



Eastern Campus Forum

Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness
March, 2012

INTRODUCTION

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis is a strategic framework that colleges have been utilizing for decades. While the terminology may seem foreign, it has proven useful in decision-making and direction setting given its ability to align internal operations with external conditions. More specifically:

- **Strengths** are attributes of the college that have a positive effect on achieving its goals.
- **Weaknesses** are attributes of the college that have a negative effect on achieving its goals.
- **Opportunities** are external conditions that will likely have a positive effect on the college achieving its goals (if leveraged).
- **Threats** are external conditions that will likely have a negative effect on the college achieving its goals (if left unaddressed).

On February 8, 2012, in the Montauket Learning Resource Center, 35 individuals including faculty, administration, staff and students from the Eastern Campus participated in a campus SWOT exercise facilitated by the Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (OPIE). This exercise mirrored the process used as part of the college-wide strategic planning effort during a 2- day workshop in January conducted by HR Synergy. As the first step in the interactive portion of the session, participants were encouraged to write the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, unique to the Eastern Campus, on color coded sticky notes. After the individual statements were gathered, participants grouped the individual statements in categories and were then asked to rank the three most important themes in each of the categories. Number one was used to identify the most important, number two was used to identify the second most important, and number three was used to identify the third most important. For purposes of scoring, the numbers were transposed when adding up the final tally within each category (a 1 was worth 3 points, a 2 was worth 2 points, and a 3 was worth 1 point). At the end of the forum, the results were tabulated and the results of this analysis are listed below. The Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness would like to thank Dr. Walters and the eastern campus faculty and staff who made this forum possible.

EASTERN CAMPUS SWOT

- **Strengths:** The top three strengths were:
 - Faculty
 - Small Class size
 - Resources

In summary, participants identified that faculty were dedicated and were willing to take on multiple roles to ensure collaboration. They also noted that the small class size provided a family atmosphere, a sense of community and personal attention, and the opportunity for students to succeed. Finally, they indicated that the resources provide a personal connection on a beautiful

intimate campus, with updated technology, and a new library and felt that the new athletic facility will demonstrate the campus' commitment to sports and groups fitness activities.

- **Weaknesses** The top three weaknesses were:
 - Budget
 - Ratio imbalance
 - Communication

In summary, participants identified the lack of finances and limited number of local industries and businesses on the East End as the top weaknesses at the Eastern campus. As a related weakness, participants identified the lack of full time faculty and accompanying high ratio of adjunct to full-time faculty as a concern. A specific concern addressed at the forum was that the limited number of full time faculty in many disciplines is creating great difficulty in completing committee work. Finally, the overall lack of communication between groups as well as the students being prevented from serving on committees in the Eastern campus congress was considered weaknesses.

- **Opportunity:** The top three opportunities were:
 - Infrastructure
 - Programs
 - Student opportunities

In summary, participants identified the infrastructure as an opportunity to showcase new or coming facilities and to create new student spaces through renovation and new construction. Participants also noted that making complete use of existing facilities should be a priority, giving the example that the greenhouse could be used to grow plants and flowers for events and gardens on campus. The academic programs were identified as opportunities based on the specialized programs, transfer programs (2+2), and maximization of online and blended course offerings. Finally, student opportunities were included with participants identifying the diversity on the campus as well as the activities and clubs. Also identified was the close association between faculty and students and the preparation they receive which helps graduates support the local employee base.

- **Threats** The top three threats were:
 - Funding
 - Underprepared students
 - Lack of new hires.

In summary, participants identified funding and economic troubles as the top threat. These included uncertain economic trends, funding cuts that hit community colleges harder, and the reduction of federal, state, and county funding. The price of tuition and the decrease in financial aid for students also causes a funding issue. There were also concerns that underprepared students (socially and

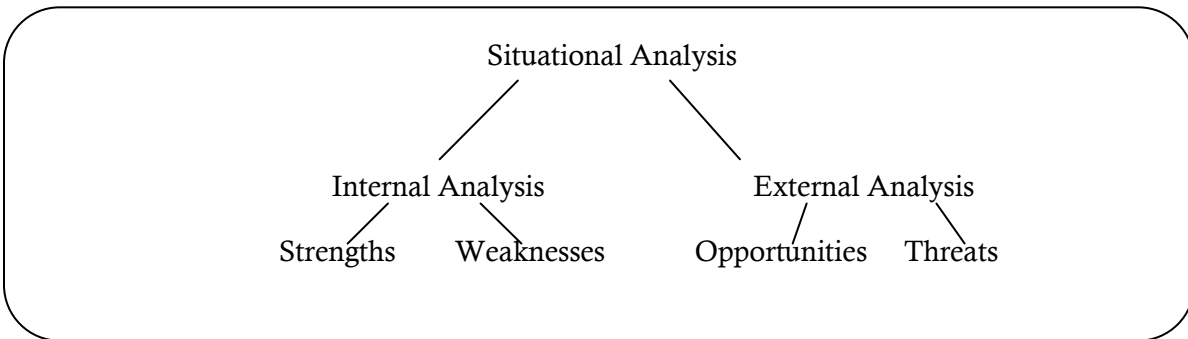
academically) increase the difficulty of teaching. Finally, participants noted that the lack of new hires and limited number of junior faculty who are full time pose a threat to the campus' ability to serve students moving forward.

Table 1 Summary of Eastern Campus SWOT

Strengths		Opportunity	
1. Faculty	58 (27)	1. Infrastructure	51 (19)
2. Small Class	50 (22)	2. Programs	45 (24)
3. Resources	22 (11)	3. Student Opportunities	31 (21)
Student Involvement	17 (14)	Demographics	7(5)
Opportunity to Succeed	12 (6)	Leadership	6 (2)
Weakness		Threats	
1. Budget	48 (20)	1. Funding	55 (22)
2. Ratio Imbalance	37 (16)	2. Underprepared Students	26 (13)
3. Communication	15 (11)	3. Lack of New Hires	24 (12)
Number of Students	13 (8)	Outside Control	18 (10)
Student Involvement	9 (6)	Political Pressure	11 (5)
Leadership Changes	4 (4)	Transportation	5 (4)
Location		Student Control	3 (1)
		Enrollment	1 (9)

= total score
 # in () = number of participants who voted

Table 2



Bibliography

Net MBA <http://netmba.com/strategy/swot/> retrieved January 25, 2012

Idaho State University SWOT analysis resource page <http://isu.edu/acadaff/swot/index.shtml>
retrieved January 25, 2012