levels of the organization and are characterized by openness, a quest for consensus, and a problem solving focus. Planning methods include meetings, discussions and problem solving task forces. The time frame is long term. This approach recognizes the social and political nature of planning and decision making and can offer payoffs in improved staff morale and increased job satisfaction. However, collaboration does not always work, and frustration can arise when groups lack technical expertise or encounter restrictions in their access to relevant information.
Neufeld's fifth category is "contingency planning", involving combinations of the other types of planning to fit different sets of circumstances. An example would be using an advocacy planning approach to develop support for a plan that had been developed based on rational planning techniques. Blending of planning models is attractive and likely is reflective of what actually happens in educational institutions, but should be done with care since each model proceeds from its own unique value base and assumptions about organizational behaviour.

Henry Mintzberg (1990) identifies ten schools of thought on strategy formation. The first three are prescriptive in nature and include:

1. The "design school", which takes a conceptual view of the strategy formation process, with strategy being developed in the conscious mind of a leader and following an informal process.

2. The "planning school" which adopts a more formalized approach and disperses strategy development across the organization.

3. The "positioning school" which focuses on the content of strategies rather than the strategy development process.

Mintzberg then identifies seven descriptive strategies. The "cognitive" school examines the mental aspects of strategy formulation, the "entrepreneurial school" focuses on visioning, the "learning school" views strategy as an outcome of collective learning, the "political school" takes a power perspective on strategy formulation, the "cultural school" looks at cooperation and collaboration, and the "environmental school" views strategy as a reaction to external forces.

In his most recent book The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning, Mintzberg focuses on strategic planning approaches drawn from the design and planning schools. He identifies five premises underlying the design school's perspective on planning (Mintzberg, 1994, pp. 37-39):

1. Strategy formation should be a controlled and conscious process.
2. The C.E.O. of an organization is the chief strategist.
3. Strategy formation models must be kept simple and informal.
4. Unique strategies arise out of a process of creative design.
5. The strategies come out of the process fully designed.
6. Strategies should be made explicit and articulated.
7. Once strategies are formulated, they must be implemented.

Mintzberg points out that the planning school differs on the third premise by advocating highly formalized, documented and routinized procedures for strategy development.

In a review of Mintzberg's book, George Keller (1994) suggests there are three schools of thought around strategic planning. The first school, called "sceptical incrementalists" argues that little can be achieved through conscious strategic planning since change is a political accommodation and implementation of plans usually fails. Keller includes Robert Birnbaum (1988) and James March (1976) in this school. Keller calls the second school "systematic planning optimists", who contend that planned change is possible through the visioning and analysis techniques of the design and planning schools. Igor Ansoff (1965), Peter Drucker (1973) and Robert Cope (1978) are included in this school. The final school consists of the "cautious advocates" who believe that, given the right conditions and an appropriate mix of leadership and analysis, some change is possible. Keller places himself in this category, along with Robert Shirley (1988). He observes that Henry Mintzberg subscribes to the some of ideas of the sceptical incrementalists and the cautious optimists, but rejects out of hand the views of the systematic planning optimists.

Another useful schema for classifying different perspectives on planning comes from Reginald Lang's examination of the conceptual underpinnings of contemporary strategic planning. (Lang, 1995, pp. 26 - 42). Lang reviews the planning literature and identifies the "rational" or "synoptic" model which is based in technical rationality. This approach is scientific, analytical, quantitative, fact-based and seeks single solutions to problems. Criticized for its inability to capture the soft aspects of strategic planning such as shared values, vision and innovation, and for its inability to deal with turbulent environments, the synoptic model still prevails in many current planning applications. Lang suggests that
this is due to society's predilection towards technical rationality, favour from academics and the legitimacy attached to the approach by planning practitioners.

Citing the work of Charles Lindblom (1959, 1965), Reg Lang (p. 31) outlines the "incrementalist" approach to planning and decision making:

Lindblom characterized decision making as incremental (small changes, seldom innovative), remedial (away from the bad rather than toward the good), serial (not trying to solve all problems at once), exploratory (ends and means continually discovered and redefined), limited (only a few alternatives considered), disjointed (power dispersed), and focused on what can be agreed on rather than on what someone considers optimal or best.

The incremental approach to planning accurately reflects the nature of the planning process in many organizations, and its trial and error approach can be appropriate in times of rapid change. However, the approach tends to support the status quo and rarely results in major innovation.

Lang presents the incremental and synoptic approaches to planning as polar opposites on a continuum. He goes on to cite Galbraith (1973) and Lawrence and Lorsch (1969) to introduce "contingency theory", the notion that there is no best way to plan and manage, but the best approach is always contingent on situational factors. Numerous writers have attempted to specify the key contingent variables, but there is little consensus in the literature. However, the approach does enable planners to utilize a mix of synoptic and incremental approaches and exercise flexibility in dealing with continuous environmental change.

The final approach suggested by Lang is the "adaptive-learning alternative". He suggests that the contingent application of different mixes of synoptic/incremental approaches are still not sufficient in dealing with turbulent environments. Based on the old principles of action research (Lewin, 1951), and the more recent literature on organizational learning (Argyris, 1982, Senge, 1990), this approach espouses continually evolving plans based on new things learned. Mintzberg (1994, p.p. 109-110) supports this approach, stating that his
own studies at McGill University found strategy making to be "a complex, interactive and evolutionary, best described as one of adaptive learning".

The approaches discussed in this section can be grouped under three broad perspectives: rational approaches that are fact based, consensual approaches that are people based, and situational approaches that are environmentally based.

1. **Rational Perspectives.** Rational approaches employ conventional analytical planning methodologies and are based on the premise that goals can be consciously selected and achieved and measured in a logical sequential fashion. Marvin Peterson's formal/rational and technocratic/empirical approaches fall within this category, along with Chaffee's notion of linear or mechanistic planning, Barbara Neufeld's rational approach, Henry Mintzberg's design, planning and cognitive schools, George Keller's system planning optimists and Reg Lang's synoptic perspective. Rational perspectives on planning have been dominating the literature, but this is now changing.

2. **Consensual Perspectives.** These approaches place a great deal of emphasis on human dynamics, focussing on the feelings and positions of stakeholder groups, particularly internal stakeholders. Marvin Peterson's organizational development, philosophical synthesis and political advocacy approaches are in this category, along with Chaffee's interpretive planning, Neufeld's advocacy and organizational development forms of planning, and Mintzberg's entrepreneurial, learning, political and cultural schools.

3. **Situational Approaches.** Situational approaches place their emphasis on internal and external factors impacting on the planning process. Peterson's notion of a coordinated anarchy falls within this category, along with Chaffee's adaptive approaches, Neufeld's incremental and contingency planning, Mintzberg's positional and environmental schools, Keller's sceptical incrementalists and Lang's contingency theory, incremental and adaptive learning approaches.

These are summarized in Table 1 on Page 21.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspectives on Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rational</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Fact-based)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterson, 1980:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaffee, 1985:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neufeld, 1990:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mintzberg, 1990:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keller, 1994:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lang, 1995:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1.4 Planning's Revolution

The approaches to institutional planning discussed in the Section 2.1.3 all have their particular limitations and generally meet with limited success in practice. By the early 1980s there was a growing awareness that conventional forms of planning had failed to address the increasingly intrusive and dynamic environmental forces impacting higher education institutions in North America. The consensus emerging in the literature was that the "best" approaches were adaptive ones drawing elements from the rational, consensual and situational forms of planning. Thus, strategic planning as a distinct and unique form of planning was finally becoming recognized.

George Keller’s influential book Academic Strategy: The Management Revolution in Higher Education (1983) became essential reading for countless academic administrators. James Miller (1983, p.44) refers to the text as a "call for action" and predicts (accurately, it turns out) that it would become the surrogate for all the strategic planning literature for many practitioners. In the book, Keller advocates the use of strategic planning in dealing with environmental challenges and prescribes a range of methods and approaches. He describes strategic planning in academic institutions as active rather than passive, and outward oriented. According to Keller, strategic planning takes a competitive stance recognizing that higher education is subject to market conditions. He proceeds to state that strategic planning concentrates on actions rather than documented plans. It is a blend of rational analysis, politics and psychology and is therefore interactive and highly tolerant of controversy. Finally, strategic planning concentrates on the fate of the institution above everything else.

Although Keller’s book is widely viewed as the precursor of the strategic planning era in higher education, scholarly interest in strategic approaches to environmental change actually dates back several decades. The notion of environmental turbulence was first identified in the 1960s as writers began to view organizations as open systems rather than closed systems. Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn (1966) treat organizations as open systems that attempt to maintain a "dynamic equilibrium" with their environment. Emery and Trist (1965) explore different ways that organizations are connected to their
environments. They first introduced the notion of a turbulent environment characterized by high levels of complexity, constantly changing connections and continuous uncertainty. As they put it, "the ground is moving" (p. 270). Other writers of the time also adopt an open systems approach, focusing on the different strategies that organizations were beginning to deploy in dealing with their environments (Thompson and McEwen, 1958; Dill, 1959; Levine and White, 1961; Warren, 1967; Duncan, 1972; Hall, 1972; Jurovitch, 1974; Osborn and Hunt, 1974). Some time later, Robert Cope reflects on the validity of the open systems approach, stating "strategic planning is largely an application of general systems concepts to a particular property: an organization in an interactive, legal, economic, and social environment" (Cope, 1981b, p. 13).

Robert Cope (1985) provides a distinction between strategic planning for business and strategic planning for education. Business planning has a competitive orientation emphasizing economic returns while educational strategic planning should emphasize basic principles that define worthwhile states of existence. (This is a major point of departure from Keller's view.) Cope views educational planning as a process that involves the establishment of a mission, identification of strategic choices, setting of long range goals and short-term objectives, and implementation.

A similar prescriptive approach to strategic planning for non-profit organizations is offered by John Bryson (1988). Strategic planning is presented as an eight step process that consists of agreeing on an approach, identifying organizational mandates, clarifying organizational mission and values, assessing the external environment, assessing the internal environment, identifying strategic issues, formulating strategies to manage the issues and establishing an effective organizational vision for the future. Bryson points out that while the steps are presented in a linear, sequential fashion, the process is actually more iterative with changes in the sequence and revisiting of decisions occurring frequently.

Robert Shirley (1988) differentiates between strategic and operational decisions. Strategic decisions involve decisions about an organization's basic mission, target audiences and program mix. Operational decision making is
required to implement the strategic plan and set general parameters for planning at the departmental level.

William Cook (1988) argues that strategic planning is both a process and discipline where "the discipline includes the vital ingredients of the plan itself; the process is the organizational dynamic through which the vital ingredients are achieved." He further states that "the whole purpose of planning is to make decisions about the future before the future either forces the decisions or renders any decisions irrelevant" (p. 93).

It is apparent from the foregoing discussion that strategic planning represents a radical departure from conventional forms of institutional planning. Although it has many of the characteristics of the rational, consensual and situational forms of institutional planning, it starts with a very different set of values and assumptions. The differences are nicely articulated in an article by Meredith, Cope and Lenning (1987, p.7) and are summarized in Table 2 on Page 25.

The adoption of a strategic planning approach requires a quantum leap for any organization, a paradigm shift that is revolutionary rather than evolutionary. It may also be the only organizational change strategy that offers any hope of dealing with the environmental turbulence facing higher education institutions in the late 1990s. The conventional planning approaches have been rendered obsolete, due in part to the "planners dilemma" which holds that there is a greater need for planning in a period of rapid change, but this uncertainty also makes it more likely that the plans will be inadequate (Keller, 1983, p. 97). Strategic planning counters this dilemma by adopting a proactive, future driven stance.

The leading edge of the literature on strategy and planning goes beyond strategic planning to explore ways that organizations can behave strategically as well as plan strategically. This is generally termed as "strategic management", and although only recently in vogue, several writers made seminal contributions to the field. For example, A.D. Chandler addresses the notion of strategic adaptation in the early 1960s (Chandler, 1962). Chandler
### Table 2
**Strategic Planning vs Conventional Planning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Planning</th>
<th>Conventional Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emphasizes the environment</td>
<td>Emphasizes the enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oriented toward change</td>
<td>Emphasizes stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision directed</td>
<td>Follows a blue print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inductive and integrated</td>
<td>Deductive and analytical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactive</td>
<td>Reactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasizes doing the right things</td>
<td>Emphasizes doing things right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open and external focus</td>
<td>Closed and internal focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipates changes</td>
<td>Extrapolates from the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions based on future</td>
<td>Decisions based past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial and action oriented, even when there is ambiguity</td>
<td>Inaction when there is ambiguity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasizes innovation and creativity</td>
<td>Emphasizes tried and tested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synergistic</td>
<td>Univariate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprise's environment and context are primary determinants of strategy</td>
<td>Strengths and weaknesses are primary determinants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on opinions, intuition and the qualitative</td>
<td>Emphasis on facts and the quantitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation toward effectiveness</td>
<td>Orientation toward efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patterns are in a stream of decisions</td>
<td>Decisions are made and carried out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Meredith, Cope and Lenning, 1987, p. 7

challenges the prevailing view that organizational structure and process are given determined by internal factors, and asserts that they are in fact shaped by external factors and the nature of an organization's strategy.

Another early contributor was Igor Ansoff, who introduced the notion of strategy in his classic *Corporate Strategy: An Analytical Approach to Business Policy for Growth and Expansion* (Ansoff, 1965). However, the sub-title of the book reflects the highly rational perspective adopted to strategy development, an approach that differs from the Meredith, Cope and Lenning definition of
strategic behaviour. In a 1988 revision of his text, entitled *The New Corporate Strategy*, (Ansoff, 1988) he offers some useful insights into strategy, including a clear and simple differentiation between strategic planning and strategic management (strategic planning makes decisions, strategic management achieves results), but according to Mintzberg, his contribution to the field of strategy development is indeterminate. In reviewing Ansoff's 1965 book, Mintzberg (1994, p. 46) states:

This outstanding question is whether or not this ever worked, whether Ansoff did indeed solve any strategy problem, let alone the total one. Did he contribute a viable model for strategy making or simply (but by no means merely) a number of interesting ideas, a good bit of wisdom, and a body of useful vocabulary.

In either case, Ansoff's influence on the field of strategic management is notable. In a more recent article, he describes an emerging "paradigm" of strategic behaviour. After reviewing the different perspectives on planning, Ansoff constructs a paradigm with the following characteristics (1988, p. 514):

- A multidisciplinary "scientific optic" that encompasses political, sociological, and cognitive realities
- A "problem space" that closely connects strategic behaviour with organizational structure and dynamics
- Close interaction between strategic and operational behaviours
- A parallel and mutual feedback process
- Clearly defined domains of strategic activity.

Ansoff concludes that the strategic evolution of an organization is determined by the interplay of environmental forces, organizational structure and dynamics, and organizational strategy.

Arthur Thompson and A. J. Strickland also invoke the notion of strategic management well before the term became popular in the literature. They describe strategic management as consisting of five tasks (Thompson and Strickland, 1980, pp. 3 - 21):

1. Determining the organization's business and establishing a vision of where it wants to go
2. Converting the vision and mission into measurable objectives
3. Determining a strategy to achieve the desired results
4. Implementing the strategy
5. Evaluating and revising the strategy

This is a useful approach since it clearly articulates some of the elements of a successful strategy and makes provision for evaluation and revision. However, like many of the early writers on strategy, the approach may be still overly proactive (rather than adaptive) and puts forward a perspective that might be overly rational and consensual (rather than situational).

James Miller captures the flavour of strategic planning in a 1983 article entitled "Strategic Planning as Pragmatic Adaptation". After suggesting that strategic planning can be viewed as a reconfiguration of other approaches to management, such as policy analysis, marketing and effectiveness evaluation, he draws from the work of Peterson (1980), Cope (1981) and Keller (1983) to describe strategic planning as environmentally based, flexible, adaptable and action oriented.

Henry Mintzberg is a prolific contributor to the field of strategic planning and has produced many widely referenced articles on strategic behaviour (Mintzberg, 1973, 1978, 1987, 1990, 1994, to name just a few). The popularity of Mintzberg's writings is due in part to his ability to articulate the nature of strategic planning and argue the importance of managing with close reference to the external environment. In a 1985 article written with J.A. Waters and appearing in the Strategic Management Journal, Mintzberg first differentiates between deliberate and emergent strategies (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985). He develops this notion further in his 1994 book (pp. 23 - 29), stating that deliberate strategies are planned in advance, and subsequently realized, while emergent strategies are unanticipated, but occur nonetheless. The actual strategies that are realized comprise a mix of deliberate and emergent strategies, and successful strategic management involves taking both into account. Mintzberg suggests that organizations should build sufficient flexibility into their strategies to incorporate emerging events. As he puts it "the real world inevitably involves some thinking ahead of time as well as some adaptation en route" (p.24).
Ellen Chaffee, in the 1985 article cited in the previous section, reviews the business model of strategy development and calls for the adoption of more strategic approaches by higher education institutions (Chaffee, 1985, p. 164):

To study strategic management is to begin to understand the nature of the organization itself, how it creates and responds to myriad and shifting external forces, and what it needs to accomplish in order to survive and prosper. The course of higher education in times of change and scarcity will be determined largely by how well administrators and faculties understand strategic management .... We need to become more aware of that (strategic management) literature and to develop the necessary sophistication to address the topic profoundly.

Kim Cameron (1984) emphasizes the importance of organizational adaptation. She differentiates this from planned change (or organizational development) by stating "Adaptation focuses on changes motivated by the external environment; OD focuses on changes motivated from within the organization" (p. 123), and outlines several approaches to organizational adaptation: the "population ecology" approach, which is totally reactive to the environment, the "life cycles" approach which assumes some control over the environment, the "strategic choice" approach which assumes greater environmental control, and the "symbolic action" approach which assumes that organizations have a considerable ability to influence their environments. Echoing many other writers, she states that higher education education institutions will have to remain flexible to develop "multiple, innovative adaptations" but retain the ability to implement strategies and change organizational components (p.139).

Keller (1997, p. 160) picks up on the aggressive, military nature of strategic planning with the following quote:

The heart of strategic thinking is the creation of a set of initiatives allowing an army, a country, a corporation, or a university to maintain stability or win a new position amidst a blizzard of discontinuities, unprecedented threats, and surprising changes. Stratagems are really meant to deal with outside threats and competition. Many colleges in recent years have had little choice: either become more strategic or decline.
Keller goes on to prescribe a number of ingredients for successful strategic planning including having a determined senior-level champion of strategic change, ensuring "buy-in" by key figures, strong and continual communication, and having a clear plan for the planning process.

In a recent article in *Planning for Higher Education*, Marc Cutright (1997) explores the utility of chaos theory in improving the effectiveness of planning. He concludes (pp. 20 - 22) that chaos theory offers five potential lessons to planners:

1. **Chaos theory suggests that events and their interrelationships are unpredictable and semi-chaotic. Plans should therefore be short term, and flexible.**

2. **Planning should be multifaceted and interactive, recognizing the non-linear nature of higher education institutions and their environments.**

3. **Planning should address "attractors" a term in chaos theory which refers to forces that help organize and stabilize a system. In planning, organizational culture and an institution's long term purpose (vision and mission) would constitute attractors.**

4. **Chaos theory emphasizes the importance of feedback in shaping systems. Planning should also be supported with solid feedback mechanisms.**

5. **In chaos theory, some factors in the environment (such as the often cited example of butterfly wings impacting weather in far away places) can gain great power from their interaction with other variables. A key to successful strategy, according to Cutright, is the ability to recognize the seemingly small factors that can bring about significant changes.**

Cutright's article is timely because it illustrates how a somewhat different and arguably unconventional theoretical perspective can be applied to strategic planning to underscore the importance of flexibility, adaptability and constant references to the environment. There is a growing interest in the application of chaos theory in the study of organizations (Stamps, 1997) so this may well be
the beginning of a new direction in the strategic planning and strategic management literature.

With the growing awareness of the importance an organization's external environment came a need for solid conceptual approaches to monitoring external factors. Writing in 1981, Robert Cope identifies a 360-degree scanning model with economic, social, technological and political, or public policy dimensions. He identifies some sources of scanning information and suggests some methodologies for assessing the environmental data, such as probability analysis, values profiling, and a range of forecasting techniques. He concludes with a strong statement of the benefits of environmental scanning (1981b, p. 5):

Environmental scanning, when employed as a part of a fully participating strategic planning process, offers many interrelated benefits. One might expect these outcomes: Help in identifying crucial issues, aid in goal formation, increased appreciation among operating units for how other units interact with each other and with their shared environment, and increased openness to opportunities.

George Keller (1983, pp. 157-8) also emphasizes the importance of environmental scanning and identifies five key areas for external forecasting: technological, economic, demographic, politico-legal and sociocultural. He admits that forecasting procedures are crude but suggests that this should not be an impediment:

It is a common flaw among the highly learned in academe to prefer to do very little until near-certainty and rigorous methodologies have been worked out. But life does not allow such delays. We must act, doing the best we can with what we have. Herodotus and Thucydides wrote the first histories without a tidy method. Environmental scanning too should proceed regardless, adjusting regularly to new conditions.

Robert H. Glover and Jeffrey Holmes (1983) maintain that the important environmental considerations are the social factors beyond the control of the institution, relationships with clients, suppliers, governing bodies and suppliers, the geographical scope as defined by the institution's mission, and the time frame for analysis. Like Cope, they suggest a range of relatively sophisticated scanning techniques. Richard Jonsen writes in a similar vein (Jonsen, 1986)
identifying demographic, economic, political, organizational, technological and social dimensions. Echoing the work of Emery and Trist two decades earlier, Jonsen describes the environmental turbulence faced by higher education institutions in the 1980s.

James Morrison is a very significant contributor to the literature on environmental scanning, with numerous articles and presentations on the subject (Morrison, 1985, 1987, 1992). His most comprehensive work was published in a 1987 issue of Planning for Higher Education. In that article, Morrison describes an environmental scanning system that responds to four questions (1987, p. 7):

1. What is the current environment?
2. What future changes in the environment might be anticipated?
3. What goals does the organization wish to achieve in the future?
4. What actions are necessary to enhance the possibility that the desired goals are achieved?

Morrison's system involves monitoring selected trends of interest, forecasting the future of the trends, setting organizational goals in response to the forecasts and implementing operational plans based on the goals. He offers a detailed and prescriptive treatment of topics such as selection and training of scanners, sources of information, data collection methods, preparation of abstracts, impact assessment techniques, and organizational considerations. He concludes (p. 21) by citing Hearn and Heydinger (1985):

... the success of environmental assessment in higher education depends on its being not only intuitive, creative, and strategically oriented, but also open, representative, highly cost-effective, well-placed organizationally, and extremely sensitive to the organization's political context.

Morrison's 1987 article is useful because it delineates a formal approach to environmental scanning that is practical, yet conceptually sound. Moreover, its real significance lies in the fact that it identifies the linkages between environmental scanning and decision making through a clear and comprehensive discussion of methods for setting and implementing goals on the basis of environmental data.
Claggett (1989, pp. 19 - 20) identifies similar scanning variables and methodologies and suggests that the utility of environmental scanning extends to other areas such as marketing, accreditation, fund raising, proposal writing, lobbying and public relations.

Academic scholars and higher education practitioners continue to build on Morrison's work. Joel Lapin (1992) reports on a survey of 612 community college where 40 percent the respondents engage in environmental scanning and more than half are interested in refining their efforts. Thomas Mecca (1996) reiterates the importance of formal environmental scanning systems, gives some updated sources of environmental data, discusses some computerized simulation approaches and provides some Internet resources for environmental scanning. The use of the Internet for environmental scanning is likely the next development in strategic management, and pilot work is already underway in some Ontario colleges (Sim and Sheridan, 1997).

2.1.5 Towards a Generic Model

Section 2.1.2 traced the evolution of planning from its early stance of reacting to the future, though its proactive phase and into its current adaptive phase with an emphasis on adaptive approaches to the environment. The different perspectives on planning were then examined in Section 2.1.3. The challenging environments now confronting higher education institutions suggest that the most effective strategic planning approach is a blend of the different perspectives, having a strong adaptive thrust, but drawing on the elements of the rational, consensual and situational approaches to planning. The actual mix of process elements depends on the characteristics of the institution and the nature of the challenges faced, a point that is developed further in Chapter 5.

Over the years, numerous writers have described and prescribed specific models for institutional planning (Drucker, 1973; Steiner, 1979; Kotler and Murphy, 1981; Hollowood, 1981; Cope 1985; Bryson, 1988; Shirley, 1988; Pfeiffer, 1991; and Thompson and Strickland, 1995). While they all improve our understanding of the intricacies of the planning process, they tend to be anchored in specific schools of thought, with their inherent limitations. In this
section, a generic model of strategic management is developed drawing widely from the literature as well as from the writer's own experience as a strategic planning facilitator.

The model proposed consists of nine components, organized in sequence, but interacting with one another in an iterative fashion:

1. An environmental scanning system, with provision for analysis of present internal strengths and weaknesses and future external threats and opportunities
2. A vision of the organization's preferred future state and a statement of the organization's mission and values
3. A stakeholder involvement plan
4. Broadly defined strategic goals and objectives
5. A comprehensive operational plan, with provision for ongoing feedback and adjustment

The model is depicted in Figure 1 on Page 34 and discussed in detail below.

1. Environmental Scanning. A formal and comprehensive environmental scan is the starting point for any strategic planning process, and ongoing scanning is the basis for effective strategic management. The important literature dealing with environmental scanning has already been discussed in Section 2.1.4.

As early as 1979 George Steiner captures the essence of strategic planning and the significance of the environment (Steiner, 1979, p. 16):

Strategic planning is not a simple aggregation of functional plans or an extrapolation of current budgets. It is truly a systems approach to maneuvering an enterprise over time through the uncertain waters of its changing environment to achieve prescribed aims.

Steiner conceives of an organization's environment (or what he sometimes calls the "situation audit") as a data base describing past performance, the current situation, and the future. Variables include sales, market share, productivity, internal capabilities, competition,
market forecasts, economics, technology and other relevant trends. He describes "WOTS UP analysis" (weaknesses, opportunities, threats and strengths underlying planning), stating that the ability to objectively link future opportunities and threats to present strengths and weaknesses can lead to a high payoff for an organization.

Kotler and Murphy (1981) identify five major parts in an organization's environment: the "internal environment" (board, administrators, staff, faculty); the "market environment" (students, funders, employers); the "public environment" (media, government, community); the "competitive environment" (direct and generic competitors); and the "macro
environment" (demographic, economic, technological, political). They describe how to analyse the environment in terms of threats, opportunities and resources. Resources that an organization has comprise its strengths, while resources that an organization lacks are its weaknesses.

Other major writers take similar approaches to the analysis of environments. Keller (1983) suggests that environmental scanning should cover internal strengths and weaknesses and external threats and opportunities implied by trends, market preferences and the competitive situation. Robert Cope (1985) places a strong emphasis on environmental context in his later writings. Bryson (1988) and Shirley (1988) also subscribe to the need to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in an organization's environment.

2. Vision, Mission and Values. Any strategic planning process must be anchored and guided by an organizational vision of its preferred future, a mission describing its purpose, and articulated values guiding the behaviour of organizational members as they discharge their mission in pursuit of their vision.

All the major writers emphasize the importance of these components. Kotler and Murphy (p.p. 477-9) see a mission as an important prerequisite to goal setting. Cope (1985, p. 15) underscores the importance of a vision and mission by stating "If an institution is heading in the wrong direction, the last thing it needs is greater operating efficiency". In a recent informal memo to a college's planning committee (1995, pp. 1-2) Cope provides a useful definition and statement of purpose of an organization's vision statement:

A vision statement describes a desirable state to attain in the future. What does a College get from a vision statement? Provides a "cause" around which faculty, staff, students, trustees, employers, community may rally. Helps establish a framework for ethical behaviour. Enlists support externally. Serves as a public relations tool. Makes a commitment.
Bryson states that clarifying organizational mission and values can eliminate unnecessary conflict within an organization and channel strategic activities more productively. He says (1988, p. 49) "Indeed, it is doubtful that any organization ever achieved greatness or excellence without a basic consensus among its key stakeholders on an inspiring mission". Shirley (p. 9) states that defining the mission is "the most fundamental component of the institutional plan". Thompson and Strickland focus on the internal benefits of a mission and vision, stating that this ".. infuses the workforce with a sense of purpose and a persuasive rational for the company's future direction" (1995, p. 4).

The role of statements of institutional purpose was closely examined in a 1991 study carried out by Daniel Lang and Rosanne Lopers-Sweetman. Lang and Sweetman reviewed the relevant literature and examined the content and form of 32 institutional statements and 12 system plans in North American higher education jurisdictions. They found that the statements fell into six categories (Lang and Lopers-Sweetman, 1991, pp.613-615):

- Historical-philosophical statements
- Action plans
- Interrogative or optional (posing questions or stating options)
- Expressions of scale and capacity
- Messanic tablets (stating a particular change to be achieved)
- Anthologies of missions (compiling various unit plans)

They argue that mission statements have to be developed carefully with an awareness of the different types of statements and close reference to the nature of the organization and its desired vision.

3. **Stakeholder Involvement.** Section 2.1.4 on "Planning's Revolution" pointed out the unique nature of strategic planning in comparison with conventional planning. Involvement of groups and individuals in the process was seen as one of the defining characteristics of the strategic approach. Meredith, Cope and Lenning, for example, drew attention to the open nature of strategic planning and its inherent emphasis on opinions over facts (p. 7). One requisite for the success of a strategic
process therefore has to be a formalized method for involving stakeholders at various points in the process.

Many scholars do not place sufficient emphasis on this important process component. However, Bryson does refer to the need to complete a stakeholder analysis before developing a mission statement. He defines a stakeholder as "any person, group, or organization that can place a claim on an organization's attention, resources, or output, or is affected by that output" (p. 52) and makes the point that this is particularly important in public and non-profit organizations since their basic mission relates to the satisfaction of key stakeholders.

An effective stakeholder involvement plan has to identify the relevant stakeholders, determine their appropriate level of involvement, and specify appropriate methodologies for soliciting their involvement. Levels of involvement can include the following:

- Provided with information only
- Consultation (asked for input, advice not necessarily followed)
- Participation (direct participation in the planning process
- Approval (approve or veto plans)

Methodologies for involvement can include questionnaires, focus groups, meetings, written submissions and a host of emerging electronic means. Conflict, and potential process sabotage can arise when stakeholders have been overlooked, or when there is disagreement over the level of involvement (Sheridan, 1997).

Faculty in an educational institution are a very important stakeholder group. A somewhat tongue-in-cheek article by Harold Eickhoff (1979) compares faculty to the men living in the myth of Plato's cave, who had to enter a new reality. Faculty (and for that matter, any other stakeholders) may not be versed in the culture and intricacies of the planning process and may encounter difficulties when asked to participate. Eickhoff prescribes a number of ways to overcome this including communication, patience, a focus on the ideal, and adherence to standard planning models. He concludes by stating (p. 15):
Faculty understanding of, and commitment to, planning and its potential results is absolutely critical in the implementation of any college plan ... Failure to meet (a plan's) expectations ... is related to the lack of faculty involvement in the planning process. Most meaningful change in colleges and universities comes at the faculty level. After all, the faculty is where the goods are delivered.

Some writers conceptualize stakeholder groups as elements of an organization's environment (for example Kotler and Murphy, 1981 and Cope, 1985). This is certainly the case, and illustrates one of the many ways in which the environment is tightly linked to an organization’s planning process. However, it is important not to lose sight of the critical role of stakeholders in all elements of the strategic management process, including defining vision, mission and values, developing goals and objectives and participating in the execution of operational plans.

4. **Strategic Goals and Objectives.** An organization's vision and mission become converted into strategic action through goals and objectives. The model in Figure 1 depicts strategic goals and objectives as the product of an organization's environmental analysis and its vision. In effect, strategic goals are a judicious mix of dreams (the vision) and reality (the environmental analysis). Getting the right mix is important. Goals that only take the vision into account are often unrealistic. Goals that only take the environment into account often result in a directionless, overly reactive organizational strategy.

Bryson (pp. 57-9) identifies three ways to delineate goals. The first method involves identifying strategic issues arising out of the vision and SWOT analysis and developing goals to address the issues. The second approach is to establish goals directly. The third approach, which he calls the "vision of success approach" works backwards from an idealized scenario of the future. The best approach, according to Bryson, depends on the particular situation. Kotler and Murphy (pp. 478) state that strategic goals are necessary to keep an institution from drifting into an uncertain future. They distinguish between determining what current goals are and what the goals should be, and point out that perceptions of this may vary across stakeholder groups. Cope (1985, p.15) sees goals as the outcome of strategic choices made by an organization.
In most strategic planning configurations, goals are broad statements of organizational direction and objectives are specific and measurable statements of outcomes. A goal is a destination, while an objective is a travel plan. Both are necessary in any strategic journey. Daniel Lang (1988, p. 9) states clearly and correctly that "planning fails in the absence of goals. He provides a realistic description of the goal setting process in a higher education institution:

In practice, the determination of goals is difficult, contentious, and political. Consequently goals are often the product of compromise and negotiation. These difficulties and conditions can neither be under-estimated nor disregarded. But goals are nevertheless essential.

5. *Operational Plan.* The operational plan is the specific and detailed set of actions necessary to meet strategic objective and monitor their impact relative to the environment. Resource priorities, documented through a budget are an integral part of operational plans. Robert Shirley (p. 16) states that where strategic planning focuses on answering the "what" questions, operational planning concentrates on the "how" questions.

The strategic process in an organization often derails at this point. March and Simon (1958) attribute this to Gresham's Law of Planning which states "If left uncontrolled the operational activity suppresses the strategic activity". The critical success factors at this stage are the ability to link operational activities with strategic activities and the ability to continually monitor changes in the environment and make appropriate adjustments. Lang (1989) suggests one way of addressing the first factor is through a linkage of planning decisions with the budgeting process. Robert Shirley (p. 13) maintains that the link can be achieved by charging planning groups with the responsibility for implementation as well as the formulation of strategic plans. Bryson (p. 64) maintains that many implementation activities should transpire during the process rather than waiting until the strategy has been completely developed:

For example, if the organization's mission needs to be redrafted, then it should be. If the SWOT analysis turns up weakness or threats that need to be addressed immediately, they should be. If aspects of a strategy can be implemented without awaiting further
developments, they should be ... Both strategic thinking and acting are important, and all the thinking does not have to occur before any actions are taken.

Bryson then suggests that the strategic team should be comprised of key decision makers, ensuring an ongoing link between strategy and operations. Thompson and Strickland (pp. 11-12) write in a similar vein, and argue that "the administrative aim is to create fits between the way things are done and what it takes for effective strategy execution". They emphasize that an organization's capabilities, its reward structure, its, internal support systems, and its culture all should be congruent with its strategy.

The second success factor in implementation is the ability to monitor and adjust plans on the basic of changes in the internal or external environment. This is a key component of strategy implementation in view of the fact that the environments of higher education institutions are in a constant state of flux. An early contributor to the literature, Stanley Young (1981) recognized this, stating "One is unable to predict the future with any precision. Strategic plans cannot be fixed or final, but must be continually monitored, modified and updated" (p.3). Others failed to emphasize this critical point. Steiner (p. 21) acknowledges the need for review, but suggests that this should take place as part of a annual cycle, rather than on an ongoing basis. Bryson identifies barriers to the implementation of strategic planning and outlines implementation steps, but does not emphasize the importance of ongoing review and revision. Thompson and Strickland (p. 3) do address this need by describing one of the tasks of strategic management as ".. reviewing new developments and initiating corrective adjustments in long term direction, objectives, strategy, or implementation in light of actual experience, changing conditions, new ideas and new opportunities". James Morrison also recognizes the need for continual review and adjustment and this is reflected in his comprehensive environmental scanning system (Morrison, 1987), which is a method for scanning the environment on an ongoing basis.
The failure to review and adjust strategic plans in the context of a dynamic internal and external environment is at the root of Henry Mintzberg's (1994) aggressive critique of strategic planning. His notion of deliberate and emergent strategies (Mintzberg and Waters, 1984) described in Section 2.1.4 is a case in point. An organization that locks into a strategic plan, and only reviews its progress at infrequent points in time, will miss the opportunity to capitalize on emergent strategies.

The generic model described in this section is an attempt to synthesize some of the best thinking in the literature on strategic planning and strategic management. The next section will employ aspects of the model to examine some of the recent practice in strategic planning.

2.1.6 Current Practice

This section briefly examines some of the current practice in strategic planning within higher education institutions in North America, specifically the United States, Canada and the province of Ontario.

A number of recent studies provide some useful insights into the planning activities of higher education institutions in Ontario. Barbara Neufeld's comprehensive doctoral dissertation examines the institutional planning activities at three Ontario universities - Trent, York and the University of Western Ontario (Neufeld, 1993) - and is an instructive reference on university planning practices in Ontario. Reg Lang (1995) establishes some linkages between the personality types of strategic planners in Ontario educational institutions and the strategic planning and change processes that they select. Saeed Ibrahim (1997) examines strategic planning practices at two community colleges and two universities in Ontario and finds some differences between the view of strategic planning described in the literature and actual practice.

There are also some recent studies of institutional planning in other Canadian jurisdictions. Robert Knapp (1991) carried out a study of institutional planning in Alberta's public colleges. Drawing on questionnaires completed by 57 senior college administrators in the province, Knapp finds high levels of formalized planning activities in the colleges although, like the Ibrahim study,
they do not completely conform to all the dimensions of strategic planning articulated in the literature. The situation in Quebec is illuminated by Miriam Bailey's (1992) study of the CEGEPs. Bailey polls college Directors General and finds that strategic planning is perceived to be a useful and necessary activity. She finds evidence of many of the characteristics of strategic planning described in Keller's (1983) process framework.

While the research on strategic planning in Canadian colleges is sparse, there are many studies of strategic planning practices in colleges in various jurisdictions in the United States. Schmidtlein and Milton's (1988) report of a three-year study out of the University of Maryland is a major contribution to knowledge about the practice of planning in higher education institutions. The project involved a review of planning literature, a survey of administration at 256 campuses, and in-depth case study research at 16 campuses (A study that is larger in scale, but similar in design to the methodology employed in this dissertation). Among the findings is the fact that colleges and universities have difficulty sustaining a particular planning approach for more than two or three years. Planning processes are often initiated by presidents. Planning activities vary widely across campuses in terms of time frames covered, processes followed, and the extent of stakeholder involvement. Few institutions have solid data on their external environments. The benefits of the process of planning are rated higher than the benefits of the outcomes of planning. Documentation produced by planning processes is not widely referenced and offers limited operational guidance. Schmidtlein and Milton conclude (p. 17) with a caveat about over reliance on planning approaches:

Although the desirability of reducing uncertainty through formal planning appears compelling, future events are highly unpredictable, and plans must therefore be constantly altered to fit new circumstances. Plans are only as accurate a predictor of what is desirable as the foresight of the human prophets who construct them. Rigid adherence to out-dated prophecies can be dangerous. While planning can help to inform and expand one's understanding of possible futures, it cannot provide a detailed blueprint for future actions, nor can it avoid the need for skilful improvisations and careful judgement.

Other studies of practice reinforce the notion that adaptive colleges that are also sensitive to their internal environments are also the most likely to have
effective planning processes. A 1984 study (Chaffee, 1984) examines the behaviours of two colleges experiencing financial difficulties and concludes that the more resilient colleges employ a mix of adaptive strategies oriented to the external environment as well as "interpretive" strategies to involve internal participants with the organizational mission and values.

Writing in the Harvard Business Review Daniel Gray (1988) reports on an interesting study investigating the pitfalls of strategic planning. Based on 300 survey respondents and 216 seminar participants drawn from the corporate sector, the study finds that companies remain committed to strategic planning, event though most of them reported feelings of disappointment and frustration with their processes. The discontent is attributed to implementation difficulties, and these are in turn traced to systems design and management problems.

Numerous doctoral dissertations from American universities address various aspects of the practice of strategic planning at the institutional and system level.

John Copeland Ray (1989) surveys 50 CEOs of Texas community college districts and finds that they feel their planning processes contain many aspects of strategic planning and are effective in goal attainment.

Alan Lee Ingle (1991) studies 75 universities and invokes Chaffee's (1984) notion of adaptive and interpretive planning. He finds that most have a linear (goal orientation) process, some have an interpretive approach (constituent orientation) and a few engaged in adaptive planning (environmental orientation).

A 1992 study by Leon Salvador Inge from The George Washington University (Inge, 1992) surveys administrators at three colleges and finds that some form of strategic planning is universally employed, attitudes towards planning are positive, but implementation of planning decisions does not always occur.

Len Hightower (Hightower, 1992) studies small independent colleges and universities and finds a weak fit between the strategic planning concepts
described in the literature and the planning actually practiced. Hightower concludes that the key variable shaping the nature of planning is the perceptions of the presidents.

The implementation issue is addressed in a study conducted at Kent State University by Marc Jeffrey (1993). Most of the 188 college presidents surveyed by Jeffrey indicated that they formulated comprehensive strategic plans but the plans were not fully implemented at their institutions.

Beth Krause (1994) surveys 649 administrators and faculty at 74 accredited colleges of pharmacy in the United States and finds a low level of adherence to any literature-based strategic planning principles. Further analysis reveals that participation in the process and openness of vertical communication are significant variables contributing to perceived success of a planning process in a college.

Laverna Saunders (1994) studies land-grant university libraries and finds that strategic planning was perceived as time-consuming, but worthwhile as a means of producing improved communication and staff participation.

Carol Binzer (1995) focuses on environmental scanning in a study of 32 senior student and personnel administrators at 16 four-year colleges and universities in North Carolina. Her study results indicate that administrators tend to seek and monitor information directly relevant to their functional specialities, rather than adopting a broader, systemic and more strategic approach to environmental scanning.

The theme of stakeholder participation is pursued by Karl Pape (1996). Results from a survey of 49 continuing education administrators indicate that people who participate in all steps in the strategic planning process have higher levels of satisfaction with the process and feel that they have the power to influence and implement the strategic plan.

Another recent dissertation (Lovinguth, 1996) finds that strategic planning contributes to changes at small, private institutions over the long term, but not always to the extent intended. Improvements in enrolment and physical
plant aspects of operations are apparent, but there is less evidence of financial goals being met. Lovinguth also suggests that the major factor impacting the successful implementation of a strategic plan is presidential leadership.

The studies referenced above constitute a very small sampling of the research on the practice of strategic planning in North American higher education institutions. Some common threads emerge:

1. Although most institutions exhibit some elements of strategic planning as described in the scholarly literature, total adherence to all the concepts is rare. The nature of strategic planning is more likely to be determined by internal factors, notably the perceptions of the CEO, rather than any prevailing planning theories.

2. The strategic planning process is viewed very positively by most internal participants.

3. Communication and style are key variables shaping the nature of the planning process.

4. Implementation of strategic planning goals is often problematic.

5. Formal and systematic environmental scanning is rarely carried out.

The next section explores some of the literature on internal governance of higher education institutions, and draws some linkages between the different models of internal decision making and the assumptions about decision making implicit in the strategic planning approaches discussed in Section 2.1. Section 2.3 then offers some evaluative observations about the planning and governance literature.

### 2.2 The Nature of Governance

The organizational theory literature sometimes gets sloppy in its use of a number of key concepts. Terms like governance, leadership, management, and administration are often used synonymously and
inappropriately. Keller (1983, pp. 122-127) offers some useful distinctions among the four concepts:

1. **Administration** involves attention to the ongoing operational aspects of an institution, such as scheduling, facilities and services. The notion of doing things right is often used in describing administration.

2. **Management** is different from administration in its focus on ensuring that the right things get done. Management is entrepreneurial and pursues increased organizational effectiveness.

3. **Leadership** is a more intangible and personal trait, referred to by Keller as the "poetic part of the presidency" (p. 125). It is the ability to motivate people and inspire them to adopt organizational values and pursue organizational goals.

4. **Governance** refers to the formal arrangements between constituencies in an institution such as senates and governing boards.

Although the above technical definition of governance is actually quite narrow, many writers employ the term in a broad context to encompass all of Keller's categories as well as the notion of organizational culture. This is supported by writers such as John D. Millet who defines governance as "the act of decision making about institutional purposes, about basic policies, about program objectives and about resource allocation" (1980, p. 495), and Robert Birnbaum who defines it as "the structure and processes through which institutional participants interact with and influence each other and communicate with the larger environment" (1990, p. 4). This broader connotation will be employed in this section.

### 2.2.1 The Notion of Culture

In the 1980s, management thought shifted away from structure and process towards a preoccupation with "organizational culture". Tom Peters and Robert Waterman popularized the cultural leadership movement in North American corporations with their best selling book *In Search of Excellence*
(Peters and Waterman, 1982). They examine the anatomy of several Fortune 500 companies that had managed to achieve "excellence" and conclude that their success lay in their ability to instil staff commitment to organizational values and beliefs. They argue that good managerial skills at the technical level are not enough - effective leaders in organizations also have to be able to articulate organizational values and inspire employees to pursue corporate goals (i.e. Keller's definition of leadership).

Advocates of the cultural leadership approach often present their case with missionary-like zeal, but frequently overlook the specific methods required for its implementation. They underestimate the difficulties inherent in changing organizational cultures that have been evolved over many years. However, the cultural leadership movement has spawned a number of more prescriptive approaches to management including customer service, visioning and the use of cross functional teams.

Chaffee and Tierney make a major contribution to an understanding of organizational culture with their book *Collegiate Culture and Leadership Strategies* published in 1988 (Chaffee and Tierney, 1988). Drawing on case study data from seven higher education institutions, they develop a framework for the study of culture. Elements of the framework include the role of symbols, the role of history and its interpretation, time and space as cultural parameters, leadership and decision making styles and the use of information.

Writing in the Winter 1990 issue of *New Directions for Institutional Research*, Marvin Peterson and Melinda Spencer (Peterson and Spencer, 1990) review the early literature on culture in higher education and identify a consensus among writers that culture is an important determinant of the success of any efforts to institute organizational change. They provide a useful distinction between the terms culture and climate. Culture "focuses on the deeply embedded patterns of organizational behaviour and the shared values, assumptions, beliefs, or ideologies that members have about their organization or its work" (p. 6). Climate, on the other hand, is defined by Peterson and Spencer as "the current common patterns of important dimensions of organizational life or its member's perceptions of and attitudes toward those dimensions" (p. 7). Climate is therefore the current and visible manifestation of
organizational culture. They then identify four dimensions of culture or climate: strength, or the degree to which culture and climate variables govern organizational behaviour; congruence, or the consistency among the various elements of culture; the clarity of culture and climate; and the degree of consensus on cultural variables. Peterson and Spencer conclude with a description of the issues and challenges around the study of culture in higher education institutions.

Another useful definition of organization culture is offered by Thompson and Strickland (1995, p. 12) who define it as "the values and beliefs shared by organizational members, the company’s approach to people management, and ingrained behaviours, work practices, and ways of thinking".

Cynthia Hardy assesses the state of research on organizational culture and advocates the use of more qualitative approaches. She points out the fact that the research on culture in education lags behind the management literature because approaches have been largely atheoretical and research has been mainly quantitative, an approach inappropriate to the study of culture (1990, p. 407). In a later article (Hardy, 1993) she emphasizes the importance of cultural variables in implementing strategic plans, particularly in areas related to resource decline. Robert V. Carlson also addresses the relationship between culture and organizational planning and, like Hardy, concludes that "the culture of a school and efforts to bring about planned change are inextricably linked" (Carlson, 1991, p. 55).

2.2.2 Approaches to Governance

There is a well developed body of literature on governance which offers a great deal of utility in analysing and comparing higher education institutions. This section will adopt a governance framework to explain the inner workings of colleges, and critically review and summarize the main theories that apply to the management and operation of higher education institutions.

The governance literature draws heavily on organizational theory and consistently refers to four models for explaining decision making in higher
education institutions - the collegial model, the bureaucratic model, the political model and the "organized" anarchy model.

1. *The Collegial Model.* The collegial model, drawn from the notion of "a community of scholars", dates back to medieval times in its association with universities and academe. The collegial approach involves full and equal participation of members of an organization (especially faculty) in making key decisions. Robert Birnbaum (1988, pp. 87-94) describes the main features of a collegial institution as a lack of hierarchical structures, an emphasis on deliberation and consensus, a view of formal leaders as "first among equals", commitment to organizational objectives and a strong sense of shared values.

From a planning perspective, the most serious shortcoming of the collegial approach to governance is in its limited ability to respond to change. Dennison and Gallagher (1986, p. 200) review the roots of the collegial model and conclude the following:

Collegiality as a style of management evolved over centuries, but in most circumstances where the pace of change was slow. Often, one of the key objectives of the collegial approach was to slow down the rate of change. Universities, where collegiality was born, were clearly intended to maintain existing conditions unless there were compelling reasons otherwise. As a result, no change was introduced until every important element within the collegium had its say... Decisions were eventually made, but this model was calculated to resist or to defer change and to avoid conflict rather than bring about change internally or respond to it from without. Collegiality may be for dinosaurs.

Since planning is focused on change, it is less likely to occur in a collegial organization. On those occasions where formalized planning does take place, it is likely to be the consensual type of planning described in Section 2.1.3. Consensus building may take place, but efficient and effective decisions to address change are not as likely to be forthcoming from this model.

Seneca College in Toronto, Ontario employed the organizational development model to develop its strategic plan in 1992 (Seneca
College, 1993). The college employed a highly participative process involving broad-based input at the grass-roots level, utilizing workshops, focus groups, interviews, surveys and special events to gather input from hundreds of students, employees and external stakeholders. Given the nature of the organizational development approach to planning, it is not surprising that the first strategic priority identified in the plan was internal organizational renewal, including the introduction of participative decision making. Implementation is underway, but the effectiveness of the college's strategic plan in dealing with its external environment remains to be determined. In fact, the college recently shifted its planning focus to a more externally-oriented stance.

Victor Baldridge points out an interesting irony in the fact that the rise of the multiversity and the increasing number of environmental problems impacting higher education has led to nostalgic calls for a return to the collegial approach (Baldridge et al., 1977). In fact, the inability of this model to support any enduring form of strategic planning makes it the worst possible approach for addressing environmental threats.

2. The Bureaucratic Model. Max Weber, the 19th century German sociologist, is a seminal contributor to the field of organizational theory with his formulation of an "ideal type" bureaucracy with the following characteristics (Gerth and Mills, 1946, pp. 196-204):

- Fixed jurisdictions, ordered by rules
- A firmly ordered chain of command organized into a hierarchy
- Operations based on written documentation
- Officials appointed with remuneration based on rank
- An emphasis on thorough and expert training
- A demand on the full working capacity of the individual
- Rules that are stable, exhaustive and which can be learned
- Separation of official activity from the sphere of private life
- Rational-legal authority based on the legitimacy of the position

Weber expresses major misgivings about the depersonalization that arose out of bureaucracy but views it as an inevitable development.
given the requirement for efficiency and the need to deal with the complexities arising out of the industrial revolution and the development of a money economy. Weber's ideas held up over time as bureaucracies grew and flourished and had a major impact on the structure of Western society through the development of the "white collar class".

Baldridge (1986, pp.16-17) presents the bureaucracy as a major model of governance in higher education and identifies a number of its characteristics that fit colleges and universities. He cites some of the inherent weaknesses of the model, such as its emphasis on structure over process, and identifies some instances where the bureaucratic model is not a good fit with the characteristics of higher education institutions. Dennison and Gallagher (1986, pp. 203-4) provide a more specific critique of the model, citing the professionalism of staff, the need for teamwork, autonomy issues and the inappropriateness of applying the industrial model to academic institutions. However, they do suggest that the bureaucratic model is more appropriate for Canadian community colleges than universities. Birnbaum (p. 12) posits that bureaucratic controls are not as effective in coordinating the behaviour of highly professional staff members, and are therefore less influential in dealing with faculty than administrators. Although it has its limitations in dealing with the pure academic areas of higher education, the bureaucratic model can still be very useful for analysing large and complex higher education organizations.

Rational planning is the most typical form of planning found in a bureaucracy. Its systematic data-based approach is an excellent match with the bureaucratic values of logic and efficiency. However, a shift to strategic planning in a bureaucracy is difficult since this involves a greater reliance on intuition and a reduced reliance on data and technical planning methods. However, the clear accountabilities and lines of communication in a bureaucracy can provide a useful infrastructure for strategic planning. Strategic planning can be done in a bureaucracy, but it involves making some value shifts towards greater flexibility.
3. **The Political Model.** The third major model frequently cited in the literature on higher education governance is that of the political federation. Initially proposed by Victor Baldridge in 1971, this approach views academic organizations as miniature political systems with competing interest groups and extensive power dynamics. The model concentrates on major policy decisions and operates under the following assumptions (Baldridge 1977, pp. 20-24):

Small groups of individuals, similar to political elites in society, are involved in the policy making process in organizations.

Participation in decision making is fluid, with people spending little time on any given issue. Persistence usually leads to success.

Colleges and universities are fragmented into competing interest groups with different goals and values. Conflict increases when resources are tight.

Conflict is natural, the key factor behind organizational change

Pressure groups place major constraints on bureaucratic authority

External interest groups can have a strong influence on policy

Advocacy planning, as described by Barbara Neufeld (1990) and others, is the most common form of planning in a political federation. The advocacy planning process is triggered by conflict between stakeholders groups, usually over resources, and plays out until concessions are made. Planning may then remain dormant until another conflict generating issue arises.

The ability of advocacy planning to facilitate dialogue and provide a forum for interest groups makes it a good model to follow in the early stages of strategic planning where it is important to generate broad dialogue over organizational goals. However, this approach can sometimes break down when it becomes necessary to achieve consensus and commitment across the organization. The cleavages caused by the residual conflict may then be too wide to bridge. Consequently, the model of the political federation is unlikely to be able to support strategic planning in the long run.
A case that illustrates the problem of planning in a political federation governance framework is Sheridan College in Oakville, Ontario. One of the larger colleges in the system, Sheridan first embarked on a strategic planning course following the appointment of its third president in 1988. The process followed was a form of advocacy planning. A constituency-based strategic planning committee was drawn from all areas of the college. The committee conducted a values audit review, carried out an internal and external environmental scan, developed a mission statement, identified and prioritized critical issues affecting Sheridan College, and drafted strategic goals and objectives. Members of the planning committee were drawn from the major stakeholder groups including faculty, administration and students. The plan was approved by Sheridan's Board of Governors in June 1991 (Sheridan College, 1991).

During the 1991-92 academic year the college encountered difficulties implementing its strategic plan. Individual departments were encouraged to develop operational plans in support of the strategic plan. Some units produced plans, but in most cases operational planning was treated as an add-on task with a low priority, secondary to other pressing demands of dealing with increased enrolment and declining resources. This was the first year that the financial constraints created major difficulties, and conflict among stakeholder groups ensued. The strategic plan soon began to be widely criticized in the organization, with employees complaining about the lack of strategic vision, the lack of a direct link to operating plans, and the failure to link to it the budgeting process.

4. Organized Anarchy. The collegial, bureaucratic and political models have dominated the higher education literature in the past 15 years, but a number of other approaches have also received some attention. One such approach is based on the metaphor of an "organized anarchy" initially presented by Michael Cohen, James March and John Olsen (1972). They describe organized anarchies as organizations characterized by difficulties in imputing a standard set of preferences, unclear technology with a frequent reliance on trial and error, and fluid participation of the type previously described in the political model. Decisions are often byproducts of unplanned activities rather than
conscious actions. Cohen et al. place their theory in the correct context by stating that organized anarchy will describe a portion of almost any organization's activity but will not describe all activities. Birnbaum (pp. 151-174) apparently chose to ignore this point and attempts unsuccessfully to apply the theory on an organization-wide basis.

Planning in an organized anarchy is incremental, with actions often arrived at through trial and error. The conservativism of this model is incompatible with the aggressive and proactive orientation of strategic planning. For these reasons, strategic planning may have difficulty achieving significant successes in an organized anarchy.

5. The Cybernetic Model. Another theory of governance in higher education is the "cybernetic" approach postulated by Robert Birnbaum (pp. 177-200). Drawing on open systems theory, Birnbaum describes the tendency for academic institutions to be self-regulating in order to keep quality within acceptable ranges. Activities are kept in balance by responding to inputs that signal unacceptable performance rather than proactively seeking to improve outputs. Leadership in a cybernetic institution involves doing routine tasks when things are going well and making subtle changes when problems are noticed. Only major shocks, such as resource declines call for major intervention, and Birnbaum states that the results of such interventions are usually unpredictable. No planning takes place in the cybernetic model since it adopts a totally reactive stance to internal and external stimuli. In fact, this model is the antithesis of strategic planning.

The cybernetic model is based on the view that higher education institutions operate as organisms rather than mechanisms. While this may be a more accurate perspective, the approach is overly simplistic and fails to address how change occurs. Organic theories of governance have given rise to a body of literature on leadership in higher education which works from the premise that leaders cannot possibly plan or even respond to all the environmental forces at play, so the best leadership style is to adopt a non-interventionist stance. Birnbaum (p. 200) refers to the laws of medicine ("If it's working, keep doing it. If it's not working, stop
doing it. If you don't know what to do, don't do anything") as an operating principle for cybernetic leaders. William Sibley (1993, p. 124) advances a similar theme, pointing out that university presidents have little time or energy to provide proactive leadership, spending most of their time in a reactive mode. John Silber (1988, p. 13) captures the problem nicely:

It is a sad fact, but from the day they take office, college presidents may become undone simply because of their terror of losing that office. Out of fear, they fail to develop standards, to set priorities and objectives - in short, to exercise leadership ... They stay in office by doing as little as possible and trying to camouflage their lack of ideas, educational policies, or courage as profound respect for faculty autonomy and sensitivity to student needs.

Warren Bennis (1992, p. 15) refers to the same phenomenon when he states that "routine work drives out nonroutine work and smothers to death all creative planning, all fundamental change in the university - or any institution."

Interest in cybernetic leadership will likely parallel the increasing interest in chaos theory described in Section 2.1.4. However, questions remain about the appropriateness of adopting a non-interventionist stance, given the pressing needs to address change in today's higher education institutions.

2.2.3 Governance/Planning Interrelationships

A matrix examining the different governance models and their relationship to planning appears in Table 3 on Page 56.

Arguments about which is the most appropriate model for governance in higher education have been evident in the literature for some time. During the 1970s the models discussed above were identified and emphasis placed on the bureaucratic and collegial approaches. In the 1980s, interest in the political model increased. The 1980s also saw attempts to develop "mixed models" combining different characteristics, an approach that was of limited use since the models were based on different assumptions about organizations, and some emphasized structure (bureaucratic model) while others focused on process (political and collegial models). In the late 1980s interest shifted to an examination of "organizational culture" (Hardy, 1990, p. 394-408).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Collegial</th>
<th>Bureaucratic</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Org. Anarchy</th>
<th>Cybernetic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose:</strong></td>
<td>protect status quo</td>
<td>further organizational goals</td>
<td>satisfy stakeholders</td>
<td>address individual needs</td>
<td>maintain status quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Driving Participants:</strong></td>
<td>faculty</td>
<td>board sr. management</td>
<td>stakeholder groups</td>
<td>varying individuals</td>
<td>management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Planning:</strong></td>
<td>organizational development</td>
<td>rational</td>
<td>advocacy oriented</td>
<td>incremental</td>
<td>continency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methods:</strong></td>
<td>participation and problem solving</td>
<td>data collection and analysis</td>
<td>bargaining</td>
<td>trial and error</td>
<td>not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>End Product:</strong></td>
<td>consensus</td>
<td>long range plan</td>
<td>agreement on resource allocation</td>
<td>decisions about emergent issues</td>
<td>reactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support for Strategic Planning:</strong></td>
<td>poor</td>
<td>fair, good with culture change</td>
<td>good initially, poor in long run</td>
<td>very poor</td>
<td>non-existent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The efficacy of the various governance models becomes easier to determine when viewed in a strategic planning context. As previously discussed, each model has some major limitations in supporting strategic planning:

The *collegial model* focuses on preserving the status quo and does not deal with change.

The linear approach of the *bureaucratic model* is not well suited to the intuitive, non-linear aspects of strategic planning.

The *political model* can break down when conflict gets in the way of the collective implementation of strategic activities.

The *organized anarchy* model can overlook major strategic issues.

The *cybernetic model* adopts a reactive stance and is actually the antithesis of strategic planning.

In many ways, the bureaucratic model offers the greatest potential to foster strategic planning. As noted earlier, it can provide a supportive infrastructure for the development and implementation of strategic initiatives. It is the only model that deals with organization-wide governance matters rather than focusing on sub-units, management styles or the behaviour of groups and individuals. It also has the capacity to systematically cope with large amounts of information generated through environmental scanning. Its maxim of efficiency is appropriate in the current atmosphere of resource constraints. However, changes are also required, especially in the area of organizational culture. Contemporary writers in management and organizations such as Tom Peters (1982) and Peter Senge (1990) have recognized this, and write about improving lateral communication, breaking down hierarchies and fostering teamwork, all within the context of existing structures. They implicitly accept the bureaucratic model and suggest ways to revise it to make it more effective for dealing with external challenges. Even the term "reengineering the corporation" (Hammer and Champy, 1993) does not suggest a drastically different organizational model, but rather a variation on an existing theme. "Improving the bureaucracy" might be a more accurate term. Thus, while the contemporary management writers talk of the need for major "paradigm shifts", a careful analysis of their writings suggests that they are working from the premise that organizations do and should function under bureaucratic
principles. In effect, they are really advocating ways to update Weber’s 19th century model rather than proposing any dramatic new forms of organization.

Regardless of the planning approach employed, it must be compatible with internal governance approach of the organization. Peterson reached this conclusion in 1980 when he argues (p. 140):

> It is important to recognize that in any institutional planning process, a dominant model or approach will probably emerge. It will, no doubt, not be a pure model but rather some combination. This dominant model stands a better chance of success if it takes as its basic planning focus an organizing assumption that reflects the basic tradition of the institution: if the planning orientation, purpose, and content reflect the real planning issues facing the institution; and if the dynamics of planning and participation reflect the governance process and administrative style of the organization.

### 2.3 Observations on the Literature

In their review of the planning literature, Norris and Poulton (1991, p. 43) state:

> A truly comprehensive bibliography of the literature would consist of thousands of citations. Since planning is a pervasive behaviour that is involved in every level of the strategic, management, and operational activities of organizations, there is scarcely an aspect of administrative behaviour that is not somehow related to planning. But much of the planning literature is redundant, prescriptive and/or related to particular circumstances, or overly general in nature.

This quote captures the nub of the problem. There is a plethora of articles on every aspect of planning, governance and organizational theory, but the literature lacks integration and cohesion. Some specific problems noted in carrying out the review of literature documented in this chapter are the following:

1. There are no cross linkages between planning at the institutional level and planning at the system level. Very few of the articles on institutional
planning make reference to any higher levels of educational planning at the provincial or state level, although this is a very significant variable that shapes and sometimes constrains the strategic planning activities carried out by a college or university.

2. There are few clear linkages between the literature on planning and the literature on governance. Many writers allude to the importance of internal organizational factors in developing and implementing strategic plans, but few attempt to make direct connections between planning and governance models. Some writers work with one set of assumptions about how organizations make operational decisions and employ another set of assumptions about how the same organizations make planning decisions.

3. As pointed out by Norris and Poulton, many articles are either highly specific and prescriptive or highly descriptive and general. There are not very many good blends of the two approaches.

4. There is a widespread shortage of attempts to integrate the disparate approaches into generic models.

5. The term "strategic planning" is not always clearly defined or consistently applied. Henry Mintzberg's 1994 book is a good example of this, for he criticizes many forms of conventional institutional planning under the rubric of strategic planning.

6. Most articles are positional, favouring a particular approach, perspective or methodology, to the exclusion of others. Again, the lack of integration in the literature is apparent.

7. The final, and perhaps the most serious shortfall, is the fact that the literature fails to sufficiently address the issue of the effectiveness of strategic planning as a means of helping organizations deal with their external environments.

The typology of planning perspectives presented in Table 1 integrates some of the descriptive literature on planning. The model developed in Section
2.1.5 and depicted in Figure 1 integrates the prescriptive literature. The discussion in Section 2.2.3 addresses the problem of linkages between governance and planning. Finally, the data in Chapters 4 and 5 is presented and analysed in order to alleviate some of the shortfalls in the literature discussed above.
Chapter 3
DESIGN OF THE STUDY
3.1 Overall Methodological Approach

The methodological approach employed in the thesis utilized a range of methodologies including survey research techniques, reviews of provincial planning reports and in-depth case studies. Colleges comprised the unit of analysis.

The case study method involving in-depth analyses of individual colleges was the predominant technique employed to carry out the core research. This approach was selected for three reasons:

1. Individual college case studies capture the complexity of the variables influencing planning decisions and enable in-depth descriptions of "soft" variables such as style and communication.

2. Since most respondents in organizations are only partially involved with planning and can provide information only about part of the process (Neufeld, 1990), a more holistic research approach involving in-depth interviews with a range of respondents is necessary.

3. While other methods, such as surveys and reviews of existing information may address questions about the "what" of strategic planning, the case study can answer the important "how and why" questions (Yin, 1989).

Many studies of strategic planning practices (Bailey, 1992; Knapp, 1991; Schmidtlein et al, 1989; Johns, 1989) have employed survey research techniques to examine planning across jurisdictions while others (Neufeld, 1990; Chaffee, 1984; Hammond, 1984) have concentrated on case studies of individual institutions. Although very useful, the former lack depth while the latter lack breadth. By utilizing both methodologies this thesis has been able to examine some individual colleges in depth, but against the backdrop of a broader provincial system.
3.2 Sample Selection

3.2.1 Establishment of Sampling Frame

The selection of "host" colleges for case study research was crucial since the sample had to reflect some well defined differences to permit an examination of the impact of background factors, but at the same time represent categories of comparable institutions to enhance generalizability. In addition, the host colleges had to be engaged in some form of strategic planning as previously defined in Section 1.4.

A review of annual reports and strategic plans published by Ontario CAATs revealed that almost all colleges stated that they were involved in some form of strategic planning. This is not surprising since at the time of the study colleges were required to file a strategic plan with the Ministry. It was therefore important to determine which colleges were actually involved in "bona fide" strategic planning as defined by the literature. To accomplish this, a three-page questionnaire was developed based in part on the Institutional Strategic Planning Assessment Questionnaire (ISPAQ) developed by Gregory Johns (1989), and closely linked to concepts measured by Meredith, Cope and Lemming (1987) in their study of US colleges. The instrument gathered basic information about planning activities and contained scorable measures of the degree of influence of planning on decision making and the strategic nature of the planning process.

The questionnaire was administered by fax to 23 college registrars in October 1994. Registrars were selected as respondents because their enrolment management responsibilities placed them in close contact with planning activities at their colleges. Follow-up of non-respondents took place in person at a provincial registrars' conference and subsequently by telephone. Twenty out of 23 colleges responded to the survey, representing a very respectable response.

Responses were tabulated and cross-tabulated employing Excel 5.0 and interpreted with input from the Director of Planning at ACAATO. The instrument and response frequencies appear in Appendix A. The findings that relate to the
nature of strategic planning carried out by provincial CAATs are reviewed in Section 4.1.4.

The following criteria for inclusion in the sampling frame were established:

- Existence of a written strategic plan
- At least three plan components: Mission statement
  - Statement of values
  - Strategic goals
  - Operational plans
- At least three process activities: Internal assessment
  - External scan
  - Stakeholder input mechanisms
  - Review and revision procedure
- A minimum planning influence score of 2.5 out of 4.0 ("some influence")
- A minimum strategic nature score of 3.0 out of 4.0 ("somewhat agree")

The criteria were then applied to all colleges that responded to the survey. Results appear in Table 4 on Page 64.

3.2.2 Selection of Host Colleges

Only eight colleges met the criteria for inclusion in the sample. In selecting from this resulting "universe" of Ontario colleges engaged in "bona fide" strategic planning, several additional empirical factors related to the thesis research questions were identified:

1. Size of the college, based on full-time post-secondary enrolment. Colleges with enrolments over 7,000 were classified as "large", colleges with enrolments between 3,500 and 7,000 were classified as "mid-sized" and colleges with less than 3,500 FTPS students were classified as "small". College size was deemed important since size could have an impact on the nature of strategic planning (Research Question #1) as well as on various internal factors (Research Question #3).

2. Proximity to a university, a factor which could have a shaping influence on the strategic planning approach adopted by a college (Research Question #2).
### Table 4
Application of Sampling Frame Inclusion Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Plan Exists</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>No. of Plan Components</th>
<th>No. of Process Components</th>
<th>Influence Score</th>
<th>Strategy Score</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Include</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Exclude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>Exclude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Include</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Include*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Exclude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Include</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Exclude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Exclude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>Exclude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Include</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Exclude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Include</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Include</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>Exclude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Exclude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Exclude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Exclude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Include</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Exclude</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Minimum Selection Criteria:**
- Yes - 3 3 2.5 3.0 Include

**Notes:**
1. College E was included in the sampling frame as the strategy score was raised on the basis of a subsequent key informant interview.
2. Colleges I, L and T did not reply to the survey.
3. The nature of the catchment area (Research Question #2). Catchment areas were classified as "urban" where most of the student body came from a concentrated urban area, "rural" where students were drawn from a wide, predominantly rural area, or "suburban" where the catchment area contained a mix of rural and urban locales.

4. The date the first strategic plan was produced by a college was also deemed relevant since this would be an indicator of the maturity of the strategic planning process within a college (Research Question #3).

Based on these criteria, three potential host colleges and two alternate colleges were selected. Two alternate colleges were also chosen in the event the host colleges did not agree to participate in the study. These are summarized in Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Proximity to University</th>
<th>Catchment Area</th>
<th>Date of Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centennial</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confederation</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgian</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternates:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conestoga</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sault</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Yes (US)</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The presidents of Centennial College, Confederation College and Georgian College were contacted by letter (Appendix B). All three presidents agreed to provide access to relevant internal documents and granted permission to interview staff, students and board members. It was therefore not necessary to approach the alternate colleges. The presidents also authorized the disclosure of the identity of their colleges in the thesis report, greatly enhancing the practical relevance of the results.
The resulting sample of three colleges provided an excellent cross-section of Ontario Colleges in terms of size, catchment area characteristics and maturity of their strategic planning processes. Centennial was representative of a large metro college with a multicultural student body, Confederation was representative of a small northern college drawing from a predominantly rural base, and Georgian was representative of a mid-sized college with a catchment area comprising both rural and urban areas. Centennial and Confederation had plans dating back several years, while Georgian had recently completed a new strategic plan. Two of the colleges, Centennial and Confederation, had universities situated within their catchment areas.

It is worth noting that Sheridan College in Oakville, Ontario was not included in the sample of host colleges due to the researcher's inside knowledge and involvement as a long-time member of its administrative staff. There were pros and cons to this decision. Skolnik (1987) points out some of the difficulties in the "inside-out" approach to case study research, particularly the problem of role conflict between vested interests and the need for critical and objective scholarship. On the other hand, Woolcot (1985, p.199) states that the disadvantages of being an insider can be more than offset by the increased understanding of the complexities of the system being studied. After a considerable amount of reflection, it was decided that role conflict of the type suggested by Skolnik could be a problem. However, the college was employed as a pilot site for pretesting study instruments and techniques, so the deeper knowledge of the internal environment at Sheridan College was not totally lost to the study. In fact, it might have been an asset in pretesting.

3.2.3 Selection of Respondents

"Key informants" are people who by virtue of their position or role in an organization tend to have an overview of certain aspects of the topic under study. Key informants were selected at each of the three colleges on the basis of their relationship to the planning process and included board members, management staff, faculty, and students. Care was taken to ensure that all constituencies were represented across the three colleges. Certain categories of respondents were designated as "cross-case anchors" and interviewed at all three colleges to ensure consistent and comparable data. Respondents
designated as cross-case anchors were college presidents, planning officers, registrars, faculty and union representatives. The resulting mix of respondents is depicted in Table 6 and is very similar in composition to the respondents interviewed in the 1989 nation-wide study of US universities and colleges carried out by Schmidtlein and Milton (1989, p. 6).

Table 6
Key Informant Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Centennial</th>
<th>Confederation</th>
<th>Georgian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board member*</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>External</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President*</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President*</td>
<td></td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty member</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning/Information Officer*</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Officer</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrar*</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPSEU Executive*</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Fac./Sup.</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Government</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisory Committee Chair</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Official</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
Respondents designated with an asterisk were "cross-case anchors" and interviewed in all colleges to ensure consistency.

A list of the titles of the actual respondents interviewed at the three colleges appears in Appendix C.

3.3 Field Methods

3.3.1 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were employed to gather information from the key informants in the three colleges. With the semi-structured approach, the interviews were guided by a list of questions, but wording was not
predetermined (Merriam, 1988, p. 74). This provided the researcher with greater flexibility to probe on certain points and clarify positions on various issues.

To facilitate the process, a semi-structured interview outline was developed and appears in Table 7.

### Table 7
**Semi-Structured Interview Protocol**

| Introduction: | Study background  
|              | Informed consent release |
| Planning Process: | Awareness of strategic planning activities  
|                  | Respondent involvement in process  
|                  | Perceptions of consensus obtained  
|                  | Perceptions of changes in planning approaches  
|                  | Planning methodologies employed  
|                  | Impact on respondent's decision making in specific areas - resources, operations, programming, etc. |
| Environment: | Respondent identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) |
| Internal: | Identification of predominant organizational issues  
|                  | Description of management style  
|                  | Perceptions of vertical and lateral communication  
|                  | Description of intergroup relationships  
|                  | Methods of dealing with conflict  
|                  | Norms - rewarded and punished behaviours |
| General: | Biggest disappointment with strategic planning  
|                  | Strategic planning as a coping strategy  
|                  | Respondent's three wishes for college |
| Closure: | Referral respondents  
|                  | Identification of additional documentation |

Most of the topics were covered with all respondents, although the actual question sequencing and wording varied. A sampling of typical questions asked appears as Appendix D.
Prior to commencing the field work, the semi-structured interview protocol and the phraseology of specific questions was pilot tested through interviews with three respondents at Sheridan College. Respondents were debriefed at the conclusion of each interview and audio tapes of the interviews were analysed to ensure that the interview wording and flow covered the research topics without introducing bias or steering the respondents in any way. Minor changes to the interview protocol and wording of some of the questions were subsequently made.

The first stage of interviewing took place in the spring and summer of 1995. Two separate field visits were made to Centennial College in Scarborough in May 1995. Two visits were also made to Georgian College in Barrie in June and July. Confederation College interviews were conducted over a five-day field visit to the Thunder Bay campus in June 1995. In addition, the writer attended the June 1995 annual conference of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) in Victoria, B.C., presented some preliminary thesis findings at a scheduled workshop, and interviewed some respondents from Confederation and Centennial College who were present as conference delegates.

Interviews lasted an average of 45 minutes to one hour. Appointments were scheduled in advance, and respondents were provided with a thesis abstract as well as an informed consent release form (Appendix E). With two exceptions (an equipment malfunction and a respondent who did not wish to be taped) all interviewees were audio taped. The tapes were subsequently reviewed and content analysed employing the abstracting form which appears as Appendix F.

In total, 15 days of field work were required to carry out the necessary data collection in May, June and July, 1995. During this period interviews were completed with 33 respondents, several planning events were observed and numerous documents and records were accessed.

3.3.2 Document Analysis

A comprehensive document analysis was carried out at each of the three host colleges. Planning reports and minutes of planning-related meetings were
reviewed to identify process characteristics. Press clippings were reviewed to identify environmental factors. Union newsletters were content analysed to identify issues and editorial stances over time. In one college, union grievance files were also content analysed. Board minutes were examined, noting references to decision rationales, strategic issues and planning process characteristics. Published continuing education and post-secondary calendars were analysed in terms of program mix characteristics. Financial documents were reviewed in order to make some inferences about resource priorities. Student publications were reviewed to identify student issues and concerns.

Sharan Merriam (pp. 105-109) points out that documents offer significant advantages as sources of qualitative field data. They are accessible, cost effective, contain detailed and technical information and can be more objective as they are not subject to respondent or interviewer biases. These advantages were all very evident in the document reviews conducted at the host colleges. Disadvantages of documents cited by Merriam - incomplete information, inconvenient formats, and lack of authenticity - did not prove to be major concerns. Overall, the document review was an invaluable component of the research, and served to "ground" the interview and observational data in a solid empirical context. Lists of the actual documents utilized appear in Appendix G.

3.3.3 Observations

In addition to the interviews and document analysis, one major planning-related event was observed at each college. This took the form of an open President's forum at Centennial College, a year-end Board of Governors meeting at Confederation College, and a two-day Board strategic planning retreat at Georgian College. Detailed field notes were prepared during and after all three events. Observations were formal and structured, focusing on both the content of the deliberations that took place as well as the processes employed to gather stakeholder input.

Merriam (pp. 92-93), citing the 1960 work of B.H. Junker, refers to a range of observational stances that can be taken by a researcher:

1. Complete participant, where the research is a member of the group being studied, and the observer role is concealed.
2. *Participant as observer,* where the researcher's role as a participating group member is subordinate to the observer role.

3. *Observer as participant,* where the researcher's observation role is known to the group and is secondary to participation in the group.

4. *Complete observer,* where the researcher is hidden in the group or anonymous due to the setting or size of the group.

My role as observer was different at each of the three events observed. The President's forum at Centennial was in a large room with many participants and it was possible to remain anonymous and function as a complete observer. The stance taken at the Confederation Board meeting was also close to Junker's "complete observer" category. Although introduced to the group, I sat at the back of the board room and was able to observe activities quite unobtrusively. At the two-day Georgian College strategic planning retreat my role was more active, closer to the third category of "observer as participant". The session was facilitated by an external consultant, who periodically called on my own specialized knowledge of strategic planning in the Ontario college system to provide background or comparative information. In addition, I interacted closely with retreat participants during the numerous informal sessions that took place.

Eugene Webb's classic work, "Unobtrusive Measures: Nonreactive Research in the Social Sciences" popularized the notion that there are two types of error in observational research: the control effect, where participant behaviour is influenced by the observation process; and the biased viewpoint effect, where observations are filtered through the researcher's own knowledge or perceptions of a situation (Webb et al, 1966, pp. 114-15). The control effect was not a significant factor in the observations since my role always remained close to the "observer" end of Junker's spectrum. The influence of the biased viewpoint effect is more difficult to assess. Obviously, I did have a familiarity with CAAT operations, issues and culture and this could have had a steering effect on the observations. However, the fact that I was not a member of any of the colleges being observed (another reason for excluding Sheridan College from the sample of host colleges) and the the fact that the observations were structured and highly focused should minimize the biased viewpoint effect.
3.3.4 Follow-up Research

When the first stage of the field research was completed in the summer of 1995, colleges in Ontario were anticipating major reductions in government funding for the coming 1996-97 fiscal year. The extent of the reductions was unknown at the time, but selected respondents from senior administration at each college were asked to reflect on how they felt their college's strategic planning activities would position them for the coming "bad times". (Without exception, respondents viewed strategic planning as an important survival strategy, a finding that is discussed in Chapter 4.)

In November 1995, the Ministry of Education and Training announced that colleges would have to absorb a 15 percent reduction in operating grants within a single fiscal year, an amount even greater than what had been anticipated by many college officials reading the political scene at the time. Many Ontario colleges had to undergo major restructuring initiatives in order to cope with a resource reduction of this magnitude. Although this major change in the fiscal environment affected the currency of some of the information collected in 1995, it also provided a unique opportunity to strengthen the data through some additional research. Consequently, a follow-up research plan was instituted to achieve three purposes:

1. To update components of the 1995 field data.
2. To provide a retrospective look at the role and efficacy of strategic planning periods of major transformation.
3. To introduce a longitudinal dimension to the data.

The follow-up field research was conducted in the summer of 1996, using data gathering techniques similar to those employed in the main study. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the President of Centennial College, the Vice President of Human Resources at Georgian College (who was the designated leader of Georgian's change process) and the Senior Academic Officer at Confederation College. The Centennial and Georgian interviews were conducted on-site, while the Confederation interview was carried out by telephone. Interviews lasted about half an hour and followed the protocol depicted in Table 8.
Table 8
Interview Protocol for Follow-up Research

| Introduction:          | Study progress report  
|                       | Informed consent release |
| Environment:          | Updating/revisions of SWOT analysis |
| Internal:             | Update of predominant organizational issues  
|                       | Organizational changes to accommodate reductions |
|                       | Change processes followed |
|                       | Impact on organizational climate - communications, morale, labour relations, etc. |
| Planning Process:     | Role of strategic planning in transformation |
|                       | Specific case examples |
| General:              | Insights gained in previous year |
| Closure:              | Identification of additional documentation |

The information gathered in the interviews was supplemented with a follow-up review of selected documents from each college. Sources included budget information, minutes of Board meetings held during the transformation period (from November 1995 to May 1996), memoranda to staff covering organizational change issues, and staff newsletters. Specific sources from each college are included in the document listing that appears in Appendix G.

3.3.5 Case Study Data Base

In order to ensure rigorous data analysis, protect respondent anonymity and maintain document confidentiality, a formal data base was established and maintained in a secure location. Materials contained in the data base include the audio tapes of the original interviews, interview abstracts, observation notes, raw data in the form of completed questionnaires from the survey of registrars, computerized survey tabulations and cross tabulations, and source documents obtained from the host colleges. The information is catalogued, coded, indexed, cross-referenced and organized by college.
3.3.6 Triangulation Procedures

Triangulation involves studying the same phenomena using several sources of data in order to develop converging line of enquiry (Yin, 1989). Merriam (p. 69) points out that the case study approach provides an excellent opportunity to use a range of techniques in order to achieve triangulation. The case studies of the three colleges utilized three major data gathering approaches to ensure triangulation: interviews, document analysis and observation. Specific approaches employed were as follows:

1. Wherever possible, information gathered from one source was cross-validated with data from other sources. For example, internal college issues identified in key informant interviews were compared with points raised at observed meetings and topics covered in staff publications.

2. Triangulation principles were also followed within each individual data gathering technique. Information, opinions or position statements by key informants were tested with other informants to identify consistent themes. Conclusions drawn from documents or records were based on information drawn from several written sources. Conclusions drawn from observations were always based on several observed indicators.

3. Care was taken to ensure that information was corroborated by members of different stakeholder groups. For example, conclusions about the labour relations environment at each host college were based on converging opinions expressed by informants with different vantage points on the topic, such as senior management, union executives and employees.

3.4 Data Quality

3.4.1 Internal Validity

The internal validity of the case study data appears to be high as a result of the successful deployment of the triangulation techniques discussed in the previous section. A high degree of data convergence was obtained with all the key study variables. The validity was further confirmed by the fact that the presidents of the three host colleges reviewed the final write-ups pertaining to
their colleges and verified the accuracy of the findings. In addition, my own "insider" knowledge of community colleges placed me in a good position to informally assess the face validity of the data obtained. Nonetheless, the subjective nature of the case study research makes it difficult to make a definitive statement about validity. However, having spent a considerable amount of time at each of the host colleges, I am confident that the perceptions stated and information provided are honest and accurate reflections of the planning behaviour of the colleges at the time the field work was conducted.

The internal validity of the survey data is high since many of the items were drawn from established instruments that had been previously tested (Johns, 1989; Meredith, Cope and Lemming, 1987).

3.4.2 Reliability

Reliability, the ability to replicate findings, is a problematic concept in qualitative research since information is highly subject to individual interpretation. Merriam (pp. 170-173) cites various writers who make the case that reliability is closely linked to internal validity in qualitative research. Applying this argument, it could be suggested that the reliability of the data from the three case studies is high due to the high internal validity described in the previous section. In addition, the use of instruments such as interview protocols, observation guidelines, abstracting forms and content analysis schema would facilitate the task of replicating the research at other colleges. However, reliability is an elusive concept that could only be truly tested by replication of the study methodology at other colleges.

Reliability of the data from the provincial survey of registrars is easier to assess in view of the quantitative nature of the data. Reliability here would be expected to be high since results are based on detailed and well documented procedures and utilize questionnaire items from studies done in other jurisdictions.

3.4.3 External Validity

External validity is a major limitation of the case study technique since it is not possible to make generalizations from a single or small number of cases.
regardless of the depth of the research. However, the external validity of this study is higher than many case studies due to five significant design factors:

1. The administration of a province-wide survey to identify basic strategic planning characteristics at colleges. The results of the survey are based on respondents from 20 colleges and can be generalized with considerable confidence. Case results were interpreted in the context of this solid provincial data.

2. The use of multiple cases enabling a comparison and contrasting of findings and the identification and categorization of both commonalities as well as unique attributes (Hammond, 1984, p. 362).

3. The selection of host colleges on the basis of how well they reflected variables across the college system.

4. The use of predetermined interview topics and specific procedures for coding and analysis (Merriam, p. 174).

5. The total cooperation received from the host colleges and individual respondents. Not one person declined to participate in the study, virtually eliminating the possibility of sample bias due to non-response.

Although the findings from the case studies can not be generalized with any degree of statistical precision, the factors described above suggest that they can be useful in providing some broader provincial insights into the behaviour of all Ontario colleges engaged in bona fide strategic planning activities.

3.3.4 Ethics

The study adhered closely to ethical principles applicable to research in the social sciences. Administrative consent and informed respondent consent preceded all data gathering activities. Respondent anonymity was protected at all times and the status of any information classified as confidential was respected. The intent of the study was always fully disclosed. The study methodology was examined and approved an the Ethical Review Committee at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. The ethical review certificate appears as Appendix H.
Chapter 4
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS
4.1 The Ontario College System

4.1.1 Characteristics

Since their inception in 1967 the Ontario colleges have had a major impact on the social and economic life of the province, producing thousands of graduates and directly impacting the lives of millions of residents (Dennison, 1995 p. 43.) In October 1994 the Ontario College system employed 8,049 faculty, 6,390 support staff, 1,835 administrative staff and 14,600 part-time staff. In the same academic year 135,000 students were enrolled in full-time post secondary programs and more than 600,000 students were enrolled in part time and continuing education courses (ACAATO, 1996). Seventy-four percent of the full time college students were between 18 and 24 years of age, but there were also significant numbers of older students enrolled in programs. Enrolment had increased by 47 percent over the previous decade. (MET, 1996 p 6-7).

Total operating funding to the Ontario college system was $1.7 billion, with $808 million provided through enrolment-based provincial operating grants. The remaining funds came from student tuition, federal sources, other provincial government ministries and private initiatives. The average grant per student (funding unit) had not kept pace with the growth of enrolment, declining in constant dollars from a high of $4,700 in 1986-7 to $3,700 in 1991-92. (ACAATO, 1991).

The 25 Ontario colleges of applied arts and technology operate as provincial crown corporations responsible to local boards of governors appointed by the Ontario Council of Regents, an overseeing agency that reports to the Ministry of Education and Training. Provincial control is exerted through an enrolment based funding formula, centralized approval of new programs and regular audits to ensure fiduciary accountability. The colleges maintain formal liaison with one another through a system of functional and program-related committees organized and maintained by the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario (ACAATO). Faculty and support staff in the colleges are represented by the Ontario Public Services Employees Union (OPSEU) and collective bargaining is done centrally.
4.1.2 The Environment

In 1992, ACAATO conducted its first environmental scan for the college system. The scan revealed a shifting demographic profile in Ontario. Annual population growth was projected at 14 percent in the central part of the province, but significantly lower in other parts of the province, particularly the North. The 20 to 24 age group, the traditional group that goes to college, had declined and was expected to decline further. The median age of the population was projected to increase from 34 to 41 in the next decade. Visible minorities in the metropolitan Toronto area had increased from 19 percent of the population in 1986 to 26 percent in 1991, and were projected to increase to 45 percent in 2001.

The depressed state of the Ontario economy was also evident in the 1992 ACAATO report. Employment had shifted from manufacturing, the traditional Ontario economic base, to service industries. The percentage of unemployed persons who were in the 24 to 44 age group had increased from 40 percent of the work force to 52 percent in the past 10 years. Layoffs and plant closures were on the increase. The relationship between education and economic success was clear in the statistics. There was a strong inverse relationship between unemployment and educational achievement, and the percentage of jobs projected to require more than 16 years of training had increased from 23 percent in 1986 to a projected 40 percent in 2000.

The first ACAATO scan was useful in that it consolidated relevant information from numerous secondary sources and presented an accurate picture of the main challenges facing Ontario colleges - increasing applicant demand, a changing student body and declining funding. However, it lacked the necessary detail to be of direct use to individual educational institutions. Morrison (1987) points to the need to examine and project literally hundreds of social, demographic, political, technological and economic variables in order to produce an effective environmental scan. In addition, it was static picture of the environment at a point in time, rather than a system for ongoing scanning and forecasting of the type proposed by Morrison. In fact, the financial situation worsened after the scan was issued in September 1992, so the scan quickly became outdated. Another shortcoming was the fact that the scan lacked
methodological sophistication by limiting its approach to the reporting of existing information. None of the commonly used qualitative or quantitative forecasting techniques were employed. For example, "values profiling" (Cope, 1978) would have been an interesting way to analyze the implications of the emerging shift in the composition of student bodies in colleges.

Some of these shortcomings were addressed in the 1996 ACAATO environmental scan. This was a considerably more comprehensive study which utilized a full range of qualitative and quantitative techniques. The 121-page report reviewed information in 10 major categories and placed it in a strategic context by identifying emerging issues and suggesting implicit opportunities and threats to colleges. The scan provided the following snapshot of the environment facing Ontario CAATs in April 1996:

1. An economy that continued to struggle and was suffering from consumer uncertainty and downsizing in the public sector.

2. A move towards greater flexibility in educational delivery and access, rationalization of programs and services, consortia and partnerships.

3. A continued high unemployment rate and consequent demands on colleges for retraining, multiskilling and upgrading.

4. Significant funding reductions far beyond the projections in the 1991 ACAATO scan.

5. A major impact of information technology on all aspects of college operations as well as on educational delivery.

6. A continuation of the demographic trends in the 1991 scan, creating an increasing demand for lifelong learning as well as the more traditional post-secondary education.

7. Significant legislative changes and a determined effort by the Ontario government to increase the accountability and efficiency of all educational institutions.

8. Major cuts to operating expenditures by all colleges.

9. An increasingly diverse learner profile in terms of academic readiness, financial stability, age social and cultural backgrounds.

10. Significant staff downsizing in most colleges, with resulting morale problems among the "surviving" staff members.
4.1.3 **System Planning Initiatives**

Educational planning can be conceptualized as having three levels:

1. The "mega" level which is beyond the scope of this thesis, but is mentioned in order to provide context to the other levels. This is the level at which international educational planning occurs. Relatively little planning activity occurs in this category at the present time, but developments in information technology, international trade and converging political ideologies could lead to an increase in the prominence of mega-level planning.

2. The "macro" level which includes educational planning by the federal and provincial governments.

3. The "micro" level which refers to planning done by individual institutions, and is the major focus of this thesis.

The levels of planning do interact with each other, sometimes in a synchronized fashion, but on other occasions at cross purposes, a point which will be discussed further in Section 5.3.4. As pointed out in Section 2.3, the literature does not adequately address the interconnections between institutional planning and system level planning.

Table 9 on Page 81 illustrates the areas where colleges have autonomy to plan and budget. Although capital and operating budgets are determined by the Ministry of Education, colleges do have considerable autonomy to determine their program mix, set enrolment levels (subject to the funding formula), and launch business initiatives that generate non-grant revenue. Most of the strategic plans of Ontario colleges address these three areas of high (in relative terms) autonomy. It is interesting to note that the colleges are losing some autonomy in the area of academic policy and standards due to some recent provincial initiatives discussed below.
### Table 9
Institutional Autonomy in the Ontario CAAT System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College Decides</th>
<th>Gov't Decides</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operating Budgets</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Budgets</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Mix</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment Levels</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Policies and Standards</td>
<td></td>
<td>x ----&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Training</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Grant Initiatives</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Much of the planning within and about the Ontario college system has taken place at the micro level through institutional planning initiatives by individual colleges. Although there is a high degree of financial control exerted through the Council of Regents and Ministry of Education, and a significant amount of central coordination through the numerous ACAATO committees, consistent and coordinated central planning in Ontario has been virtually non-existent. Any provincial planning initiatives that have taken place were limited to particular aspects of the college system, and usually proposed by commissions and task forces with limited mandates. However, in recent years there have been a few educational policy initiatives that could be viewed as forays into centralized planning:

1. **Vision 2000.** In 1988, the Liberal government of the day recognized the challenges facing the Ontario college system and commissioned a major project to develop a vision for a revitalized college system in the year 2000 and recommend reforms to meet the vision. A large steering committee and six study teams engaged in research and public consultations over a two-year period and made some sweeping recommendations in the areas of curriculum design, standards, access,

A College System Strategic Planning Committee should be established by the Council of Regents.

The Council of Regents, through its Strategic Planning Committee, should develop and recommend a mechanism to coordinate information and plans relevant to the sharing of specialized resources among the colleges.

Each college's board of governors should further develop its capacity for strategic planning, especially on issues related to quality, access and funding, and for working in partnership with a range of stakeholders to meet student demands.

These recommendations were not implemented, but Vision 2000 contributed to planning and governance in the CAATs by articulating key issues and providing a systemwide planning mechanism to use as a backdrop for institutional planning. At the time it was an ambitious and far-reaching provincial planning initiative. Certain aspects of several of the recommendations in the 1990 report were in fact implemented by subsequent NDP and Progressive Conservative governments.


3. Ontario Training and Adjustment Board. On November 23, 1992 the provincial government introduced an act to create the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board (OTAB). The result of several years planning and extensive public consultation (Local Board Secretariat, 1992), OTAB was a crown agency led by a tripartite board consisting of representatives from labour, employers, education and equity groups. Its mandate was to
coordinate workplace training, apprenticeship programs, transition assistance and labour force entry programs and allocate federal manpower training funds through a provincial network of local boards. The provincial OTAB structure was eliminated in July 1996 as part of a government restructuring program, the local training and adjustment boards (LTABs) remain in place.

4. College Standards and Accreditation Council. Another major central planning initiative flowing from the Vision 2000 report was the College Standards and Accreditation Council (CSAC). Established in 1992, CSAC reported to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities through the Council of Regents and had broad authority to establish provincial program standards, accredit college programs, define general education curriculum goals and oversee system-wide program review (Johnston and Shapiro, 1992).

4.1.4 Institutional Planning Initiatives

The survey of College Registrars carried out in late 1994 and described in the discussion of methodology in Chapter 3 was conducted in order to establish a sampling frame for the selection of host colleges for follow-up case research. However, it also provides an interesting overview of the nature and scope of strategic planning activities carried out by individual colleges at the time. The questionnaire with detailed responses appears as Appendix A. Principal findings were as follows:

- Most registrars reported that their colleges had a written strategic plan
- All the written plans contained mission statements and strategic goals, but some did not include value statements or operational tactics. (A review of published strategic plans filed with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities in 1994 confirmed this finding.)
- In most cases, development of the strategic plans involved an internal and external environmental scan, a process for gathering stakeholder input and a review and modification process.
• Several college plans had been in existence for five or more years and were entering their second iteration.

• The registrars indicated that the strategic plans were having a moderate influence on decisions about academic and registrarial matters at their colleges.

The survey contained a series of statements about planning with Likert-style agree/disagree scales designed to measure the strategic nature of the planning that was taking place. The statements were drawn from a 1987 study of US colleges and universities by Meredith, Cope and Lemming. Findings appear in Table 10 on Page 85.

It is interesting to note that Ontario colleges had item scores consistently lower than the Meredith Cope and Lemming study. However, in relative terms the scores from the two studies followed a similar pattern, with visioning viewed as a critical component of planning, and operational matters such as budgeting and program planning receiving lower scores. It is also noteworthy that while 17 out of the 20 colleges replying to the survey stated that they were involved in strategic planning, only nine colleges met the cut-off point (average strategic score of 3.0) for selection eligibility as host colleges for in-depth research. So it appears that in 1994, most colleges believed that they were engaged in strategic planning, but in reality less than half were involved in bona fide strategic planning as defined by objective, literature-based criteria. This was a finding that was also paralleled by the Meredith, Cope and Lemming findings.

College registrars were also asked to rate the influence of strategic plans on various academic and registrarial matters at their college. The resulting influence ratings were then cross-tabulated with the college strategy scores, and appear in Table 11 on Page 86. This table suggests that there is in fact a relationship between the registrars' influence ratings and their strategy scores. The majority of the colleges with low influence ratings also received low strategy scores, and most of the colleges with high influence ratings had medium or high strategy scores.
Central to our planning process is a reasonably clear and articulate vision of what our college is to become.

Resources are redirected on the basis of strategic decisions.

Our mission statement is considered more important for public relations than as a guide for the institution's future.

Strategic choices are consistently made that reposition the college in more favourable niches.

Our institutional mission is regularly reviewed and clarified in terms of "what business we are in."

The college's planning relies primarily on concrete, objective data rather than on opinions, values, traditions and aspirations.

Annual budgets largely determine what our college will be doing in the future.

New program decisions are usually a reaction to outside influences such as competition and government policy.

Average score

Notes:
1. Bracketed signs indicate polarity of items. Numbers indicate rank order.
2. Scores are out of four, based on responses to 4-point Likert scale items.
Table 11
Influence/Strategy Score Comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence:</th>
<th>Low (10-13)</th>
<th>Medium (14,15)</th>
<th>High (18-20)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (14-18)</td>
<td>4 colleges</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (19-23)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3 colleges</td>
<td>2 colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (24-29)</td>
<td>2 colleges</td>
<td>2 colleges</td>
<td>3 colleges</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1. Based on replies from 17 colleges stating they had a strategic plan.

The influence scores were also compared to the size of the responding colleges, and it was found that the strategic plans in the larger colleges tended to have more impact on decision making. This is depicted in Figure 2 on Page 87.

Strategy scores were cross-tabulated by size of college, but no significant relationship was identified. The Meredith Cope and Lemming study also failed to detect a relationship between size and strategic scores, suggesting that other variables such as exposure to the external environment (perhaps a stronger factor with the smaller, non-Metro colleges) could be more significant.
Chapter 4
Discussion of Findings

Figure 2
Influence Score by Size of College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence Score</th>
<th>Small Colleges</th>
<th>Mid-sized Colleges</th>
<th>Large Colleges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 6)</td>
<td>(n = 7)</td>
<td>(n = 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1. Scores represent respondent ratings of degree of influence that strategic plan had on various types of decisions. A score of '4' represented "great influence" while a score of '1' represented "no influence".
2. College size categories based on full-time post-secondary enrolment, grouped as follows: Small - Less than 3,500 students, Medium - between 3,500 and 7,000 students, Large - More than 7,000 students.

The next four sections describe the institutional planning that took place at three colleges in the context of this provincial backdrop. Section 4.2 describes Centennial College in Scarborough in terms of its background, catchment area, learner profile, formal structure, strategic planning practices, culture and climate, stakeholder perceptions and transition tactics. Sections 4.3 and 4.4 employ similar headings to profile Confederation College in Thunder Bay and Georgian College in Barrie. The chapter concludes with a cross-case comparison of the three colleges appearing in Section 4.5.
4.2 Centennial College Profile

4.2.1 Background

Centennial College is one of the largest colleges in Ontario with an enrolment of 8,592 full-time students and 30,000 part-time registrants in the 1994-95 academic year. At that time the college had about 2,000 full and part-time staff and faculty, and an annual operating budget of $82 million. Four major campuses are situated throughout Scarborough and East York. Centennial is a comprehensive college offering a full range of 75 programs in applied arts, health sciences, business and technology as well as some unique programming in transportation, entrepreneurial studies and communications. Transportation programs are offered at the Ashtonbee Campus, business and engineering technology programs are run at the Progress Campus, and the Warden Woods campus houses the applied arts and health sciences programs. In 1994, Centennial opened a $35 million Centre for Creative Communications in partnership with Bell Canada, Silicon Graphics Inc., Alias Research Inc. and Sony of Canada Ltd. The facility is a world-class training centre for digitally-based education and houses five full-time communication programs and a range of part-time and custom training programs.

4.2.2 Catchment Area

A college's catchment area is its geographical service area designated by the Ministry of Education at the time that the Ontario college system was established. (A map showing the catchment areas of all the colleges appears in Appendix J.) Colleges now draw learners from each other's areas, and offer educational programming that crosses official boundaries, but catchment areas remain a significant factor in planning and operational decisions. Board representatives are drawn from constituencies within College catchment areas. Geography impacts the number and location of campuses and their subsequent operating costs. Catchment area demographics have a major shaping influence on learner profiles. In fact, much of the uniqueness of the individual colleges in the Ontario system can be traced to catchment area differences.
Chapter 4  Discussion of Findings

The catchment area of Centennial College comprises the municipalities of Scarborough and East York, with a total population of 660,000 in 1995. The area is tightly flanked by Seneca College to the north, Durham College to the east and George Brown College to the immediate west. The Scarborough campus of the University of Toronto is located in the Centennial catchment area, and York University, situated in Seneca's catchment area, is nearby.

The population of Scarborough and East York is growing rapidly and the area is becoming a major settlement destination for new Canadians. The Scarborough Planning Office projects that in five years, visible minorities will comprise almost half of the city's population.

The economy in Centennial's catchment area has been somewhat depressed. Unemployment and welfare rates are higher than the Metro Toronto average. The economic base is changing, with a 40 percent loss of manufacturing jobs in Scarborough since 1989. Industries such as chemicals, rubber, plastics, metal products and machinery are declining, while service and technology-based industries are increasing.

4.2.3 Learner Profile

Applications to full-time post secondary programs at Centennial have been increasing, and this has been reflected in a steady growth in enrolment over the past few years. Appendix I indicates a 1996 enrolment increase of 6 percent over 1994-95 academic year, well above the average for the college system as a whole.

Centennial's student population is multicultural and multiracial, reflecting its catchment area. Centennial has the most ethnoculturally diverse learner group of any college. A 1994 study of first year students in Metro Colleges (Central Region Research Network, 1995) indicated that two thirds of the students had an ethnic origin other than British Isles. An internal study conducted by the college in 1995 found that one quarter of Centennial's full-time learners and one third of the part-time learners did not have English as a first language. In the same year, four out of ten new students tested below Centennial's first year English entry requirements.
Students at Centennial are older than students from other colleges. Half of the full-time post-secondary learners came directly from the work force, and one quarter were aged 25 years or older. However, they tend to be financially insecure, with less than half of Centennial's learners rating their financial situation as satisfactory. One quarter have financial dependents. Utilization of the Ontario Student Assistance Plan (OSAP) increased by 50 percent between 1993 and 1996. In a 1995 internal survey, students reported that finances, employment and family responsibilities were major factors impacting on their abilities to cope with college.

Centennial's students are locally-based. Of all the Metro Colleges, Centennial had the highest percentage of learners drawn from its catchment area (Central Region Research Network, 1995). The students at Centennial have an active student government structure and pursue a range of issues related mainly to teaching and academic services. A new student centre at the Progress Campus opened in the Fall of 1996. The student government is formally involved in college decision making through through appointments on various planning and operational committees, but much of the student input occurs through informal interaction with college management.

4.2.4 Formal Structure

The organization chart for Centennial College as of June 1994 appears as Appendix K. The college was organized under four functional areas - academic, administration/finance, student services/community relations and human resources. This organization reflected a restructuring carried out by the current president in 1993, when the number of level 2 management positions was reduced from six to four.

4.2.5 Strategic Planning

Centennial was one of the first colleges to become involved in strategic planning, issuing its first formal plan in 1988. The plan was initiated by the Board and president. The process involved many committee meetings and invitations for various groups to provide input, but the plan was still viewed as a
top-down directive, supported with little consensus. As one respondent put it:

A plan was produced. It was given as a sort of manifesto. In fact, it was in poster form and distributed. So people could frame it.

The document was a very detailed conventional plan, spelling out six goals, fifteen objectives and numerous action items, but it did not appear to have a direct impact on operations. In fact, many respondents reported having difficulty with the terms, definitions and choices in the plan and claimed that it actually impaired their ability to behave strategically. One member of administration framed the problem as follows:

When you do a strategic plan over a long period of time, and when the discussions are not sufficiently well focussed, it saps the energy of the organization. When you have to deal with what is a mission statement and there is not consensus on terms, the discussion disintegrates and frustrates everyone. So when you get to the meat of things - key strategic directions - you have already exhausted things.

A summary of the key elements in Centennial's first strategic plan appears in Table 12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elements of Centennial's First Strategic Plan, 1989-1992</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Mission:** To educate students for career success
- **Values:** Critical thinking and personal growth  
  - Equity of access  
  - Employee development  
  - Collegiality  
  - Quality and innovation
- **Goals:** Ensure student's career success  
  - Improve learning and working environment  
  - Become known for quality and excellence  
  - Expand partnerships with private and public sector
In 1993, a new president was appointed who dismantled the formal planning structure, eliminated the Level 2 planning director position, and initiated a new, grass-roots based planning process. She spent the first few months of her term consulting broadly with students, staff and members of the community. In early 1994 she produced a paper outlining a set of values in support of Centennial's initial mission statement "To educate students for career success". These appear in Table 13 below.

In October 1994, a detailed plan was issued outlining strategic directions and operational time frames. It was called a "business plan" since the term strategic planning had a negative connotation at Centennial as a result of the experiences with the first strategic plan. Centennial's business plan was developed in a bottom-up fashion, with substantial committee input. Plans in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Centennial's Guiding Principles, 1994</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning and teaching are our core activities. Every action and every dollar must reflect and support this value

We will begin immediately a process of continuous improvement and appropriate accountability. We will evaluate all of our work as part of the work itself.

As far as possible, we will attempt to maintain full employment at our college.

We are committed to training and retraining for our employees. We want to work in a learning environment. Each of us must be committed to working and learning to achieve our full potential.

We will maximize collaboration, consultation and internal partnerships in planning, action and decision-making.

We will manage our college in a fiscally accountable way, always striving for a balanced budget.

92
the various functional areas were assembled and consolidated by the level two managers. The final plan was organized under six strategic directions:

1. Reaffirm teaching and learning as the heart and soul of the college
2. Expand enrolment and access to classrooms
3. Improve services to students
4. Support, maintain and enhance a comprehensive learning environment
5. Initiate partnerships with business, labour, educational institutions and the community
6. Develop a culture of open communication and equity

An updated version of the business plan was issued in 1995. In 1996, the format was altered and a strategic directions document was presented to the Board of Governors.

An interesting and ironic point is the fact that Centennial's 1989 plan was called a strategic plan, although it could not really pass as one by most definitions in the literature. On the other hand, the 1994 plan was not called a strategic plan, yet it was in fact highly strategic, having all the characteristics of "bona fide" strategic planning discussed in Chapter 2. The college also met the strategic selection criteria that were delineated in Table 4 on Page 64, resulting in its inclusion as a host college for the study.

The difference in attitudes towards Centennial's second strategic plan was very evident. Respondents from all levels of the organization were aware of the contents of the plan and reported that it had a significant shaping effect on their operations:

Now we have a plan which is driven by a strategic purpose.

Centennial's strategic plan now is focused on students, on faculty, the public. In the early days we were very dogmatic on what terms meant what. Now the college is more concerned with how you treat people, rather than what word means what.

In the past, the planning unit used to complain about lack of compliance with the strategic plan. Now we are living a plan rather than talking about one.
In the 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96 academic years there were numerous other planning initiatives at Centennial, all relating in some way to the guiding principles and strategic directions of the college. A Transition Team was formed early in the president's tenure, with broad representation and a mandate to provide advice to the president on a range of organizational issues. Once a new senior management team was assembled, many of the team's functions became redundant. In 1995 a President's Planning Council was established which replaced the Transition Team and had a mandate to provide coordination to the myriad of committees and planning groups that had been established. An information technology plan was developed, again with extensive committee involvement. A new program review system was instituted. An Academic Framework Advisory Panel, representing a cross section of faculty, staff, student and community members, met for about a year, conducted an environmental scan, and issued a major discussion paper in May 1996, identifying a number of future scenarios for the college to consider. (I was contracted by the panel to assemble some of the research data and write the paper, an interesting project that allowed me to expand my field data and gain additional insights about the planning process at Centennial.)

The Board of Governors appears to have a limited role in strategic planning at Centennial College. The Board reviewed and commented on various planning documents, but was not directly involved in their formation. This could be due in part to the fact that the Board was reviewing its own role at the time of the study, and had not yet adopted a clearly defined governance approach.

4.2.6 Culture and Climate

The most significant thing about the internal environment at Centennial was the way that it had changed. The culture and climate had undergone a very significant transformation in the past few years, originating with the appointment of the new president in 1993.

The transformation was very evident in the labour relations environment at the college. In earlier times union management relations were very acrimonious, with little trust and openness on either side. At the time the field
research was conducted, this had changed and labour relations were viewed as positive by respondents from all constituencies. Both union locals were well represented on all planning and decision making groups, and communication between the unions and senior management appeared to be open and free-flowing. This is evidenced by the following quotes from a member of senior management and a union representative:

We have one of the best interpersonal human relationships with the union in the system. We think a lot, we talk a lot, we spend time together. We don't always agree. Quite clearly we don't agree. But we have come to be honest with each other and at least respect process to some degree.

(With management now) there is an openness, a willingness to listen and a willingness to sit down and discuss things. Before there were a lot of hidden agendas.

An analysis of back issues of "Unfettered", the OPSEU local's newsletter at Centennial, underscored the change in the labour relations climate. Issues from the early 1990s were highly critical of management staff at Centennial and contained numerous direct and personal attacks on individual managers and on the president. By 1994, the tone had shifted significantly. A review of four editions in the 1994-95 academic year revealed articles on the social contract, (then Premier) Bob Rae, system-wide labour relations issues, union philosophy, and professional development activities and opportunities. Organizational changes were covered in a neutral and objective fashion. There were still some criticism of members of management, particularly middle management, but these were relatively mild, and often presented in a humorous vein.

The management style at Centennial was in transition from a previously autocratic to a more democratic, consultative approach emphasizing lateral communication. As one respondent put it "you can't bring things to the executive group unless you have consulted with all the affected groups". The new style was not as widely observed at the middle management level of the college. Respondents reported that some deans and chairs still adhered the the "old" ways of doing things, operating in an autonomous fashion. One administrator interviewed reasoned that this was because organizational change usually takes a year to move through each organizational level, and so the new style had needed more time to fully take root at the college.
A college climate study was conducted by the Marketing and Communications department in late 1994. Although it had a low response (15 percent, or 139 employees), the findings did corroborate the observations presented above. Three quarters of the respondents perceived a change in the way that Centennial operates, and this was seen as a change for the better. Almost half of the employees felt their supervisors were successfully following the college strategic directions (almost a quarter were undecided). Supervisors were seen to be an effective source of information, ranking ahead of memos, publications and the grapevine.

The consensual approach at Centennial was articulated in a 1995 discussion paper about the principles underlying the newly formed Presidents Planning Council:

A postsecondary environment is a place where faculty, staff, administration and students seek to work together as a community. This culture has its roots in the concept of a "community of scholars. Colleagues thrive in an environment where decisions are made together, rather than being imposed by one group on another.

Institutional goals cannot be set single-handedly, and require for their validation extensive negotiation with all constituent groups"

Dialogue is a distinctive feature of consultation, resting on the belief that talk is creative, not confirmative.

At the time the field work was carried out at Centennial the main internal staff issues were centred around job security, organizational changes, the use of technology in education, and a range of academic matters. I had the opportunity to observe a President's Forum in May 1995 that was attended by 23 employees, mainly from the faculty group. This represented a good turnout, since post-secondary classes were not in session at the time and many faculty were not on campus. The discussion centred mainly on general education at Centennial, student characteristics and the need for literacy and ESL training, construction plans for the upcoming campus consolidation and attempts to "humanize" the architecture, recruitment plans for the new director of human resources, a request for input to the new human resources configuration, and the amalgamation at the East York Board of Education. The discussions at the forum were free flowing, almost to the point of being random, but the topics all
related to change themes - organizational change, changes in the external environment, changes in student characteristics - and could be linked to the guiding principles and strategic directions of the college. An agenda setting session with the president and College Council executive was also observed, and similar issues were discussed.

Respondents were asked to describe the kind of person who would do well at Centennial, and a consistent pattern emerged across all organizational levels and constituencies. Behavioural norms at Centennial included collegiality, openness to change, cultural and ethnic sensitivity, energy and a valuing of relationships. As one respondent put it "If you're not working collegially, you are in trouble here." Another respondent reported recently being reprimanded by an immediate supervisor for undertaking an initiative without sufficient consultation.

4.2.7 Stakeholder Perceptions

During the interviews, respondents were asked to indicate what they felt were the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing Centennial College. Results of these questions appear in Table 14 on Page 98.
Table 14
Composite SWOT Analysis - Centennial College

**Strengths:**
- Student involvement
- Staff talents
- Labour relations
- Accessible metro location
- Constituent based decision making
- Multicultural nature of staff and students

**Weaknesses:**
- Lack of visibility, profile
- Previous internal strife
- Information systems
- Physical plant

**Opportunities:**
- Immigration in catchment area
- Program niches
- Partnerships, such as Bell Centre
- Contract training
- Change, new management team

**Threats:**
- Competition from adjacent colleges
- Private competition
- Declining funding
- Declining public support of education

Respondents were also asked to state what their three wishes would be for the college. A composite "wish list" was assembled and appears below in Table 15.

Table 15
Composite "Wish List" - Centennial College

- Continued communication, collaboration
- Faster processes, fewer procedural restrictions
- Become number one college of choice
- Closer industry/college relationships
- Student success
- Leader in access and information technology
4.2.8 Organizational Transition

When the first stage of the field research was carried out in the spring of 1996, colleges were anticipating that the newly elected provincial government would introduce major resource reductions for the 1996-97 fiscal year. In November 1995, the actual cutbacks were announced and the colleges had to absorb a 15 percent reduction in operating grants within one fiscal year.

Centennial’s initial response to the cutbacks was to implement hiring and expenditure freezes and to escalate plans to sell the Warden Woods campus and consolidate operations on three campuses. Staff reductions were also achieved through retirements and voluntary early leave arrangements. A program review process led to the elimination of two programs. The impact of the funding cutbacks was mitigated by additional funding due to previous enrolment growth and extra revenues being generated by the Bell Centre. However, difficulties around the financing arrangement of the Bell Centre campus in East York inflicted an additional obligation of $2.1 million to the College. This was exacerbated by a cost of $2.5 million for severance and early retirement packages, higher than the projected $600 thousand. The net result was a $900 thousand operating deficit, leading to some layoffs of support staff.

Centennial’s business plan and value statements did prove to play a significant role in the transition at Centennial College. The priority on teaching and learning was reflected in the fact that only two faculty positions were eliminated at the time, compared to 15 administrative positions and 20 support staff positions. The collegiality value was evident in the extensive use of forums and consultation processes to identify areas for reduced activity. Priorities pertaining to information technology and professional development were also maintained. A review of documentation and communiques related to the downsizing revealed frequent reference to the 1994 values statement and the strategic goals from the 1995 business plan.

The follow-up field work suggests that the positive organizational climate at Centennial weathered the 1995-96 cutbacks, although relations were strained due to "bumping" in the support staff groups. As one respondent put it "people would still rather be at Centennial".
4.3 Confederation College Profile

4.3.1 Background

Confederation College is one of the smaller colleges in the Ontario system with an enrolment of 3,236 full-time students and 18,000 part-time registrants in the 1994-95 academic year. At that time the college had 594 full-time and 600 part-time employees and an annual operating budget of $31.4 million. The main campus is situated in Thunder Bay with other campuses located in Kenora, Fort Frances, Dryden, Sioux Lookout, Geraldton and Marathon. Confederation offers a traditional range of 52 programs in Business, Applied Arts, Health Sciences and Technology as well as some unique programming in aviation manufacturing and aboriginal studies.

The college is recognized internationally for its expertise in entrepreneurship education (Clayton, 1992). Confederation's Northwest Enterprise Centre delivers entrepreneurial training throughout Canada and in the Caribbean, Poland, Malaysia and China. Other initiatives include small business development programs, trades training, an entrepreneurship centre and a range of international programs and activities. The geography of the catchment area has also made the college a leader in the development and delivery of distance education programs and courses.

4.3.2 Catchment Area

Although one of the smaller colleges in the Ontario system, Confederation's catchment area comprises all of Northwestern Ontario, extending from Marathon to the Manitoba border and north to Hudson Bay (see Appendix J). Adjacent colleges are Northern College and Cambrian College, both situated well to the east of Confederation. The relative size of Confederation's catchment area was put into perspective by one respondent who said "We cover half the province. The other 24 colleges cover the other half".

The local economy in the catchment area is resource based, although it recently experienced a decline in the value of mining exploration activity.
Manufacturing, construction and transportation, including grain handling, have also been declining. The service sector, including personal and community services and the hospitality industry has been growing in size. Small business start-ups were also increasing, reflecting trends elsewhere in the province. The area's unemployment rate has historically been above the Ontario average.

Confederation College is very closely linked with the communities, organizations and institutions within its catchment area. This is evidently a common characteristic of Northern Ontario colleges. As one respondent put it:

Community colleges in smaller communities are more than a college. We truly are a community college. When you move into a place like Kenora or Dryden, they see the college as much more than delivering a course or program. There is a lot of community connection that goes beyond delivery of programs. It can become very political in terms of what's going to happen for a particular community.

College alliances include a partnership with the Aboriginal Postsecondary Education and Training Council, articulation agreements with universities and high schools, consortiums and joint ventures with other educational institutions in Canada and the United States, and numerous partnerships with business and industry.

Lakehead University is located in Thunder Bay, less than a kilometre away from Confederation's main campus, and is a major player in the area. As one external respondent put it "we have two large institutions in one fish bowl." Confederation has numerous formal linkage agreements with the university. Lakehead University began as a technical institute and still offers some engineering technology diploma programs, so the two institutions work together closely to avoid duplication and share lab facilities. An official at Lakehead University reported:

Lakehead in general has had within their history, their framework of a university where they are going to try and be as accommodating to college graduates as possible, but we have especially close ties with Confederation College. We offer concurrent degree and diploma programs with them. It's a cooperative nature. We have done some recruitment work together to save costs. Other than the engineering technology programs, there isn't too much program competition.
4.3.3 Learner Profile

Applications to full-time post secondary programs at Confederation increased slowly and this has been reflected in a relatively steady enrolment pattern over the past few years. Appendix I indicates a 1996 enrolment increase of 2.3 percent over 1994-95 AY, less than the system average of 2.9 percent.

Extensive demographic data on the Confederation students are not available since the students apply through the Ontario College Application System (OCAS) and detailed age, gender and ethnicity information is not collected. However, an internal student survey on the extended academic year conducted in 1994 showed that they were similar to other Ontario students at least in terms of age. Sixty three percent of the Confederation students reported that they were under 23 years of age, compared to 68 percent of the students in the Metro colleges (Confederation, 1994; Central Region Research Network, 1994). The great majority of the full-time post-secondary students were located at the Thunder Bay campus. Many were from out-of-town and therefore impacted by the relatively high living expenses in the area. OSAP claims at Confederation were among the highest in the province. Records also showed that 365 aboriginal students were registered at the college.

An active Student Administrative Corporation (SAC) is located at the Thunder Bay campus, with less active SAC branches situated at the various satellite campuses. The SAC works closely with the college administration and has a formalized campus employment contract covering all student positions at Confederation. One student respondent stated:

We have a great relationship with the administration. They are very open to trying new things and working together to make this a better place for students.

The main student issues during the 1994-95 academic year were the extended academic year, the $30 capital campaign levy on student fees, and concerns over potential tuition increases.
4.3.4 Formal Structure

Confederation College had a flat organizational structure, with four deans, an executive director (finance and administration) and an executive director (student services and human resources) reporting directly to the president. In 1995, there were 76 administrative positions at Confederation College, a relatively high ratio compared to other colleges. This is due to the need for decentralized operations created by the large catchment area, and some variations in the approach to job classification, where many positions classified as administration at Confederation would be classified as support staff positions at other colleges. In late 1992 the college completed a major restructuring process which led to the establishment of an educational innovation division headed by a senior dean, an extended academic year, reduced program hours and a push for more curriculum modularization and computer-based learning. Operating funds of $1 million per year were then designated for technology and distance education initiatives. The college organization chart as of April 1995 appears as Appendix L.

4.3.5 Strategic Planning

Confederation first became engaged in formalized strategic planning when the current president was appointed in 1989. The process was initiated and facilitated by senior management with Board involvement in developing a college mission statement. From the outset, the college worked to establish an integrated planning process that would closely link strategic planning with operational planning and with the budget process.

Strategic planning was viewed as a corporate function with a three to five year time frame and defined as "... determining where the organization should be going so that all organizational efforts can be pointed in that direction" (Confederation College, 1989). Operational planning at Confederation was seen as a divisional function with a one to three year time frame and an emphasis on the means by which the strategic plan will be implemented.

Planning at Confederation followed an annual cycle with a well defined time line specifying key activities in strategic planning, operational planning and
budgeting. The process began with the annual board retreat in October of each year where strategic directions were reviewed and confirmed. The annual strategic plan was published in January and a detailed operational plan published a month or two later. The operational plans contained a great amount of detail supporting each strategic initiative, including objectives, activity descriptions, start and completion dates, specific responsibilities, and indicators of successful completion. The budget process ran in parallel with the operational planning phase, and budget guidelines were closely linked to operational objectives. The cycle concluded at the end of each academic year when management performance reviews were linked back to operational objectives. Table 16 summarizes Confederation's strategic plan at the time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elements of Confederation's Strategic Plan, 1994-96</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Mission:</strong></th>
<th>To deliver innovative, high-quality, college-level learning and training opportunities in Northwestern Ontario to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Meet the diverse needs of adult learners for continued self-growth and meet the needs of business, industry, and organizations in a rapidly changing global environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Assist the cultural, social and economic growth of the regional communities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Values:** | Not stated, but implicit in the goals |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Goals:</strong></th>
<th>Enhance regional operations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide quality aboriginal programming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure quality curriculum, instruction and learning support systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster a positive human relations climate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieve a high level of customer service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Confederation's goals were very generic, and in some cases resembled value statements rather than statements of strategic direction. However, they acquired specificity as they were converted into objectives and action plans.
For example, the broad goal dealing with quality of education was broken out into the following specific objectives:

1. To develop a plan to introduce new educational technology in the delivery of general education, postsecondary programming, corporate and small business training.

2. To increase access for diverse learning by providing flexibility in delivery of college programs and courses.

3. To develop a flexible education and training model which incorporates a program system with a core cluster with special options/endorsements to provide a specialized career vocation.

4. To enhance the quality of teaching through planned professional development activity, such as returning to business, industry and public services, exchanges and secondments.

5. To participate in system wide initiatives and developments as both a leader and a partner with other institutions.

6. To assess short term program demands and temporarily increase enrolments without a permanent increase in capital and operating costs.

7. To internationalize college curriculum.

Each objective was then supported with a detailed action plan. The objective to internationalize college curriculum, for example, had eight specific action items for the 94-95 academic year, including establishing faculty assignments, researching approaches taken by other institutions, allocating international seats, seeking out training contracts and developing faculty exchanges. All these items included time frames and specific responsibilities.

Development of the plan was coordinated by a director of research and planning. Board input was obtained through the annual retreat and updates at regular meetings. Focus groups with representatives from local business and industry were held every couple of years to update the external environmental scan. Annual sessions with managers and program coordinators were also held to obtain input to the plan. Operational plans were drawn up by the divisional deans. There did not appear to be any formal mechanisms for obtaining broad faculty and support staff input to the plan and there was limited internal awareness of the plan details. This is captured in the following quote from the president:
I would have liked to have seen the (planning) process get down to the ranks, a bigger commitment ... It shouldn't stop at the dean level ... Every employee should have a general idea of where we're going and their role in that. We try to do that, but it's very difficult. You send out a document to everybody indicating what the process is, what the results are and you ask somebody where we're going and they don't know. That's frustrating.

A counter point was made by a respondent from the faculty group:

The time for doing things - strategic planning and other things - has really been crunched. We only have one divisional meeting a year - and we did look at the strategic plan at that point. But there are ten million other things we are more interested in - teaching strategies, learning strategies, hours and content.

It is interesting to note that the "other things" identified by the respondent were actually quite directly related to the overall strategic directions of the college, suggesting that some staff are in fact concerning themselves with strategic issues without making a conscious connection to the strategic plan.

While there appeared to be relatively low level of "buy-in" to the plan compared to the other colleges studied, some respondents suggested that the level of support and commitment to Confederation's strategic directions was increasing:

I think its changing slowly. I think the key is for people to understand what is the objective. International is a good one. For a number of years faculty had some very serious reservations about international. But as more faculty got involved, they realize there are benefits to the college.

To a lot of staff it (international) doesn't have an impact on their lives. And sometimes when they do think of it, they think "oh, it's just x or y going on a trip to Europe, or China, or whatever, and how can the college afford that when I can't even get an eraser". But I think there is some beginning of a recognition that it is valid.

Regardless of the level of commitment to specific process aspects, awareness of Confederation's overall strategic directions was high across all the constituency members interviewed. In addition, strategic topics had a high profile in meetings and publications. A Board meeting was observed in June 1995 and much of the discussion centred on items related to the strategic plan such as international initiatives, information technology, aboriginal funding, and
the implications of the federal budget. A review of College Council minutes for the 1994-95 academic year revealed a similar focus on topics of a strategic nature. Issues addressed by the staff newsletter for the same period also showed a similar pattern, with lots of coverage of strategic matters, particularly developments in international education and distance education initiatives.

4.3.6 Culture and Climate

The internal culture at Confederation appeared to be more entrepreneurial, and less consultative than that of the other colleges studied. Communication was seen to be essentially of a "top-down" nature and lateral communication was viewed as relatively weak at the middle management level. Yet there was a widely held perception that the organization was changing, moving to a more collaborative approach:

You really have to be prepared to work with others. We're not isolated any more. The downsizing has caused new and overlapping responsibilities. It has opened our eyes to the problems of other departments. There tends to be more cooperation now.

I see a mix (of styles) at the middle management level. I see more territorial types of management going on. Some of the older managers hang on to things. (But) that is slowly breaking down.

At the time of the study, a major internal issue at the college was change. Most respondents made reference to change at Confederation, and described staff anxieties about job security and the need for upgrading. When the field work was carried out in June 1995, change topics dominated staff discussions and included technology, distance education, international initiatives, traditional vs non-traditional approaches to learning, the social contract, and the extended academic year. Some respondents felt that there were high levels of stress as a result of the change:

This college has gone through tremendous change in the last two or three years. At one point there was succession after succession of employees being bombarded with change. There was no way that people who were frightened ... had any process to deal with it effectively. It was very much "this is what's happened, let's move on".

On the other hand, most respondents felt that Confederation was better off than
other colleges because it had taken a proactive approach to change.

One of the main issues is uncertainty. Staff feel in a state of flux. They know things are changing. The place is reinventing itself by the month. But I have also heard staff say they are in better shape than some of the other colleges. We seem to know where we're going.

I strongly believe in the vision of the president. He's been criticized for trying to push and push, but we are three years ahead of the other colleges.

Labour relations at Confederation College were essentially positive, with respondents from both sides reporting no major problems. There were few grievances compared to some colleges in the system, and the grievances usually related to classification matters, rather than management practices.

When asked to describe the kind of person that did well at Confederation, respondents provided a profile of an employee who was technologically literate, innovative, willing to accept change and committed to the college's strategic initiatives.

4.3.7 Stakeholder Perceptions

During the interviews, respondents were asked to indicate what they felt were the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing Confederation College. Results of these questions appear in Table 17 on Page 109.
Table 17
Composite SWOT Analysis - Confederation College

Strengths:
- Strong community ties
- Approach to innovation
- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Rapport with business and industry
- Dedication of staff

Weaknesses:
- Widely dispersed campuses
- Geographic isolation
- Lack of staff involvement
- Job security concerns and related stress

Opportunities:
- International
- Distance education
- Program niches
- Aboriginal ties

Threats:
- Declining funding
- Declining enrolments
- Increasing tuitions

Respondents were also asked to state what their three wishes would be for the college. A composite "wish list" was assembled and appears as Table 18.

Table 18
Composite "Wish List" - Confederation College

- Improved funding
- World recognition
- High employee commitment
- Good working environment
- Educational quality/student success
4.3.8 Organizational Transition

When the first stage of the field research was carried out in the spring and summer of 1995, colleges were anticipating that the newly elected provincial government would introduce major resource reductions for the 1996-97 fiscal year. The nature, shape and scope of these reductions was unknown at the time. In November 1995, the cutbacks were announced and the colleges had to absorb a 15 percent reduction in operating grants within one fiscal year. This translated into a $3.5 million budget reduction for Confederation College.

To absorb the funding reductions, Confederation reorganized, reducing the number of second level senior management positions from six to four. The number of third level chair positions was also reduced significantly. Staff reductions amounted to 21 percent in the administrative group, 20 percent in the faculty groups and 16 percent in the support staff group. Most of these were achieved through attrition and early leave arrangements, although there were a number of layoffs, and some "bumping" under the collective agreement in the support staff group. A program review was carried out, leading to the cancellation of the Photography, Mechanical Engineering Technician, Health Record Technician and Airport Management programs. A new Multimedia program was established. The overall enrolment growth target was reduced to three percent.

When asked in June 1995 how the strategic planning process would help the college deal with the coming fiscal challenges, Confederation's president felt strategic initiatives as positioned the college well:

You have to run faster than the others. If you're in a cluster of 25, then the object is to shine in the group, and be more innovative than the rest, and you'll get out of it better.

Another senior manager felt the plan would provide useful guidelines for downsizing:

What the strategic plan says to me is some of our sacred things. It doesn't matter how bad the budget problem is. Those strategic things are going to happen. It doesn't help us in the cutting. But it tells us what to cut.
The experience at Confederation suggests that the strategic plan did in fact play a significant role in the downsizing that took place in the 1995-96 academic year. One management respondent described it as a "guiding beacon which helped the college work through some tough decisions". The new program in multimedia and the continued emphasis on entrepreneurial and international initiatives were clearly in line with the college's stated directions. The follow-up research conducted in September 1996 also suggested that the positive labour relations had remained intact, particularly with the faculty union, and some of the earlier staff feelings of insecurity had dissipated when the outcome of the cuts was known. As one respondent put it "people are settling in and saying let's move forward".
4.5 Georgian College Profile

4.4.1 Background

Georgian College is a mid-sized college with an enrolment of over 5,000 full-time students and 25,000 part-time registrants in the 1994-95 academic year. At that time the college had 2,200 employees and an annual budget of $28 million. Campuses are situated in Barrie, Orillia and Owen Sound. The Barrie campus is the largest, with 4,000 full-time students situated on-site, followed by the Orillia campus with 1,000 students and the Owen Sound campus with 500 students. Georgian offers a full range of programs in business, applied arts, visual arts, health sciences and Technology as well as some unique programming in civil aviation, automotive technology and marine training. Special facilities include the Canadian Automotive Institute, a training centre situated at the Barrie campus, the Kempenfelt Centre resort on Lake Simcoe which serves as a learning laboratory for the hospitality and tourism programs, and a $2.5 million marine simulator at the Owen Sound campus.

4.4.2 Catchment Area

The catchment area of Georgian College comprises a mix of urban and rural areas and includes many of the most popular vacation locales in the province (see Appendix J). Adjacent colleges are Seneca and Humber to the south, Fanshaw and Conestoga to the West, Fleming to the east and Cambrian to the north. There are no other higher education institutions in the Georgian catchment area, with the nearest universities located in Toronto, Sudbury and North Bay.

Georgian's catchment area does not reflect the provincial trend towards ethnic diversity. In-migration is largely from other parts of the province. There is a significant native population and the college has established a Native Education Training Strategy to attract aboriginal students and promote post-secondary education to the native community.

The local economy reflects national trends, with shifts away from manufacturing to service, mass technology and tourism sectors. The
manufacturing base is experiencing some increased demand in fields such as programmable logic controllers and hydraulics. A study carried out by the college in 1993 suggested that Georgian has a significant economic impact in its catchment area. Its employees and students spend an estimated $36 million annually in the area. The greatest impact is in Barrie, but Georgian College also is a major player in the local economies of Orillia, Owen Sound, Collingwood, Midland, Penetang and Parry Sound. The college also contributes to the local economy through a range of training programs as well as partnerships with local agencies.

The college has many formal and informal alliances with organizations and institutions within its catchment area. Georgian's 1994-95 annual report reported on nine articulation agreements with provincial school boards and ten transfer agreements with universities in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom. Other agreements exist with corporations, the Canadian Coast Guard and native groups.

4.4.3 Learner Profile

Applications to full-time post secondary programs at Georgian have been increasing, and this has been reflected in a relatively steady enrolment pattern over the past few years. Appendix I indicates a 1996 enrolment increase of 6.2 percent over 1994-95 AY, higher than the college system average for that year. However, 1993 market share analysis conducted by the Ministry of Education and Training (MCU, 1993) indicated that 70 percent of the students from the catchment area attending a CAAT went to colleges other than Georgian. Georgian also draws students from other colleges' catchment areas but is still experiencing an overall net loss.

A 1994 study of first year students in Metro Colleges (Central Region Research Network, 1994) indicated low levels of ethnic diversity among Georgian's student population. Almost all (94 percent) of the students were born in Canada and three-quarters traced their origin to the British Isles. Only four percent of the students came from homes where English was not the first language. The majority were single and had no financial dependents. Forty percent came from locations within the Georgian catchment area and half had
to move to attend the college. Eighty-three percent of the students stated that Georgian was their first choice college. This was the highest percentage among the metro area colleges, adding credence to the stated college strategic intent "to become everyone's first choice".

The students at Georgian have an active student government structure and pursue a range of issues related mainly to teaching and physical facilities. There are separate student governments at the Barrie, Orillia and Owen Sound campuses and very distinct atmospheres at each location. The student government is formally involved in college decision making through the College Planning Council.

4.4.4 Formal Structure

In late 1994 Georgian College completed an organizational review which led to a restructuring into four functional areas - academic services, student services, administrative services and human resource services, each headed up by a vice president. Twenty-five dean and chair positions were eliminated and replaced with 13 academic directors, thereby eliminating a level of management within the academic organization. A College Planning Committee was established with key stakeholder representation including the college president, vice presidents, faculty union president, support staff union president, student administrative council president and college council chair. An organization chart reflecting Georgian's structure as of January 1995 appears as Appendix M.

A further restructuring took place in late 1995 as a result of the organizational transition necessitated by the funding cutbacks. The Student Services portfolio was dismantled and the functions transferred to the other Vice Presidents. This is discussed further in Section 4.4.8.

4.4.5 Strategic Planning

Georgian's first strategic plan was issued in 1992 and was the result of deliberations by an internal committee of representatives drawn from different departments. There was little senior management or board involvement. At the time, strategic planning at Georgian was perceived to be a closed process,
Chapter 4

Discussion of Findings

restricted to a small number of departmental representatives. Later the plan was criticized for being overly complex and too reliant on documentation and reporting. Nevertheless, the plan did provide some solid guiding principles which endured for several years. Table 19 summaries Georgian's first strategic plan.

Table 19
Elements of Georgian's First Strategic Plan, 1992-96

| Mission: | To provide internationally recognized, student-centred, career education in order to contribute to the social and economic well being of Ontario |
| Values: | Individual worth and recognition |
| | Fairness |
| | Mutual trust |
| | Communication |
| | Commitment |
| | Efficiency |
| Goals: | Focus on teaching as the central enterprise |
| | Ensure quality and relevance of programs and services |
| | Restructure to attain strategic intent |
| | Maintain financial stability |
| | Position as college of first choice in marketplace |

Specific objectives, along with time frames and designated responsibilities, were developed under each goal category and distributed throughout the organization as an operational plan. In addition, the College chose to use the strategic plan goals as headings for submission of the annual report to the Ministry of Education and Training. The report thus became a useful way to monitor and report on the progress Georgian was making towards implementing its strategic plan.

In 1994 Georgian College commenced work on its second strategic plan. By that time, Georgian's Board of Governors had adopted the "Policy Governance Model" developed by John Carver (Carver, 1990). Carver's model is useful in clarifying the role of governing boards in strategic planning because it focuses board decision making on matters relating to "ends" rather than
"means". Decisions pertaining to mission, vision, values and strategic directions all are in the ends category and clearly fall within the domain of the board. As a result, the second plan was carried out with significant input and direction from the Board of Governors.

During 1994 and the first half of 1995 there were numerous activities that involved a broad range of stakeholder groups. An external consultant versed in the Carver model was retained, and the Board discussed the strategic plan at meetings held in July 1994, January 1995 and April 1995. A meeting of former governors took place in December 1994 and their opinions regarding Georgian's strategic directions were solicited. In the spring of 1995, a survey of student leaders, staff and program advisory committee members was carried out. The survey asked respondents to rate aspects of the existing strategic plan in terms of their importance to the future of the college and the success to date in achieving them. The survey findings were presented at a college-wide forum in June 1995 and revealed strong support for existing directions related to student centredness, education and community linkages, but less agreement on issues related to the development of new markets, resource utilization and alternative delivery modes. The consensus across all constituencies was that Georgian was doing well with staff and students but had some major challenges in the application and use of technology.

A two-day strategic planning retreat attended by the Board of Governors and senior management staff was held at Georgian's Kempenfelt Centre on Lake Simcoe in July 1995. (I was very fortunate to be permitted to attend all the sessions as an observer.) The meeting process was facilitated by the external consultant and included presentations of information drawn from an updated environmental scan by members of senior management, breakout group exercises around strategic goals, "mind-mapping" of group reports and nominal group process exercises to establish priorities. Topics discussed were wide ranging and included the pros and cons of international activities, program mix, system constraints, internal resource allocation, technology, career based vs generic education, program development, retrenchment strategies and community linkages. A writing team was appointed to prepare a new strategic plan which was issued in October 1995 and is summarized in Table 20.
Table 20
Elements of Georgian's Second Strategic Plan, 1995

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mission:</strong></td>
<td>To become first choice for excellence in learning and career success</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Values:** | Commitment to learning and success  
Quality, relevance and value  
Individual worth and recognition  
Fairness and honest  
Mutual trust  
Communication |
| **Goals:** | Continue to be a viable economic entity  
Acquire and apply appropriate technology  
Continuously ensure program relevance  
Vigorously promote successes and develop partnerships |

The mission and values in Georgian's second strategic plan were similar to the initial plan, but the strategic goals placed slightly greater emphasis on resource considerations. The development process involved a broader base of stakeholders and referenced a more rigorous and comprehensive environmental scan. However, the real difference was in the approach to implementation. Rather than adopting a detailed and prescriptive implementation plan, the college chose to stick to broad strategic principles and focus on strategic management. The July retreat concluded with a discussion of methods for the Board to continue its strategic focus, such as structuring their agenda around strategic items and linking strategic management to board evaluation.

4.4.6 Culture and Climate

The internal climate at Georgian College was viewed by respondents from all stakeholder groups as collaborative, consultative and characterized by free and open communication. Little internal conflict was apparent, due in part to the fact that large numbers of employees had received formal training in conflict management following the model of principled bargaining (Fisher and Ury, 1985). As one respondent put it:
We are a very polite group of people. Even if you disagree, which is quite alright, if you do it in a friendly way that's one thing, but if you are very negative and difficult, then that isn't an accepted behaviour.

The lack of conflict was particularly noteworthy given the fact that major restructuring had taken place in 1994.

At the time the field work was conducted, the internal staff issues at Georgian included both academic and financial concerns. Academic concerns related to the implementation of the new provincial (CSAC) guidelines regarding curriculum standards, the use of technology in education and the implementation of alternative delivery modes. Financial issues pertained to maintaining service and academic quality in the face of declining resources as a result of the restructuring. Student government leaders identified similar concerns and also identified specific student concerns around levels of service, parking and lack of study space. Some intercampus rivalries were also noted by students, due in part to the existence of different program mixes and separate student government structures at each campus. The Barrie campus was perceived to be the "head office", the Orillia campus was characterized as very "close knit" and the Owen Sound campus was seen to be the most removed from Georgian's mainstream of events.

Respondents from all areas of the organization described Georgian's overall management style as collaborative and consultative, particularly at the senior management level. A few respondents viewed some middle managers as having a more closed decision making style, but the feeling was that all management staff were moving towards a more open approach.

Senior management - the president and vice presidents - is very participatory and consultative. With the next layer of management, some do their consulting and participating extremely well, while some have a need to learn more about how to do that. The overall feel of it is that it's important to the college and how well people are consulted varies with individual skills. Sometimes we're overconsulted and decisions could just be made and other times (we needed) more appropriate consultation.

The College Planning Committee described in Section 4.4.4 meets regularly and serves as an apparently effective vehicle for broad based participative decision making. The committee operates by consensus, although
final decisions are made by the President and senior executive. The committee has a high profile at Georgian College and was viewed as the most significant decision making group in the organization. The effectiveness of the committee is summed up by the following comments, first from the president and then from some of the other committee members:

We've been able to struggle along with the fine line between having constituency groups involved in (planning and) decision making and not putting them in a position where they can't contribute to the decision because it's contrary to their prime role. Right from the outset (they knew) I'm accountable to the board ... On occasion I may have to make the decision on a unilateral basis ... to avoid placing constituency leaders in a compromised position.

In three years we have been able to reach consensus on all but a couple of issues. We look at all parties' needs - management, union, students and look at what makes sense - nine times out of ten we agree on what makes sense.

There are no votes. It's a consensus. Everybody discusses every issue, and a consensus is met. My outlook has just as much bearing as everyone else sitting at that table. It's fantastic.

Operating by consensus is a very long process. The process to get things done drags out a little while, but once it's been achieved, you have all the people buying into the decisions.

I'm not there to just to represent what the students need. Every group around the table needs to succeed, or nobody does.

This college has the ability to actually get into the various constituencies, hear what they're saying, and take what they're saying and build that into the operation of the college.

Labour relations with both the OPSEU support and the OPSEU faculty unions were also seen to be very positive by all the staff groups. Some of the respondents suggested the Georgian's labour relations environment was the best in the province. The unions tended to be supportive of strategic planning efforts, feeling that if the organization adopts clear positions and values, this will be beneficial to staff.

Behavioural norms cited by respondents included mutual respect, listening, commitment, energy, student centredness and a focus on professional development. The "caring and friendly" aspect of the College slogan appears
to be deeply rooted in the College's culture, although a number of respondents raised a caveat:

One of our strengths is the caring and friendly atmosphere here. But we are trying to make sure it's not caring and friendly and stupid. Not being complacent, aware of the outside world.

4.4.7 Stakeholder Perceptions

During the interviews, respondents were asked to indicate what they felt were the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing Georgian College. Results of these questions appear in Table 21.

| Table 21  |
| Composite SWOT Analysis - Georgian College |

| **Strengths:** | Student involvement  
                | Staff talents  
                | Labour relations  
                | Community support  
                | Constituent based decision making  |
| **Weaknesses:** | Complacency  
                 | Too many operating locations  
                 | Information systems  
                 | Dependence on one major funding source  
                 | Technical skills of employees  
                 | Program menu too large  
                 | Big and slow bureaucracy  |
| **Opportunities:** | Attractive location  
                        | Program niches  
                        | Partnerships  
                        | Contract training  
                        | Efficiency gains through technology  |
| **Threats:** | Competition  
              | Not moving fast enough  
              | Declining funding  
              | Elimination of some colleges  
              | Declining public support of education  |
Respondents were also asked to state what their three wishes would be for the college. A composite "wish list" was assembled and appears as Table 22.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composite &quot;Wish List&quot; - Georgian College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to exist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remain financially viable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain present climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continued student success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge inter-campus gaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective new ways of doing things</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.8 Organizational Transition

When the first stage of the field research was carried out in the spring and summer of 1995, colleges were anticipating that the newly elected provincial government would introduce major resource reductions for the 1996-97 fiscal year. The nature, shape and scope of these reductions was unknown at the time. In November 1995, the cutbacks were announced and the colleges had to absorb a 15 percent reduction in operating grants within one fiscal year. This translated into a $6.6 million budget reduction for Georgian College.

In the summer of 1995 Georgian seconded the vice president, human resources to head up a change process to respond to the cutbacks, working closely with the College Planning Committee. Twelve separate change teams, staffed by committee members drawn from all areas of the college generated 90 recommendations to the College Planning Committee for implementation during the Winter of 1996. Changes included the elimination of duplicate programs, suspension of two programs and creation of four new programs. Half of the college programs completed a summative evaluation process. Program hours were reduced by 18 percent and teaching efficiency was increased by 20 percent.
Staffing reductions were relatively small, given the extent of the budget reduction. This was due to the collaborative organizational culture that already existed and a local workload agreement arranged with the faculty union. Five administrators and three faculty were laid off, and three support staff elected layoffs. Some contract faculty and support staff positions were eliminated. Staff complement was reduced by a further 45 positions through early retirements and vacancies not filled.

During the interview in June 1995, the president was asked how the strategic planning process could help the college deal with the coming challenges:

We have created an environment through the strategic planning process to deal with these very serious challenges. We have an environment with some level of trust and some level of commitment to the success of the college that came out of the refocusing towards teaching/learning, student centredness and customer service. I think we have a framework and a climate - the place is ready for some of those challenges.

The events at Georgian College between July 1995 and April 1996 suggest that Georgian's strategic plan played a significant role in the transition at the college. Involuntary staff reductions were small in relation to other colleges in the system, due in a large part to the local workload agreement with the faculty union. Communication among constituencies remained strong. Changes that were made were reflective of the directions stated in the 1995 strategic plan. An open learning centre was created and $1.5 million was invested in educational technology. Several new "niche" programs, such as a dialysis technician post-diploma were launched. Partnerships with industry were expanded. Improvements were made in the management information systems at the College. The large number of campuses remained, due in part to Board reluctance to make changes in this area. Perhaps most important, the level of complacency, identified by some as a weakness in the summer of 1995, had declined, due to a greater awareness of funding issues and a widely distributed discussion paper that served as the basis of the change process.

The strategic plan did help, and the organizational climate, although strained, held up. As one respondent interviewed in August 1996 put it: "Warm and friendly? Yes we still are. A little less so, maybe, but smarter."
4.5 Cross-Case Comparison

While the three host colleges were selected to represent different aspects of Ontario CAATs, the findings presented in the previous sections revealed many similarities, as well as differences. The colleges were all involved in strategic planning activities, they all were dealing with resource problems, and they all underwent some form of downsizing in the 1995-96 academic year. Issues raised by the student and staff constituencies tended to be the same in all three colleges. However, the colleges also exhibited some significant differences across a number of factors that are described below and summarized in Table 23 on Page 127.

4.5.1 External Factors

Centennial had a concentrated, highly urbanized multicultural catchment area. Confederation's area was widely dispersed and predominantly rural, while Georgian's area fell somewhere in the middle. Georgian's and Confederation's learners came from more traditional backgrounds. All three colleges faced competition from other post-secondary institutions. Confederation's immediate competition was from a nearby university, while Georgian and Centennial had other CAATs flanking their catchment areas. The host colleges were closely connected to their areas, but in different ways. Confederation had extremely close economic ties to its communities, almost to the point of mutual interdependence. Georgian also had a significant economic impact on its catchment areas, but linkages were achieved through more formal articulation agreements. Centennial had less of an economic impact, but established linkages through formal partnerships with business and industry.

4.5.2 Strategic Considerations

The composite "SWOT" exercises carried out with respondents indicated that the host colleges were in different strategic positions relative to their perceived internal strengths and weaknesses. Centennial's strengths included its positive internal climate, while a major weakness identified was its low profile relative to other nearby metro colleges. Confederation defined its strengths in terms of its entrepreneurial spirit and leadership in technology and distance
education. Confederation's relatively flat enrolment growth pattern was considered to be a weakness. Respondents from Georgian also viewed internal climate as a strength and felt a weakness was the fact that college resources and initiatives were spread too thin across many different areas.

Many Centennial respondents identified the college's concentrated market as a major opportunity. Confederation respondents saw many opportunities in international education and Georgian respondents identified a number of opportunities in particular niche markets. Respondents from all three colleges cited funding reductions and private competition as major threats.

4.5.3 Internal Factors

The most striking difference among the colleges studied was in their internal culture and climate. The differences can be illuminated by invoking some characteristics of four popular models for examining the internal workings of higher education institutions - the collegial model, the bureaucratic model, the political model and the anarchical model. The models were discussed in depth as part of the literature review in Section 2.2.2.

Centennial College exhibited characteristics of the collegial and the anarchical model. Robert Birnbaum (1988, pp. 87-94) observed that collegial institutions lack hierarchical structures, emphasize deliberation and consensus, and have a strong sense of shared values. The dismantling of the formal planning process at Centennial, the high profile of its "guiding principles" (values) and the emphasis on dialogue and consultation all fit closely with Birnbaum's notion of a collegium. On the other hand, the fluid and often multidirectional participation in planning at Centennial fit with some aspects of the "organized anarchy" model initially posited by Michael Cohen, James March and John Olsen (1972).

Confederation College was a closer fit with Max Weber's notion of a traditional bureaucracy (Gerth and Mills, 1946). The college tended to place more emphasis on hierarchy, had clearly defined roles and jurisdictions, and supported its planning process with extensive data and documentation.
Georgian College was a combination of two different operational models. Like Centennial, it placed a strong emphasis on collaboration, and many decisions were arrived at through a consensual process characteristic of the collegial model. However, Georgian placed a greater emphasis on obtaining input from specific interest groups, and had formal mechanisms to make this happen, such as the constituency-based College Planning Committee. Thus, Georgian also had some characteristics of the model of the political federation first proposed by Victor Baldridge in 1971 (Baldridge, 1986, pp. 20-24). Baldridge points out that decision making in this type of organization focuses on the positions of specific stakeholder groups and often is characterized by conflict over different needs and values. However, the collegial factors at Georgian - shared values, a consensual approach to dealing with conflict, and an emphasis on communication - appeared to mitigate any dysfunctional conflict arising out of its stakeholder-based approaches.

The different approaches at the colleges can be vividly illustrated by examining how students interact in college planning and decision making. Students were considered an official stakeholder group at Georgian, and the students had official representation on the College Planning Committee. At Confederation, student/administration linkages were clearly specified and documented, an example being the formal student employment contract between the college and the student government. Student involvement was much less structured at Centennial, with students communicating with members of the college administration in an informal way that did not follow any set pattern.

4.5.4 Approaches to Planning

Differences in how the three host colleges approached strategic planning flowed logically from the differences in their organizational culture described in the previous section. Planning at Centennial was based on values, was dispersed across the organization, and focused on teaching and learning issues (designated as the most important value). There was extensive dialogue and a plethora of committees addressing strategic issues. Participant "buy-in" to the planning and decision making processes at the College was very high, although support and commitment to the planning outcomes was more difficult.
to assess. At Confederation, the planning was goal-based and more centralized, with a strong entrepreneurial focus. Operational plans were detailed and closely monitored. Buy-in among the faculty and support staff ranks was lower than at the other colleges, but was seen to be increasing as planning outcomes became more visible. Georgian's planning had a programming focus and was closely linked to the needs of internal and external constituents. Planning was centralized through a single planning committee that represented stakeholder groups and operated consensually. Buy-in to both process and outcomes was very high at Georgian College.

It is very important to note that no particular college's approach to strategic planning was superior to the others - they were just different. All were successful in having an impact on decision making that was perceived to be positive, and in achieving acceptable levels of stakeholder commitment.

4.5.5 Transition Tactics

In the fall of 1995 the host colleges were faced with similar downsizing challenges, all having to cope with a 15 percent reduction in operating grants. Confederation underwent major downsizing to absorb the funding cut. Centennial's staff reductions were mitigated by past enrolment growth and some successful industry partnerships. The downsizing at Georgian was relatively minor, due to the local faculty workload agreement that arose out of a collaborative process.

Strategic planning initiatives had a high profile in the implementation and establishment of transition approaches at all three colleges. Centennial drew heavily on its guiding principles, Confederation focused on strategic and operational priorities, and Georgian utilized its stakeholder collaboration processes. Respondents from all three colleges reported that their internal climates "held up" fairly well in the face of major organizational transformation, a finding which points to the utility of strategic planning in dealing with externally induced organizational change.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Centennial College</th>
<th>Confederation College</th>
<th>Georgian College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size/Type:</strong></td>
<td>Large urban</td>
<td>Small rural</td>
<td>Mid-sized suburban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>External Factors:</strong></td>
<td>Urban, concentrated Multicultural learners Flanked by competitors Industry links</td>
<td>Rural, broadly dispersed Traditional, some aboriginal Nearby university Community interdependence</td>
<td>Urban/rural mix Traditional learners Flanked by competitors Close community ties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Considerations:</strong></td>
<td>Positive internal climate Low profile Concentrated market Funding/competition concerns</td>
<td>Distance education leader Flat enrollment growth International opportunities Funding/competition concerns</td>
<td>Positive internal climate Spread thin Niche markets Funding/competition concerns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Internal Factors:**    | Collegial/Anarchical Model:  
  • Shared values  
  • Consensus/deliberation  
  • Fluid participation | Bureaucratic Model:  
  • Hierarchical  
  • Fixed jurisdictions  
  • Data and documentation | Collegial/Political Model:  
  • Constituency orientation  
  • Consensus  
  • Communication emphasis |
| **Approach to Planning:** | Values-based  
  Dispersed initiatives  
  Many committees  
  Process buy-in  
  Teaching/learning focus | Goal-based  
  Centralized  
  Detailed op. plans  
  Limited buy-in  
  Entrepreneurial focus | Environment-based  
  Constituency driven  
  Single planning committee  
  High buy-in  
  Programming focus |
| **Transition Tactics:**  | Moderate downsizing  
  Values based  
  Climate maintained | Major downsizing  
  Priorities based  
  Climate maintained | Minor downsizing  
  Consensus based  
  Climate maintained |
Chapter 5

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS
5.1 The Research Questions Revisited

As discussed in Section 1.2, the objective of the study is to provide a descriptive analysis of strategic planning practices employed at Ontario colleges of applied arts and technology in the context of organizational theory and the literature on strategic planning. The review of literature and data collection activities described in the preceding chapters have reflected this objective and focused on providing answers to three broad research questions:

1. What is the nature of the strategic planning process in colleges?

   In addressing this question, the study gathered information on principal actors and their roles, perceptions and expectations about strategic planning, and planning methods employed. These were the dependent variables in the analysis. The focus was on who does planning, how it is done, and its impact on the organization. The generic strategic planning model extracted from the literature and described in Section 2.1.5 will provide a descriptive framework for examining the nature of the strategic planning processes in the three host colleges.

2. What is the relationship between strategic planning practices and external environmental factors?

   External factors investigated included catchment area characteristics, learner profiles, competitors and the impact of government policies. These were independent variables in the analysis.

3. What is the relationship between strategic planning practices and internal environmental factors?

   A second set of independent variables was comprised of forms of governance, the history and maturity of the strategic planning process within the college, size and structure and aspects of organizational climate such as communication, management style and labour relations.

The configuration of these three research questions and the associated variables is illustrated in Figure 3 on Page 129.
Section 5.2 addresses the first research question by describing the nature of strategic planning in the host colleges. The other research questions pertaining to the impact of external and internal factors are addressed in Sections 5.3 and 5.4. Section 5.5 goes on to explore the implications of the findings for theory, practice and future research.
5.2 The Nature of Strategic Planning

5.2.1 Applying the Generic Model

There are significant differences across the three host colleges and these have been noted in the cross case comparison that appears in Section 4.5. However, many commonalities were also noted, and it is possible to draw some generalizations about the nature of strategic planning in Ontario colleges. The generic model extracted from the literature and depicted in Figure 1 on Page 34 will be used as a framework for this discussion.

1. Environmental Scanning   Colleges did not place a great amount of emphasis on environmental scanning. The host colleges did commission limited amounts of formal research on specific aspects of their environments, and they did have access to the ACAATO scan and other data. However, institutionalized environmental scanning with designated sources and ongoing identification and review of trends, events and issues as suggested in the literature (e.g. Cope, 1978; Morrison, 1987) was not evident. Much of the information the colleges utilized was qualitative in nature and generated intuitively by staff. This could be appropriate, given the characteristics of strategic planning outlined in Table 2 on Page 25. The difficulty comes in the lack of ongoing environmental information systems to provide ongoing support for strategic planning and decision making.

2. Vision, Mission and Values. Colleges attached considerable importance to their statements of vision, missions and values. These were prominent in the planning documentation of the all host colleges as well as in documents obtained from other provincial colleges. They were usually developed with substantial stakeholder input. The most prominent type of statements fell under the "historical-philosophical" category suggested by Daniel Lang and Rosanne Lopers-Sweetman (1991).

3. Stakeholder Involvement. College strategic planning processes were notable for the high levels of involvement of internal stakeholders. Regardless of the governance model followed by a college, some form of
stakeholder involvement was prominent. Principal stakeholder groups were faculty, staff and students, with limited representation from external groups such as employers or members of the community. Meetings were the main method of soliciting input. Other involvement devices such as focus groups, surveys, response forms and electronic feedback were not used extensively. Different levels of involvement (such as information only, consultation, participation, or approval) were not articulated at the beginning of processes, an exclusion that could lead to potential disagreements and conflict.

4. **Strategic Goals and Objectives.** Although varied in content, format and levels of specificity, all host colleges had published strategic goals and documented objectives. Strategic goals were generally published externally and strategic objectives were widely distributed internally.

5. **Operational Plan.** Documented operational plans, with identifiable connections to strategic directions existed in all colleges. The plans were detailed and linked to budgets. However, accountabilities for the plans fell with line managers who participated in the process in varying degrees, and there were no formal efforts to pursue Bryson's (1988) recommendation to involve key decision makers throughout the strategic planning process. Of greater concern, however, is the fact the colleges did not have an articulated process for monitoring the environment and adjusting plans on an ongoing basis, a dangerous exclusion given the turbulent nature of their environments.

5.2.2 **Success Criteria and Outcomes**

The most direct way to measure the "success" of a strategic planning process would be to determine its impact on organizational effectiveness. However, as discussed in Section 1.3, this was beyond the scope of the dissertation and fell outside the boundaries of the study. It is possible, however, to gain some insight into strategic planning effectiveness by examining three key success factors:
1. **Environmental Relevance.** Strategic planning is defined in Section 1.4 as an activity involving the development and maintenance of an advantageous fit between an organization and its changing environment. The degree to which a strategic plan addresses the environment is therefore an important consideration in ascertaining its success.

Environmental relevance was assessed by comparing the items in each college's SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) with the strategic goals identified in its strategic plan. In all three instances there was a high degree of congruence. For example, Centennial's goal to initiate partnerships, described in Section 4.2.5, follows from its SWOT analysis in Table 14 by taking advantage of its metro location (identified as a strength), raising visibility (low visibility was identified as a weakness), establishing program niches (identified as an opportunity) and generating non-grant revenue (declining funding, identified as a threat). High levels of congruence also existed with Confederation and Georgian. Linkages are depicted in Table 24.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>SWOT Items</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centennial:</td>
<td>Metro location</td>
<td>Initiate partnerships with business and industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low visibility</td>
<td>(Section 4.2.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Program niches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Declining revenue (Table 14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confederation:</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>Introduce new educational technology and improve flexibility of program delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dispersed, isolated</td>
<td>(Section 4.3.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Program niches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Declining enrolment (Table 17)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgian:</td>
<td>Poor info. systems</td>
<td>Acquire and apply appropriate technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weak technical skills</td>
<td>(Section 4.4.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Efficiency gains</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Falling behind</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Table 21)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **Stakeholder Buy-in.** Effective stakeholder commitment is an underlying premise of strategic planning, and it is one of the factors that differentiates it from conventional forms of institutional planning. With a few exceptions (such as Cope, 1987 and Bryson, 1988) the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 does not capture the importance of this fact. It is better reflected in some of the studies of current practice described in Section 2.1.6 which point to the importance of stakeholder involvement, especially internal stakeholders, and find that most internal participants have positive views of the process.

The findings reported in Chapter 4 clearly indicate high levels of stakeholder buy-in at all three host colleges, even though they had very different organizational climates. As pointed out in Section 3.3.6, this finding was validated across the different stakeholder groups.

3. **Decision Impact.** The third success factor is the impact of the strategic planning on actual decisions about organizational direction. In a sense this is a paradoxical factor since it assumes that the plans are in fact good plans. A bad strategic plan that is well implemented leads to a far worse outcome than a good strategic plan that is poorly implemented. The relationship between the quality of a strategic plan, the quality of its implementation, and the impact on organizational effectiveness is postulated in Table 25 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Plan</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good:</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad:</td>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Ministry of Education's announcement of a major (15 percent) reduction in operating grants in November 1995, four months after the completion of the initial field research, provided a unique opportunity to assess the decision impact of the host colleges' strategic plans by analysing the tactics they employed to deal with the cutbacks. Consequently, the follow-up research in June 1996 focused on respondents' perceptions of the helpfulness of the strategic plan in dealing with the resource reductions, and then compared the actual tactics employed with the overall strategic directions of the plans. All three colleges reported that the plans helped with organizational transition by articulating tangible priorities to serve as guidelines for downsizing and by providing a collaborative organizational climate to serve as a basis for communication.

Many of the downsizing tactics could be linked to the strategic plans. For example, Centennial's stated priority on teaching and learning was reflected in the fact that only two faculty positions were eliminated. Confederation terminated some traditional programs, established a new multimedia program and continued its emphasis on entrepreneurial and international initiatives, actions that conformed directly with its stated strategic directions. Georgian also stayed on track with its strategic directions, developing new niche programs and investing in educational technology.

Thus the strategic planning processes at the host colleges met the three stated success criteria. They were environmentally relevant (based on the examination of the SWOT analyses), well supported by the stakeholders (based on validated field research), and deliberately linked to major decision making (based on an analysis of transition tactics related to resource reduction). This is not overly surprising, given the fact the three host colleges were initially selected for inclusion in the study on the basis of high strategic scores on the province-wide survey of college registrars (Section 3.2.1).
5.2.3 Process Observations

The planning processes followed by the host colleges were strongly shaped by the prevailing organizational cultures, a point that is developed in Section 5.4.3. Although there were many process differences, two striking commonalities were evident. The first was the apparent lack of conflict around the strategic planning process. The research drew on the opinions of members of all constituencies, but as is evident in the discussion of findings in Chapter 4, points of disagreement were extremely rare. This phenomenon was so strong that a positive bias in respondent selection was suspected, but subsequently ruled out since the respondents were selected on the basis of their official positions within their constituencies (rather than on a voluntary, self-selected basis), and extensive converging evidence from multiple sources was obtained. The explanation could lie in the fact that the strategic planning processes tended to remain at a generic level, dealing with values, mission statements and broad strategic goals. The conversion of the strategic goals into operational activities and specific resource allocation decisions occurred at a different point in the process. In the short term this approach is good for developing a positive organizational climate. However, it can break down in the longer term by producing plans without substance and missed strategic opportunities.

The second notable feature of the planning processes employed by the host colleges was the fact that planning procedures appeared to evolve in an adaptive fashion rather than being consciously selected at the outset. Particular models, processes or methodologies were not articulated. (The reported approaches they actually did follow were deduced from the field research.) However, this approach seems to have been fortuitous, given the success factors discussed in the previous section. It could explain why the planning process characteristics were so highly compatible with the organizational culture of the colleges. Selecting a planning model in advance, and then applying it to an organization could be counterproductive regardless of the validity of the model, unless it is selected on the basis of a solid understanding of the organizational culture.

In summary, a profile emerges that responds to the first thesis research question about the nature of the strategic planning in Ontario colleges:
• A limited amount of formalized ongoing environmental scanning.

• High levels of process involvement of internal stakeholders. Low levels of conflict between and within stakeholder groups, due in part to a tendency to keep deliberations at a generic level.

• An emphasis on value articulation, mission statements and broad strategic directions.

• Processes which evolve adaptively, rather than being consciously selected and applied.

• High levels of process effectiveness, in terms of environmental relevance, stakeholder commitment and linkages to decision making.

The next two sections explore the influence of internal and external factors on the nature of strategic planning.

5.3 Strategic Planning and External Factors

5.3.1 Catchment Area Characteristics

As hypothesized in Research Question #2, the characteristics of a college's catchment area are a determinant of the nature of the strategic planning process. Much of the impact is on planning outcomes, although there is also some influence on planning processes.

Size and concentration of the catchment area can affect the nature and types of programs offered. This accounts for Confederation's emphasis on regional operations and distance education initiatives within a large dispersed area, and Centennial's emphasis on local delivery to niche markets within a smaller, concentrated area. The size of the catchment area can also shape the planning processes followed. Centennial's three major campuses are only a few miles apart, so it was easy to pull together groups of stakeholders for planning deliberations. Confederation's campuses are hundreds of miles apart,
frequently requiring air travel, and this could help explain the lesser extent of stakeholder participation and the greater reliance on formal, documented plans.

Community linkages, especially economic ones, can have a strong influence on the strategic directions selected by a college. Sometimes these linkages can limit the strategic options available. Georgian, for example has very close economic ties with its communities, and this could account for its reluctance to close any campuses as a response to the 1996 cutbacks, even though the SWOT analysis suggested that there were too many campuses. Confederation found itself in a similar situation. Centennial, on the other hand was able to consider campus closures with minimal public reaction.

5.3.2 Learner Profiles

The nature of the learners affects the outcomes of strategic plans through program mix decisions. The multicultural learners at Centennial shaped its focus on access and student support services. The high number of aboriginal learners at Confederation accounts for its emphasis on aboriginal programming and its strategic alliance with the Aboriginal Postsecondary Education and Training Council. Learner characteristics are also linked to the the types of stakeholder involvement mechanisms employed. Georgian College, for example, was able to effectively integrate student leaders into its existing decision making structures since the learners came from traditional backgrounds and had little difficulty relating to traditional decision making approaches.

5.3.3 Competition and Demand

External competition and applicant demand are two closely related factors that shape the nature of strategic planning at Ontario colleges. Competitors take the form of other colleges, universities, and private industry, including trainers and proprietary schools. All three host colleges identified private competition as a threat in their SWOT analyses, and addressed this threat through strategies such as alliances with industry, marketing initiatives,
and increased flexibility in program delivery. Two of the colleges had universities within their catchment areas. In the case of Centennial, the impact of the Scarborough Campus of the University of Toronto was mitigated by the density of the urban catchment area, and it was not directly addressed in its strategic directions statement. Confederation, on the other hand, had Lakehead University in very close proximity, and dealt with this factor through a strategic partnership offering a number of joint programs. The College's decision to drop the Mechanical Engineering Technician program was related to the fact that similar programming was available through Lakehead University. The third source of competition, other colleges, was not a factor at Confederation due to its remote location. It was a very significant factor for Centennial and Georgian Colleges, since both were flanked by other community colleges, and this accounts for the strategic emphasis on niche markets by both colleges.

Applicant demand appears to affect the level of aggressiveness of a college's strategic plans. At the time the study was conducted, Centennial had experienced several years of major enrolment growth, and with its funding base secure, the college could choose conservative strategic directions related to teaching and learning, service quality and selected partnerships. Confederation, on the other hand, was concerned about its relatively flat enrolment growth and adopted a more aggressive stance with its marketing, outreach, and distance education initiatives.

5.3.4 Government Policy

Provincial government policy can have a major steering effect on the strategic options available to a college. In Section 4.1.3, it was pointed out that there was little centralized planning in Ontario, unlike many jurisdictions in the North America. However, a number of topic-specific provincial planning initiatives have been undertaken recently, and when these are combined with existing Ministry of Education financial and reporting policies, they can seriously impair a college's ability to behave strategically. This is even the case in those areas of greater decision making autonomy identified in Table 9 - program mix, enrolment levels and non-grant revenue initiatives. Government policy impacts and constrains strategic planning outcomes in several ways:
1. The long lead times required to submit and obtain Ministry approval for new program offerings limit a college's ability to alter its program mix rapidly.

2. At the time the field work was conducted, Ministry policies regarding the funding of international students were unclear and ambiguous, and there were major restrictions on admitting international students into fully subscribed programs.

3. The weighted funding formula steers program mix decisions, and the two year delay in allocation of funds dampens the immediate impact of program terminations and creates resource pressures for new program development.

4. There are limitations on the types of formal partnerships that can be established by colleges.

5. There are also restrictive guidelines, many of them ambiguous, on the type of fundraising and non-grant revenue generation that can be carried out by colleges.

Thus, catchment area characteristics, learner profiles, competition and demand all have a strong shaping effect on the nature of strategic planning at Ontario colleges. In addition, government policy can act as a significant constraint on the strategic planning process.

Figure 3 depicts a dotted arrow between external factors and internal factors, indicating that an indirect relationship can exist between some of the factors. High applicant demand, for example, can lead to increased enrolment and corresponding increases in the overall size of a college. Learner profiles can affect the program mix of a college, thus affecting the types of staff and faculty members hired, which in turn can have an influence of organizational culture and climate.
5.4 Strategic Planning and Internal Factors

5.4.1 Size

Several of the practice studies referenced in Section 2.1.6 suggest that a relationship exists between the size of a college and the nature of its strategic planning, with larger colleges engaging in strategic planning that is more aggressive and sophisticated. This was not the case with the host colleges studied, nor with the other Ontario colleges polled in the survey of registrars. In fact, some of the evidence collected suggests that smaller colleges actually engage in more aggressive strategic behaviour, since their size makes them more vulnerable to environmental turbulence. Larger colleges, with their greater program diversity and their opportunities to realize economies of scale, enjoy a higher degree of stability, at least in relative terms. The metaphor of aircraft flying in bad weather comes to mind. A small Cessna airplane will be buffeted more in a storm than a 747, and it therefore has to fly more strategically, continually monitoring weather changes and making frequent course corrections. However, the small plane, like the smaller college, is more manoeuvrable and can change altitude and direction quickly.

5.4.2 Process Maturity

The length of time in which a college has been involved in strategic planning has an effect on the planning process and the attitudes towards it. Colleges developing their second strategic plans did so very differently, and in a way that was often completely opposite to the way the first round of planning was conducted. This phenomenon was observed at two of the host colleges. Centennial, for example, concluded that the first round of strategic planning was too closed, top-down and autocratic. Its second round of planning changed to become very open and grass-roots oriented. Georgian displayed the converse pattern. Its first plan was considered to lack sufficient management and board direction, so the second round of strategic planning was designed and driven by the president and board. There was a pendulum effect, with major shifts in approaches between the first and second iterations of the strategic planning processes.
Chapter 5  
Analysis and Conclusions

The appointment of a college president almost always marks the inception of a new round of strategic planning. Virtually all the strategic plans examined could be traced back to the onset of a new presidential term.

5.4.3 Culture and Climate

Clearly the most significant variable impacting the nature of strategic planning processes at Ontario colleges is organizational culture and climate. This fact became clear in the cross-case analysis of the three host colleges discussed in Section 4.5 and summarized in Table 23. The congruence between the organizational culture and climate and the nature of the planning process was striking. Centennial College, with its shared values, emphasis on consensus and deliberation, and fluid participation in decision making adopted a planning approach characterized by a teaching/learning focus, numerous committees and dispersed initiatives. Confederation College, with its fixed jurisdictions and emphasis on data and documentation followed a centralized, goal based planning process with detailed operational plans. Georgian College, with its strong constituency orientation and emphasis on communication and consensus employed a single planning committee with broad representation from all its stakeholder groups. As noted in Section 5.2.2, all three colleges had effective strategic planning processes according to the success criteria of environmental relevance, stakeholder commitment and decision impact.

The findings from the study suggest that no one particular internal governance approach is "best" for strategic planning. However, the match between organizational culture and the style of the planning process employed seems to be a very significant factor in the success of any strategic planning initiative. An inappropriate or weak match would likely lead to confusion among planning participants due to unfamiliar processes, scepticism, low stakeholder commitment, a reluctance to attach credibility to environmental information and an inability to link planning decisions that were developed under set of organizational assumptions with operational decisions driven by another set of assumptions.
The integral relationship between organizational culture, planning processes and planning effectiveness is depicted by Venn diagrams in Figure 4. The greater the area of overlap between organizational culture and planning processes, the greater the effectiveness of the planning. The arrows pointing to the circles indicate the desirability of integrating organizational culture and planning processes. (There are more arrows pointing to the process circle because this is the area which is easiest to alter.)

---

**Figure 4**

**Determinants of Planning Effectiveness**

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Environmental Relevance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stakeholder Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Decision Linkages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5  

Analysis and Conclusions

The conclusions relating to the study research questions can be summarized in the form of five propositions:

1. Strategic planning effectiveness is a function of environmental relevance, stakeholder commitment and decision linkages.

2. The most significant variable that shapes the nature of strategic planning processes is an organization's culture and climate.

3. Planning effectiveness can be improved by increasing the compatibility between organizational culture and planning processes.

4. External factors shape the outcomes of strategic planning and include catchment area characteristics, learner profiles and the degree of public and private competition.

5. Government policy is a major constraint on the scope of strategic planning in Ontario colleges.

The next sections explore implications for theory, practice and further research.

5.5 Implications

5.5.1 Implications for Theory: Towards a Blended Approach

Planning theory and organizational theory are the two main bodies of knowledge underpinning strategic planning and they are poorly connected. As a result, many planning assumptions are made and accepted without the benefit of a broad conceptual base. A case in point is the widely held view that in order for strategic planning to succeed, an organization must first ensure that it has the "right" culture, usually described as one which is open, collaborative and collegial. The analysis in the preceding section suggests that this is not necessarily the case. The fit between a planning process and an organization's culture is more important. It is easier to adapt a planning process to an existing culture than to try to create a new culture, yet many organizations persist in opting for the latter approach. More scholarly work needs to be done to
articulate the conceptual linkages between organizational dynamics and organizational change interventions.

A second major gap in the theory is the lack of scholarly attention to the interrelationships between institutional-level planning and system-level planning. This is probably due to the fact that most educational jurisdictions in North America emphasize one or the other form of educational planning. However, conceptual articulation of the two approaches is critical to a full understanding of educational planning in multi-level jurisdictions such as Ontario.

A third area needing more theoretical work relates to the emerging need for ongoing organizational change as environments become increasingly turbulent. Planning theory on its own is too conservative to fully account for all the dynamics of strategic planning and strategic management. There has been a longstanding tension between the rational, empirically based approaches and the more qualitative, intuitive approaches to organizational change interventions. The balance must shift, and alternative bodies of theory have to be examined and reconciled with mainstream thought. The emergence of writers applying chaos theory to strategic planning is an encouraging move in this direction.

Finally, the prescriptive and descriptive approaches to strategic planning have to be integrated. Environmental scanning, for example, is well prescribed with detailed steps and methodologies, but it is poorly described in terms of its conceptual base. Strategy formulation, on the other hand, is well described conceptually, thanks to the work of Mintzberg and others. However, it is poorly prescribed, with little information available on how to actually go about formulating an organizational strategy.

A fully integrated conceptual framework that is both prescriptive and descriptive, encompassing system planning theory, institutional planning theory and organizational theory is critical to the long term relevance of the scholarly work on strategic planning. It is the only way that the conceptual and empirical evolution from strategic planning to strategic management can be successfully accomplished.
5.5.2 Implications for Practice: Advice for Boards and Presidents

Presidents and members of governing boards of colleges and other not-for-profit organizations have a major responsibility to provide strategic leadership to their organizations as they deal with increasing environmental turbulence in the public sector. The following are some practical points suggested by the literature, the research findings from this thesis, and the writer's own experience as a strategic planning consultant:

1. Changing organizational culture is a difficult endeavour that is not a prerequisite to strategic planning or other change interventions. It is more important (and easier) to design or select the planning processes to fit the existing culture.

2. Stakeholder involvement is critical and must be crafted to address the organizational culture and the needs of the stakeholder groups. It is particularly important to recognize that stakeholders work within different time frames. College students typically have a two year time horizon, Board members have three years, presidents have five years, and staff usually have a longer range perspective on planning issues. Plans to manage stakeholder involvement should take this into consideration.

3. Ongoing formal environmental scanning, with identified sources of information, scanning protocols and designated scanners is a crucial support to strategic planning. This is the most overlooked component of strategic planning. Technology can play a significant role here, and practical Web-based environmental scanning systems are within the realm of most public sector organizations.

4. It may sometimes be necessary to challenge centralized government policy in order to behave strategically.

5. Strategic planning is about making choices for the future. In doing so, an organization cannot be all things to all people. Keeping deliberations at a broad level may build some goodwill between stakeholder groups, but will not likely generate any substantive strategic goals. Planning
deliberations that are characterized by a lack of dissonance may also lack substance.

6. Strategic planning related to retrenchment should always ensure that some resources remain for new strategic initiatives, regardless of the magnitude of the downsizing.

7. Most organizations embarking on a strategic planning venture get it wrong the first time. This is natural, because planning approaches are usually new to stakeholders, and they must seek out an equilibrium with organizational culture. It is important not to overreact by introducing drastic shifts in planning and consultation approaches. It is also important to consider using different methodologies with each planning iteration, since organizations change along with their environments.

8. Large public sector organizations are like ocean liners. There is lots of forward momentum created by things like union contracts, leases and published calendars, so it is difficult to change course quickly. It is important to keep the overall direction focused on basic principles - articulated in the organization's mission, vision and values - and then concentrate efforts and influence on one or two key initiatives in order to achieve incremental change.

9. Strategic planning must be carried out in concert with other organizational change methodologies. Contemporary organizational interventions like reengineering, restructuring, total quality management, and cross-functional teams are not competing approaches. They are different ways of implementing strategic plans. In order for a strategic plan to be a precursor to strategic management, change management methodologies have to be selected, adapted and implemented.

10. A strategic plan is like a new automobile - it depreciates by 30 percent the moment it is placed into service. The intrusiveness and turbulence of college environments necessitates ongoing "service and maintenance" by monitoring, refining, and periodically revising goals and objectives. Strategic plans must be "living". The only stable part of a strategic plan is
its vision, mission and values. That is what provides the long term
destination. The travel plan to get there has to be adjusted regularly.

5.5.3 Implications for Future Research

Several areas of required future research are apparent as a result of this study. The first requirement stems from the previous discussion about theoretical gaps. More research is needed to support the integration of relevant theories, particularly research on the margins of the theories and their cross-linkages. Research is particularly desirable on the need for organizational change interventions to be compatible with organizational culture. The notion of the "best" governance model is an interesting research topic. The findings from this study suggest that all the commonly cited governance models can serve as effective platforms for strategic planning. Further investigation of this finding would be interesting.

The boundaries of the thesis could be expanded in future studies. This study focused on three host colleges preselected on the basis of their effective strategic planning. A parallel study of some of the colleges that had lower scores on the strategic questionnaire administered to the college registrars would provide an interesting comparison. It would be especially fascinating to see if their match between culture and planning processes was different. Another interesting expansion of the study would be to examine the experiences of colleges facing crises that were defined in other than financial terms - such as enrolment declines, legislative changes, or shifting catchment area requirements.

The three host colleges contain some interesting internal phenomena worthy of scholarly research. Centennial College was able to institute a major cultural change within a very short time frame. Confederation College employed many aspects of the bureaucratic model, widely considered as an anathema to creativity and innovation, to become one of the most innovative colleges in the system. Georgian College managed to effectively merge collegial principles with aspects of the political governance model to achieve highly positive relations among stakeholder groups which endured in the face of a major
retrenchment challenge. Research on any of these success stories would contribute greatly to an understanding of the internal workings of colleges.

The methodology employed in this study worked well. It demonstrated the utility of combining survey techniques with the case study research method and revealed the importance of having a longitudinal dimension in strategic planning research. The triangulation techniques such as key informant matrixing, use of multiple sources, and a carefully balanced blend of interviewing, observation and document analysis ensured acceptable levels of validity and reliability. It is hoped that the experience here will provide some guidelines and standards for future research.

5.6 Reflections on Learning

I recently completed a consulting contract with a large provincial organization that wanted to explore new directions. The project involved rigorous environmental scanning, many facilitated planning meetings, and extensive dialogue with over 500 stakeholders. Finally, after a full-day session, the Board of Directors unanimously passed motions calling for major changes in the focus and direction of the organization. Everyone was feeling a great sense of accomplishment, as the process had been lengthy and the deliberations had generated a good deal of dissonance. Then it was my turn to make some wrap-up remarks. I stood in front of a group of about 25 board members and senior managers and told them that the worst thing they could now do with their strategic plan was follow it. Ensured of their rapt attention, I described the importance of continuous adjustment of their strategic goals to address ongoing environmental changes. They listened, and the organization is now well positioned to make the crucial transition from strategic planning to strategic management. That was the moment when I realized how much I had learned as a result of carrying out this thesis.

The well known futurist, Alvin Toffler states "The illiterates of tomorrow are not those who cannot read or write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn." Toffler's quote succinctly captures the fact that, as we approach the end of the 20th century, what we know is less important than our ability to
process, assess and adapt new information. It also offers a way to measure the changes in my own level of learning literacy as a result of this thesis. I learned many new concepts and approaches to strategic planning. I gained new insights into the internal workings of large organizations confronting environmental challenges. I expanded my work on organizational environments carried out many years ago with my Master's thesis. I learned more about the Ontario college system. I learned new ways of managing organizational change. Most of all, I learned the importance of patience, persistence and focus in carrying out a project of this magnitude.

But my unlearning was even more significant than my learning. To move the thesis this far I had to abandon some of my longstanding views that the cognitive, rational and analytical perspective was the only route to successful planning and organizational change outcomes. I came to realize the importance of the affective domain in planning. This is reflected in my (new) belief that the body of knowledge in strategic planning and organizational theory has to be pushed in new, and sometimes unconventional directions.

Some interesting relearning also took place. I have a strong background in survey research, and have carried out innumerable opinion surveys in my career. I very much like the survey method due to its precision and its ability to make statistically measurable generalizations. My original thesis proposal called for a major survey, but my committee wisely discouraged this. While I still managed to include a survey component in the study design, the mainstay of the methodology consisted of case study research. This forced me back into some of the qualitative research methods that I learned at York University in the 1970s. Starting with Webb's classic book, I relearned this material from a very different perspective and adapted it to my study objectives. The levels of cross-validation I achieved convinced me of the utility of this method which I had ignored for many years.

So I did learn, unlearn and relearn as Toffler suggests. My level of learning literacy is higher and this is already being reflected in improved quality in my work as a strategic planning practitioner. I intend to keep learning and working to push the edges of the literature.
REFERENCES
REFERENCES


Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario (ACAATO). *CAAT Environmental Scan.* Toronto, 1996.


References


References


References


References


October 7, 1994

TO: College Registrars

RE: STRATEGIC PLANNING SURVEY

My doctoral thesis at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education involves an analysis of strategic planning activities in Ontario CAATs in the context of organizational theory and the planning literature. I hope to select three to five colleges for in-depth study of a range of variables impacting the shape of strategic planning.

I am currently determining which colleges to select and require information about the extent to which your colleges are involved in strategic planning. As Registrars you are in a good position to comment on the planning activities in your college and I am therefore requesting that you complete the attached questionnaire. I will utilize the information to design my sample, and if your college is selected for follow-up analysis, I will formally request access approval through your President.

Please fax the attached questionnaire to me by October 14, or if you prefer, give it to me at the October CRALO conference in London.

Thanks in advance for your support and cooperation.

Yours truly,

David Sheridan
Registrar

Encl.
SURVEY ON STRATEGIC PLANNING PRACTICES

1. Does your college have a written strategic plan?

   17 Yes  \( (N = 20\) responding colleges)  
   3 No  (Go to Question 6)

2. Does the strategic plan contain the following components?

   \( (N = 17) \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A formal institutional mission statement</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A statement of the values of your college</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written goals outlining broad strategic directions for the next 3 to 5 years</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documented operational plans stating implementation details such as time frames and departmental responsibilities</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. In developing the plan, which of the following activities took place at your college?

   \( (N=17) \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An assessment of the college's internal strengths and weaknesses</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A formal analysis of the college's external environment</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A process to gather input from stakeholder groups such as staff, faculty, students and alumni</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A process for reviewing and modifying the plan on an ongoing basis</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. When was your college's strategic plan first prepared? \( (N=17) \)

   2 in 94, 1 in 93, 3 in 92, 0 in 91, 4 in 90, 1 in 89, 2 in 88, 4 non-responses
5. Rate the degree of influence that the strategic plan has had on decisions about academic and registrarial matters at your college:

\[(N = 17)\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Great Influence</th>
<th>Some Influence</th>
<th>Little Influence</th>
<th>No Influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of new programs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modification or termination of existing programs</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting enrolment targets</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing and promotion</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget allocations</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements:

\[(N = 20)\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The primary purpose of our planning is to develop a blueprint for the college's future</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our institutional mission is regularly reviewed and clarified in terms of &quot;what business we are in&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our mission statement is considered more important for public relations than as a guide for the institution's future</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central to our planning process is a reasonably clear and articulate vision of what our college is to become</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New program decisions are usually a reaction to outside influences such as competition and government policy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. (Cont'd) *(N=20)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(+) Resources are redirected on the basis of strategic decisions</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-) The college's planning relies primarily on concrete, objective data rather than on opinions, values, traditions and aspirations</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) Strategic choices are consistently made that reposition the college in more favourable niches</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-) Annual budgets largely determine what our college will be doing in the future</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Feel free to make any comments or observations about institutional planning at your college:

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

Completed by .................................. College ..................................
Date ..............................................
Appendix B
LETTER TO HOST COLLEGES

March 20, 1995
Dr. Catherine Henderson, President
Centennial College
41 Progress Court
Scarborough, Ontario
M1G 3T8

Dear Dr. Henderson:

RE: STRATEGIC PLANNING RESEARCH

As you are well aware, the many pressures and tensions in the post-secondary system in general and colleges in particular make it more important than ever that colleges give close attention to planning and strategy.

My doctoral thesis at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education involves an analysis of strategic planning activities at Ontario CAATs in the context of organizational theory and the planning literature. The study will examine the relationship between strategic planning and internal environmental factors such as size, structure and organizational culture; and external factors such as catchment area characteristics, government policy and applicant demand. The findings should be of use to administrators in higher education seeking ways to improve their planning initiatives and will address several of the issues and priorities identified by the Council of Governors and the Council of Presidents.

A survey of college registrars was carried out in the fall to identify the nature and extent of strategic planning in the system and to establish a sampling frame for the selection of three host colleges for follow-up case study research. I would very much like to include Centennial as a host college since its strategic planning practices adhere to the principles described in the literature and your institution has certain features that can be generalized to other colleges.

Specifically, I am requesting the following:

1. Access to internal documents and records such as operational plans, minutes of meetings, organization charts, reports, correspondence, budget data and statistical information.
2. Permission to interview eight to ten "key informants" involved with strategic planning at Centennial College. These could include selected Board and PAC members, second level administrators, deans, planning staff, faculty and student government representatives. The interviews would concentrate on planning related matters and be approximately an hour in length. Respondents would be provided with background information and asked to give written consent prior to each interview. Naturally, all interviews would be anonymous and confidential.

3. Approval to disclose the identity of Centennial College in the thesis write-up. Many dissertations mask the identity of the cases researched, but the findings of this study would be more meaningful and of greater use to the college system if the colleges used as host sites were identified. I would in turn ensure that all passages referring to Centennial College were referred to the appropriate people in your organization for review and correction before finalizing the thesis.

I believe that your staff would find the study interesting and that their understanding of the the strategic planning process would be enhanced by their participation. When the thesis is complete, hopefully by this fall, I would be happy to return to Centennial to present and discuss the findings with interested members. I would also provide a copy of the thesis.

I will follow up with your office next week. If your response is affirmative, it would be helpful to identify a contact person with whom I could work to access the information and schedule the interviews. Ideally, I would like to carry out the interviews during the month of April.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours truly,

David Sheridan, B.Com., M.A.
Registrar
Appendix C

POSITIONS OF RESPONDENTS INTERVIEWED

Pilot Test - Sheridan College

Vice President, Student Services
Director, Corporate Communications and Development
Executive Member, OPSEU faculty union

Centennial College

President
Vice President, Administration and Finance
Dean, Engineering Technology and Transportation
Registrar
Director of Marketing
Chair, College Council
Professor
Student representative, College Council
Executive member, OPSEU support staff union
President, Student Administrative Corporation

Georgian College

President
Vice President, Human Resources
Director, Human Resource Development
Registrar
Manager, Planning and Organizational Development
OPSEU representative, Board of Governors
President, Student Council
Past President, Student Council

Confederation College

Chair, Board of Governors
President
Executive Director, Finance and Administration
Senior Academic Dean
Registrar
Director, Planning and Research
OPSEU representative, Board of Governors
Executive member, OPSEU faculty union
Executive member, OPSEU support staff union
Chair, Health Sciences Advisory Committee
President, SAC
Assistant Registrar, Lakehead University
Appendix D
SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Introduction
Can you tell me a bit about your background and experience here at X college?
(Reference specific planning documents) Are you familiar with these documents?

Planning Process
What do you think motivated your college to become involved in strategic planning in the first place?
Has the approach to planning at your college changed? How? If not, why not?
How much consensus was there in developing the plan? (Probe for specific groups)
Is any one group driving the planning process more than others?
Would you consider the planning approach to be mostly intuitive or mostly analytical? Mostly ad hoc or mostly systematic?
Can you give an example of how the strategic plan influences your ongoing decision making? (Probe with specific examples)

Environment
(SWOT analysis) Can you give an example of a strength of X college? A weakness? An opportunity? A threat?

Internal
What are the topics that generate a lot of dialogue among employees in your college?
What kind of a person does well here? Provide a profile.
What kinds of behaviour get rewarded? What kinds of behaviour get punished? What kind is ignored or goes unnoticed?
What is the predominant management style here? What is your own style?
What is the predominant form of communication - top down, bottom up or sideways?

How much lateral communication is there - between senior management, middle management, departments?

What kind of expectations are placed on management? Faculty? Support staff?

How do staff deal with conflict?

What is the state of labour relations at this college?

The literature tends to classify colleges into several models of organization (describe bureaucracy, political federation, collegium and org. anarchy). Which model is closest to your college?

**General**

Let's assume that you have found Aladdin's lamp and the genie has given your college three wishes. What would they be?

Assume a donor made a significant contribution (give $ amount) with no strings attached. What things would you do differently?

How do you think that strategic planning will help your college deal with the coming bad times? (cue - transfer payments, labour relations, expiry of social contract, etc.)

What has been your biggest disappointment with the strategic planning efforts at X college?

What is the one most significant thing that you have learned about college planning in the past year?
Appendix E
INFORMED CONSENT RELEASE FORM

The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
252 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1V6
Higher Education Group

Institut d'études pédagogiques de l'Ontario
252, rue Bloor Ouest, Toronto (Ontario) M5S 1V6

May 1995

Dear Participant:

According to the Ethical Review Board, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (O.I.S.E.), University of Toronto, it is necessary for me to obtain prior consent from all persons being interviewed for my doctoral thesis:

An Analysis of Strategic Planning Practices at Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology

This is a standard procedure regarding data collection which protects both the interviewee and the interviewer.

My thesis involves an examination of strategic planning activities in the Ontario College system and your college has agreed to act as a "host" site for in-depth research. An abstract of the thesis is attached. The interview will deal with your perceptions about the nature of strategic planning at your college.

The interview will take about an hour of your time and will be tape recorded, with your permission. Anonymity and confidentiality are assured. No notes or documents containing your name will be employed in the thesis. In addition, any sections that I write directly citing information you have provided will be forwarded to you for review and correction. Of course, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

I believe you will find that your participation in this study will be interesting and enhance your understanding of the strategic planning process.

Please sign below to indicate your agreement with these arrangements. Your assistance and support are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

David Sheridan

Name: ___________________________ Date: ____________
Title: ___________________________ College: ____________
SIGNED: _________________________
Appendix F
INTERVIEW ABSTRACTING FORM

Background
Respondent: College:
Position: Date of Interview:
Experience: Date of Abstract:

Planning
Process:

SWOT Analysis - Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Opportunities:

Threats:

Other:
Culture

Issues:

Governance "model":

Management style:

Communication:

Behavioural Norms:

Other:

General

Three Wishes: 1.

2.

3.

Other:
Appendix G
DOCUMENTATION REVIEWED

Centennial College

Annual Reports, 1993-94 and 1994-95
Business Plan, October 1994 - October 1995
Board of Governors minutes
Centinel, staff newsletter, January 1996 - June 1996
College Climate Survey, Fall 1994
College Council minutes
Continuing Education calendars, 1994-95, 1995-96
Developing an Academic Framework, discussion paper, April 1996
Media releases
New Student First Semester Demographic Survey, Fall 1994
Post-secondary calendars, 1994-95, 1995-96
President’s memos to college community, Oct. 1995 - February 1996
President’s Planning Council minutes
Student newspaper back issues
Operating budgets, 1994-95, 1995-96
Organization charts, June 1994, March 1996
Strategic Plan, 1989 - 1992
Unfettered, OPSEU newsletter back issues

Confederation College

Annual Reports, 1994 and 1995
Board Annual Retreat materials, November 1994
Board of Governors minutes
Employee Attitude Survey, 1995
Insight, staff newsletter back issues
Integrated Planning Process, 1992
International initiatives, presentation notes, June 1995
Lakehead University Strategic Plan, 1992 - 1998
Lakehead University calendar, 1995 -96
Media releases
Northern Ontario Enterprise Alliance, presentation notes, June 5, 1995
Operational plans, 1994-95, 1995-96
Operating budgets, 1994-95, 1995-96
Organization charts, April 1995, April 1996
Post-secondary calendar, 1994 -95
Program Planning Process Model report
Restructuring report, January 1993
Strategic Plan, 1994 - 1996
Student newspaper back issues
Student yearbooks
Georgian College

A Change Process to Strategically Reposition Georgian College, position paper, September 1995
Academic Plan, 1995-98
Annual Reports, 1994 and 1995
Board of Governors minutes
Capsule, staff newsletter back issues
Continuing Education calendars
From the President, bulletin back issues
Media releases
Operating budgets, 1994-95 and 1995-96
Organizational charts, January 1995 and January 1996
Post-secondary calendar, 1995-96
Strategic Plan, 1992-96
Strategic Plan, October 1995
Student newspaper back issues
Appendix H

ETHICAL REVIEW CERTIFICATE

Project/Thesis Title: An Analysis of Strategic Planning Practices at Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology.

Principal Investigator (if Research) Student and Thesis Supervisor (if Thesis): David Sheridan/Michael Skolnik (Supervisor)

Ethical Review Committee Members: William Alexander (Ad Ed)
Grace Griss (Chair, High Ed)
Saeed Quazi (High Ed)

This certificate is completed in the light of relevant OISE policy on legal, ethical and moral review, taking into account the relevant standards of the discipline concerned as well as, where appropriate, the standards specified by certain external funding bodies.

This is to certify that the above noted committee has examined this research and development project and concludes that the research meets the accepted professional standards for the conduct of research prevailing within the discipline(s) involved, including appropriate standards of ethical acceptability.

Signature of Chairperson
Ethical Review Committee

Date: June 2, 1994

175
### Appendix I

**COLLEGE ENROLMENTS** 1993-1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>93-94AY</th>
<th>94-95AY</th>
<th>95-96AY</th>
<th>%Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centennial</td>
<td>7,436</td>
<td>8,592</td>
<td>9,107</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confederation</td>
<td>3,173</td>
<td>3,236</td>
<td>3,309</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgian</td>
<td>4,625</td>
<td>5,411</td>
<td>5,745</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System</td>
<td>127,256</td>
<td>134,285</td>
<td>138,209</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

1. Figures represent full-time post-secondary enrolment as of November 1st Ministry of Education and Training audit date.

Appendix J

COLLEGE CATCHMENT AREAS

Source: Ontario Department of Education "Guidelines for Planning Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, 1967."
Appendix K

ORGANIZATION CHART - CENTENNIAL COLLEGE

CENTENNIAL COLLEGE - ORGANIZATION & SERVICES STRUCTURE

June 1994

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

PRESIDENT

VICE PRESIDENT ACADEMIC

All Instructional programs/delivery
- Instructional/curriculum development
  - control of all curricular input from Schools to data base
  - contact point for College/ACU re: new revised programs
  - support for College Council

Access/Assessment
- Prior Learning Assessment
- Skills Development and Training
- Continuing Education
- International Education
  - Recruitment of students
  - Specialized support services for International students
  - International placement, co-op
  - Development of curricula
  - Faculty and student exchanges and assignments
  - Tours and internships of international personnel

OSIS/DIS
- Placement & Co-op Education
  - Career planning & placement
  - Graduate placement stats
  - liaison - business & industry
  - Research
  - Work placement & job development
  - Case study monitoring

Articulation
- Learning Centers

VICE PRESIDENT ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

Information Systems
- Administration of Academic/Boards
- Computing
- Policies Security and Control
- Technical Services
- Systems Development
- Print Shop
- PC Repair/Service
- Telecommunications

Legal Services
- Physical Resources/Office Services
- Plant Engineering
- Building & equipment maintenance
- Environmental Control
- Utilities consumption
- Security, Health & Safety
- Contracting
- Space planning & utilization
- Capital construction/renovations
- Land improvements
- Grounds maintenance

- Receiving
- Printing
- Photocopying
- Mail
- Transportation

Bibliocentre
- Acquisitions
- Cataloguing & Processing
- Electronic Access
- ODEB/USL learn
- Develop new clients/services

Financial Services
- Financial Reporting
- Cashiering
- Billing/Collections
- Accounts Receivable
- Purchasing
- Disbursements Control
- Short-term investing
- External audit interface
- Capital tracking
- Banking

- Financial Planning
  - Budget forecasting, management
  - Data analysis review
  - Financial Liaison with ACU/BCG

- Project Development/Contracting
  - Facility Leasing
  - Inventory Control
  - Insurance Management
  - Contract Administration

Bookstores
- Operations and purchasing, pricing, merchandising, sales
- PC payroll deduction plan
- Store design

Contract Food Services
- Sales and service
- Facility renovation

Parking

VICE PRESIDENT STUDENT SERVICES & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Registrar
- Management of enrollment
- Student admissions, records, enrollment reports, statistical data
- Registration of CE, full-time and apprenctice students
- Grade reporting
- Resources to students, faculty
- Academic transcriptions
- Certificates of graduation
- Student Photo ID card service
- Student development counseling
- Tax receipt service

Scheduling
- Recruitment, orientation, placement
- Recruitment publications

Financial Aid
- Student Awards
- Marketing and College Communications
- College marketing plans
- Research
- Public and media relations
- Corporate identity
- Internal communications
- Special events
- Communication
- Friends of Centennial
- Fundraising
- College calendar, full time/CE

Resource Centers
- Library materials, circulation
- Updating, Interlibrary loans
- Student orientation & instruction
- Bibliographic services
- Newsletters, brochures, drives
- Audiovisual services

Counselling/Health/Spec Needs
- Personal, academic, vocational, health education counselling
- Faculty resources
- Crisis intervention
- Peer tutoring
- Special needs counselling
- Fleet Aid
- Advice re: Workers' Comp.,
  - Accident insurance

Student Life/Athletics
- Varsity sports, student recreation, student life activities
- Physical Health instruction
- Rental of athletic facilities

Student Government

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HUMAN RESOURCES

Labour/Employment Relations
- Provides up-to-date information to faculty & staff re: collective agreements or
  amendments or renewals
- Participates on committees to resolve work agreements
- Interprets and maintains salary levels, according to procedures, collective agreements
- Maintains records re: salary, classification & seniority for reporting purposes

Recruitment and Selection
- Develops policies for equitable selection of employees
- Participates on selection committees
- Develops & implements procedures re: effective hiring
- Ensures procedures are current, reflecting legislation etc.

Staff Development
- Needs analysis
- Plan & conduct seminars etc.
- which reflect needs & are
  consistent with strategic goals
- Provides counselling services to individual employees
- Develops appropriate policies

Compensation & Benefits
- Ensures distribution of accurate compensation to staff
- Communicates current info to staff
- Provides consultation on DCU & pension to faculty,
  & annual account reports re: DCU
- Maintains accurate staff records
- Provides benefit counselling to employees

Education/Employment Equity
- Develop effective policies re:
  Human Rights, Multiculturalism, AIDS, Social Harassment etc.
- Conduct needs analysis and implement seminars related to these issues
- Generates funding for special projects
- Prepares annual reports showing funding & planned activities
- Provides advice on those issues for
  all staff & students
- Liaises with the community

Freedom of Information
- Develop appropriate policies
- Ensures compliance with legislation
- Maintains central area for permanent files
- Provides advice to staff