**Suggested Planning Alignment Practice**

Alter to suit your unit

1. Unit Leadership reviews MSU plan
2. Leadership charges a small planning or writing group
   1. Charge group to draft a unit-level alignment plan addressing the MSU plan (what you will do to help the University succeed) that is strategic (not everything can be in it) and measurable (you need to demonstrate progress) and a (reasonable) stretch.
   2. Set ground rules for meeting behavior, feedback mechanisms, decision making, conflict resolution, information sharing, etc.
   3. Review the MSU plan together
   4. Consider strengths and weaknesses in the unit
   5. Develop a list of stakeholders in and out of the unit
      1. Who can influence your plan’s success, positively or negatively?
      2. Who is interested and wants to be informed?
      3. How do you need to engage each group?
3. Planning group listens to stakeholders
   1. Ask stakeholders or the whole unit (depending on size) to complete some pre-work to promote thoughtful participation
      1. Read MSU plan
      2. Talk to at least 5 faculty, students, staff in or outside of the unit
      3. Ask “what do we already do well in alignment with the plan?”
      4. Ask “what might we do better/more/differently that we want to do in alignment with the plan?” Another option is “what strengths do we have that we can deploy toward parts of the plan?”
   2. Invite influencers or whole unit, depending on stakeholder mapping and unit size, to a group session(s)
   3. Schedule plenty of time – 90+ minutes depending on group size
      1. Set ground rules
      2. Collect input on the two questions
      3. Choose top themes from each question
      4. Are these representative of how the unit can align with the plan? Was anything missed?
4. Draft Alignment Document
   1. What Intentional Focus Areas are you resonating with the most? Where do the themes from the listening sessions fit? Not all units must address all Intentional Focus areas.
   2. What Goals are you resonating with the most within those IFs? Where do the themes from the listening sessions fit? Not all units must address all Goals.
   3. Write the themes alongside the appropriate MSU plan elements as one or more goals and one or more strategies (e.g. The Unit will have X by this time…; The Unit will do this to achieve X…)
5. Distribute
6. Listen
   1. Solicit input through multiple channels – email, face to face, meeting, comment space online or in person, design charrette, etc.
   2. Ask “do the goals and strategies reflect the unit’s potential contribution to the MSU plan?” “Are they are aligned in the right places?” “Have we missed an important area of the MSU plan that the unit could address with existing strengths?”
   3. Consider engaging stakeholders outside the unit who might partner in planning interdisciplinary or inter-unit efforts.
7. Review the input
   1. Any themes emerging?
   2. Are changes needed? Are they consistent with the MSU plan and appropriate for the unit?
8. Repeat 4-7 as needed to generate consensus (unanimity is not required)
9. Draft details
   1. How will you know within the unit if you have made progress?
   2. Draft metrics and actions that are
      1. Specific
      2. Measurable
      3. Actionable
      4. Realistic
      5. Timebound
   3. Assign champions for each goal/strategy who will be responsible for ensuring the work progresses and who can be contacted by Planning Council for more information (measures, questions, demonstrations, etc.)
   4. Consider reallocation of resources and possible additional resources you might request in a future space, position, budget, technology or other allocation process.
10. Distribute
11. Listen
12. Review
13. Adopt and celebrate success!