SWOT

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

Why conduct a university SWOT?

The SWOT provides input on the internal and external factors that affect the university, informing our strategy and vision.

Who creates the SWOT?

All campus stakeholders will have the opportunity to provide their input, which will be collected either in-person or online.

When will the SWOT be conducted?

SWOT input collection will take place from late February through early March.

Steps for completing the SWOT

1. Determine if your college/department will be completing SWOT in-person, or online.
2. Review guidelines and STEEP-L (below) for context prior to SWOT.
3. Complete the SWOT exercise using the guidance provided (in-person or online).
4. Report inputs for SWOT per directions.
   - In-person: group synthesizes inputs to provide 10 or fewer per each SWOT topic
   - Online: strategic planning committee representative will synthesize inputs from all individuals to provide 10 or fewer from college/department

Guidelines for the SWOT process:

- Must be a collaborative and inclusive process - all stakeholders are invited to provide input.
- Because this is a visionary, 10-year strategic plan, think FORWARD considering where we want to be (aspirations).
- Develop SWOT inputs on the university-level, rather than college/department level.
- If your college/department has external stakeholders, solicit their inputs about the university as well.

When brainstorming your SWOT inputs, consider STEEP-L.

What is STEEP-L? It is a list of factors to consider when coming up with your SWOTs. For each phase (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats), consider the following:

- Social - employee competencies (education, background, credentials, network, etc), org. structure, fiscal position
- Technology - customer needs, innovation, barriers
- Economy - customer need, barriers, cost and reserves, economic health and direction
- Environment - morale, ethics, transparency, equity, inclusion
- Politics - policies, agendas, perceptions, initiatives
- Legal - laws, policies, practices, regulations, barriers

What happens with the SWOT?

- Strategic planning committee (SPC) will synthesize SWOT inputs from all university stakeholders, and use these inputs for next phases of strategic plan development.
- The SWOT inputs become the basis for development of university mission, vision, goals, and objectives.

SWOT

Use this information for reflection and prompts as you complete your SWOT.

Strengths:

Are positive attributes internal to the organization. Consider:
- Things we do well - what do people love about us?
- What separates us from our competitors?
- What do we do better than others?
- What beneficial relationships do we have?
- What internal resources and assets do we have?employee competencies, org. structure, facilities and equipment, fiscal position, etc.

Weaknesses:

Are internal factors within our control that may impede our ability to be successful. Consider:
- What does our organization lack?
- What do our users/stakeholders/suppliers dislike about us?
- What is mentioned in our negative reviews?
- Why do our users/stakeholders/suppliers leave?
- What do our competitors do better than we do?
- Do we have outdated policies and practices?
- What do our faculty and staff say is not working?

What we CAN control

Strengths
What we do well

Internal

Weakness
What we can improve upon

Opportunities
What we can leverage to improve

External

Threats
What puts the organization at risk

What we CANNOT control

Opportunities:

Are factors the organization could (or should) develop. Consider:

Internal:
- What strengths can be enhanced?
- What weaknesses can be changed to strength?

External:
- Who are currently underserved populations for our services?
- What trends can we use to our advantage?
- How can we better meet the needs of our stakeholders and/or market demand?

Threats:

Are external factors beyond our control that put our organization at risk. Consider:
- What would endanger the integrity or success of the organization?
- Who are our competitors?
- What restrictions do we have?
- What is our competition doing that could negatively impact the university?
- Are there shifts in user/stakeholder/supplier requirements away from how we do things currently?