

American Accounting Association

Teaching, Learning & Curriculum Section

Strategic Plan Overview 2010-2013

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Members of the Strategic Planning Committee, 2009-2010

Bob Allen (committee chair), University of Utah; bob.allen@utah.edu

Cathleen Burns, University of Colorado—Boulder; Cathleen.Burns@Colorado.edu

Natalie Churyk, Northern Illinois University; nchuryk@niu.edu

Susan Crosson, Santa Fe College; susan.crosson@sfcollege.edu

Martha Doran, San Diego State University; doran1@mail.sdsu.edu

Dale Flesher, University of Mississippi; acdlf@olemiss.edu

Gail Hoover-King, Rockhurst University; gail.hoover@rockhurst.edu

Marsha Huber, Youngstown State University; mhuber@ysu.edu

Bambi Hora, University of Central Oklahoma; bhora@uco.edu

Sherry Mills, New Mexico State University; smills@nmsu.edu

Bea Sanders, KPMG; bsanders@kpmg.com

Scott Showalter, North Carolina State University; scott_showalter@ncsu.edu

David E. Stout, Youngstown State University; destout@ysu.edu

Tracey Sutherland, AAA (ex officio); tracy@AAAHQ.org

Monte Swain, Brigham Young University; monte@byu.edu

Donald E. Wygal, Rider University; wygal@rider.edu

DRAFT

Dear Fellow Accounting Professional:

It is with great pride that I present you with an overview of the American Accounting Association (AAA) Teaching, Learning and Curriculum (TLC) Section Strategic Plan. This overview is the result of many hours of lively discussion and insightful inputs from members of the TLC Section Strategic Planning Committee over the past year. Our purpose was clear: to develop a strategy that reflects TLC Section membership, that builds on past successes of the Section, and that establishes a clear path for our continued success.

When the TLC Section was founded 30 years ago, Section leaders devoted a great deal of time in considering value propositions that would serve members for the long term. They identified the value the Section could add in serving as a clearinghouse for ideas, in promoting faculty development, in providing support for teaching excellence, and in enabling linkages to and interaction with others. As you will see below, current leaders of the Section have embraced these value propositions and have identified emerging imperatives as well.

Some of you may be asking if this is the time to launch a strategic plan given today’s current economic challenges. Let me assure you there is no better time. Creating a sound strategic plan requires a hard and objective look at the various internal and external forces affecting accounting education and our Section and then turning these forces into opportunities. A strategic plan is all about *possibilities* and the absence of one is like being lost without a map.

What is strategic planning? Fundamentally, strategic planning is an organization’s process of defining its direction and aligning decisions that will ensure its continued growth. To determine where an organization can go, it needs to know where it stands today, and then envision its potential future and how it intends to get there. A strategic plan usually includes the following elements:

Current Situation Analysis	•An assessment of internal and external factors as they affect the organization; in structured terms, an assessment of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) of the Section
Business Concept	•A description of the service offerings of our organization, our stakeholders, our culture, the way we conduct business, as well as the potential changes that may be required to shift our organization in a particular direction
Vision and Mission Statement	•A Vision articulates the future of our organization in an inspirational way; our Mission Statement succinctly describes what our organization does that is unique
Objectives and Goals	•Specific measurable results that we wish to achieve and that will drive all of our efforts.
Tactics	•Actions and programs including tangible activities that produce results and outcomes that will help us attain our specified goals and objectives

Each of the above items is discussed more fully in this draft copy. Our intention is to motivate deep discussion among our membership in terms of charting a future course for the Section. Prior to finalizing the Strategic Plan we seek broad-based input from Section members, committee members and regional representatives. Please forward to me (bob.allen@utah.edu) any comments you have regarding this draft. Note, too, that this draft of the Strategic Plan will be discussed at the TLC Section Executive Committee Meeting and the General Business (Breakfast) Meeting at the AAA Annual Meeting in San Francisco on July 31-August 4.

Bob Allen, University of Utah
Incoming Chair, AAA TLC Section

Current Situation Analysis

Current Situation
Analysis

Capacity, Capabilities, and Critical Issues for the TLC Section

The TLC Section has a rich heritage over the past 30 years. Its current and former leaders are dedicated to expanding on the current membership base (about 1,300 in 2009), to identifying critical issues facing the Section and its members, and to delivering its value proposition to the membership.

Planning to date has considered our mission and vision, the nature of services we provide (and consideration of ways for improvement), definitions of leadership roles for the Section at both the national and regional levels, and emerging teaching, learning and curriculum issues affecting our members. We explore these areas in greater detail below.

SWOT Analysis

Within the context of strategic planning, “SWOT” is an acronym “Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats” to an organization. The following SWOT analysis provides a framework for the development of the Section’s strategic plan. It should be noted that the SWOT analysis presented below is not static in nature—over time we expected leadership of the Section to appropriately revise the analysis based on current conditions and status of the Section.

- **Strengths (S):** Importance of teaching, learning and curriculum across accounting disciplines
- **Weaknesses (W):** Costs of AAA membership and meeting expenses
- **Opportunities (O):** Networking with educators and practice professionals
- **Threats (T):** Shrinking college/university operating and travel budgets

We encourage our members to consider the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the TLC Section and to communicate their views to the Strategic Planning Committee.

Business Concept

Business Concept

Recommended Changes/Action Plans

Establishing a future course for the TLC Section requires a fundamental understanding of what business we are in today, where we would like it to be in 12 to 18 months, and the changes necessary to achieve this new direction.

To continue to thrive and excel as part of the AAA and to remain in the forefront of our industry, several essential shifts and enhancements to the way we conduct our business have been identified thus far by members of the strategic planning team. These recommended changes have been considered and are a part of the strategic initiatives described later in the plan.

The Future of the TLC Section

Vision and Mission Statement

Vision

A clear vision of the future of the organization is a requisite element of a strategic plan. A vision outlines what an organization wants to be and should serve as a source of inspiration. Our vision for the TLC can be stated succinctly as:

AAA Community of Choice for Teaching and Learning

Mission

It is vital that an organization has a deep understanding of its purpose, which is usually communicated via a *mission statement*. A mission describes the most meaningful aspect of what an organization does—its reason for being—and how it goes about doing what it does.

We have a simple and focused mission:

To create a community that inspires and advances teaching, learning, and curricular excellence

The strategic plan, once completed, is designed to guide the future direction of the TLC Section. What is needed at this point is broader input from the Section membership regarding this draft of the strategic plan and the set of initiatives we will ultimately pursue to implement our strategic plan successfully.

Strategy

Goals and Objectives

Objectives and Goals

The TLC Section will succeed in executing its Strategic Plan and achieving its Vision only if our members unite around a common set of business objectives supported by clear and measurable goals and Strategic Initiatives (SI). Shown below in outline form are the SI's that have been planned for to date.

Strategic Initiatives (SI): Overview and Action Plans

Tactics

The Strategic Initiatives (SI) drive the Strategic Plan and bring it to life. Each SI team comprises a cross-section of TLC members who contribute to the planning effort by bringing their best ideas and thinking to their respective SI. A brief outline is provided below that identifies initiatives and team leaders proposed to date. Each team can only be effective if it has strong leaders and players. Please let us know the types of roles you would like to play in moving the Section forward, either in terms of the SIs that appear below or in terms of other SIs worth pursuing.

SI1 Wow Factor **Team Leaders: B. Allen, S. Mills, C. Burns**
The “WOW” factor is a term used to reflect our efforts to demonstrate to members, and potential members, of the Section—in dramatic fashion—our commitment to providing exceptional value and service. In short, the term refers to “marquee” events sponsored by the Section. This initiative focuses on identifying events that would make our members say “Wow”! The first such event (The Exploratorium) is planned for the Annual Meeting in San Francisco.

SI2 Product Development and Marketing **Team Leaders: S. Mills, C. Burns**
The focus of this initiative is to add new services; increase the number of people attending and participating in the full spectrum of TLC activities and improve TLC membership satisfaction.

SI3 Strategic Relationships **Team Leaders: B. Sanders, S. Showalter**
The focus of this initiative is to be recognized by our strategic partners as the AAA arm that drives quality teaching and curriculum development, to maintain ongoing active relationships, to obtain their input, share our common objectives, and to collaborate with strategic partners, where appropriate, on programs and events.

SI4 Faculty Development Program **Team Leaders: M. Huber, N. Churyk**
The focus of this initiative is to offer on-going activities that improve teaching and scholarship, and to support personal well-being including Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

SI5 Meeting Quality **Team Leaders: B. Hora, G. Hoover-King**
The focus of this initiative is to improve quality control for meeting content presenters, sponsor keynote speakers and to increase effectiveness of TLC involvement in the AAA’s new faculty consortium.

SI6 Governance & Structure **Team Leaders: B. Allen, S. Crosson, D. Stout, D. Wygal**
The focus of this initiative is to improve organizational effectiveness in continuity, structure, and financial stability and to monitor progress toward strategic objectives.

SI7 Business Processes **Team Leaders: M. Swain and D. Stout**
The focus of this initiative is to formalize the process of leadership and management within the TLC Section and to formalize a strategic scorecard.

SI8 Finance **Team Leader: N. Churyk**
The focus of this initiative is to assure sound fiscal management of inflows and outflows.

SI9 AAA Commons **Team Leader: D. Wygal, R. Lillie**
The focus of this initiative is to improve the quality and usefulness of the AAA Commons to our members.

Strategic Planning and Implementation Schedule/Timeline

The following is a high-level overview of the proposed time line for strategic planning and implementation. Members of the strategic planning committee have spent many hours to develop a draft of the strategic plan between August 2009 and July 2010. The time line suggests the importance of gaining input from section members in August and September of 2010 so that we can complete the Strategic Plan Document by October 2010. The TLC Section strategy will pay dividends in the implementation phase and will drive the change needed to achieve our vision and strategic goals. This proposed time line also illustrates the expectation that SI teams will regularly convene to advance their initiatives as well as to report periodically to leadership on their progress as we move forward. However, each SI team will determine a schedule of meetings that best meets their needs. We view the strategic plan as an ongoing process with feedback mechanisms to ensure that the plan is delivering the desired results.

Activity	Timing
Vision and Strategy Development (develop a clear and concise draft of strategic plan that communicates key messages to relevant stakeholders)	August 2009-July 2010
Rollout of Strategy Document Draft (section members have the opportunity to provide input on the strategic plan)	August – October 2010 Unveil draft to members at Section Breakfast August 2010
Strategic Initiatives (action/tactical plans completed and in process. Section members volunteer to be involved in strategic initiatives)	June – December 2010
Resource Alignment (resources allocated to support SIs)	January 2011 and moving forward
Implementation (Input received from Regional leaders, including recommendations for filling SI team roles. All members of the Section’s Leadership Team understand their role and how to contribute)	February-December 2011
Performance Management (all members of the Section’s Leadership Team have a performance plan and a mechanism in place to obtain feedback relative to desired results)	Ongoing

Critical Success Factors

Over the past year, a number of TLC Section members came together with vast experience from their many years in the accounting profession. Their intention was to assist in the creation of a Strategic Plan that would both energize the membership base and provide a mechanism to ensure vibrancy and success of the Section. Members of our Section are now poised to claim our future. The TLC Section will achieve our stated vision and mission by leveraging the factors that are crucial to our plan's success. These critical success factors are:

- Achieving section-wide buy-in of our Strategic Plan and the commitment of the TLC leadership to ensure its implementation
- Recruiting and developing the best and brightest professionals in accounting who are able to leverage the powerful combination of teaching knowledge and understanding of the accounting profession in order to differentiate themselves and our organization
- Leveraging processes and an organization structure that is fortified by leading technology
- Capitalizing on access to key accounting professionals
- Establishing deep and enduring relationships with our current and future AAA peers

Realizing our Vision

A way to visualize the end product of the Strategic Plan is shown in the figure below:



We believe that as we succeed in implementing the strategic plan our organization in the next few years will be successful in achieving the things outlined by the bullets in each of these four vision element areas.

What's in it for YOU?

Throughout this document, we have asked for something from you: feedback and input, buy-in and commitment to the strategic planning process, openness to new ideas, and the dedication of your time in helping to develop and implement action plans. But it is important for you to know that our strategic plan gives back. The entire organization and each individual team member will experience rewarding benefits as we execute our strategic plan and work toward achieving our vision:

- *Pride* that comes from being a member of the AAA and one of the most respected educator associations, the TLC Section
- *Personal satisfaction* associated with knowing that what you do positively impacts others in the accounting teaching profession
- *Enjoyment* from collaborating with colleagues who work assiduously to produce great results.
- *Excitement* over the possibilities that exist for your own professional growth.
- *Fulfillment* gained from positive and productive relationships that cut across all levels of AAA
- *Gratification* from your role in forging new and deepening existing linkages with the practice area of our profession.
- *Realization* that the TLC Section is *our* section—its future, its promise, and its ability to affect in a positive way the lives of young people are in *our* hands.

How to Participate—What's in YOU for TLC?

We need your involvement! We will only be successful as you help us succeed. If you would like to participate in any of the strategic initiatives proposed thus far please do one of the following:

- Contact the Strategic Initiative team leader(s) directly.
- Contact your TLC Section Regional Representative and let him/her know of your interest

We welcome the participation of as many people as we can get.