

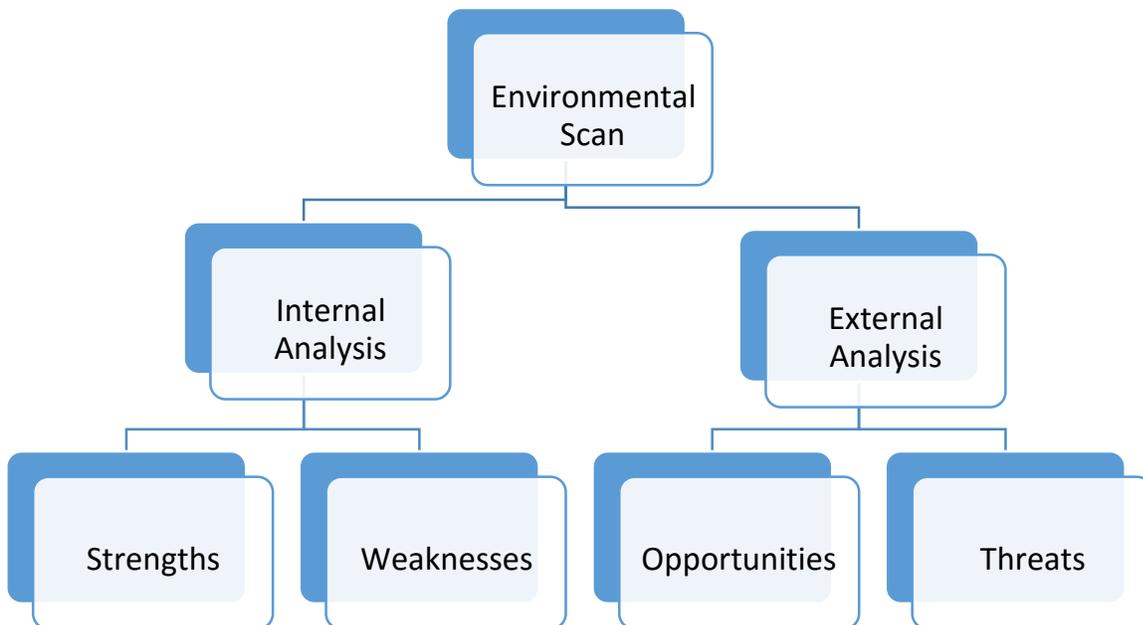
Strategic Planning Principles & Guidelines

An environmental scan informs the division/unit/department of its current position and reviews the external and internal environments. There are many accepted methods for conducting successful environmental scans. Two that are frequently used in Higher Education are the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) and CAS (Council for the Advancement of Standards) methods. For the ITS department, SWOT will be utilized to mirror the College's Strategic plan methodology.

SWOT: This analysis consists of two main scans: the internal scan, Strengths and Weaknesses, and the external scan, Opportunities and Threats.

- The internal scan should provide planners with an accurate assessment of the division/unit/department's capability before developing priorities, outcomes and action plans. The analysis allows planners to build upon strengths and overcome weaknesses. Internal considerations may include, but are not limited to, culture, finance, reputation, faculty or staff commitment, skills or expertise, organizational systems, stakeholder expectations, and demographics among others.
- An external scan considers economic, social, demographic, political, legal, technological, and/or international factors to identify opportunities for growth and improvement, and barriers thereto. Identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats allow planners to recognize and address gaps between the division/unit/department's current status and vision for the future.

SWOT Analysis



SWOT MATRIX – STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS

	HELPFUL to Achieving the Mission/Vision/Values	HARMFUL to Achieving the Mission/Vision/Values
INTERNAL	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
EXTERNAL	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

SWOT ANALYSIS – ANOTHER EXAMPLE

Internal Strengths: resources or capabilities that help the unit accomplish its mission and vision.

Strength	Description	Options for Preserving or Enhancing Each Strength

Internal Weaknesses: deficiencies in resources or capabilities that hinder a unit from meeting its responsibilities and delivering its mission and vision.

Weakness	Description	Options for Minimizing or Overcoming Weakness

External Opportunities: outside factors or situations that balance out any related threats allowing the unit to meet its responsibilities and deliver its mission and vision.

Opportunity	Description	Options for Taking Advantage of Opportunity

External Threats: outside factors or situations that negatively affect a unit.

Threat	Description	Options for Overcoming the Threat

TOWS Matrix – “Turning Opportunities & Weaknesses into Strengths” - Used to develop strategies that take into account the SWOT analysis.

	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
OPPORTUNITIES	S-O	W-O
THREATS	S-T	W-T

- **S-O strategies** identify potential opportunities that are a good fit to the unit strengths.
- **W-O strategies** identify potential opportunities to overcome weaknesses to pursue opportunities.
- **S-T strategies** identify ways that the unit can use its strengths to reduce its vulnerability to external threats.
- **W-T strategies** establish a defensive plan to prevent the unit’s weaknesses from making it highly susceptible to external threats.

GAP ANALYSIS

Identifying the variance between your current state and your envisioned state. Review the Vision statement and the SWOT/TOWS results to identify the “gaps” between the two. The gap between where the unit currently stands and the unit’s vision for the future is the planning area. Your strategic plans will identify goals, outcomes, actions plans and measurements to eliminate this gap.

Resources:

Bryson, J. M., Anderson, S. R., & Alston, F. K. (2011). Implementing and sustaining your strategic plan. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Wiley.

Hinton, Karen E. (2012). A Practical Guide to Strategic Planning in Higher Education. Society for College and University Planning.