Resilience Prioritization Quadrant

PRIORITIZING ACTION STEPS

Resilience can be a broad topic that touches on every aspect of the campus and community; schools will likely need to narrow down actions from a long list of potential focus areas. The scope of resilience in a campus' CAP should reflect the capabilities of the school. This means that campuses will need to prioritize actions and initiatives that address the most pressing vulnerabilities.
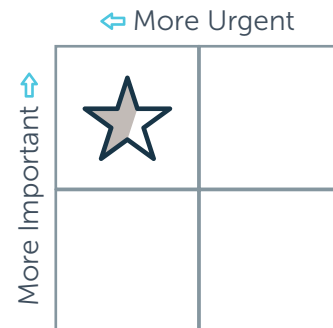
RESILIENCE PRIORITIZATION QUADRANT

This quadrant is a tool to help higher education institutions organize potential activities to increase resilience. It is modified from Stephen Covey's time management matrix,[1] and can help institutions decide what resilience initiatives to include in a new or updated Climate Action Plan (CAP). There are many strategies institutions can use to organize and prioritize action steps for inclusion in the CAP. The Resilience Prioritization Quadrant is one framework to help schools evaluate potential resilience action steps or initiatives. The quadrant will be most useful for schools that have generated a list of possible actions to increase resilience and need guidance prioritizing.

The quadrant frames potential activities or initiatives in terms of time sensitivity (more or less urgent), and magnitude of impact (more or less important). The upper left quadrant includes activities that are urgent and important; they address a pending climate crisis with large potential impact. Institutions should focus their CAP on implementing these steps. It is also important to include some actions that are less time

sensitive but may have a large longer-term impact (upper right quadrant). The lower left quadrant includes short-term activities that have less impact. Institutions should consider incorporating these activities into the CAP if they will generate support and incrementally increase resilience.

The final CAP should include resilience goals that cover short term, mid term, and long term time horizons.

(1) Covey, S. 1989. The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Free Press, New York, NY

Focus

MORE IMPORTANT

Actions that address pending crises, time-sensitive issues with a large impact to campus and community.

Example: Action steps to address an imminent danger, such as a portion of the campus that is below sea level and floods with every major rain storm, or failing infrastructure that will not withstand the next storm or heat wave.

Manage

Actions that address a long-term problem, or long-term prevention. This often includes partnership building.

Example: Action steps to build productive relationships with partners. Action steps to identify and secure future funding streams for projects that will improve longer term resilience or that will be implemented in the next 5-10 years.

Incorporate

LESS IMPORTANT

Easier, simple steps or tasks that may not be integral to achieving CAP goals but are important to the campus and community and help acquire community support. Easy wins.

Example: A community engagement program that addresses a visible need in the community and generates stakeholder buy-in, such as a tree planting program.

Avoid

Tasks that do not address a crisis, may be seen as busy work, and are not crucial to the CAP's success.

Example: Activities that expend relational or political capital and contribute little value to the planning process, such as unnecessary meetings or compiling and recreating data sets that already exist.

STEPS TO FOLLOW IN USING THE QUADRANT

1. List all possible action steps in one place. During the Resilience Assessment, campuses should have identified initial action steps to increase resilience based on their identified strengths, vulnerabilities, and initial indicators of resilience. Campuses that completed a Community Resilience Building workshop will also have a list of possible action steps to increase resilience.
2. Identify the problem or type of problem each action step is addressing.
3. Organize the action steps into each of the quadrant boxes.
4. After organizing each step into a box, try to identify the timeline, funding and implementation partners in order to ensure that each step can be actualized.

There will likely be a mix of urgent, not-urgent, important, and not important actions; this does not necessarily mean campuses must organize their CAPs this way. This tool is meant to help schools conceptualize and organize resilience action steps in order to more effectively address them, and determine where to allocate resources. A thorough CAP will likely include several actions from each quadrant except the bottom right (less important and less urgent).

EXAMPLES FROM CITY PLANS

These examples are from city plans. Climate Programs Intern Valerie Weiner organized the examples to demonstrate steps that could fit into each of the quadrant boxes.

Important and Urgent

The CAP should **focus** on activities that are both urgent and important. These are activities that address an immediate crisis to the campus infrastructure or community at large.

Examples of Urgent and Important Action Steps (**Focus**) could include:

New York City, NY
Crisis: Flooding and Storm-Water Management
Goal: Diminish Stormwater Impacts
Action Step: Increasing the percentage of park facilities in Sandy inundation zone that are upgraded for greater resiliency

Los Angeles, CA
Crisis: Extreme Heat
**Goal:** Avoid the Health and Residual Impacts of Urban Heat Island and Extreme Heat
Action Step: Requiring cool roofs for all new and refurbished homes and laying down cool pavement

Philadelphia, PA
Crisis: Extreme Heat
Goal: Protect vulnerable populations from health hazards
Action Step: The Health Department, in partnership with Philadelphia Corporation for Aging, runs a 'Heatline' to provide medical support to vulnerable residents during heat emergencies
Action Step: Establishing a network of cooling centers in areas with extreme heat island effect

Atlanta, GA
Crisis: Extreme Heat
Goal: Provide a 'cooling centers' for people to escape the heat
Action Step: Establishing and marketing libraries as a safe haven for heat waves while reinforcing library capacity to hold large numbers of people and providing ample air conditioning units
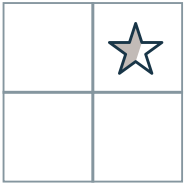
Important and Less Urgent

Steps that are less immediate but critical to campus resilience should be **managed** over the long-term. This may include the process of initiating relationships with new stakeholders that will be important for the implementation of more complex projects in the future. This may also include identifying funding streams that could support longer-term proactive adaptation initiatives.

Examples of longer-term actions with high importance or impact include:

Boston, MA
Problem: Racial and Gender Inequality
Goal: Ensure employment equity and better serve all Bostonians by increasing the representation of the city's diverse population in city government
Action Step: Launching the Racism, Equity, and Leadership Resilience Program

Los Angeles, CA
Problem: Extreme Heat
Goal: Develop a framework for prioritizing neighborhoods, engaging stakeholders, creating policies, identifying funding sources, and recommending budgets in support of changes that will lead to a heat-resilient Los Angeles
Action Step: Developing Partnerships with TreePeople and Climate Resolve to use their expertise in problem-solving extreme heat issues

Atlanta, GA
Problem: Structural and historic racism in the city
Goal: Become a national leader in addressing structural racism, reconciling historic racism, and promoting racial equity
Action Step: Creating a comprehensive cultural plan, a formal City document, and corresponding policies by 2020 to recognize and reconcile past systemic wrongdoings
Action Step: Launching Imagine 50/50 series to vision a racially equitable Metro Atlanta

Madison, WI
Problem: Poor air quality
Goal: Improve air quality, eliminate incidences of Clean Air Action days, and days that reach the Air Quality Index by 2020
Action Step: Reducing reliance on coal as a major source of electrical power generation by creating programs and policies to increase energy efficiency to use cleaner fuels
Action Step: Creating a county-wide program with incentives and regulations to reduce the use of low efficiency wood burners and promote cleaner wood burning county-wide
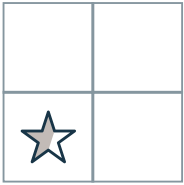
Urgent and Less Important

Institutions should consider **incorporating** short term action steps that may not address a pending crisis but contribute to increased resilience. These may be simple, easy steps that are important to the campus and community. Short-term wins can help generate support for longer-term and more complex components of the plan. This could also include activities or projects that have a lower impact individually, but together can incrementally increase the resilience of the campus-community.

Examples of short term and lower impact action steps could include:

Cleveland, OH
Community Need: Constituents do not agree that flooding or extreme weather are in dire need of action

Goal: Better understanding of climate change and resilience

Action Step: Creating Climate Fairs where non-profit climate ambassadors and community development corporations develop regular educational and community-building programs that emphasize accessible, hands-on education.

Action Step: Filming a local climate documentary using interviews with residents, local scientists, and city officials on climate and resilience issues. Show the documentary as an event for the community to build momentum behind the movement.

Phoenix, AZ
Community Need: Social cohesion where neighbors know and support each other

Goal: Neighbors will know 75% of their neighbors in two years

Action Step: Holding neighborhood gatherings and monthly block parties

Philadelphia, PA
Community Need: Awareness of vulnerable populations and how they are impacted by extreme weather

**Goal:** Prepare to better support these communities in crisis

Action Step: Regularly mapping locations of vulnerable populations and using the information to provide the Office of Emergency Management with information for focused interventions during extreme weather and power outages

Boulder, CO
Community Need: Better understanding of the impacts of climate change

Goal: Foster Climate Readiness

Action Step: Initiating the Climate Leaders Program, in which all city department leaders will be trained on the science of climate change to ensure that everyday decisions are informed of their impact
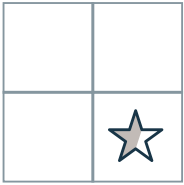
Less Urgent and Less Important

There may be some action steps that have been identified, but should be **avoided**. These are generally activities that will not contribute significantly to achieving CAP goals, and may waste valuable political and social capital. Such activities could include creating a poorly defined task force, conducting data analysis that already exists in a different department or organization, focusing energy on unpopular initiatives with low impact, or convening meetings that do not have a clear objective. Campuses should carefully consider the cost and effort associated with potential action steps, and assess whether or not the outcome is sufficiently valuable to include in the CAP.