

## **SECTION A—DEVELOPING A PROGRAM PLAN WHEN YOU HAVE NOT COMPLETED PROGRAM REVIEW**

### **V. 3-5 Year Strategic Directions**

Using the information you have presented in the previous sections and any information you have, describe the strategic directions you foresee the program evolving, or changes you foresee over the next 3-5 years.

Consider the following questions:

1. How will the program change or evolve over the next 3-5 years?
2. Will demand for the program's services increase, remain stable, or decline in the future?
3. Are there functions the program will add, delete, or automate over time?
4. Will the skills required of the individuals working in the program change over time? If so, what will the program need to do to address those changes?

#### **How do we write a strategic direction?**

A strategic direction is a general statement that describes where the program wants to go or a desired aspiration of the program. You need to start with a vision of where the program is heading. Visualize the direction. Where do you see the program as a whole heading?

Ask yourselves the following questions:

#### **1. What do we want to be or where are we heading?**

A strategic direction is a well thought out and clear statement that describes where your program is heading. Think about the direction the program is going. What direction do you desire to move your program? Visualize your desired destination. What does it look like?

#### **2. What is the focus of our strategic direction?**

The focus of your strategic direction will often be the individuals (e.g., students, committee members, staff, employees, etc.) affected by it. The focus may also be a place, a physical object, a situation, an event, or a condition, but making people the focus of your strategic direction is usually best.

#### **How do strategic directions, goals, and objectives relate to each other?**

There are significant differences between strategic directions, goals, and objectives. This section explains how they differ. First, strategic directions are general, whereas goals and objectives are definite or specific. Strategic directions inform you where you want to go, whereas goals tell you what you will accomplish when you get there. Because strategic directions are very general, you do not need to give evidence showing what you will accomplish when you get there, whereas for goals, you will need to give evidence showing what you have accomplished. Objectives are even more specific than goals. Objectives are specific steps/tasks you will need to accomplish the goal.

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Here's a personal example that might help you understand the differences.

Mission = The purpose of my exercise program is to be healthy and fit.

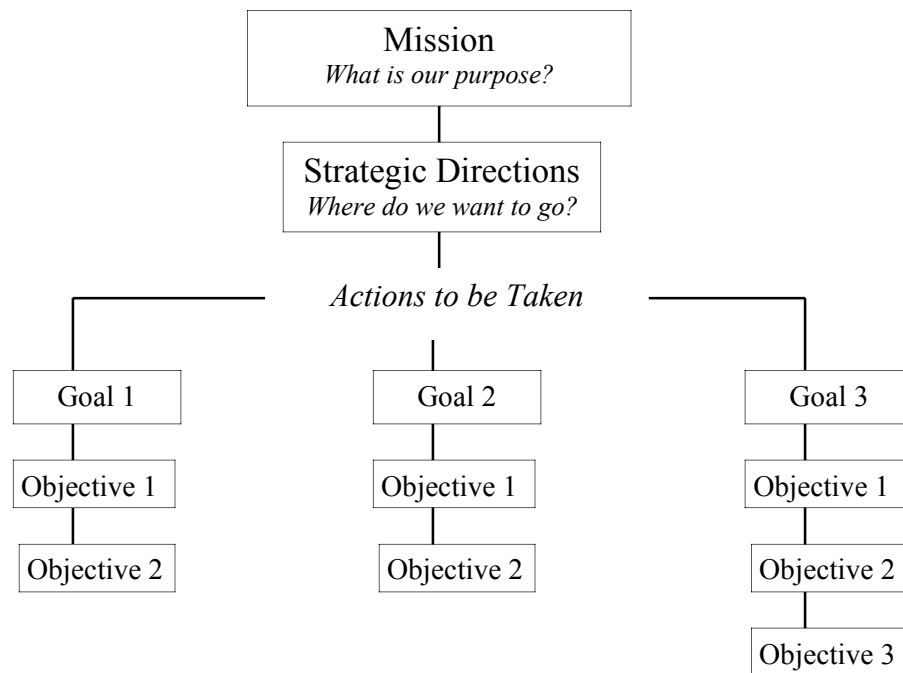
Strategic Direction = Be fit enough to run marathons.

Goal 1= Increase the distance I run each week.

Objective 1 = Increase the number of days I run a week by two.

Objective 2 = Increase the number of days I do leg exercises a week by two.

The diagram below illustrates how the mission, strategic direction, goals, and objectives relate to each other.



### Examples of Strategic Directions

#### Example 1:

Strategic Direction 1: Over the next 3-5 years, Media Services will provide a technological environment that is supportive of the efforts of the staff so they can assist students with the achievement of their educational goals.

Note that the **focus** of the strategic direction is “staff” and **where the program wants to be** is in a “technological environment that is supportive of the staff.”