

College Strategic Planning Process SWOT ANALYSIS SUMMMARY

Department of Kinesiology & Physical Education

PROCESS

At a department meeting in the fall 2007 semester a process was agreed for undertaking a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis of the department. The process provided an opportunity for all department members to complete an on-line (through Survey Monkey) anonymous SWOT analysis (see Appendix A). It was agreed that these analyses would be collapsed verbatim into one document and then summarized by the department advisory committee.

The advisory committee reviewed the comments collated across each section of the analysis and developed a summarized bulleted list of all the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that emerged. Comments that were identified as possible action plans were omitted but retained for the next step in the process. The list developed was not a priority listing but one that reflected all the common and unique aspects mentioned by the individual department members. The list was presented to the department members and clarification sought on whether the list accurately reflected the comments in the original SWOTs. In addition, discussion focused on whether items had been correctly identified as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and moved if agreed. Lastly, department members had the opportunity to add additional items to the list.

Presented below is the final list of items identified through the SWOT analysis. To reiterate, this is **NOT** a priority listing. This part of the process will begin in the spring semester and also draw on the SWOT analysis completed by each program area. A preliminary summary of the unique and comment elements of the individual program analyses is underway.

SWOT SUMMARY

Strengths

- High quality academic programming at the undergraduate and graduate level with many programs accredited and/or aligned with their professional association
- Department has an excellent reputation with a wide range of locally and regionally agencies as well as within the college and university for its programming and work of faculty
- The department is primarily located in one facility which it controls
- Multiple students scholarships and awards are available to support undergraduate and graduate students
- A wide range of graduate assistantships are available to support graduate students
- The department has very active and very supportive alumni
- The department is well connected with and very well supported by its retired faculty
- A strong focus on quality teaching with a faculty that excels in teaching students at all levels
- A large number of strong and widely respected and recognized outreach programs that demonstrate a strong commitment to the community and community service
- Student interest in department programs is very strong and growing across all programs
- Premier department in the region for the programming offered
- Excellent geographic location to provide service locally and regionally
- Diverse faculty in terms of ethnicity and gender
- Dedicated and experienced support staff
- Broad range of high quality clinical and practical experience opportunities for students
- Broad disciplinary/cognate base to faculty and programming which is unique in the university
- Highly qualified, experienced, and dedicated cadre of adjunct faculty and full- and part-time instructors
- Faculty are highly involved in their professional organizations
- The department is strongly student centered and focused

- Faculty are supportive of each other and collegial
- The department is recognized as a leader in the programs it delivers
- Undergraduate and graduate students are committed to their studies and passionate about their future professions
- Excellent placement record of graduates across all programs

Weaknesses

- Lack of competitiveness of GA stipends relative to other institutions
- High proportion of our own undergraduates in some of our graduate programs
- High student numbers makes it difficult to connect with students and retain our student centered focus
- High student numbers means a diverse student body with diverse needs and insufficient resources to address students at both ends of the ability continuum
- Lack of appreciation/recognition of faculty work
- Inadequate advising/clinical placement resources especially in the undergraduate and teacher certification programs
- Some programs need revision to keep up with changes in the field and improve course sequencing to help student progression especially as student numbers have grown
- A relatively slow responding curricular process when set against the continual need for rapid program changes driven by external accrediting agencies
- Web site out of date and not responsive to user needs
- Too few summer classes offered at the graduate level
- Aging technology and equipment
- Lack of off-campus and alternative programming (e.g., on line courses)
- Limited program diversity when compared to the wide range of programming possibilities in the broad field of physical activity
- Inadequate and aging facility (labs, teaching space, gyms, offices)
- Inadequate levels of personnel, facilities, and funding to meet growing student demand for programs and classes
- No enrolment control
- Faculty load inequities and responsibilities across programs
- Lack of cohesion across all programs and areas in department
- Lack of consistency of advising at the graduate level

Opportunities

- Well placed to undertake cross-disciplinary collaboration (research, teaching, service) within and beyond the department in alignment with the university strategic plan due to broad-based disciplinary focus of department faculty and programs
- We have the ability to connect and develop partnerships with the community and a diverse array of agencies (e.g., medical, fitness, schools, businesses) around faculty and program expertise—potential for new buildings with shared use consistent with initiatives developed by some of our competitors
- Many faculty have the expertise and ability to secure grant funding and undertake cutting edge scholarship
- Through its faculty and programs we are well placed to be at the forefront of the movement pushing the importance of physical activity to lifelong health and wellness
- The broad-based disciplinary bases to our programs of study provide opportunities for cross-curricular synergies within and beyond the department especially since programs with a focus on physical activity in its broadest sense is very attractive to students
- The high level of interest in department programs provides an opportunity to translate high student demand into more selective admission
- We have the opportunity to use our reputation for quality programming and our geographic location to develop new programming opportunities and new modes of delivery

- With the new MAT degree being developed there is an opportunity to better support initial certification at the masters level and provide opportunities for graduate curriculum realignment
- The growing recognition of the importance of physical activity on health and university initiatives in health related areas provides opportunities to develop research centers focused on physical activity within and beyond the department
- The department faculty are very diverse with well developed international networks that can be used to develop student study abroad opportunities as well as faculty exchanges
- The proposed long-term realignment of the college placement office potentially provides an opportunity to assist the department with student clinical and teaching placements
- Across all areas of the sport, exercise, and physical activity sciences there is a shortage of qualified individuals for faculty positions which can be translated into opportunities to develop a doctoral program either in the department or collaboratively with other departments
- Changing demographics in the region and a growing population affords opportunities for the placement of our graduates in the fitness, sport management, and teaching professions as demand for qualified individuals in these areas grows
- The middle school initiative and the development of a center of excellence for middle school teaching provides an opportunity to increase the marketability of our students
- Geographic location affords opportunities to develop consultancy work
- With growing student demand, a greater focus and importance on health related activities, a need to reduce maintenance costs in an aging building, now is an opportune time to revisit plans developed several years ago for a third floor in Anderson

Threats

- Turnover in institutional leadership personnel threatens faculty and program stability
- Political pressures related to accountability, accessibility, and affordability driving programming
- Perceived 'fit' of department programs within college programming and mission
- Changing demographics of our graduate students has reduced the number of students wishing to pursue GAships in certain areas making it difficult to cover some lab classes
- Outside of the department many misperceptions and myths exist related to an understanding of what the department does in terms of its academic and scholarly activities
- Paradoxical situation of the recognized and widely accepted benefits of physical activity set against the lack of value placed on physical activity as evidenced politically through policy and legislation
- Many of our competitors have recently developed or are currently developing new state of the art facilities which amplify the problems related to our aging facility and threaten our competitiveness to maintain cutting edge research and deliver quality programs
- External threats, changing priorities, and limited funding can potentially create internal tension over limited resources
- Competition from other schools who have more diverse programming opportunities and resources for students (e.g., on line courses, blended programs)
- Limited number of qualified applicants for faculty positions in many department areas
- Many faculty nearing retirement age who will need to be replaced in a market where there are limited numbers of qualified individuals
- Low salaries for department faculty relative to other institutions lowers our competitiveness to hire new faculty in a market where there are limited numbers of qualified individuals
- Changing rules for merit and the inability for salary increases to cover cost of living increases for many faculty coupled with increasing loads is lowering morale
- Salary compression is resulting in many senior faculty seeing their salaries slipping relative to new hires
- No enrollment control in most programs has created demand that cannot be met and threatens the high quality of our programming and which could negatively impact our reputation as the premier department in the region

- External pressures to cope with growing student numbers and retain the department's student focused approach coupled with increased scholarship demands means faculty are being increasingly overstretched
- Student growth has reached a point whereby we have no spare capacity (facilities and faculty) to meet changing needs and demands

SWOT ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

S.W.O.T stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Completing a SWOT analysis will help us identify ways to minimize the effect of our weaknesses while maximizing our strengths. We can use our strengths to create opportunities as well as minimize threats.

Strengths focus on the things that we do WELL as a department. Weaknesses focus on the things we do that we need to IMPROVE. Thus strengths and weaknesses focus **internally**.

Opportunities and threats reflect factors **external** to the department that are often out of our control. Opportunities can create conditions that offer the potential for us to reinforce and/or expand our strengths. Threats may present barriers to maintaining our strengths and/or create conditions that exacerbate our weaknesses.

SWOT ANALYSIS ORIENTATING INFORMATION

Your SWOT analysis reflects your candid and honest HOLISTIC perceptions of the department. It is NOT a personal analysis of your strengths and weaknesses or the threats to you personally NOR is it an analysis of others' strengths and weaknesses.

Your SWOT analysis needs to consider the broader university context. That is, it should accommodate and assimilate the four imperatives that have been identified by the strategic planning process. However, it need not be constrained by those imperatives (see below as articulated by the college). Your analysis should also be informed by the college's/department's mission statement, vision, and core values.

1. Preserve, Strengthen, and Extend NIU's Teaching and Learning Environment in preparing highly qualified effective professionals who are focused on educational and other related professional issues.
2. Develop a Strategy for Investing in Multi-disciplinary Scholarship and Artistic Clusters – to complement NIU's focus on individual scholarly and artistic achievement that bring focus to the College of Education's graduate programs and create research-practice centers that inform the state/region/nation/world.
3. Strengthen and Extend NIU's Global/Regional Impact by highlighting and enhancing the College of Education models of teaching in P-20 education and the workplace.
4. Make NIU an Institution of "First Choice" for Faculty, Students, and Staff by creating an environment that helps all to focus on their most natural and authentic professional strengths and by creating a "can do" culture in which innovation and creativity are celebrated.

SWOT ANALYSIS SHEET

Please provide your candid and honest assessment of the department's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Please write your responses in the appropriate box. The questions posed in each box are offered as a way of getting you started as are the possible types of factors listed below. You are not limited to these questions or constrained by the example factors. The range of factors (can either positives, negatives, or both) that might be identified in a SWOT analysis include, but are not limited to:

Fiscal/budget/economic
Political
Legislative
Facilities
Technology
Market demand
Accreditation
Partnerships
Competition
Industry trends
Globalization
Time/Location
Personnel resources/knowledge/experience
(collective rather than individual)
Philosophical
Cultural/historical
Attitudinal
Reputation

STRENGTHS

What do we do well? What unique attributes and/or resources do we have? What do others' see as our strengths?

WEAKNESSES

What could we do better? What attributes and/or new or additional resources do we need? What do others' see as our weaknesses? What do we do that perhaps we shouldn't?

OPPORTUNITIES

What can we take advantage of that is happening external to the department? How can we take our existing strengths and turn them into opportunities? What trends can we identify that offer new initiatives?

THREATS

What external events are taking place that could hurt us and undermine our strengths and opportunities? What are our competitors doing that we aren't and should do? Do these threats have the potential to amplify our weaknesses? What obstacles exist?