

Synopsis of: *UTRGV Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threat (SWOT) Analysis*
11:00 am- 12:30pm on Thursday January 21, 2016

Overview – Process

This section of the Retreat started with an overview of the SWOT Analysis process with an emphasis on its important place within Strategic Planning. The presenters emphasized that Strengths and Weaknesses refer to things internal to our University whereas Opportunities and Threats refer to things External to the University. We then had three interactive activities that generated a SWOT Analysis for UTRGV. The first activity prompted eight groups to brainstorm strengths and weaknesses within UTRGV as well as opportunities and threats that exist in our environment. Next, groups collapsed the items into categories based on common characteristics/topic areas. The result was a set of themes pertaining to UTRGV Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats. The final activity asked each participant to denote, using a limited number of stickers, those areas they believed to be most important as we move forward with our strategic planning process. The section below contains each theme identified by this activity as well as a "power" number in parenthesis to indicate the importance retreat members gave to each.

STRENGTHS

- Faculty, staff, students, and alumni were identified as a major strength for UTRGV. This included attributes such as the mix of existing and new workforce, faculty diversity, resiliency, and a commitment to student success (30)
- Examples of programs of excellence including Music, Engineering, and the emerging Medical School (16)
- The fact that we are a new institution and thus have an opportunity to create world class programs that attract faculty, staff, and students (14)
- Infrastructure including new construction and the BTOB fiber network (6)
- The support and connection to the UT system, including becoming eligible for PUF funding.

WEAKNESSES

- Physical buildings, grant support, website presence, and transportation, IT services and infrastructure to support a distributed campus (29)
- Lack of a collective identity that can unify, support, and empower faculty, staff, students, and alumni in addressing the goals of the institution (23)
- Ambiguity in availability and allocation of dollars for organizational priorities; salary compression and low staff and faculty salaries impacting retention (12)
- Staffing shortages (6)
- Challenges of creating and maintaining a unified university across distributed geography (7)
- Lack of experience in building doctoral programs (5)
- Do not have a clear understanding of what it means to be a bilingual, bi-literate, and bicultural institution (this was a theme mentioned numerous times across the day)

OPPORTUNITIES

- The many needs within our community in the areas of health, education, and economic growth, as well as engagement of our alumni and other stakeholders, can help shape our university and manage our media image (32)
- Our community reflects the changing demographics (Hispanic, young, bilingual) nation-wide, providing an opportunity for us to serve as a national model in health, education, and economic growth (22)
- Location on the border presents opportunities for both research and student success initiatives (12)

- Medical school gives us an opportunity for philanthropy / and external funding (1)

THREATS

- Changing nature of higher education (17)
- Decrease in oil revenue and federal funding (12)
- Competition from other institutions (2)
- New accreditation and THECB requirements (2)
- Local politics (2)

Recommendations

This can serve as a useful document as we actively engage stakeholders in the Strategic Planning Process. It would be important to carefully review all of the items and especially the items listed as weaknesses as these may cause the best intentioned strategic priorities to get derailed. Several of the items listed are in the process of being addressed and it would be beneficial to go through each and list what is already in progress or pending.