

THE ASPIRA ASSOCIATION INSTRUCTIONAL AND ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT SERVICES INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY BLUEPRINT FOR THE YEAR 2005

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THE ASPIRA ASSOCIATION
INSTRUCTIONAL AND ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT SERVICES
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY BLUEPRINT
FOR THE YEAR 2005

Background

The faculty, advisors and staff of The ASPIRA Association schools and academic advisement and counseling programs have always demonstrated a strong commitment to addressing students' learning needs. They have always searched for and demanded the best possible environment conducive to improve the teaching / learning processes and have communicated their concerns and ideas with the Association management team. With the input of the faculty and staff, the Association management team has put together a vision, a dream of how to improve the teaching / learning environment of the Association using state-of-the-art information technology.

The dream started about one and a half years ago, on an October afternoon when the Association management team shared possible options for the vision with the Association faculty and staff. Committed to the improvement of the teaching and learning environment of the Association, a meeting of the minds coincided in the use and user-friendly integration of information technology to improve the teaching/learning process on ASPIRA's schools. During that October afternoon a plan was outlined on how to integrate information technology--from the simplest applications to the most complex. Since that day the dream has evolved.

This plan reflects a dynamic planning process rather than a fixed statement. It expresses the current visions and strategic goals for information technology at the ASPIRA Association as members of the community shares them.

For the purpose of this plan information technology is defined as a term that encompasses all the technologies used for creating, abstracting, visualizing, presenting, collaborating, communicating, and otherwise "managing" the flow of information. In the academic setting information technology can enhance the value of information in several ways. Students can use information technology to locate and associate information and concepts and to connect to more sources of information, thereby making the overall knowledge base more comprehensive. Information technology also enhances the value of information by facilitating knowledge exchange and coordinated activities among individuals. The democratization of information and the simple processing of information more rapidly allows the members of the school's community to consider, evaluate, and make choices faster and more decisively.

Rationale for Information Technology

Just because we cannot see clearly the end of the road, that is no reason for not setting out on the essential journey. On the contrary, great change dominates the world, and unless we move with the change, we will become its victims.

John F. Kennedy

The development of the ASPIRA Association vision for information technology has been influenced by the techno-anxiety of knowing that you will not ever clearly see the end of the road while still traveling on it at ever-increasing speed. Due to the fact that we share Yeats's vision of education when he said: "***Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.***" At Aspira we are committed to light the spark of education in the minds of our students with the support of intensive and selective use of information technology.

Networked computers have provided a way to open up new avenues of communication between teachers and their students. Communication tools, such as group software and multimedia applications support interactive computing that can enhance classroom learning. Computer conferencing and electronic mail can extend classroom time and bring geographically separated individuals together in electronic learning environments that amount to virtual classrooms. Access to worlds of information and to teaching and learning peers is possible through network services such as Internet, and others.

In such an academic technological environment, teachers will be able to transfer class materials and multimedia presentations directly from their office workstations or homes to computers located in classrooms and connected by the Association network. Homework assignments and term papers--some complete with audio and video annotations--may be submitted, graded and returned without a single sheet of paper changing hands. Students will have ready access to instructors, personal records, homework assignments, libraries, other students, and school event schedules through workstations present in all school facilities. Barriers that now separate administrators, teachers, support staff and students will be removed through the development of an information technology infrastructure that makes communication and interactive participation as effortless as composing a paragraph or picking up the phone.

In the student service areas there is a need for the development of a "high-tech, high-touch" environment. Students must have access from homes, and school computers to institutional information management systems that will allow them to request services, fill applications, and get advisement via computers. Student access to information technology will free human resources from routine chores to perform a number of activities that require human interaction.

The foregoing describes what potentially can be done today even given the obstacles imposed by seriously inadequate financial support. To take full advantage of the many benefits offered by information technology, we must anticipate the future by seeking solutions that seamlessly integrate resources into a truly ubiquitous computing environment using every cost-effective combination possible.

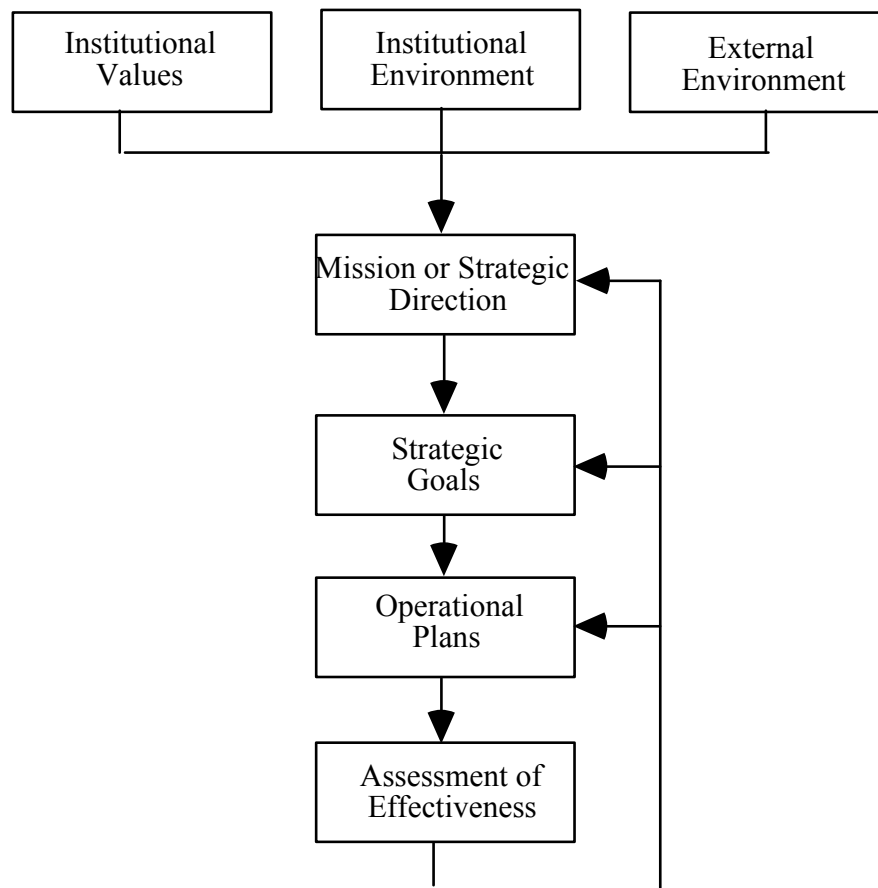
Planning Process

The planning modality utilized in the development of this plan is a strategic planning process. Strategic planning is concerned with the definition of the major goals and objectives for an organization; the design of the functional policies and operational plans; the organizational structure and systems necessary to achieve those goals and objectives - all in response to changing environmental conditions, institutional resources, and values (individual and institutional)¹.

In the strategic planning process the mission or strategic direction is developed based upon the careful assessment of the institutional (internal) environment, institutional values, and the external environment (or trends) to the institution. In the assessment of the internal environment, the strengths and weaknesses of the institution must be considered. The matching of these three elements (institutional values, the internal and external environmental conditions) will provide the basis for the formulation of the mission or strategic direction.

The following figure graphically represents the process utilized in the development of the proposed plan.

¹Strategic Management, Text and Cases on Business Policy. La Rue T. Hosmer, Prentice-Hall.



Institutional Values

The following shared values concerning teaching and learning guides the ASPIRA Association in the development of its mission, goals and operational procedures. These institutional values are critical elements in formulating a strategy because they provide a philosophical frame of reference to the actions of the institution.

The ASPIRA Association:

1. Values learning;
2. Values change as necessary and appropriate to meet educational needs and to improve learning;
3. Values access while maintaining quality;
4. Values diversity in order to broaden understanding and learning;
5. Values individuals;
6. Values a systematic approach to decision making;
7. Values its partnership with the community;

Institutional Environment

One of the major steps in formulating the strategic direction of the institution is an examination of the organizational environment in order to identify opportunities and challenges. In this process we have examined the organizational resources, assets, and experience, or the lack thereof, in order to identify their potential as well as existing limitations.

Strengths

- A cornucopia of experience, knowledge, and skills of the ASPIRA Association personnel provides a springboard for technological innovation
- ASPIRA personnel has a long history of community leadership
- Use and integration of information technology at the Association has a strong grassroots commitment from faculty and staff
- The ASPIRA's schools administration encourages the use of information technology to empower faculty and students in the teaching/learning process
- Curriculum offered by the ASPIRA Association schools and the curricular strategies used in a large number of courses involve the use of computers
- Approximately fifty percent (50%) of the faculty, staff, and administration of the schools are computer literate.
- The Association has developed working relationships with hardware and software vendors
- Association Facilities Development Plan provides for state-of-the-art facilities for the use of information technology in the near future

Challenges

- There is a need to help some employees to overcome technophobia
- Due to severe financial limitations, acquisition of information technology hardware and software is a difficult and slow process
- There is no integration between telecommunication, data processing, network resources, and audiovisual resource distribution
- There is a need to effectively coordinate the information technology management and support needs for the integration of this technology in the teaching/learning environment
- There is a need to greatly enhance the unit responsible for providing the faculty with the necessary support for the preparation of instructional materials
- The staff development program needs to provide a comprehensive development program that should include topics such as: how to prepare audiovisual materials, how to use computers as a teaching tool, basic information technology equipment trouble shooting, instructional presentations authoring, multimedia programs authoring, among others
- At present access to Internet is limited
- There is no philosophical framework for the integration of technology into

the student service areas

- With the proliferation of desktop computers a change in the data processing paradigm is needed
- There is no plan for hardware and software replacement and upgrade
- The Association needs to become more active in helping community institutions and organizations to understand, embrace, and the use of information technology.

External Environment and Trends

The external forces or trends that potentially affect and/or shape the Association technological and instructional activities are summarized as follows:

- Globalization of the economy
- The workforce is being reshaped due to the fast changes in information technology;
- The demand for increase employee productivity requires their training in the use of office productivity computer tools
- Computer technology is evolving at a very fast pace
- There is a constant need for equipment replacement and hardware and software upgrade
- The ASPIRA's schools location requires the organization to respond to the community training needs
- Advances in science and medicine require new skills in the use of computers, computer interfaces with analytical, diagnostic and/or treatment equipment;
- The nation is moving onto the information superhighway
- The increasing number of immigrants to our community area have resulted in an increased demand for English as a Second Language after school programs and other remedial programs
- Changes in software and hardware vendor strategies demands changes in the Association procurement policies and procedures
- State funding for information technology equipment is limited
- The community needs a forum and a support system for understanding, discussing, and receive advice on present and future information technology trends and issues

Mission Statement for Information Technology

The mission is to create a culture--driven by technology--in which student's faculty, and staff are continuously learning.

Robert C. Heterick, Jr.²

Based upon the analysis of the characteristics and trends of the institutional values, the institutional environment and the external environment to the Association, a mission statement or strategic direction for information technology is defined:

The mission for information technology at the schools and counseling programs of the ASPIRA Association is to deliver quality education to students with different learning styles, anytime and anywhere through the use of state-of-the-art information technology to continuously improve the quality of the teaching and learning environment.

The elements necessary for the implementation of the information technology mission are discussed in the following sections.

Strategic Goals for Information Technology

Based upon the mission of information technology at the ASPIRA Association, the following list represents the strategic goals for the Association schools to:

- Revise, develop and implement academic courses that will provide instruction to students in the use of state-of-the-art information technology for discipline-specific fields
- Revise, develop and implement academic courses supported by information technologies which will address the academic national standards for Math and Science
- Provide technological support to improve student performance in the state performance examinations
- Design and implement instructional facilities and equipment utilizing ASPIRA's computer minimum configuration standards hardware and software that will provide the most conducive environment for the teaching/learning process
- Provide faculty and staff with training, information technology awareness presentations, and hands-on workshops by which they will change their attitude towards technology, be empowered to use information technology, teach with help of information technology, improve their academic and administrative productivity, and improve services provided to students and the general

² Heterick, R.C. (1994). Technology Change and Higher Education Policy. Priorities, Association of Governing Boards. Num. 1, Spring 1994.

- community
- Facilitate the development of instructional applications for students and faculty use in classrooms, laboratories, and libraries
 - Develop strategic alliances with hardware and software manufacturers, research and development groups, community and educational organizations, and vendors to invigorate the implementation and advancement of the proposed plan
 - Develop strategic alliances with government, business and industry to invigorate the implementation and advancement of the proposed plan
 - Provide ready computer access to all students, faculty and staff
 - Connect all school computers to ASPIRA's network using the Association technology network standards
 - Develop and implement a strategy for information technology acquisition, replacement, upgrade, maintenance, and repair
 - Secure adequate funding for information technology.

Measurable Outcomes

The measurable outcomes identified for the implementation of the proposed strategic goals are as follows:

1.0 Instruction

- 1.1 By the academic year 2005, at least seventy five percent (75%) of all courses taught at the ASPIRA Association schools will be delivered assisted by Information technology. The technological resources will support the implementation of Academic Standards in the areas of English, Reading, Math and Science. The number of courses taught with the support of Information technology will be documented at the end of each academic semester as prepared by the Coordinator of Association Planning and Effectiveness, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Instruction and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.
- 1.2 By the academic year 2005, the majority of the ASPIRA Association students will be computer literate. The number of students using computer laboratories and other types of instructional technologies will be documented at the end of each academic semester as prepared by the Coordinator of ASPIRA's School Planning and Effectiveness, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Instruction and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.
- 1.3 By the academic year 2005, alternative education programs (i.e. GED preparatory courses, community technology literacy workshops, among

others) delivered to the community by the ASPIRA Association will be assisted by information technology. The number of alternative education courses taught with the support of information technology will be documented at the end of each academic semester as prepared by the Coordinator of Association Planning and Effectiveness, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Instruction and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.

- 1.4 By the academic year 2005, student performance in the state performance exams will increase by twenty percent (20%) compared to the 1998 performance. Student academic achievement in the examinations is expected to improve due to the introduction and extensive use of innovative instructional methods supported by instructional and assessment technology. Student examination performance will be documented at the end of each academic semester as prepared by the Coordinator of Association Planning and Effectiveness, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Instruction and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.

2.0 Student Services

- 2.1 By the academic year 2005, fifty percent (50 %) of all students testing will be administered with the use of computers. Testing migration into computerized systems will be documented at the end of each academic semester as prepared by the Coordinator of the Testing, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Student Services and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.
- 2.2 By the academic year 2005, fifty percent (50 %) of all student records will be maintained with the use of computerized imaging systems. Record keeping migration into computerized image systems will be documented at the end of each academic semester as prepared by the schools registrars, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Student Services and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.
- 2.3 By the academic year 2005, student admissions, and records will be assisted by computerized systems. Application process and record keeping migration into computerized systems will be documented at the end of each academic semester as prepared by the school registrars and the Coordinator of Financial Aid, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Student Services and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.

3.0 Classrooms

- 3.1 By the academic year 2005, all Association classrooms will be equipped with one or more multimedia networked computer(s) in compliance with State computer equipment standards. Multimedia classroom conversion or construction will be reported at the end of each semester as prepared by the Association Facilities Management Office, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Administration and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.

4.0 Student Laboratories

- 4.1 By the academic year 2005, approximately 10,000 sq. ft. of new or existing school instructional laboratories will be equipped with state-of-the-art computer equipment based on ASPIRA's computer equipment standards. Laboratory construction or conversion will be reported at the end of each semester as prepared by the School Facilities Management Office, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Administration and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.

5.0 Faculty Offices, Administrative Offices and Staff Offices

- 5.1 By the academic year 2005, all new or existing faculty offices will be equipped with Association's computer equipment standards networked equipment. Faculty office computer installation will be reported at the end of each semester as prepared by the Association Network Manager, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Instruction and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.
- 5.2 By the academic year 2005, at new or existing departments offices will be provided with one room with state-of-the-art multimedia authoring computer equipment. School multimedia authoring and computer equipment installation will be reported at the end of each fiscal semester as prepared by the Association Network Manager, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Instruction and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.
- 5.3 By the academic year 2005, all new or existing administrative offices will be equipped with state-of-the-art networked computer equipment. Administrative office computer installation will be reported at the end of each semester as prepared by the Association Network Manager, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Instruction and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.
- 5.4 By the academic year 2005, all new or existing staff workstations will be equipped with state-of-the-art networked computer equipment. Staff workstations computer installation will be reported at the end of each semester as prepared by the Association Network Manager, with

attached documentation, attested by the Director of Instruction and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.

6.0 Libraries

- 6.1 By the academic year 2005, the ASPIRA Association schools libraries will be equipped with state-of-the-art networked computer equipment, electronic library resources collections, and network connections to local, regional, national and international networks. Library computer equipment installation will be reported at the end of each semester as prepared by the School Library Coordinator, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Instruction and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.
- 6.2 By the academic year 2005, the ASPIRA Association schools faculty, administrators and staff will be able to perform library research from their desktops with state-of-the-art networked computer equipment, with connections to local, regional, national and international library networks. Faculty library research activities will be reported at the end of each semester as prepared by the School Library Coordinator, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Instruction and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.

7.0 Association Network

- 7.1 By the academic year 2002, all new and existing computer equipment will be networked using Association's network standards. All Association computers will be part of the Association network, and have access to regional, state, national and international networks (Internet). Network installation and advancements will be reported at the end of each semester as prepared by the Association Network Manager, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Instruction and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.

8.0 Faculty, Administrators, and Staff Development

- 8.1 By the academic year 2005, faculty, administrators, and staff development facilities will be operating at the ASPIRA Association with support from the ASPIRA National Office and local community colleges. Faculty and staff development activities will include a strong component in use of computers, computer applications, office productivity programs, and computer-based pedagogical techniques; these will be reported at the end of each semester as prepared by the Association Coordinator of the staff development program, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Instruction and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.

- 8.2 By the academic year 2005, eighty percent (80%) of all Association personnel will have participated in one or more development activities sponsored by the ASPIRA National Office. A needs assessment will be implemented in order to establish the base-line data of where the school personnel are in terms of information technology usage and what is needed to move them forward. Faculty, administrators, and staff development activities will be reported at the end of each semester as prepared by the School Staff Development Coordinator, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Instruction and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.

9.0 Computer Assisted Instructional Applications Development (CAI)

- 9.1 By the academic year 2000, a computer-based instructional applications development center will be available and operating at the Schools Teaching and Learning Resource Centers. Availability of computer-based instructional facility and applications development will be reported at the end of each semester as prepared by the School Coordinator of the Teaching/Learning Resource Center, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Instruction and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.

10.0 Information Technology Acquisition, Replacement, Upgrading, Maintenance, and Repair

- 10.1 By the academic year 2000, a computer-based equipment maintenance and repair center will be available and operating as part of the Association Network department. The availability of a computer-based equipment maintenance and repair center and annual repair/maintenance activities will be reported at the end of each semester as prepared by the Association Network Coordinator, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Instruction and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.
- 10.2 By the academic year 2000, a computer-based audiovisual equipment maintenance and repair center will be available and operating as part of the School Audiovisual department. Availability of computer-based audiovisual equipment maintenance and repair center and annual activities will be reported at the end of each semester as prepared by the Audiovisual Coordinator, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Instruction and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.
- 10.3 By the academic year 2000, strategies for the acquisition, replacement and upgrading information technology equipment will be in place.

Availability of these strategies and annual activities will be reported at the end of each semester as prepared by the Coordinator of Facilities Management, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Administration and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.

11.0 Community and Business Partnerships

- 11.1 By the academic year 1999, strategic partnerships with community and businesses will be negotiated and implemented. Partnership objectives are to support the implementation of the Association information technology mission as well as to provide training and consultation to the local businesses and surrounding community in aspects related to information technology. The partnerships, accomplishments, benefits and activities will be reported at the end of each semester as prepared by the Coordinator of Association Planning and Effectiveness, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Instruction and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.
- 11.2 By the academic year 1999, a community and businesses technology advisory board will be implemented. The Advisory Board objectives are to support the implementation of the Association information technology mission as well as to provide training and consultation to the business and community in aspects related to information technology. The partnerships, accomplishments, benefits and activities will be reported at the end of each semester as prepared by the Coordinator of Association Planning and Effectiveness, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Instruction and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.

12.0 Association Administrative Computing Systems

- 12.1 By the academic year 2005, the majority of the Association administrative functions (such as inter-office mail, budgeting, purchasing, and personnel transactions among others) will be supported by computers. Administrative functions migration into computerized systems will be documented at the end of each academic semester as prepared by the Coordinator of the Network Services Department, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Administration and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.

13.0 Technology Plan Sustainability

- 13.1 By 1999 a development plan (fund raising and resource acquisition plan) will be developed to sustain the viability of the technology plans at the ASPIRA Association. In developing the plan the school will be assisted by the ASPIRA Association National Office. The development plan accomplishments, benefits and activities will be reported at the end

of each semester as prepared by the Coordinator of Association Planning and Effectiveness, with attached documentation, attested by the Director of Instruction and forwarded to the ASPIRA Association President.

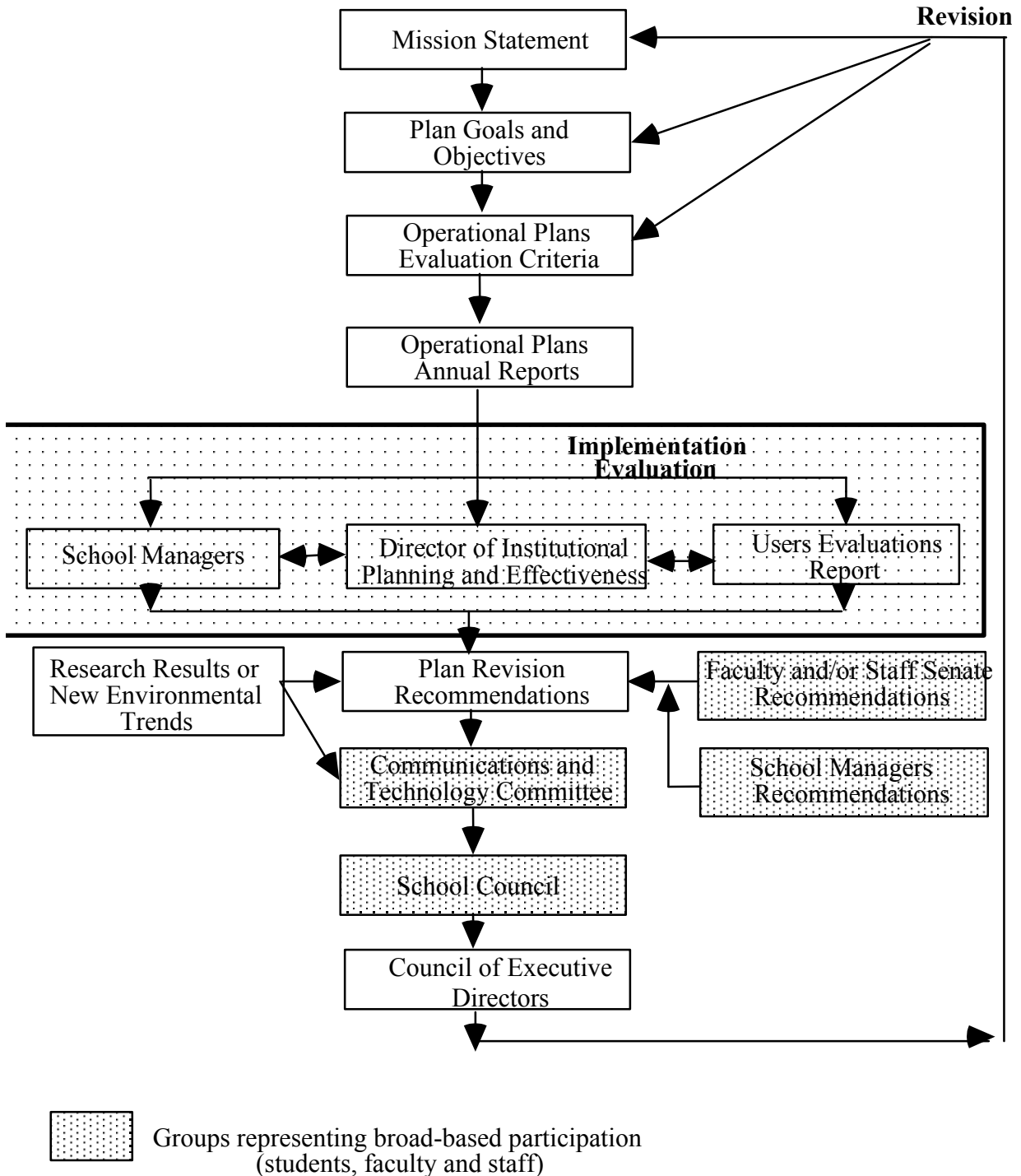
Plan Effectiveness Evaluation

A number of schools accreditation associations in their accreditation criteria have established that institutions must engage in continuous study, analysis and appraisal of its purposes, policies, procedures and programs. An institution has the obligation to all constituents to evaluate effectiveness and to use the results in a broad-base, continuous planning and evaluation process.

In the development of a procedure for evaluating the effectiveness of all the components of the information technology plan, the following aspects have been taken into consideration:

1. Broad based participation of faculty, staff, and administration in the development of the plan.
2. Establishment of a clearly defined mission statement for information technology.
3. Formulation of goals consistent with the mission statement.
4. Formulation and evaluation of the accomplishment of plan objectives and operational activities consistent with the mission statement.
5. Use of results of these evaluations to improve, modify and update the strategic plan.

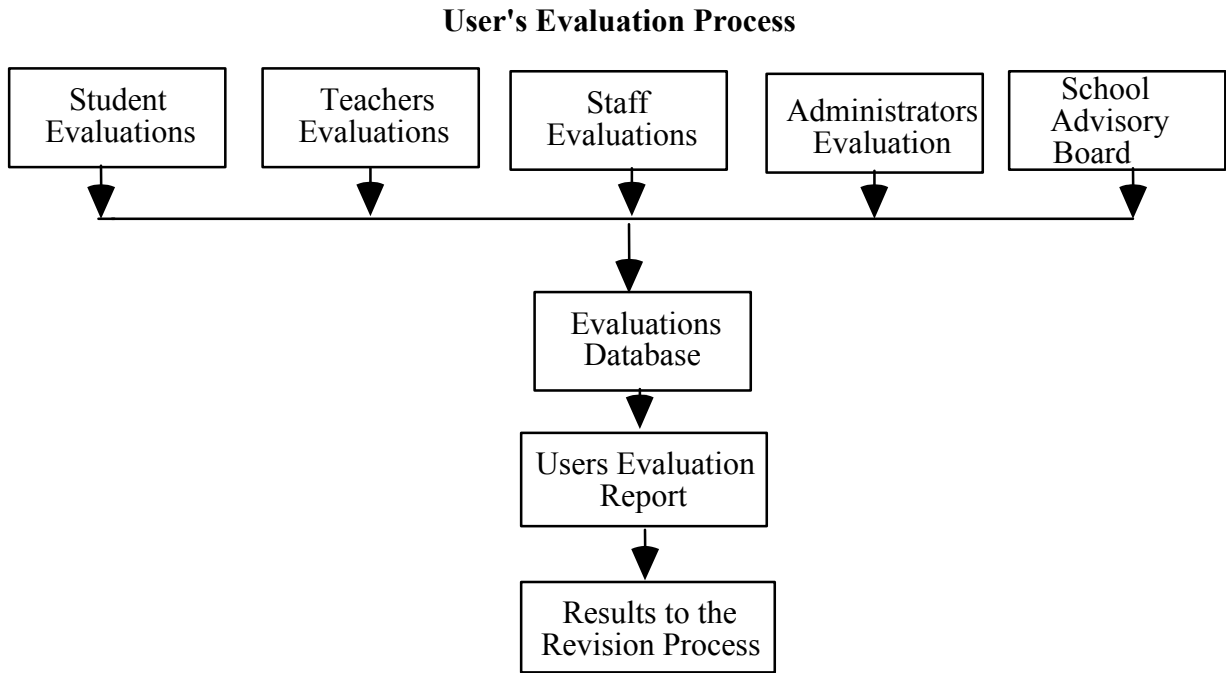
The plan evaluation and revision procedure to be used in this plan is represented in the following figure.



The most important characteristic of this evaluation and revision process will be the broad participation of the ASPIRA Association academic community.

The Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness will be responsible for the overall effectiveness evaluation. The Coordinator of this Office will report directly to the ASPIRA Association President the activities concerning the evaluation and revision of

the plan. One of the most important tasks to be taken by this office is the assessment of the user's satisfaction. That process is illustrated in the following figure.



Our plan implementation calls for a broad participation of the academic community in the determination of effectiveness. This requirement reassembles the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM) applied to education. In the educational context and specifically in the context of this plan, when applying Deming's TQM philosophy, we must consider the users (students, faculty and staff) satisfaction with the available information technology, and employers satisfaction (business, industry and government) in terms of students skills and knowledge. All this information should also be used as part of the plan implementation evaluation and its results should be used for the revision of the plan as necessary.

Operational Plans Guidelines

This section presents some guidelines for the development of the operational or implementation plans for its specific components.

Plan Timelines

As presented in the above sections this is a six-year strategic plan. For the purpose of planning the sequential development and implementation of the proposed objectives, three timelines have been designated based on the adoption year (1998 base year) of this plan. These timelines are: short term (2000), mid-term (2002), and long term (2005).

The recommended activities implementation sequence is as follows:

| Area | Objective No. | 1998 | 2000 | 2003 | 2005 |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------|--------|------|
| Instruction | 1.1 Courses | S*-----C** | | | |
| | 1.2 Computer Literacy | S----- On-Going -----C | | | |
| | 1.3 Alternative Ed. | S-----C | | | |
| Student Services | 2.1 Testing | | S----- | | |
| | 2.2 Imaging | | | S----- | |
| | 2.3 Application forms | | S----- | | |
| Classrooms | 3.1 Classrooms | S----- On-Going -----C | | | |
| | 3.2 Audiovisual | | S----- | | |
| Student Labs | 4.1 Labs | S----- On-Going -----C | | | |
| Faculty Offices | 5.1 Faculty office | | S----- | | |
| | 5.2 Div. office | | S----- | | |
| | 5.3 Adm. offices | | S----- | | |
| | 5.4 Staff offices | | S----- | | |
| Library | 6.1 Electronic library | S----- On-Going -----C | | | |
| | 6.2 Electronic Search | | S----- | | |
| Association Network | 7.1 100% network | S-----C | | | |
| Training | 8.1 Training facilities | | S----- | | |
| | 8.2 Personnel training | S----- On-Going -----C | | | |
| CAI | 9.1 CAI Center | | S-----C | | |
| Maintenance | 10.1 Network Maint. Center | | S----- | | |
| | 10.2 A.V. Maint. Center | | S-----C | | |
| | 10.3 Acquisition plan | S-----C | | | |

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Partnerships | 11.1 Agreements | S----- On-Going -----C |
| | 11.2 Adv. Board | S----- On-Going -----C |
| Adm. Computing | 12.1 Comp. Systems | S----- On-Going -----C |
| Sustainability | 13.1 Development Plan | S----- On-Going -----C |

*S - Start
** C - Completed