Components of a Strategic Plan

1. Mission
This is a brief statement, not more than 1-3 sentences, that outlines the purpose of the unit and how the unit helps the university achieve its mission.

Example: The Office of Institutional Research (IR) partners with university officials to support effective decision-making that advances AUC’s mission. IR provides timely, accurate, and relevant information and analysis to external and internal constituencies. (OIR)

Vision: A vision statement answers the question, “Where do we want to go from here?” It articulates your unit’s dreams and hope for the future and sets the direction for planning.

Example:
Our vision is to be a world-class university internationally recognized for its leadership and excellence in teaching, research, creative expression, and service. (AUC)

Values: The ethical ideals of your unit. These ideals should be internalized by your unit’s faculty and staff and should be the framework upon which all decisions are made. You should draft a definition of each value, so faculty and staff understand what is meant by the term. Here is a list of commonly-used values:
http://www.ethics.org/resource/definitions-values

Example:
Diversity: We seek to treat all individuals with dignity and fairness and to promote understanding and respect for diversity of perspectives, traditions and experiences. (AUC)

2. Environmental Assessment

Internal Analysis
Strengths: Characteristics which contribute to your unit’s ability to achieve its mission. What advantages does your unit have? What do you do better than anyone else? What unique aspects can you draw upon that others can’t? What do people in your field/location see as your strengths?

Example:
• Growing enrollment in undergraduate and graduate programs, continuing education and professional education programs
• Increasing enrollment selectivity, with less than 40% of all applicants currently being admitted
• A significant network of loyal and committed alumni in locations throughout the world and a legacy of multi-generational enrollment (AUC)

Weaknesses: Characteristics which limit your unit’s ability to achieve its mission What could you improve? What should you avoid? What are people in your field/location likely to see as weaknesses? What factors lose you students/faculty?

Example:
• The JRMC journalism program is not ACEJMC accredited.
• Location of new campus from downtown Cairo and its impact on ability of faculty and students to engage in the media industry as well as have access to guest speakers.
• Quality of students in English needs considerable improvement.

External Analysis
Opportunities: Political, technological, socioeconomic, educational changes that could create opportunities to advance. What opportunities might your strengths create? If you overcame a weakness, would that create an opportunity? What interesting trends are occurring? Changes in your market/field? Local changes? What is the likelihood of it occurring and what is the potential impact if it does?

Example:
There is a tremendous opportunity for IR to reach out to universities both nationally and in the region to contribute expertise and cement its position as the national and regional leader in the field.

IR’s in-house expertise and the region’s need for that expertise creates an opportunity for IR to work with the university’s technology and continuing education units to develop and offer online non-academic programs in assessment and research techniques. (OIR)

**Threats:** Political, technological, socioeconomic, educational changes that could threaten your ability to achieve your mission. *What obstacles does your unit face? What are competitors doing? Is the technology changing? Changes in your market/field? Local changes? What is the likelihood of it occurring and what is the potential impact if it does?*

**Example:**
- An increased focus on quality and accountability in academic programs. AUC needs to ensure that all of the university’s programs are academically rigorous and challenge students to develop the skills and abilities needed in today’s knowledge-based economy.
- The transition to life on the New Cairo campus, from long commute times and lack of public transportation to increasing traffic congestion and dangerous roads (AUC)

### 3. Goals

Where do you want to be at the end of the plan? Goals should be “big picture items,” not necessarily time-bound, and generally not more than three to five. For administrative and academic support units, unit outcomes can be substituted for goals.

**Example:** The university community receives the technical support it needs to conduct effective outcomes assessment. (OIR)

**Objectives**

Objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART). Each goal may have several objectives.

**Example:** All academic, academic support, and administrative units will have effective assessment plans in place by 2011. (OIR)

**Strategies:** Strategies are the specific actions the unit will take to achieve its goals and objectives. Beginning and completion dates will allow a unit to track its process, as will performance benchmarks.

**Resources:** List here any funds over and above your annual operating budget that you will need in order to achieve this objective. These costs will be ready for you to add to a planning matrix if your unit has been targeted for investment. Please indicate in the description if these funds are likely to be offset by anticipated grants or other revenues, or if it represents a permanent increase to revenues.

**Key Performance Indicators:** How will you assess whether or not you’ve achieved your objective?

**Example:**

**Goal/Outcome 1.**

**Objective 1.1**

Strategies, Resources, KPIs

**Objective 1.2**

Strategies, Resources, KPIs

**Goal/Outcome 2.**

**Objective 2.1**

Strategies, Resources, KPIs

**Objective 2.2**

Strategies, Resources, KPIs

**Example:**

**Goal 1:** The university community receives the technical support it needs to conduct effective outcomes assessment.

**Objective 1.1:** All academic, academic support, and administrative units will have effective assessment plans in place by 2011.

**Strategies:** OIR will work with departments throughout 2009-2010 to assist in the development of plans and will send periodic updates and dashboards to area heads and deans.

**Resources:** One new staff position, assistant director level. No add’l space.

**KPIs:** 100% of units will have approved assessment plans in place by 2011.