Abstract: One of the values often found in the strategic plans of higher education institutions is diversity. However, the manner in which diversity is addressed can vary across plans. The purpose of this study is to explore the different ways that diversity is included and used in institutional strategic plans. Specifically, I will look at the use of diversity in the University of Illinois’s strategic plan and compare it that of Big Ten and other peers.

Initial Exercises:

Question: Primary question: How does the use of diversity in Illinois’s strategic plan compare to the use of diversity in peer institutions’ strategic plans?

Other questions:

- How prevalent is diversity in the strategic plans? Is it a central theme/priority?
- How frequently is diversity referenced as a goal or aspiration?
- How is diversity used in the strategic plan? Is it a stated value or high-level goal? Are there specific
strategies related to diversity?

- What kind of diversity is referenced in the plans (i.e., racial/ethnic, gender, socio-economic, etc.)?

- Were there any changes in how the University of Illinois addressed diversity in their original February, 2006 plan and the March, 2007 revision? If so, what were the changes?

**Plan:** February 1 – February 22: Preliminary research and draft of research proposal

February 23: Research proposal completed

February 24 – March 15: Perform literature review and revise research question(s) as necessary

March 16: Literature review completed

March 17 – March 31: Conduct historical research (analyze various strategic plans) and finalize supplemental interview questions

March 31 – April 3: Conduct interview with the Associate Provost for Strategic Planning and Assessment

April 4 – April 26: Synthesize findings and draft full paper
April 27: Request feedback on draft

May 4 – May 11: Final revisions

May 11: Final research project completed

**Data:**

**Discuss:**

**EUI Links:**

**Reflect:** My interest in this topic came from my previous work with strategic plans. I was a graduate assistant in the University Office for Planning and Budgeting during the time that the University of Illinois was undergoing its strategic planning process. At the system level, our responsibility was developing the framework that the three University of Illinois campuses would follow in drafting their individual plans. Even though I was not directly involved with the creation of UIUC’s plan, I am quite familiar with its form and some of the content. As a researcher, it will be important for me to look at the plan from a different and fresh perspective.