Applying Design Thinking to Strategic and Academic Plan Development

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July 16, 2019
Objectives

1. Define design thinking
2. Describe processes, steps and exercises that can infuse design thinking into your strategic and academic plans
3. Identify the benefits of design thinking, specifically in relation to stakeholder engagement and buy-in
4. Understand how design thinking applies to high-level institutional planning
THE CONCEPT: DESIGN THINKING
What comes to mind when you hear the term “Design Thinking”?
**Design Thinking**
A process for creative problem solving

**FRAME A QUESTION**
- Identify a driving question that inspires others to search for creative solutions

**GATHER INSPIRATION**
- Inspire new thinking by discovering what people really need

**GENERATE IDEAS**
- Push past obvious solutions to get to breakthrough ideas

**MAKE IDEAS TANGIBLE**
- Build rough prototypes to learn how to make ideas better

**TEST TO LEARN**
- Refine ideas by gathering feedback and experimenting forward

**SHARE THE STORY**
- Craft a human story to inspire others toward action

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**Human Centeredness (Empathy)**

**Ideation**

**Prototyping**
APPLICATION OF DESIGN THINKING TO STRATEGIC PLANNING
Established in 1965
Comprehensive Primarily Undergraduate university with campuses in Northwestern Ontario and Simcoe County
10 Faculties
42 Academic Units
~8,500 students (~85% undergraduate: ~15% graduate)
Bicameral governance
Context: Opportunity to Align Strategic and Academic Planning Approaches

Governance Structure

- Board of Governors
- Senate
- Ogimaawin-Aboriginal Governance Council (Advisory Council to President)

2012-2017 Academic Plan

2013-2018 Strategic Plan

2018-2023 Strategic Plan

2019-2024 Academic Plan
Developing a Strategic Plan
Lakehead’s Approach

01 Establish the framework and approval process
02 Identify critical issues
  Develop major directions and priorities
03 Broad consultation on key themes
04 Develop Draft Plan
  Consultation on Draft Plan
  Refinement of Draft Plan
05 Senate Endorsement
  Board Approval
  Implementation
Aligning the Approach to Design Thinking

01 Establish framework
02 Develop major priorities
03 Consultation on key themes
04 Develop/ refine draft Plan
05 Approvals

FRAME QUESTION
GATHER INSPIRATION
GENERATE IDEAS
MAKE IDEAS TANGIBLE
TEST TO LEARN
SHARE THE STORY
Aligning the Approach to Design Thinking

01 Establish framework

02 Develop major directions and priorities

03 Broad consultation on key themes

04 Develop Draft, Consult, and Refine

05 Approvals and Implementation

FRAME A QUESTION
Identify a driving question that inspires others to search for creative solutions

GATHER INSPIRATION
Inspire new thinking by discovering what people really need

GENERATE IDEAS
Push past obvious solutions to get to breakthrough ideas
Framing the Question and Gathering Inspiration
Visioning Exercise with the Board of Governors

Enablers
- Technology
- Strategic Relationships
- Remote Education

Experiential Learning
Scholarship
Research and Scholarship Excellence

Future Thinking
- Expanding Global Reach
- A regional approach to comprehensiveness
- Student focused

Students
- Reaching new students through new approaches
- Global and Local Partnerships
- Expanding Global Reach
- Experiential Learning
- Scholarship
- Research and Scholarship Excellence
Gathering Inspiration and Generating Ideas
World Café with the Board of Governors

“World Café” exercise with Board of Governors
• Facilitated creative thinking and open discussion
• Leveraged brainstorming principles and collective intelligence

How it works
• Groups rotate among stations
• Each station has a question
• Each group looks at a different view of the question
  • Round 1 brainstorms
  • Round 2 identifies problems
  • Round 3 synthesizes
Gathering Inspiration and Generating Ideas
Board Retreat

Developed shared understanding
• Reviewed local, provincial, national, and global landscape
• Identified emerging trends, risks and opportunities

Developed high level themes/directions
• Reviewed Vision, Mission, Values
• Reviewed 2013-2018 Strategic Plan themes and goals
• Discussed future aspirations
• Identified conceptual strategies and enablers
Aligning the Approach to Design Thinking

01 Establish framework
02 Develop major directions and priorities
03 Broad consultation on key themes
04 Develop Draft, Consult, and Refine
05 Approvals and Implementation

GENERATE IDEAS

*Push past obvious solutions to get to breakthrough ideas*
Generating Ideas Through Broad Consultation
Multiple Opportunities for Input

- In person
  - Board-facilitated discussion with all academic and non-academic units and Senate committees, informed by discussion document
  - Board-facilitated discussion with advisory committees

- On-line
  - Dedicated webpage with discussion document
  - Survey with open-ended comment fields
  - Instructions on providing a written submission

- Internal updates through Communications Bulletin
- External invitation to participate through local newspapers
Generating Ideas Through Broad Consultation
Consistent Approach in Survey Design and Facilitated Engagement

1. Developed shared understanding of landscape
2. Reviewed 2013-2018 Strategic Plan Themes
3. Reviewed output of visioning exercise
4. Posed broad open-ended questions to gather aspirations and conceptual strategies and enablers
5. Asked more specific questions to gather practical/actionable input
Generating Ideas Through Broad Consultation
Example of Facilitated Engagements with the University Community

~1,250 stakeholders participated

5 Senate committees

10 Faculties

SR. MGMT → TOWN HALL → SENATE CMTE → ADMIN UNIT → SENATE CMTE → ACADEMIC UNIT → SR. MGMT
Aligning the Approach to Design Thinking

01 Establish framework
02 Develop major directions and priorities
03 Broad consultation on key themes
04 Develop Draft, Consult, and Refine
05 Approvals & Implementation

MAKE IDEAS TANGIBLE
Build rough prototypes to learn how to make ideas better

TEST TO LEARN
Refine ideas by gathering feedback and experimenting forward
Making Ideas Tangible
Analysis and Synthesis of Idea Generation

~1,250 stakeholders; 40+ facilitated sessions

350+ survey responses (50% students)

~15 written submissions

Synthesis
• Content analysis of survey responses (word clouds)
• Thematic analysis of facilitated discussions and written submissions
• Thematic development and identification of emerging milestones
• Mind mapping by theme
Making Ideas Tangible
Identifying Themes
Making Ideas Tangible
Identifying Themes and Hierarchy

High Level Theme

- Sub Theme 1
  - High level strategies/actions
    - Specific actions
    - Measurement
  - High level strategies/actions
    - Specific actions
    - Measurement
  - High level strategies/actions
    - Specific actions
    - Measurement

- Sub Theme 2
  - High level strategies/actions
    - Specific actions
    - Measurement
  - High level strategies/actions
    - Specific actions
    - Measurement
  - High level strategies/actions
    - Specific actions
    - Measurement

- Sub Theme 3
  - High level strategies/actions
    - Specific actions
    - Measurement
  - High level strategies/actions
    - Specific actions
    - Measurement
  - High level strategies/actions
    - Specific actions
    - Measurement

Specific actions
Measurement
Making Ideas Tangible
Strategic Themes - Alignment and Hierarchy

AIM
- Long term (5-year) aspiration for Strategic Theme that links to achievement of University Vision

OBJECTIVES
- Primary goals/areas of focus that contribute to the achievement of the Aim

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS
- Key initiatives and high level activities that will be undertaken to achieve the Objectives over the term of the Strategic Plan

METRICS
- How we will measure progress of achieving the Aim throughout the life span of the Plan
Prototype: First Draft

1. Academic Excellence
2. Social Responsibility
3. Local and Global Partnerships
4. Entrepreneurship and Innovation
5. Quality Outcomes Through Capacity Development
Test to Learn
Consultation on the Draft Plan

Broad invitation to comment

Directed invitation to comment

Public invitation to comment

Focus groups
Test to Learn
Feedback on the Draft Plan

- Staff/Administrators
- General Public
- Faculty/Department
- Faculty Members
- External Partners
- Students

Draft 2.1
Aligning the Approach to Design Thinking

01 Establish framework
02 Develop major directions and priorities
03 Broad consultation on key themes
04 Develop Draft, Consult, and Refine
05 Approvals & Implementation

SHARE THE STORY

Craft a human story to inspire others toward action
2018-2023

Strategic Plan

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

LOCAL AND GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT
2019-2024

Academic Plan

HIGH-QUALITY PROGRAMS

INNOVATIVE AND IMPACTFUL RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

ANISHINAABE MIIKANA GICHI KENDAASIWIN
at lakehead university
we all have a purpose

every day, each and every member of our
staff and faculty in thunder bay and orillia
has an impact on our students,
communities and real world problems that
require solutions.

together, we make a difference.
BENEFITS OF APPLYING DESIGN THINKING TO STRATEGIC AND ACADEMIC PLANNING
# Design Thinking
A process for creative problem solving

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