



# HOW HIGHER ED IS RETHINKING STRATEGIC PLANNING

5 key takeaways from  
Elate's recent panel on  
strategic planning in  
higher education.





# **TODAY'S HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE IS EVOLVING FASTER THAN EVER — AND STRATEGY LEADERS ARE ADAPTING IN REAL TIME.**

In our recent virtual panel, we gathered Strategy and Operations leaders from colleges and universities across the U.S. and Canada to discuss how they're navigating the complexity of strategic planning amid rapid change.

Here are some of the biggest takeaways from the conversation:





# Planning Is Moving From Annual To Ongoing

Gone are the days of 5-year plans gathering dust. Today's leaders are adopting rolling, responsive planning cycles that are anchored in long-term vision, but flexible enough to adapt quarter by quarter.

*“We’re not throwing out the long-term plan, but we’re adjusting course more frequently—quarterly, even monthly.”*





# Alignment Requires Engagement

You can't plan in a vacuum. The most successful plans aren't top-down mandates. They bring in cross-functional voices early and often. From faculty to student services, real buy-in starts with inclusion.

*“If faculty and staff do not feel ownership, nothing moves.”*





# Visibility Is Still A Major Challenge

Many leaders cited the challenge of tracking progress. Disconnected tools, spreadsheets, and manual reporting still make real-time visibility a struggle.

*“The lack of shared data means we’re often working with different definitions of success.”*





# Themes Are Critical For Alignment



Each leader spoke to the power of having clear, institution-wide themes. When departmental initiatives roll up to shared priorities, faculty are more engaged, aligned, and invested in the strategy.

*“All of the silos in the organization started falling down because people saw how the siloed view of the plan excluded them.”*



# The Importance Of Timing

The academic calendar plays a critical role in driving timelines. Certain goals must be acted on months, even years in advance, and missing a key window can have lasting consequences.

*“There are a lot of things in higher ed that if you miss it by a couple of months you could be waiting for a year+ to reload properly.”*





# CATCH THE FULL RECORDING

[WATCH REPLAY](#)

Want to see how Elate is helping  
institutions bring strategy to life?

Connect with us at [goelate.com](https://goelate.com).