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Tomorrow's Doctors, Tomorrow's Cures®

Group on Institutional Planning (GIP) Strategic Planning Toolkit

AAMC's Group on Institutional Planning (GIP)

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Introduction to the GIP Strategic Planning Toolkit

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Group on Institutional Planning (GIP) Strategic Planning & Management Subcommittee has developed this toolkit to assist those that hold strategic planning roles in academic medicine.

Although the roles of strategic planners in academic medicine can vary in scope and environment, this toolkit is designed to provide best practices and tools to support successful strategic planning across institutions.

Learn more about the GIP Strategic Planning and Management Subcommittee.

Work Group Members

Thank you to the members below for their time and effort in redesigning the GIP Strategic Planning Resources webpage and the GIP Strategic Planning Toolkit.

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Pre-Planning

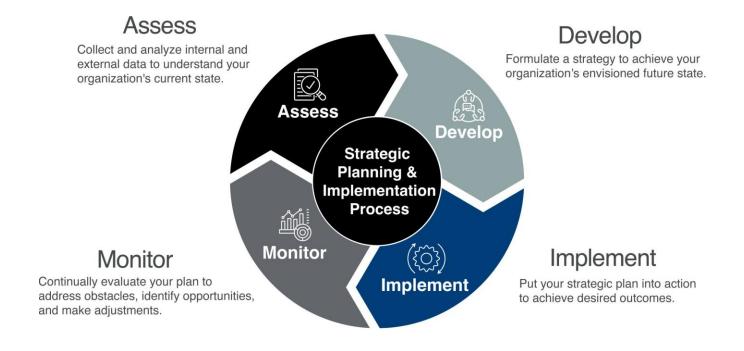Prior to kicking off a strategic planning cycle, take the following pre-planning actions:
- Ensure organizational leadership supports the planning process.
- Establish the length of the strategic plan (e.g., 3 or 5 years).
- Identify an appropriate timeline for plan development from kickoff to implementation.
- Identify members of a planning team or task force that represent a wide range of organizational stakeholders.
- Determine whether a budget is needed to support the planning process.

Strategic Planning Process Overview

Familiarize yourself and your team with the strategic planning process and resources available in this toolkit to help guide your strategy efforts.

Strategic Planning Process at a Glance

The strategic planning and implementation process outlined in this toolkit follows four phases. This process is intended to help define your organization's direction, align goals to ensure cohesive progress, identify areas for improvement, enable competitiveness, and cultivate areas of excellence.

Assess
Collect and analyze internal and external data to understand your organization's current state.

Develop
Formulate a strategy to achieve your organization's envisioned future state.

Monitor
Continually evaluate your plan to address obstacles, identify opportunities, and make adjustments.

Implement
Put your strategic plan into action to achieve desired outcomes.

Strategic Planning & Implementation Process

Strategic Planning Process Overview, continued

Toolkit Resources

This toolkit includes the following resources:

- **Glossary**: Appendix A includes a glossary of common strategic planning terms used throughout the toolkit.
- **Templates**: Downloadable and customizable strategic planning templates are provided at the end of each toolkit section (where applicable) and the complete list of templates is available in Appendix B.
- **Other Resources**: Appendix B also contains links to key resources, webinars, recommended reading, and examples of institutional strategic plans from academic medical centers.

Phase 1: Assess

The purpose of the assessment phase is to collect and analyze internal and external data to understand your organization's current state. This is accomplished through a variety of ways, including interviews, data and financial analysis, focus groups, surveys, and internal and/or external benchmarking. The result of this phase should be a summary that provides an accurate representation of the present environment while identifying issues and opportunities. Some questions to answer include:

- What does the organization's historical performance indicate?
- What trends are impacting the organization?
- What strengths or weaknesses does the service or organization possess?
- What opportunities or threats are facing the service or organization?

There are three types of analyses to guide you through the assessment phase. Involving a business manager and/or data analyst may be helpful in obtaining data and performing the analyses.

Internal Analysis

An internal analysis focuses on data internal to your organization.

- Review current organizational data/analytics, core competencies, performance metrics, employee satisfaction data, and financial records.
- Analyze the work environment, process/operations, locations, and current resource allocations (staff assignments, leased or owned properties, etc.).

External Analysis

An external analysis can help you determine how competitive your organization is in the market and examine external factors that may impact your organization.

- Evaluate your position in the market by comparing your organization to your competition.
- Complete a PESTLE (political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental) analysis to examine the macro trends in the external environment and uncover factors that may influence new opportunities or threaten your organization's market position.

SWOT Analysis

Using the outcomes of the internal and external analyses, conduct a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis to identify areas for improving overall business performance, strengthening competitiveness, and minimizing risk.

Phase 1: Assess, continued

Phase 1 Templates:
• External Analysis Template (includes Market Analysis & PESTLE)   • SWOT Analysis Template

Phase 2: Develop

The purpose of the development phase is to formulate a strategy to achieve your organization's envisioned future state. First, confirm or adjust your current mission, vision, and values. Next, determine the core elements to include in your strategic plan. With your mission, vision, values, and core elements set, you will be ready to obtain approval from leadership and share high-level information with key stakeholders.

Mission, Vision, and Values

- **Mission Statement**: A mission statement is a foundational statement defining an institution's core purpose. It explains what an organization does, who it does it for, and why it does it. A mission statement should be easy to remember.
- **Vision Statement**: A vision statement is an inspirational statement that describes what an organization aspires to achieve in the long term.
- **Values**: Values are a set of core principles that guide and define an organization's culture.

Strategic Plan Core Elements

Core elements are the building blocks of your strategic plan. The elements below are an example of a common structure, but organizations may have their own unique structure or naming conventions. To develop your core elements, begin by using your SWOT analysis from Phase 1 to determine and prioritize strategic priorities and goals. When you have finalized your goals, use them to guide development of the remaining elements.

- **Strategic Priorities**: Strategic priorities are key aspects or categories that specify where an organization plans to direct resources and efforts to achieve strategic goals.
- **Goals**: Goals generally state what an organization aims to achieve to fulfill its mission and vision. Goals provide a clear direction and focus efforts on key priorities. It's advisable to rank your goals to identify what is most important, what is feasible, and what most warrants organizational efforts and resources.
- **Strategies**: Strategies are defined approaches (the "how to") to support an organization in achieving goals. Each goal can have multiple strategies to reach the end state of success.
- **Actions**: Actions are targeted activities to achieve a strategy. There can be multiple actions to support a strategy. These actions will guide the development of your implementation plan in Phase 3.
- **Outcomes**: Outcomes are the intended results of a strategy and can be seen as the end point.

Strategic Plan Core Elements, continued

- **Metrics**: Metrics are specific and measurable data points to measure the outcomes of strategic efforts. Metrics can come in many forms and from multiple sources, and should demonstrate progress toward goals (e.g., clinical volume, quality, safety, financial, research funding, etc.). Where data points are available, it is important to identify who owns them, where they reside, and what the collection cycle is. Where they are not already available, you may consider creating data points as well as associated collection cycles.

Approvals

To provide senior leadership with the information needed to approve the strategic plan at a high level prior to implementation, develop a strategic plan overview using details associated with your core elements. The strategic plan overview will also be helpful in communicating the plan to key stakeholders.

Phase 2 Template:

- [Strategic Plan Overview Template](#)

Phase 3: Implement

The purpose of the implementation phase is to put your strategic plan into action to achieve desired outcomes. In this phase, establish how you will execute and communicate the strategic plan to stakeholders.

Implementation Plan

An implementation plan addresses and documents the responsibilities, timelines, actions, fiscal impacts, and resources to support your strategies. Your implementation plan will build upon the strategic plan overview you developed in Phase 2.

Communication Plan

A communication plan specifies how and when you will communicate progress and share information with stakeholders. Identify and encourage appropriate individuals and leaders to mention the plan in regular interactions and share how it impacts decision making, prioritization, and alignment of efforts.

Phase 3 Templates:

- Implementation Plan Template
- Communication Plan Template

Phase 4: Monitor

The monitoring phase allows you to continually evaluate your strategic plan to address obstacles, identify opportunities, and adjust where necessary. By measuring and monitoring performance, you'll see how your activities are helping achieve the desired outcomes and where you may need to make adjustments to your timeline, strategies, or resources.

Scorecards and Dashboards

Develop a scorecard or dashboard to visually monitor and display strategic initiative progress and outcomes, comparing actual performance to targets for key metrics. A scorecard will help facilitate clear, concise, and compelling communication of data to key stakeholders.

Ongoing Review

Assign teams and individuals to conduct ongoing review of the strategic plan. They should determine how frequently the plan will be re-evaluated and meet periodically to discuss progress and any factors that mitigate the plan's success. Regularly assessing progress:

- helps identify what's working, what isn't, and where improvements are needed, allowing for necessary adjustments and ensuring the plan remains relevant in a dynamic environment.
- provides transparency and accountability, enabling stakeholders to track achievements and make informed decisions.
- allows you to advocate for financial or other resources as you identify new needs.

Phase 4 Template:

- Scorecard Template

Conclusion

The GIP Strategic Planning Toolkit underscores the invaluable role of strategic planning in academic medicine. As you navigate the complex landscape of education, research, and health care, the implementation of a well-structured strategic plan is essential for achieving institutional goals and sustaining a mission of excellence. By embracing the concepts outlined in this toolkit, you position your organization for continued growth and the potential to deliver the highest quality of service to stakeholders, uphold academic standards, and make lasting contributions to the future of health care.

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

- **Actions**: Specific and targeted activities to achieve a strategy.
- **Assessment phase**: Collecting and analyzing internal and external data to understand your organization's current state.
- **Communication plan**: Specifies how and when you will communicate strategic plan progress and share information with stakeholders.
- **Development phase**: Formulating a strategy to achieve your organization's envisioned future state.
- **Goals**: General statements that describe what an organization aims to achieve to fulfill its mission and vision.
- **Implementation phase**: Putting your strategic plan into action to achieve desired outcomes.
- **Implementation plan**: Plan addressing and documenting the responsibilities, timelines, actions, and fiscal impacts to support a successful strategic plan.
- **Metrics**: Specific and measurable data points to measure the outcomes of strategic efforts.
- **Mission statement**: Foundational statement defining an institution's core purpose.
- **Monitoring phase**: Continually evaluating your strategic plan to address obstacles, identify opportunities, and make adjustments.
- **Outcomes**: Intended results of a strategy and can be seen as the end point.
- **Scorecard/dashboard**: Visual display and tracking of strategic planning initiatives, related outcomes, and supporting metrics.
- **Stakeholder**: Any person or entity that would be positively or negatively impacted by organizational changes.
- **Strategic priorities**: Key aspects or categories that specify where an organization plans to direct resources and efforts to achieve strategic goals.
- **Strategies**: Defined approaches to support an organization in achieving goals.
- **SWOT analysis**: Exercise to help an institution define its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
- **Values**: A set of core principles that guide and define an organization's culture.
- **Vision statement**: An inspirational statement that describes what an organization aspires to achieve in the long term.

Appendix B: Templates and Resources

Templates

External Analysis Template (includes Market Analysis & PESTLE)
SWOT Analysis Template
Strategic Plan Overview Template
Implementation Plan Template
Communication Plan Template
Scorecard Template

Resources

Review the Strategic Planning Resources webpage.
Access key resources, webinars, and recommended reading.
Review examples of institutional strategic plans from academic medical centers.

Questions about this toolkit or the GIP can be directed to gip@aamc.org.