

# What Lies Ahead for American Community Colleges

James L. Morrison

Professor Emeritus of Educational Leadership  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

<http://horizon.unc.edu>

[morrison@unc.edu](mailto:morrison@unc.edu)

The Inn on Biltmore Estate

July 11, 2011

AACC President's Academy Summer Institute

# Factors to consider in anticipating the future

- ✓ Addressing the business of paradigms
- ✓ Paradigm paralysis
- ✓ Paradigm flexibility

# Critical elements

- ✓ Identify critical trends
- ✓ Identify potential events
- ✓ Forecast events and trends

# Definition of EVENT

An unambiguous,  
confirmable occurrence

*When an event occurs,  
our future is different!*

# Event Examples

- ✓ 80% of people accessing Internet do so primarily via mobile devices
- ✓ 20% of instruction at Maricopa Community College is game-based
- ✓ Campus as place disappears

# Identify Signals that Events Could Occur

- ✓ Signals that 80% of people accessing the Internet do so via mobile devices
- ✓ Signals that 20% of instruction at an institution is game based
- ✓ Signals that campus as a place will disappear

# Environmental Scanning Overview

- ✓ Identify signals
- ✓ 360 degree STEEP
- ✓ Regional through global

*Look for indicators of social, technological, economic, political and other change.*

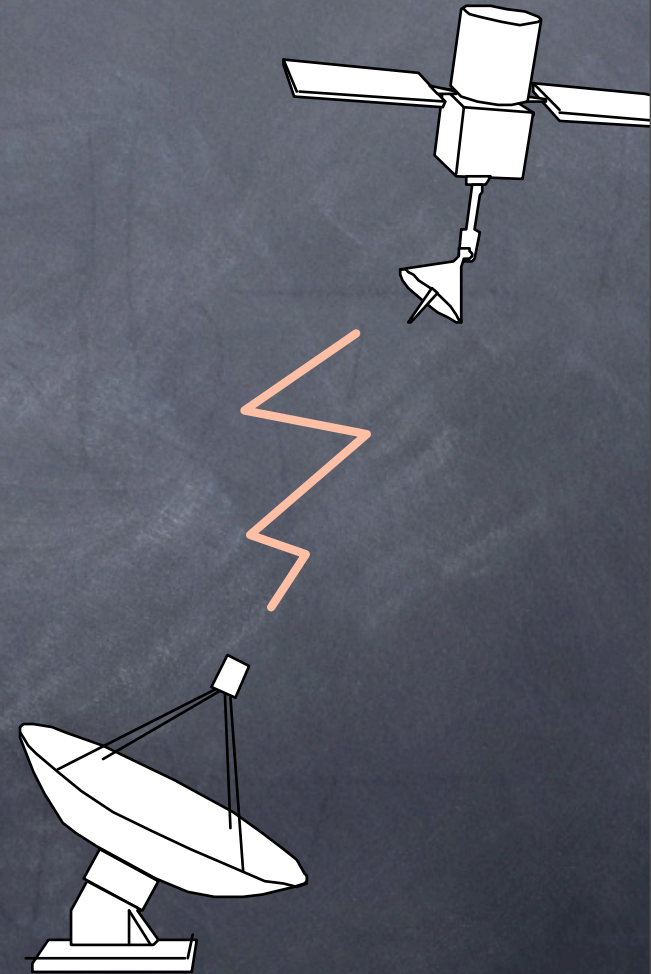
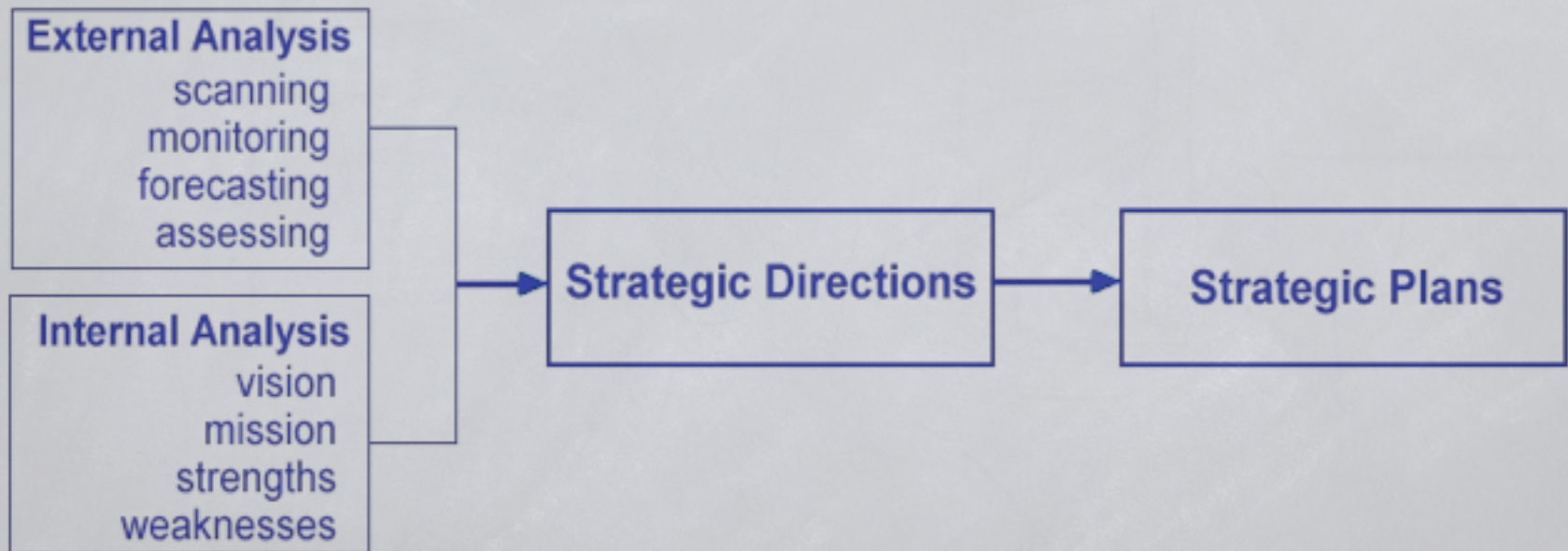


Figure 1

## The Role of External Analysis in Strategic Planning





# Defining the External Environment

- ✓ Market environment
- ✓ Industry environment
- ✓ Macroenvironment

"It is not the lofty sails  
but the unseen wind  
that moves the boat."

W. MacNiele Dixon

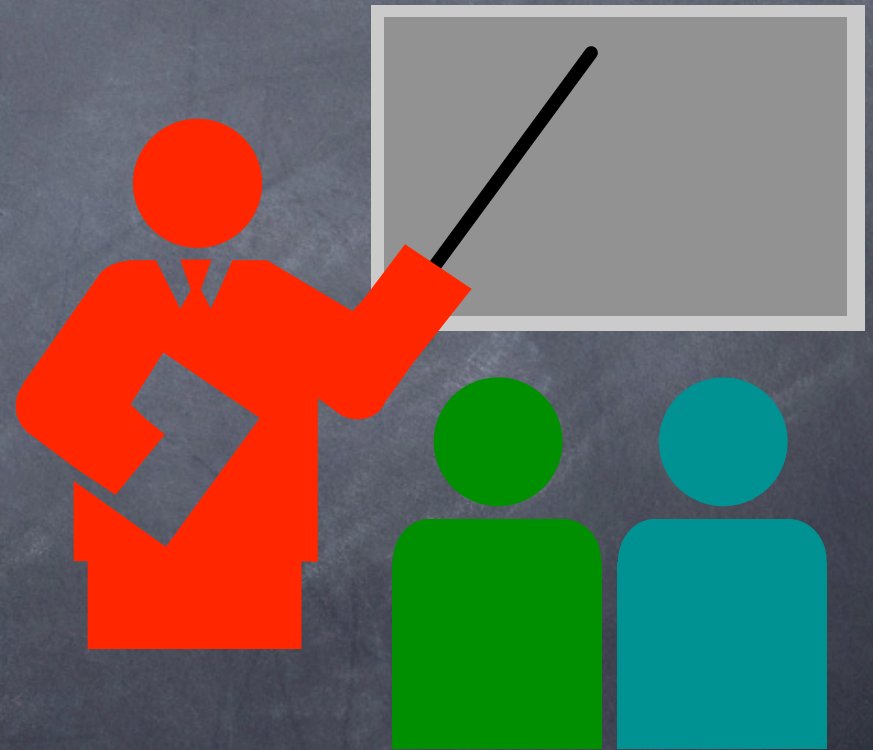
# Nominal Group Technique

- ✓ Think about the question
- ✓ Record your responses
- ✓ Round robin
- ✓ Discussion
- ✓ Advantages
  - ✓ Tapping still waters
  - ✓ Think before talking



# Group Roles

- ✓ Facilitator
- ✓ Flip chart scribe
- ✓ Group Reporter
- ✓ Paperhanger



# Identifying Potential Events

- ✓Event: if it occurs, the future is different
- ✓STEEP (Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental, Political)
- ✓Local through global

# Writing Event Statements

- ✓ State events as a single occurrence rather than multiple occurrences
- ✓ Do not state events in the form, "A occurs because of B"
- ✓ State events as definite and specific. Avoid ambiguous terms (most, widely used)
- ✓ Insert sufficient description of the event so that the meaning is unambiguous
- ✓ Use headline model

What are the potential events that could change the future of American community colleges?

# Prioritize Events

- ✓Vote for four events
- ✓One vote per event
- ✓Put votes at beginning of event statement



Select the most critical event. What are the signals that this event could occur?

# Group Report

- ✓ Five most critical events
- ✓ Signals that the most critical event could occur

# Assume The Event Occurs . . .

- ✓What are its implications for community colleges?
- ✓What should community colleges do?

