

American University of Beirut

Explanation of Topics in the Common
Planning Outline

Mission Statement

- The purpose for which the planning unit exists; its “raison d’être”
- 1-2 paragraphs

Major Accomplishments

- During the last three years
- New or modified programs or services
- New or re-engineered processes
- Facilities that were built, refurbished or expanded
- Etc.
- 1 page

External Trends and Influences

Factors affecting the planning unit, such as:

- Technology
- Legislation
- Demographics
- Competition
- Economics
- Regional salary patterns
- Etc.

1-3 pages

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

- A common practice in strategic planning is to make assessments in terms of the strengths and weaknesses of a planning unit and in terms of the opportunities and threats that a planning unit faces. This analysis is called "SWOT"
- 1-2 pages

Strengths

- Internal competencies and resources of the planning unit
- Often benchmarked with similar planning units in other universities
- Strengths are frequently based upon personnel
 - Their values
 - Knowledge
 - Abilities
 - Motivation
 - Networks
 - Responsiveness to those whom they serve
- Strengths may also result from the quality of facilities and equipment or attributes of an organizational structure

Weaknesses

- Weaknesses are internal factors which tend to inhibit or decrease the quality of work
- They may be the reverse of the strengths listed above or they may be new or different challenges

Opportunities

- ❑ An opportunity is a combination of favorable circumstances, times, and places
- ❑ If accompanied by a certain course of action on the part of a unit, is likely to produce significant positive benefits.

Threats

- Reasonably probable event or trend
- If the event were to occur or the trend to continue, it would produce significant damage to a unit

SWOT

- ❑ Matching internal strengths to opportunities can shape a unit's vision and spark new ideas for strategies that otherwise might not be considered
- ❑ Conversely, identifying internal weaknesses can stimulate capacity building and responses to new conditions.

SWOT

- ❑ A thorough SWOT analysis can assist strategic thinkers to create both innovative and retrenchment strategies
- ❑ A thorough SWOT analysis typically leads to clarifying objectives and formulating clear initiatives.

SWOT- Important Note

- ❑ A useful way is to elicit insights from personnel in your planning unit
- ❑ Ask faculty and staff to anonymously identify your unit Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
- ❑ This will be a rich source of information

Vision Statement

- ❑ Describes what the planning unit aspires to be in the foreseeable future (five to ten years)
- ❑ Often referred to as “Destination Statement”
- ❑ Must be agreed to and supported by the key stakeholders of the planning unit
- ❑ Must be aligned with the Institution-wide vision statement
- ❑ 1 paragraph

Student Learning goals, outcomes and assessment (Academic units only)

- ❑ Knowledge, skills and competencies students are expected to learn
- ❑ How will students learn this?
- ❑ What measurements testify that students are meeting learning expectations?
- ❑ 1-3 pages

Strategy Map

Displays in 1 page:

- The vision statement
- The strategic objectives linked by a cause-and-effect relationship along four perspectives:
 - Students (and/or internal customers)
 - Internal Processes
 - Skills, motivation and systems that are needed
 - Financial implications

Summary of Key Performance Indicators

- This list provides the measures that the Planning Unit will use to assess how well it is achieving the strategic objectives outlined in its Strategy Map
- 1-3 pages

Summary of Strategic Initiatives

- This list each will extract the following information from the planning templates (explained in the next slides):
 - The initiative's statement number (ISN);
 - The initiative's criticality rating ("1" to "10")
 - Whether the initiative is short-range (1-2 years) or long-range (3 or more years)
- 1-3 pages

Planning Template

- ❑ All planning units are to use the common planning template to document their strategic initiatives
- ❑ One template (1 page) should be completed for each initiative.
- ❑ A reproduction of the common planning template appears as an appendix

Planning Template

Planning Templates

Initiative Statement Number (ISN)

- ❑ Each initiative is assigned its own number
- ❑ This is a sequential number, unique to each planning unit (e.g. FEA0501)
- ❑ Throughout each unit's planning update, the numbering should remain unchanged

Planning Templates

Initiative Statement

- ❑ Initiatives should be stated in direct terms
- ❑ Initiatives should be *measurable* and *time bound*
- ❑ *An Inappropriate Initiative Statement:* OIRA will conduct a parent survey
- ❑ *An Appropriate Initiative Statement:* By April 2007, OIRA will design, test and conduct a satisfaction survey with a random sample of parents of undergraduates.

Planning Templates

Criticality Rating

- ❑ Certain initiatives are going to be more important to a unit's mission and operation than other initiatives
- ❑ Each initiative is to be rated using a scale of 1 to 10
 - "1" indicating initiatives which are least critical
 - "10" indicating initiatives which are most critical
- ❑ Criticality is not necessarily the same as desirability. It may be very desirable to create a new program, but not critical to a unit's continued operations or success

Planning Templates

Estimated Cost

- ❑ Strategic planning does not infer that initiatives should carry new costs
- ❑ It does not infer widespread availability of additional funding
- ❑ New initiatives may require funding beyond a unit's annual operating budget (incremental)
- ❑ **The estimated incremental cost should be completed for all new initiatives whether they can or cannot be accommodated within a unit's annual operating budget.**

Planning Templates

Estimated cost- Multi-year Initiatives

- Use the “Notes/Comments/Explanations” section to document annual costs until the year when costs level out (or disappear) and a steady state of expenditures is achieved.

Planning Templates

Estimated cost- Operating Budget

- ❑ Use the “Notes/Comments/Explanations” section to document a permanent annual increase to the operating budget (e.g. annual purchase of new testing materials, annual cost for a new conference)
- ❑ Line item budgets are not approved as part the strategic planning process. They are approved during the budgeting process

Planning Templates

Key Implementation Steps

- These are key steps or processes required to reach the overall initiative.
- Essential for activities
 - Done by (or in conjunction with) other units
 - Require hiring FTEs
 - Require incurring costs (Capital or Operational)

Planning Templates

Beginning and Completion dates

- The quantifications of these initiatives is limited to a five year period
- The fifth year should normally reflect a steady-state. Other provide a note in the comments section

Planning Templates

Notes/Comments/Explanations

- This section provides the space for additional information that gives the reader a better understanding of the initiative statement, its costs and/or its critical milestones
- If an initiative involves another organizational unit, the other unit must agree with the initiative. The name of the cooperating unit is noted in this space

Mechanisms to Secure Faculty/Staff Input in the Planning Process

- In this section of the plan, please briefly describe the mechanism and activities used for obtaining full input and review from colleagues within your unit. Suggestions:
- **Small units:**
 - Review and discuss plan in a collegial, face-to-face departmental meetings
- **Large units:**
 - Administer the “SWOT Analysis” survey form at the beginning of the process
 - Provide the opportunity to submit written comment on the planning draft with the option of anonymity
 - Amend the plan as appropriate based on the insights offered by those commenting on draft

Mechanisms to Secure Faculty/Staff Input in the Planning Process

- Final versions of the plans should be made available to all faculty and staff in the unit

Mechanisms to Foster Interdisciplinary, Cross-Unit and Cross Functional Programs

- In this section of the plan, describe your unit's mechanisms and activities, both current and planned, to foster discussions and selection of interdisciplinary, cross-college, cross-unit and cross-functional projects
- If you do formulate a initiative that involves partnering with another organizational units, please be sure the other units supports the collaborative effort and indicate the cooperating units in the "Notes/Comments/Explanations" section of the Common Planning Template
- IPPI will play a coordinating role, ensuring that the planning documents prepared by the units participating in the collaborative effort, contain plans that reflect this participation

Mechanisms to Foster Interdisciplinary, Cross-Unit and Cross Functional Programs

- Some initiatives can affect other units directly and indirectly. If your initiatives significantly influence other units, please make these units aware of such before finalizing your strategic plan

Schedule of Strategic Performance Reviews

- ❑ Strategic planning is a major investment for the institution
- ❑ In order to realize the benefits, all planning units should conduct regular reviews of actual performance against plans
- ❑ During the reviews, each planning unit will have the opportunity either to confirm that its plans are on track or to take corrective actions if the plans get off track
- ❑ A minimum of two reviews per year is recommended for all planning units; the exact dates, venues and attendees of these reviews should be mentioned in this schedule.

Other Considerations

- Please use this section to discuss any issues which do not fall neatly into the other categories of the planning outline or to provide supporting documentation