Toolkit for Conducting an Informal SWOT Assessment of Nursing and Allied Health Programs

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Purpose: This toolkit provides a structured approach to conducting an informal SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) assessment. The goal is to gain insight into the Nursing and Allied Health programs' capabilities and challenges, to better understand the needs and how to leverage strengths.

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1. Planning the SWOT Assessment

Before conducting the assessment, determine:

- **Scope of Assessment:** Have goals/objectives. Understand the program, clinical placement needs, new programs, qualified faculty, curriculum, resources, etc.

- **Key Participants:** Identify key administrators, staff, and stakeholders involved (CTE Deans, Health Deans, Associate Deans, Program Directors, Clinical Placement Coordinators, and Health Facility Partners).

- **Method of Data Collection:** Use interviews, surveys, focus groups, or direct observations.

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2. SWOT Framework

Use the SWOT framework to organize information during the assessment. Each component should have a clear structure to collect information. Data can be collected by arranging one on one meetings, conducting interviews or focus groups with Health Deans, CTE Deans, Associate Deans, Program Directors, Clinical Placement Coordinators, and stakeholders.

Strengths

Identify what the Nursing and Allied Health programs excel at. These could include:

- **High-performing faculty** and clinical instructors

- **Strong clinical partnerships** for student placements

- **Advanced technology and resources** (e.g., simulation labs)

- **Accreditation status** or high licensure pass rates

- **Positive student outcomes**, including job placement rates

- **Diverse program offerings** (e.g., nursing, respiratory therapy, radiology)

- **Reputable programs,** high performance

- **Collaboration,** with other health program deans and directors

Weaknesses (Needs):

Identify what the health programs need, such as:

- **Communication and Collaboration** with other health programs, chancellor's office, health facilities, etc

- **Insufficient qualified faculty** and retention issues

- **Limited clinical placement opportunities**

- **Inadequate resources** (e.g., outdated simulation labs, lack of space)

- **Curriculum needs/gaps** or outdated content

- **Student needs and engagement** or satisfaction

Opportunities

Explore external factors that the program can leverage, such as:

- **New clinical partnerships** with healthcare facilities (e.g. who else do we need to collaborate and reach out)

- **Strengthen partnerships** with existing stakeholders at the health facilities and with health programs from other schools

- **Grant opportunities** (e.g government funding, strong workforce funding, local non-profit grants)

- **Emerging healthcare trends** that align with program offerings (e.g., telemedicine, use of AI, software for medical records, etc)

- **New Programs –** work with your local Strong Workforce Partnership and COE to identify new programs

- **Advancements in educational technology** for simulation and online learning

Threats

Understand external challenges that affect the health programs, such as:

- **Competition for clinical placements** from within the same college, sister colleges and other institutions with similar programs

- **Changes in healthcare regulations** affecting accreditation (e.g. BRN, LVNPT, Legislation, etc)

- **Health facilities constrains and changes** hospitals downsizing or closing

- **Decreased student enrollment** due to demographic shifts or economic factors

- **Reduce clinical sites** due to hospitals low resources of competition from private entities

- **Resource constraints**, including budget cuts

3. Steps to Conducting the Assessment

Step 1: Preparation

- Create an assessment timeline, defining when information/data will be collected and reviewed.
- Develop survey or interview questions based on the SWOT categories.

Step 2: Information/Data Collection

- Use a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to gather data.
- Ensure participation from a diverse range of stakeholders (e.g. Health Deans, Associate Deans, CTE Deans, Program Directors, Clinical Placement Coordinators and clinical partners)

Step 3: Analysis

- Compile the data and categorize it according to the SWOT framework.
- Discuss findings with Regional Consortium Chair, Health Deans, Associate Deans, CTE Deans, Program Directors, Clinical Placement Coordinators

Step 4: Reporting

- Summarize key findings from the SWOT analysis.
- Highlight the top priorities for improvement and the most promising opportunities.

Step 5: Action Plan Development

- Based on the SWOT analysis, develop actionable recommendations.
- Build consensus by identifying three or four priorities to work together collaboratively.
- Develop next steps and timeline to work on the priorities.
- Convene a Regional Meeting to report on progress and share best practices.

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4. Tools and Templates

1. **SWOT Assessment Template**

   SWOT Category Key Findings

Strengths	- List of strengths identified
Weaknesses	- List of weaknesses identified
Opportunities	- List of opportunities identified

SWOT Category Key Findings

Threats   - List of threats identified

2. **Survey/Interview Guide**
   Create structured questions that help gather information for each SWOT category.
   Example questions:

   - o Strengths: "What aspects of the program do you believe are most successful?"

   - o Weaknesses: "What challenges are you facing?"

   - o Opportunities: "What internal and external opportunities do you see that could benefit the program?"

   - o Threats: "What risks or challenges are you facing and could affect the program's success in the future?"

3. **Stakeholder Map**
   Identify key stakeholders and their roles in the assessment process.

Stakeholder	Role in Assessment	Input Needed
Health Deans and Associate Deans	Provide insights about program needs and faculty needs	
Clinical Placement Coordinators	Provide information about clinical sites and student requirements	
Health Facilities	Gather information about student performance, skills sets, availability for clinical sites, etc	

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5. Conclusion

Conducting a SWOT assessment provides a comprehensive overview of the Nursing and Allied Health programs' current status. Through this informal assessment, program administrators and stakeholders can develop a clearer understanding of strengths to maintain, weaknesses to address, opportunities to seize, and threats to mitigate.

This toolkit helps ensure the assessment is structured yet flexible enough to allow for meaningful insights, ultimately supporting data-driven decision-making for program enhancement.