

WHAT WORKS - A PKAL ESSAY

THE PLANNERS

Project Kaleidoscope suggests that there should be key individuals and committees that will act as the main players in the planning process. Identifying and assembling the people that are necessary for these roles can be difficult, but is essential to the overall success of the project. The spheres of influence and responsibilities of persons in these leadership roles often overlap, which makes effective communication an important factor to consider when selecting who will fill each of these roles.

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Key Individuals

Project Shepherd

The project shepherd typically is a faculty member from one of the departments which will be housed in the new structure. S/he is an indispensable facet of the project and therefore should possess leadership skills, a knowledge of construction and planning, and effective listening skills in order to best communicate the needs and wishes of the people that s/he represents. The project shepherd is also responsible for ensuring that the space works for the people who will utilize it. This faculty member is responsible for facilitating communication between and among all committees and individuals involved in the planning. In representing the viewpoints, needs, and educational goals of faculty colleagues, s/he must be open to debate and disagreements and understand how to challenge individuals and departments to ask questions in a context of mutual respect and shared commitments. Ideally, the project shepherd should have released time at critical stages in the planning and construction process.

Project Manager

The project manager usually is a representative from the facilities office, a consulting firm, or an architectural firm, and is often selected prior to or immediately after the selection of an architect. This person offers the technical perspective needed in order to help implement the renovations. The project manager is responsible for overseeing the project scope, budget, and schedule, and to assure that all these are met within the parameters as defined by the program and established by the institution in making the decision to undertake the project.

Project Committees

Building Users Committee

This committee ideally includes representatives from the faculty, staff (including a custodian), and students of a particular institution. The role of this group of individuals is to "start the ball rolling" after the school makes a commitment to go ahead with the renovation or building project. The people sitting on this committee discuss what they want to see in the building that is specific to the needs of that particular campus. It is important that all of the groups that will use the space are represented so that the planners can best work to incorporate the suggestions that are offered. The project shepherd

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sits on this committee and reports back to other committees what is discussed during meetings.

Project Team

This team of people ideally consists of a core of representatives from appropriate departments and administrative offices, and from the design, engineering, and management firms engaged for the project. This committee is led by the project shepherd and/or project manager. They have authority to make decisions regarding the design and construction of the spaces, and have the responsibility to bring the community into agreement on alternate design possibilities. These people try to solve the various problems that inevitably come up during the various stages of the process. This team is also responsible for keeping communication open between other leadership groups and individual faculty and administrators with relevant areas of interest and experience.

Executive Committee

This committee typically includes the president, and vice presidents for academic affairs, finance, and development, or their representatives. Also included in this group is the project shepherd, the administrative leader, and a representative of the project team. This group is the link to the regents and is responsible for making sure that the project is in line with the educational missions and goals of the institution, that the monetary resources are in place, and that fundraising efforts are in line with the planning and construction schedule.

Special Subcommittees

These groups are set up, as necessary, in order to tackle specific issues that come up as the project develops. They are also created in order to capitalize on local experience and expertise. The project manager and/or project shepherd, depending on the managerial policies set for the project, will attend these meetings and serve as an institutional representative and as a conduit of information back to the leadership committees.

Design Professionals

Design professionals include the architect, lab designer and other professionals who will be involved in the design and construction of your science and mathematics facilities. The project committees are responsible for making this selection and it is crucial that they take time and care when determining who to use for the design and construction of the project.

Important Questions

Questions that the key individuals and project committee should be considering throughout the project include:

- ♦ Are the voices of all faculty members included in the decision making process? If not, how can they be brought into the discussion?
- ♦ Are the ideas that students offer incorporated into the various planning stages?
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- ♦ Are the vision goals and mission statement of the college still being adhered as the project continues?
- ♦ Is the project budget in adherence with the budget as set by the governing board or senior administration?
- ♦ Are the non-science faculty informed about the project?
- ♦ If not, how can this information be distributed so that the whole community is aware of the project?
- ♦ Some questions to consider asking design professionals when selecting them:
- ♦ How will you approach our project?
- ♦ Who would be assigned to this project on a day-to-day basis, provide overall management during the construction process, etc.?
- ♦ How do you manage schedule and costs during design and construction?
- ♦ What similar projects have you recently completed, and who are the contact persons on those projects? ■