INTEGRATED PLANNING

SWOT ANALYSIS INFORMATION

HOW CAN MY PROGRAM OR DEPARTMENT DETERMINE OUR STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES?

Reflecting on your program or department is an excellent way to determine its strengths and challenges. Many accomplish this task by completing a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. This self-reflective exercise helps you to learn more about your program or department and form the foundation for future planning.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SWOT ANALYSIS?

A SWOT analysis can help your program or department:
- Gain perspective from talking to others.
- Establish strategic goals.
- Prepare and prevent – by acknowledging your strengths and challenges, you can better plan for the future.

HOW CAN MY PROGRAM OR DEPARTMENT COMPLETE A SWOT ANALYSIS?

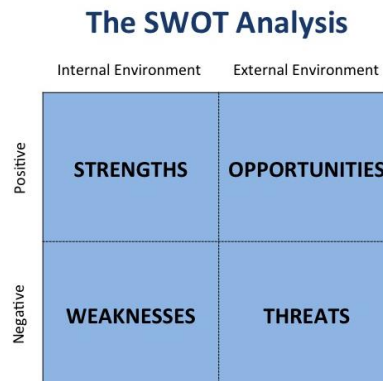**Step #1 – Gather your team for a SWOT analysis session.**

- A SWOT analysis is best when all team members contribute.
    - Some programs or departments find it beneficial to have an external facilitator for these discussions so that ALL members of the area can participate.
    - Please email planning@otc.edu if you would like assistance facilitating a SWOT analysis for your program or department.

- Two potential options for completing the SWOT analysis for your area include:
    - Have your team members complete a SWOT analysis for your program or department on their own and share their thoughts at a team meeting.
        - Because team members have the time to think about the small details, both good and bad, in advance, be mindful to keep this from focusing too much on the "strengths" or "weaknesses" quadrants.
    - Completing the SWOT analysis as an unannounced discussion as a team meeting.
        - Because team members are completing the discussion unannounced, be mindful not to spend too much time on one quadrant and recognize items may be forgotten.

- You know your team best so determine which method will work for your area.

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Step #2 – Draw the SWOT quadrant and begin to complete it.

- This could be done on a whiteboard (be sure to take pictures at the end) or on big paper (using markers and post-it notes).

The SWOT Analysis

	Internal Environment	External Environment
Positive	STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
Negative	WEAKNESSES	THREATS

- Sample questions to start the conversation include:
  - Strengths
    - What do students or other stakeholders love about your program or department?
    - What are the positive aspects of your program or department?
    - What makes your program or department unique?

  - Weaknesses
    - What do students or other stakeholders dislike about your program or department?
    - What problems or complaints are frequently mentioned?
    - What resources do you need that you do not have?

  - Opportunities
    - How can you improve processes?
    - Are you allocating budget funds effectively?
    - What changes can you make to further engage students or other stakeholders?

  - Threats (these could be internal or external)
    - What is your competition doing?
    - Are there regulations/policy/laws that may affect your program or department?
    - What obstacles does your program or department face?

- Additional SWOT sample questions are located on the last page of this document.

Step #3 – Review the final document with your team.

- Another option is to have a colleague from outside your program or department review your SWOT analysis. Their objective opinion may give you insight that you had not considered before.

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MY PROGRAM OR DEPARTMENT COMPLETED A SWOT ANALYSIS – NOW WHAT?

- For the Integrated Planning documents, you are required to include your program or department's strengths and challenges in the program review section.
    - The opportunities and the threats may be items that act as evidence to support your plans and goals in the planning section.

- The final document should give you and your team a reflective, yet objective look at your area.
    - Your area should build on its strengths, minimize its weaknesses/challenges, seize opportunities, and counteract threats.
    - By looking at all four areas, your team can be prepared to play both offense (work on your successes and opportunities) and defense (work to correct your weaknesses and address threats).

WHAT ARE SOME ADDITIONAL HELPFUL RESOURCES?

- https://www.mindtools.com/amtbj63/swot-analysis

- https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2017/12/20/swot-analysis

- https://www.isixsigma.com/dictionary/scot-analysis/#:~:text=Overview%3A%20What%20is%20a%20SCOT,%2C%20challenges%2C%20opportunities%20and%20threats.

- Email planning@otc.edu if you would like assistance facilitating a SWOT analysis for your program or department, have any questions, or need any supplies (such as post-it notes, white boards, markers, etc.)

SWOT ANALYSIS INFORMATION

ADDITIONAL SWOT BRAINSTORMING PROMPTS

STRENGTHS BRAINSTORMING PROMPTS

- Thinking about our program or department, what do we do really well now?
- What knowledge, skills and attitudes do we have that can help us with our future goals?
- What helpful assets do we have and which one of those assets is the strongest that we can leverage in the future?
- What resources do we have readily available that will assist in reaching program or departmental or institutional priorities?
- What are positive things currently happening we should continue to capitalize on?

WEAKNESSES BRAINSTORMING PROMPTS

- What resources (financial and non-financial) do we lack that we need to address?
- What don't we do well that we need to address?
- What's the main area we need to improve on immediately to continue being successful in our program or department?
- What knowledge, skills and attitudes are we missing that are necessary for our program or department?
- What are the things we need to avoid that won't be helpful for our program or departmental or institutional goals?

OPPORTUNITIES BRAINSTORMING PROMPTS

- What is going on in the community, field, or economy that could impact our future plans?
- What could be done today that isn't being done that will help us guide our program or department?
- What are the current ongoing trends that would have a direct positive impact on our program or department?
- What external changes will bring us opportunities that will be helpful?
- What would be the ideal opportunity for our program or department's next steps?

THREATS BRAINSTORMING PROMPTS

- What obstacles do we face right now that might keep us from successfully implementing our program or departmental goals?
- What might cause us problems in the future and how might that affect our program or department?
- What external relations might hurt us and make us re-evaluate our program or departmental plans or goals?
- What are the negative tendencies in play today that we will need to address to successfully implement our program or department's plan?
- What are other business/industries/colleges doing that might cause us difficulties in the future?