

## LEADERSHIP AND TEACHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



**USAID Award Number:** AID 294-A-12-00006

**USAID Program Area and Element:** Program Area A12/ Element A055

Education / Strategic Objective SO 13

**Author:** Center for International Education, University of Massachusetts - Amherst

**Contractor Name:** AMIDEAST- Leadership and Teacher Development Program

**Sponsoring USAID Agency Operating Unit:** Education Development Office

**Date of Publication:** June 13<sup>th</sup> 2016

**Language of Document:** English

**Contact Information:** Dr. Said Assaf PhD , Chief Of Party : [sassaf@amideast.org](mailto:sassaf@amideast.org)

### DISCLAIMER:

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It was prepared by the USAID Leadership and Teacher Development Program (LTD) West Bank/Gaza. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.



# STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

## AL-AZHAR UNIVERSITY

Prepared by the Center for International Education,  
University of Massachusetts - Amherst



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
Introduction to Strategic Planning for Higher Education	3
Inquiry: The Key to Strategic Planning	4
What Influences Strategic Planning?	5
Portfolio of Strategic Planning (PoSP)	6
Stages of Strategic Planning	7
<b>Stages of Strategic Planning</b>	
<hr/>	
Stage 1: Pre-Planning	8
Stage 2: Developing the Planning Process	9
Stage 3: Producing the Strategic Planning Document	14
Stage 4: Publicizing the Plan	15
Stage 5: Getting the Plan Approved	15
Stage 6: Implementing the Plan	15
Stage 7: Monitoring and Evaluating the Plan	17
Stage 8: Institutionalizing Strategic Planning	18
<b>Essentials Exercises for Beginning Strategic Planning</b>	
<hr/>	
The Mission Statement	19
The Vision Statement	21
Organizational Goals and Objectives	23
<b>Timeline</b>	
<hr/>	
Tentative Timeline for Strategic Planning Process at Al-Azhar University	25

## Introduction to Strategic Planning in Higher Education

### This guide:

Provides basic information about strategic planning

Emphasizes why strategic planning is vital to the successful of academic units

Helps prepare participants for some of the major challenges of strategic planning

Presents an overview of the stages of strategic planning

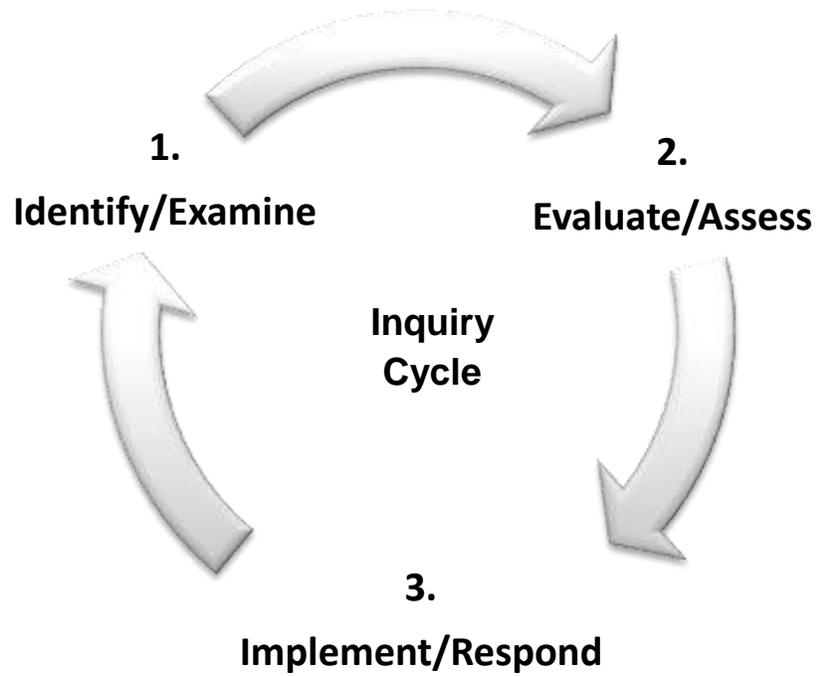
Provides tools to help make strategic planning successful

Highlights approaches, key considerations for strategic planning

### Why is strategic planning important?

- It provides a process that builds on areas of strength, addresses weaknesses, and creates a plan to build a stronger more effective academic unit.
- It helps an academic unit fulfill its mission.
- It helps an academic unit focus on developing goals and strategies that result not only in better efficiency, but to achieve superior results through intentional activities, better utilization of resources, and benchmarks to monitor progress.

## Inquiry: The Key to Strategic Planning



## What influences strategic planning?

### Internal Factors

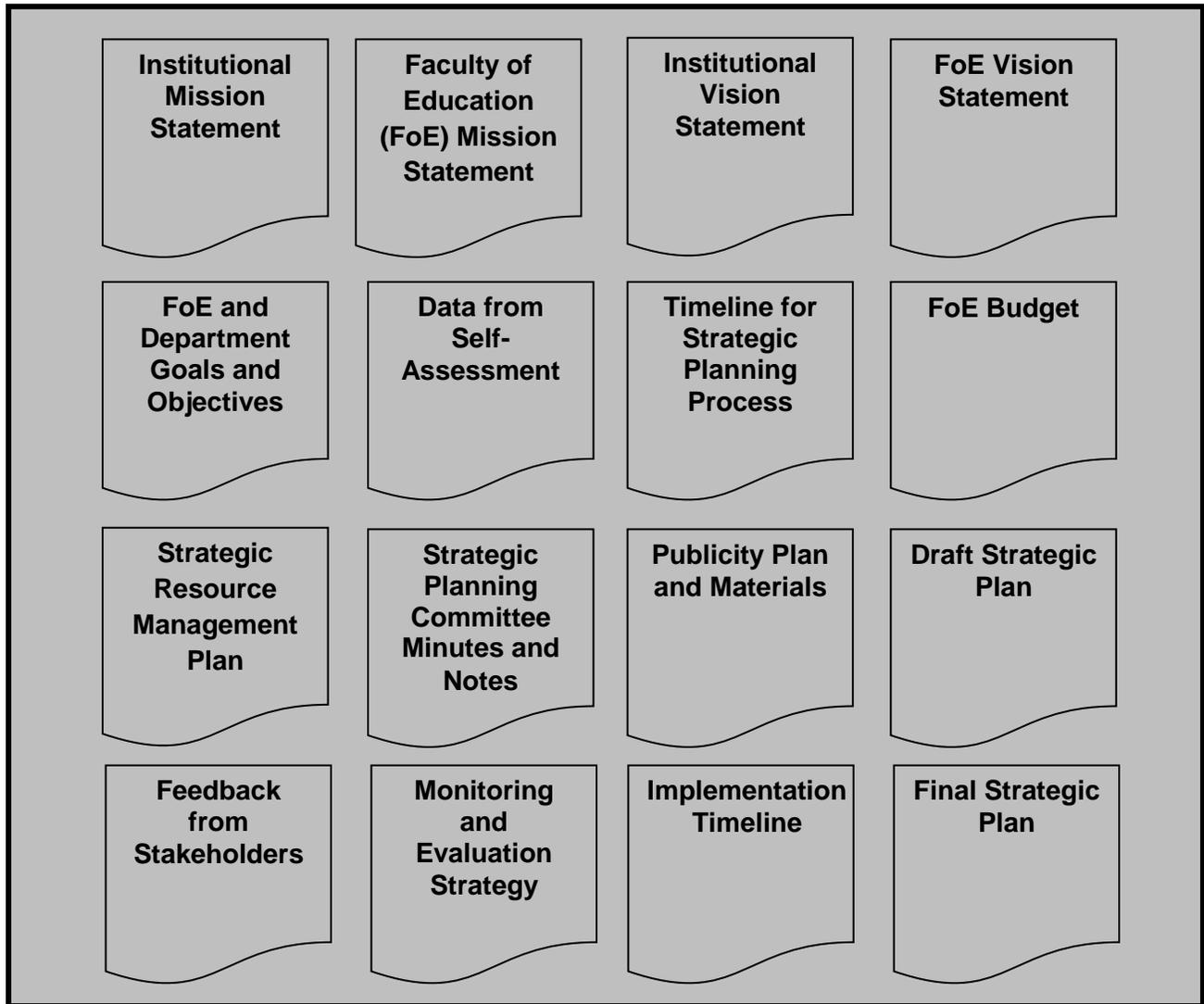


### External Factors



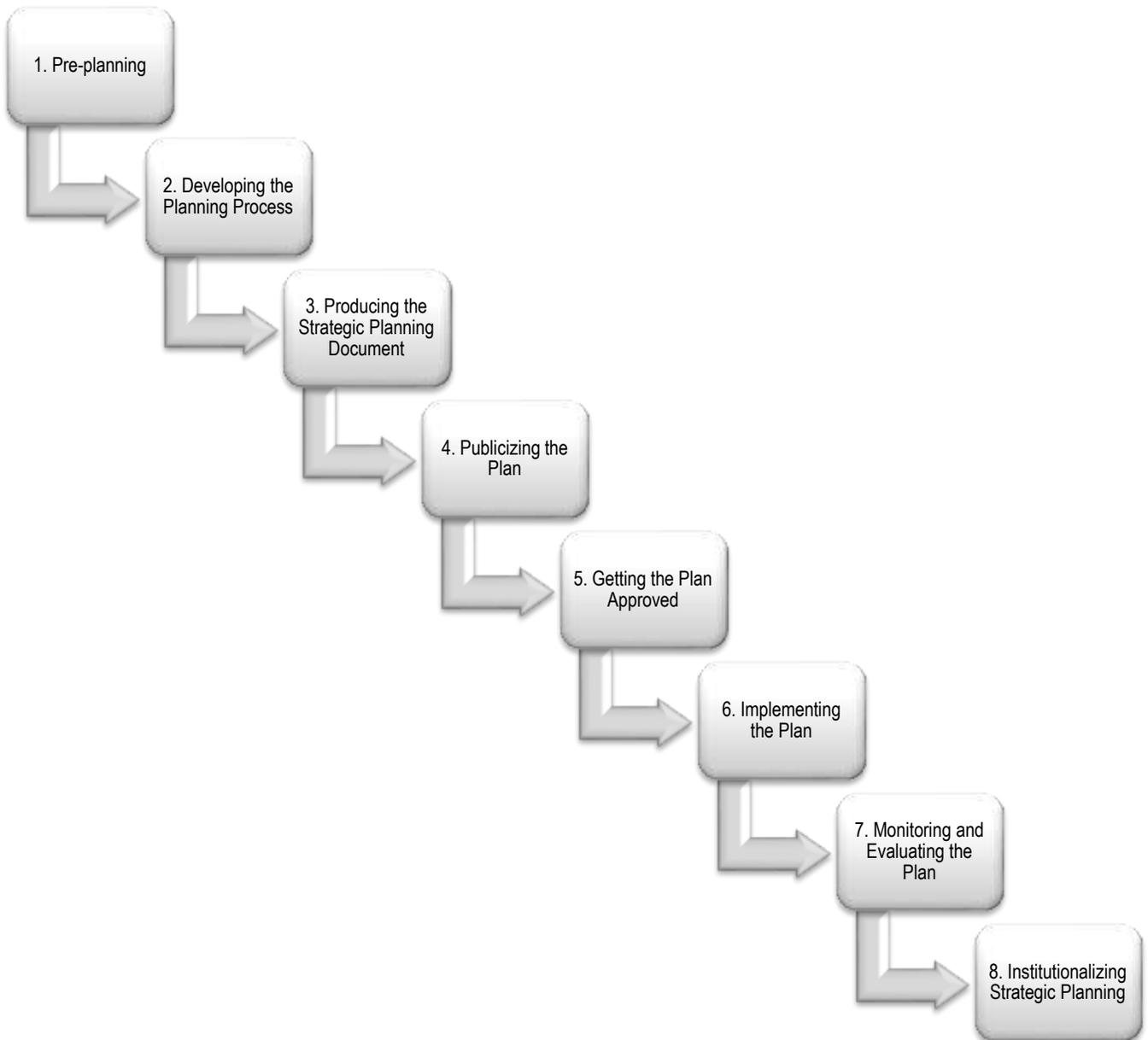
## Portfolio of Strategic Planning (PoSP)

The PoSP is a documentation receptacle for carefully storing and purposefully organizing data about planning, performance, and results. The PoSP may contain many different types of documents:



## Stages of Strategic Planning

Typically, there are eight stages involved in strategic planning:



## Stages of Strategic Planning

### Stage 1: Pre-Planning

#### Laying the groundwork for the strategic planning process

It is essential that the academic unit's leadership reaches agreement on answers to the following questions:

Why should we undertake a strategic planning process?	What value would be added?	How will the academic unit benefit?	Is there an additional organizational commitment to change?
---	----------------------------	-------------------------------------	---



#### Enacting pre-launch consultations

The unit's leader should consult with a broad spectrum of constituent leaders from throughout the campus community prior to formally announcing the launching of a strategic planning process.	This consultative phase should focus on <b>creating support</b> for the need to engage in such a process
--	--



#### Appointing the committee

A committee, including a clearly designated leader, should be appointed as the responsible parties for leading the process.

Committee members should focus on building collaboration and communication across campus while fostering creative ideas, brokering compromise, encouraging hard work, building shared understanding, emphasizing fiscal responsibility, and creating shared understanding.	Committee members should be <b>well-organized</b> and <b>knowledgeable</b> about the campus and higher education in general.
--	--

## Stages of Strategic Planning

### Stage 2: Developing the Planning Process

1. Once the committee has been formed, the strategic planning process should be **formally announced** by the academic units or division's leader. This should be a **public announcement** and presented as a way to build on past successes and/or move forward to future successes.
2. The committee should then first review the pre-existing mission, vision and goals. In doing so, they might consider the following questions:

#### Questions for the pre-existing mission, vision, and goals

Is the existing vision of a thoughtful overview of the desired future of the academic unit?

Does the vision reflect the goals of the academic unit?  
Do the goals reflect the vision?

Is the vision appropriate for the current environment?

How well has the academic unit fulfilled its mission? Has it realized its current vision and goals?

Is the mission statement clear? Does it reflect current thinking?

What are the major strengths and successes of the academic unit? Weakness and failures? Challenges and obstacles? Opportunities?

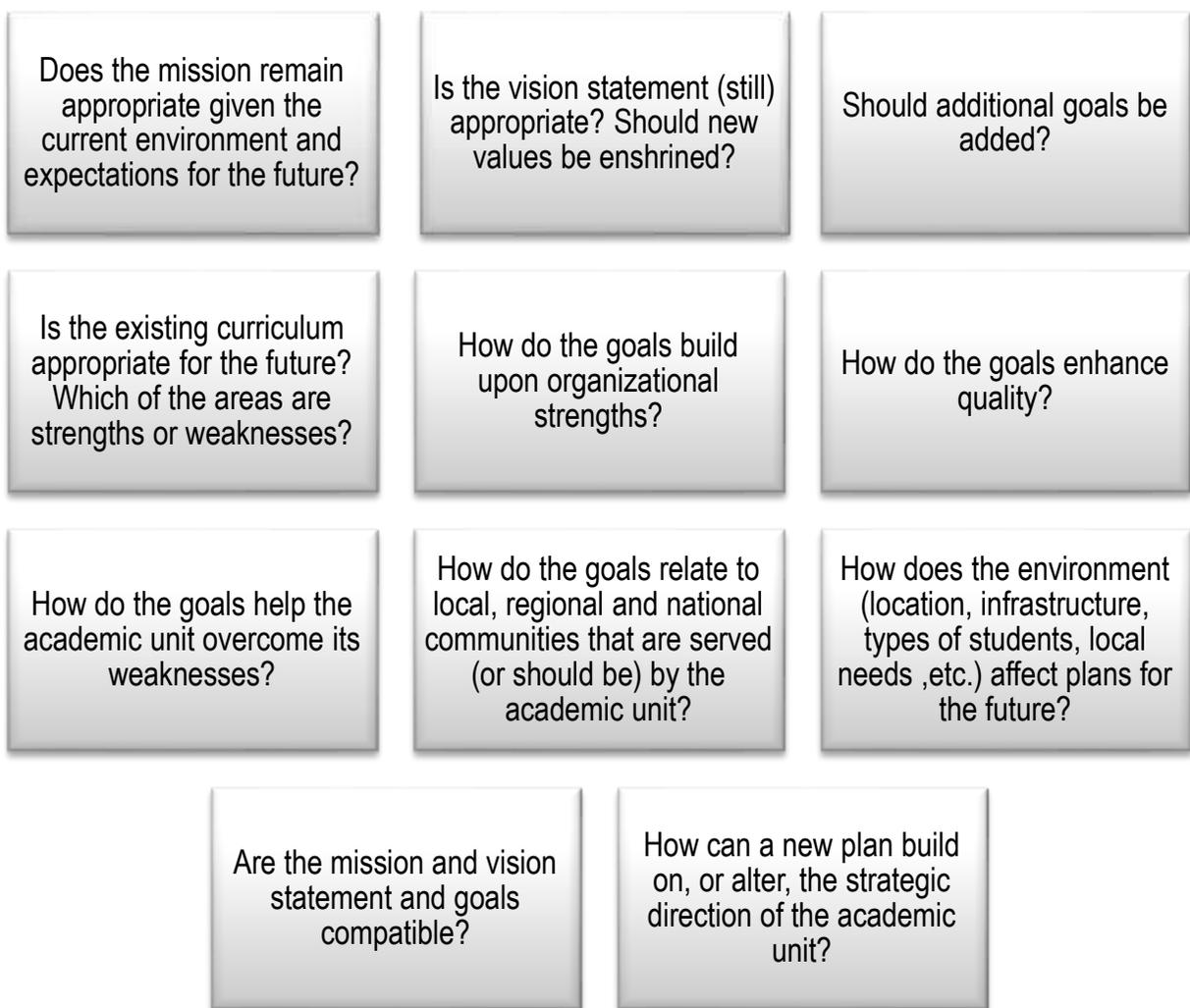
**Please note:** It is important to take time to carefully consider such questions and to carefully develop or revise the mission and vision statements along with appropriate goals and objectives. The committee should work collegially in responding to these queries as the success of the strategic plan will depend on a high degree of consensus on the basic goals,

## Stages of Strategic Planning

### Stage 2: Developing the Planning Process (cont.)

3. For revising existing missions, visions and goals or when drafting new ones, the following questions should be considered by the committee:

#### Questions for the existing mission, vision, and goals

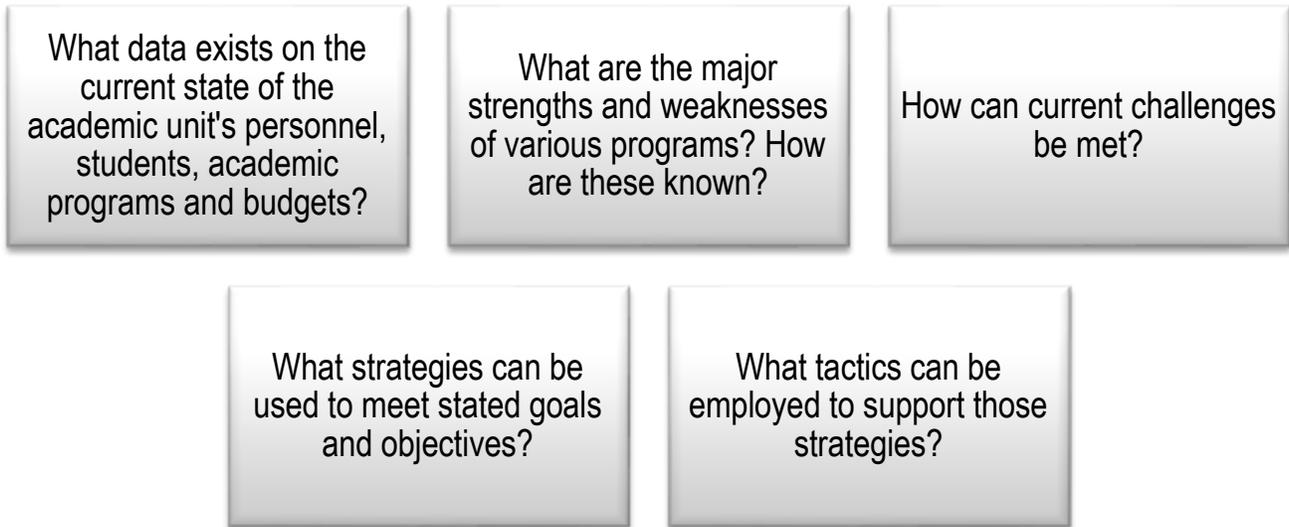


**Please note:** It is important to take time to carefully consider such questions and to carefully develop or revise the mission and vision statements along with appropriate goals and objectives. The committee should work collegially in responding to these queries as the success of the strategic plan will depend on a high degree of consensus on the basic goals, values and priorities.

## Stages of Strategic Planning

### Stage 2: Developing the Planning Process (cont.)

4. The committee should then assess the current state of the academic unit. In conducting this self-assessment, the committee should make the following inquiries:



As the committee works, it should provide communication and public transparency across the campus about its work. The committee should:

Listen to others: Stress openness to input from interested individuals and groups

Be open: Emphasize its commitment to transparency regarding outcomes

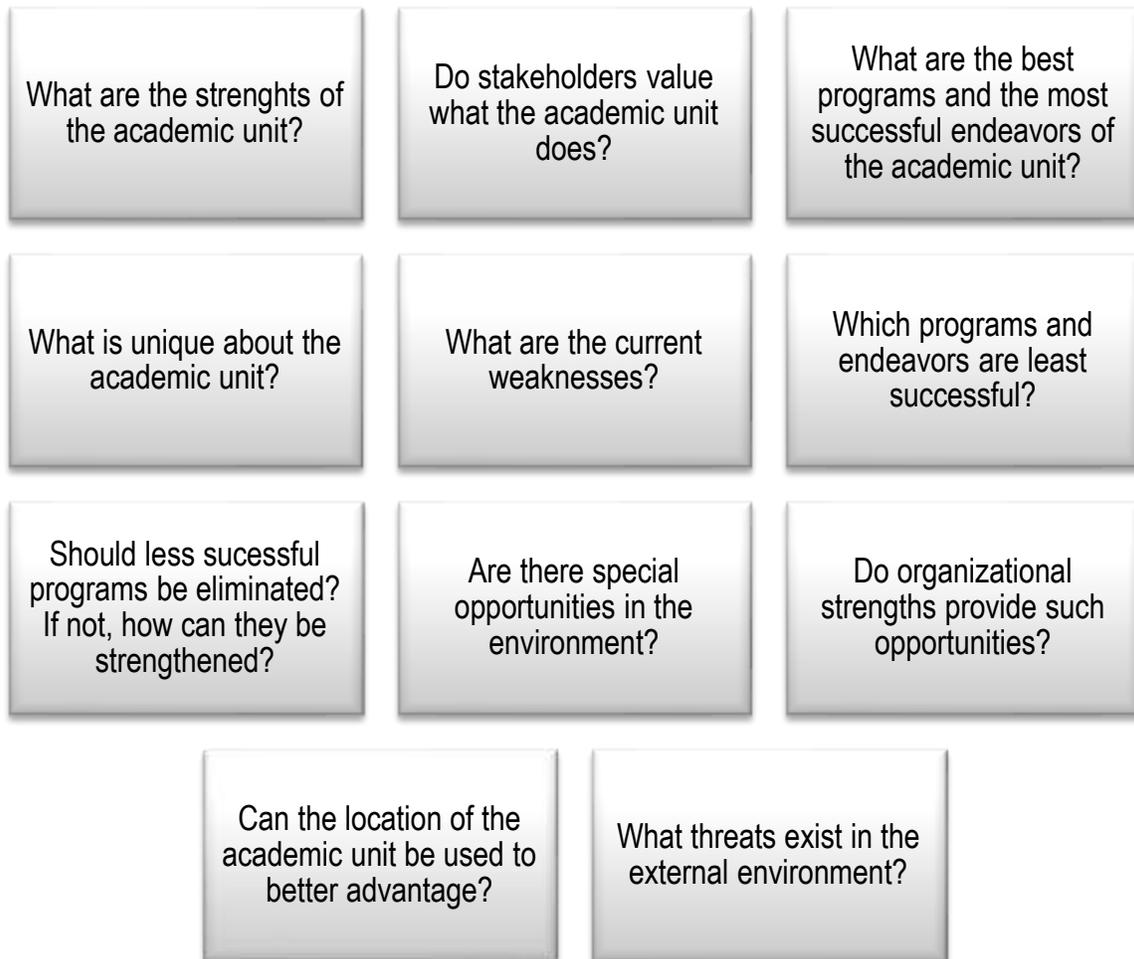
Be honest: Assure the campus and community there are no hidden agendas

**Please note:** The committee should also have resources and infrastructure to support its work. This includes having some release time and basic technological support to meet in a productive setting, generate and review data, create documents and communicate with others.

## Stages of Strategic Planning

### Stage 2: Developing the Planning Process (cont.)

One strategy for proceeding with the initial committee work is to conduct a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. This is a strategy for mapping assets and assessing needs. Typical questions include:

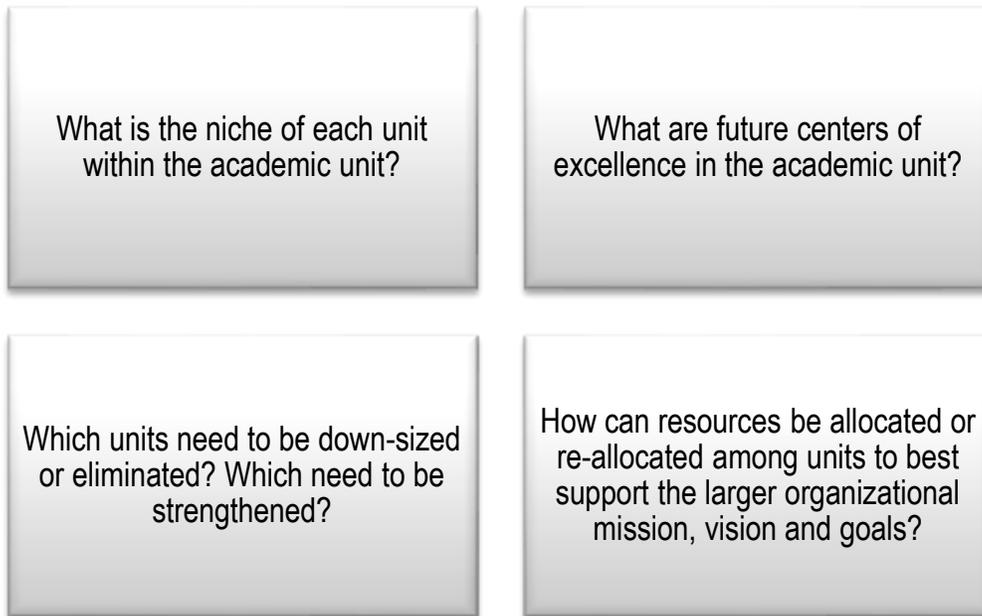


The committee should also consider how to review each unit – not only as a one-time effort, but as part of an on-going process. Ideally, the committee will develop guidelines to help each unit do a self-study. It is often helpful to invite expert outside reviewers to assist with such self-studies. These reviews should be aligned with the strategic plan so that each unit is able to demonstrate how it relates to and supports the mission, vision, and goals of the academic unit.

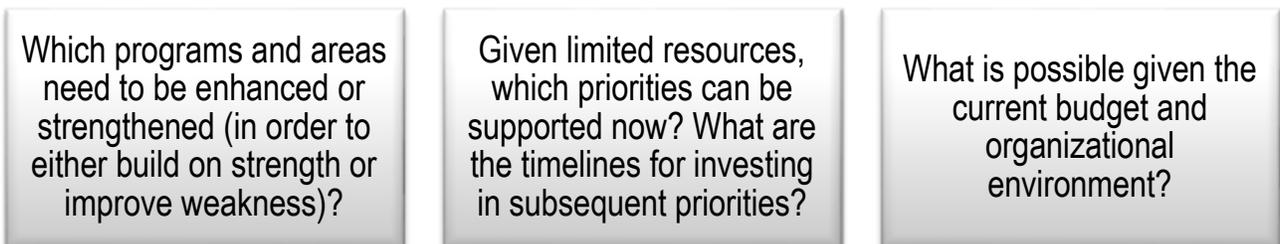
## Stages of Strategic Planning

### Stage 2: Developing the Planning Process (cont.)

Self-studies, such as SWOT, can be used to address the following questions at the organizational level:



As answers to these questions emerge, establishing organizational priorities becomes a vital part of the strategic planning process. Appropriate questions to be addressed at this point include:

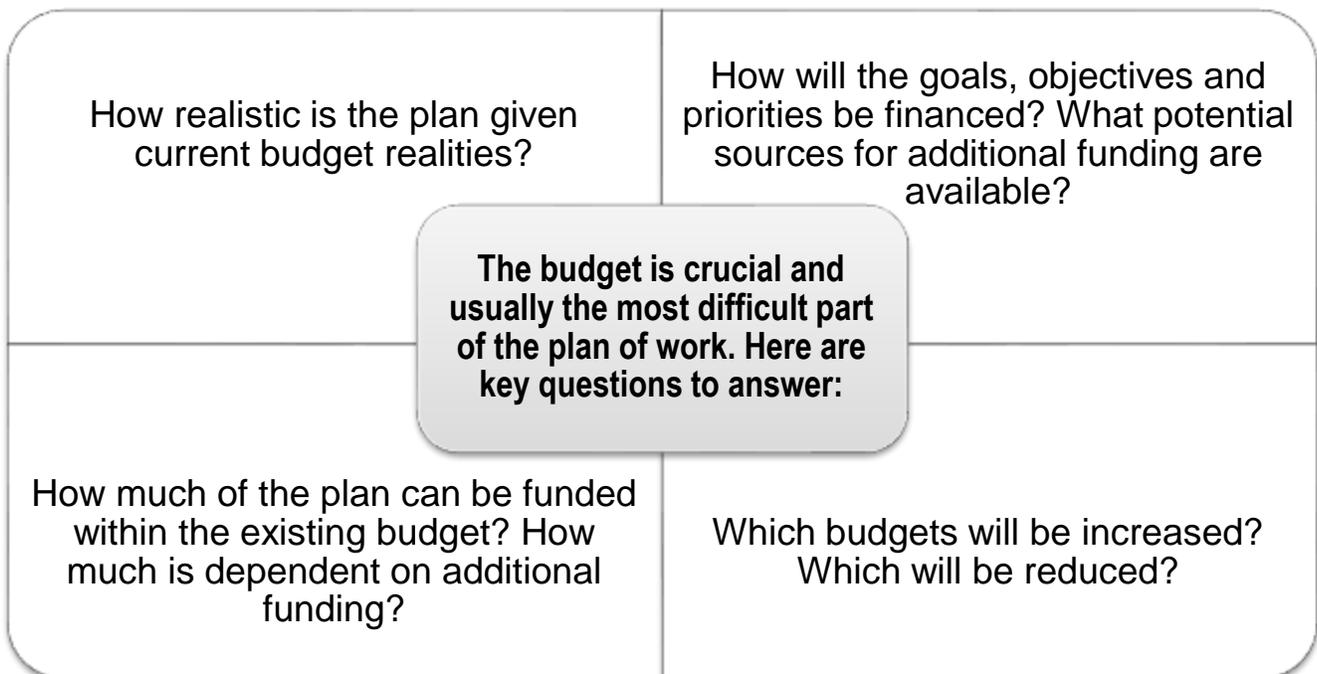


## Stages of Strategic Planning

### Stage 3: Producing the Strategic Planning Document

Once all of the major stakeholders have been consulted, the mission, vision, goals and priorities have been determined, analysis of organizational data have been completed and relevant supporting data compiled; the next step is to draft the strategic planning document.

The **strategic planning document** should include the new or revised mission, vision, goals and priorities along with a plan of work. The **plan of work** should have clearly defined tasks, measurable objectives, timelines for implementation, completion and evaluation, and a budget that is clearly connected to the plan.



## **Stages of Strategic Planning**

### **Stage 4: Publicizing the Plan**

Once the plan has been completed it should be reviewed within the academic unit(s) and among stakeholders. While wide-spread discussion should have occurred during the planning process, it is essential that the final version of the plan be widely shared in a public and transparent manner.

## **Stages of Strategic Planning**

### **Stage 5: Getting the Plan Approved**

The next task is to get formal approval from relevant governance structures. If the strategic planning has been doing a good job of consultation along the way and if it has operated with integrity in a transparent manner, much of the support for the plan should already be in place.

## **Stages of Strategic Planning**

### **Stage 6: Implementing the Plan**

Now that the strategic plan has been developed and approved, it must be implemented. The planning process should actually have comprised the beginning of the implementation, but it is important to maintain the open communication as this part of the process moves forward. In particular, the committee should continue to monitor progress and make adjustments as needed. The committee should meet regularly to evaluate internal progress and discuss and evaluate external conditions that may affect the plan.

## **Stages of Strategic Planning**

### **Stage 6: Implementing the Plan (cont.)**

There are a number of actions that will facilitate successful implementation of the plan, they include:

Starting with short-term goals that can be carried out as the process gets under way -- and publicly recognizing and rewarding these efforts

Clearly laying out the goals and objectives, complete with policies for implementation

Setting up a realistic timetable that outlines priority short-term goals

Assigning lines of responsibility and accountability

Outlining the tasks associated with major goals

Monitoring progress

Being prepared to re-think major aspects of the plan as unintended consequences occur

## Stages of Strategic Planning

### Stage 7: Monitoring and Evaluating the Plan

As part of its on-going work, the committee should consider the following in developing and implementing a monitoring and evaluation strategy:

A means for routinizing the collection of key organizational data that serves as performance indicators and can be used to assess progress at organizational and sub-unit levels; these data should provide benchmarks for assessing the progress of each goal, objective and priority

A periodic re-assessment of the external environment

Regular consultations with the capus community to ascertain views about progress of the plan

Maintenance of an open review process that includes data driven progress reports as public documents

Maintenance of a flexible approach to making necessary adjustments as the planning proceeds

Establishing management information systems to support these activities

## Stages of Strategic Planning

### Stage 8: Institutionalizing Strategic Planning

In the long run, the strategic planning process should be integrated into organizational culture. People should come to expect that attention will be re-focused on the plan at regular intervals. The following steps can help institutionalize this process:

Provide the continuation of the strategic planning committee, even if it meets only periodically and if personnel changes are made over time

Maintain an office with support infrastructure

Continue to collect data and monitor progress

Keep documentation of planning meetings and efforts

Continue to review the plan on a regular basis

In the end, strategic planning is an on-going process that is a worthy investment of time and resources as a way to ensure continued viability and increased quality and success for the academic unit.

## Essential Exercises for Beginning Strategic Planning

### Mission Statement

	What is it?	Why is it valuable?	What is the function?	Components	What should be addressed
<b>The Mission Statement</b>	An assertion of an academic unit's purpose and justification for its existence.	It sets expectations for student learning at the core and defines expectations of faculty.	To clearly define the academic unit's ideals as the products and services that will be offered and to whom..	General statement of values, aims and goals of the academic unit.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Who are we?</li> <li>2. What is our purpose?</li> <li>3. How do we recognize and anticipate needs or problems?</li> <li>4. How should we respond to our key stakeholders?</li> <li>5. What is our philosophy? Our core values?</li> <li>6. What makes us distinctive or unique?</li> </ol>

#### Example

The **College of Education** is dedicated to enhancing the practice of education through:

- scholarship that informs the preparation of educational professionals,
- the improvement of educational systems,
- and the development of educational policy.

Our approach is shaped by our:

- fundamental commitment to social justice and diversity,
- diverse perspectives and innovative approaches,
- inquiry-driven and collaborative efforts,
- and by our belief in the essential importance of national and international perspectives as we advance education in the Commonwealth as a model for the nation and the world.

**Please note:** An effective mission statement will be clear, precise, and transparent about commitments.

## Exercise 1 – Mission Statement

Begin a review of your mission statement by answering the following questions:

1. *Who are we?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. *What is our purpose?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. *How do we recognize and anticipate needs or problems?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. *Who are and how should we respond to our key stakeholders?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. *What is our philosophy? Our core values?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. *What makes us distinctive or unique?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Vision Statement

<b>The Vision Statement</b>	What is it?	Why is it valuable?	What is the function?	What should be addressed
	It describes what an academic unit aspires to become in the future and the values it enshrines.	A clear vision will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide focus at both strategic and operational levels</li> <li>• Give specific guidance to members of the academic unit about what is expected of them and why</li> <li>• Guide decision-making and help avoid and resolve conflict</li> <li>• Contrast the academic unit as it is with what it could be</li> <li>• Inspire and motivate</li> </ul>	It captures the detail in what things could be like if the academic unit was functioning effectively and it focuses on the contribution the academic unit could make to society.	A successful strategic plan must be premised on values such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic freedom</li> <li>• Organizational autonomy</li> <li>• High quality</li> <li>• Equity</li> <li>• Non-discrimination</li> </ul>

### Example

State University will be recognized worldwide for the quality and impact of its research, teaching, and service. Our students will be able to learn and to advance knowledge in all areas. As a 21st century land-grant university, State University will set the standard for the creation and dissemination of knowledge in service to its communities, state, nation, and the world. Our faculty, students, and staff will be among the best in the nation.

Academic excellence will be enriched by an environment that mirrors the diverse world in which we live. Within this environment, we will come to value the differences in one another along with the similarities, and to appreciate that the human condition is best served through understanding, acceptance, and mutual respect. Throughout the learning process, our faculty and staff will find the highest levels of fulfillment and satisfaction as they collaborate to educate and support a student body recognized for its scholarship and integrity.

The quality of our physical facilities and grounds will be consistent with our world-class status. Extracurricular activities will support the personal growth of all members of our community. Our intercollegiate athletic programs will routinely rank among the elite few.

Graduation rates for all students will compare favorably with the nation's best public universities. Most of all, our graduates will be among the most sought after by the world's best employers and will become leaders in their communities and accomplished professionals in their chosen work. Our research will help solve the most challenging social, cultural, and technical problems.

The excellence of our programs will be recognized by the highest levels of public and private support. As a result, State University will earn an intensity of alumni loyalty and of public esteem unsurpassed by any other university.

## Exercise 2 – Vision Statement

Begin a review of your vision statement by answering the following questions:

1. *Who do we aspire to be?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. *How do our aspirations differ from our current reality?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. *What will be our indicators of success?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

---

Using your answers to the questions in Exercises One and Two – consider the following questions as you review your existing mission and vision statements:

- Is the mission statement clear?
- Does the mission remain appropriate given the current environment and expectations for the future?
- Is the existing vision a thoughtful overview of the desired future of the academic unit?
- Is the vision appropriate for the current environment? Should new values be enshrined?
- Does the vision reflect the goals of the academic unit? Do the goals reflect the vision?
- How well has the academic unit fulfilled its mission? Has it realized its current vision and goals?

## Organizational Goals and Objectives

	What are they?	Why are they valuable?	What is their function?	What should be addressed
<b>Organizational Goals and Objectives</b>	Organizational goals and objectives represent a broad statement of the aims of the academic unit.	Organizational goals help translate the organizational vision and mission into <b>action</b>	They should reflect the needs of the community and society as a whole.	They should clearly state the conditions for organizational effectiveness and the norms and expectations for faculty and staff.

Goals depict the general outcomes, while objectives specify more specific outcomes. It is common to have several objectives for each goal.

Goals and objectives can be differentiated in the following ways:

### Effective goals:

- are broad statements of meaningful outcomes
- are clearly written
- are achievable
- provide a framework for writing statements of objectives
- are adaptable to changes in the program
- are consistent with the mission statement of the program and institution

### Effective objectives:

- use action words that specify definite, observable behaviors
- indicate an appropriate level of attainment
- are assessable through one or more indicators
- comprehensively and meaningfully define a goal
- are realistic and achievable
- use simple language

For example, one goal might be:

- Newly enrolled students will persist by steady and supported progress to graduation.

For each goal, develop objectives that will help ascertain if the goal is being reached. These are observable outcomes expected of students. For example:

- 90% of new students will maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher.
- 90% of new students will meet degree progress requirements.
- 90% of new students will return for their second year of study.

(adapted from the Office of Institutional Research, Syracuse University)

### Exercise 3 – Organizational Goals and Objectives

What are key specific goals and objectives that will help your unit fulfill its mission and vision? Use the worksheet below to generate preliminary ideas about specific goals and related objectives that can be used to help turn your mission and vision into an action-oriented strategic planning process. Identify multiple objectives for each goal and think about what evidence would be needed to evaluate progress towards achievement of each goal and objective.

Goal 1:	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	Evidence:
Goal 2:	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	Evidence:
Goal 3:	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	Evidence:
Goal 4:	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	Evidence:
Goal 5:	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	Evidence:

## Tentative Timeline for a Strategic Planning Process at Al-Azhar University

Year 1 2013-2014	Description	Responsibility	Start-Finish (est.)
1. Pre-planning	Formation of strategic planning steering committee and four departmental planning committees	Dean and heads of departments (Steering Committee)	August-September 2013 (workshop in August)
2. Developing the Planning Process	Review mission, vision and develop initial goals and objectives including internal self-assessment of four departments	Steering Committee and departmental sub-committees	August 2013-December 2014 (workshop in December)
3. Producing the Strategic Planning Document	Draft the strategic planning document including the development of the resource management plan	Steering Committee	January 2014-May 2014
4. Publicizing the Plan	Circulation of draft plan within the departments of the Faculty and other key stakeholders for discussion and feedback	Steering Committee	March 2014-April 2014
5. Getting the Plan Approved	Formal approval of Plan	President's office and Al Azhar's Board of Directors	May 2014-June 2014
Year 2 2014-2015			
6. Implementing the Plan	Implementation of short-term goals	Dean, heads of departments and senior faculty	August 2014-May 2015 (workshop in August)
7. Monitoring and Evaluating the Plan	Ongoing monitoring and assessment of short-term goals being implemented	Steering Committee and departmental sub-committees	August 2014-June 2015
8. Institutionalizing Strategic Planning	Plan is integrated into organizational culture of Faculty of Education with structures to ensure ongoing monitoring and periodic reviews and adjustments.	Dean and heads of departments	June 2015 (workshop in May/June)