SOAR Retreat Participant Agenda

Date:

Facilitators:

Location:

*The outcomes of our discussion today are to:*

* Identify strengths of [the program] and explore opportunities for future growth and improvement
* Articulate aspirations for [the program]
* Generate and prioritize a list of suggestions that will contribute to strategic planning
* Discuss: What might success in implementing elements of our aspirations look like?

*Agenda:*

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| --- | --- |
| 1:00 - 1:10 | Welcome |
| 1:10 – 2:00 | Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations |
| 2:00 – 2:35 | Debrief and Identifying Possible Priorities |
| 2:35 – 2:55  2:55 – 3:05 | Break  Selecting Priorities |
| 3:05 – 3:45 | Results: How will we know we are succeeding? |
| 3:45 – 4:00 | Wrap Up |

### Your Role:

* Openly explore new ideas, be innovative, creative, and have fun
* Listen to each other and build upon other’s ideas
* Ask for clarification when needed

### Our Role:

* Ensure that we stay on time and keep the discussion focused
* Ensure participation and help to create a relaxed, collaborative atmosphere
* Ask for clarification and further reflection

## **1. Welcome**

## **2. Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations**

Introduction to SOAR

Activity: In 3 groups, answer the SOAR analysis questions on the flip chart paper related to program strengths, opportunities, and aspirations. At each chart, consider the available data at your station.

Round 1: 20 minutes; Round 2: 15 minutes; Round 3: 15 minutes

**3. Debrief and Identifying Possible Priorities**

Each group analyzes, themes, and reports on the key ideas from their 3rd round

## **4. Break**

## **5. What are our priorities?**

Large-group Activity: Review and adjust priorities arising from the debrief

Individual Activity: Indicate top priorities by voting with dots (three votes per person)

## **6. Results**

In small groups participants take a priority and work on results, answering:

1. What is our primary goal or goals related to this theme?
2. Reviewing the goals you created, how will we know we are succeeding?
   1. Considering our strengths, opportunities, and aspirations, what meaningful measures will indicate that we are on track in achieving our goals?
   2. What measurable results do we want to see? What measurable results will we be known for?
   3. What resources are needed to implement our most vital projects and
3. Small groups share back with the large group

## **7. Wrap Up**

SOAR Analysis

A framework to guide strategic conversations related to identifying and leveraging academic program strengths.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Strengths: What can we build upon in our program?**   1. What are we doing well?    1. What key achievements are we most proud of?    2. What positive aspects of the program have students/ faculty employers/ others commented on? 2. What are we known for?    1. What makes us unique?    2. Why do students choose our program? 3. What key resources and areas of expertise give us an advantage? 4. How do our strengths fit with the realities of the marketplace our students are entering? | **Opportunities: What are the best possible future opportunities?**   1. What changes in demand do we expect to see over the next years?    1. What external forces or trends may positively affect the program? 2. What future external opportunities exist for the program?    1. What are the key areas of untapped potential and/ or collaboration?    2. What are students, employers, and/ or other community members asking for? 3. How can we highlight our program and distinguish ourselves from competing programs? 4. How can we reframe perceived challenges to be seen as opportunities? |
| **Aspirations: What do we care deeply about?**   1. What are we deeply passionate about? 2. As a program, what difference do we hope to make (e.g., to learners, the institution, employers, the community?) 3. What does our preferred future look like? 4. What would we like to be known for? 5. What projects, programs, or processes would support these aspirations? | **Results: How will we know we are succeeding?**   1. Considering our aspirations, what meaningful measures will indicate that we are on track in achieving our goals? 2. What measurable results do we want to see? What measurable results will we be known for? 3. What resources are needed to implement our most vital projects and initiatives? |