**SWOT ANNALYSIS**- Use this tool to help analyze internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats of and to your department

Note: If you have a list of schools that you typically use for benchmarking purposes, use that list for this exercise as well. The administration will appreciate data analysis and comparison with schools that they consider competitors.

**Strengths:**

* What advantages does your office have over other DS offices?
* What do you do better than anyone else?
* What unique or lowest-cost resources can you draw upon that others can't?
* What do people in your market see as your strengths?

Consider your strengths from both an internal perspective, and from the point of view of your customers (i.e. students, parents, faculty, etc.) and other DS offices?

You should also be realistic - it's far too easy to fall prey to "not invented here syndrome." Also, if you're having any difficulty with this, try writing down a list of your organization's characteristics. Some of these will hopefully be strengths!

When looking at your strengths, think about them in relation to your competitors. For example, if all of your competitors provide high quality products, then a high quality production process is not strength in your organization's market, it's a necessity.

**Weaknesses:**

* What could you improve?
* What should you avoid?
* What are people in other DS offices likely to see as weaknesses?
* What factors impact your retention of students?

Again, consider this from an internal and external basis: Do other people seem to perceive weaknesses that you don't see? Are other DS offices doing any better than you?

It's best to be realistic now, and face any unpleasant truths as soon as possible.

**Opportunities:**

* What good opportunities can you spot?
* What interesting trends are you aware of?
* Useful opportunities can come from such things as:
  + Changes in technology and markets on both a broad and narrow scale.
  + Changes in government policy related to your field.
  + Changes in social patterns, population profiles, lifestyle changes, and so on.

A useful approach when looking at opportunities is to look at your strengths and ask yourself whether these open up any opportunities. Alternatively, look at your weaknesses and ask yourself whether you could open up opportunities by eliminating them.

**Threats**

* What obstacles does your office face?
* What are your competitors doing?
* Are quality standards or specifications for your job, products or services changing?
* Is changing technology threatening your position?
* Do you have bad debt or cash-flow problems?
* Could any of your weaknesses seriously threaten your business?

When looking at opportunities and threats, PEST Analysis can help to ensure that you don't overlook external factors, such as new government regulations, or technological changes in your industry.

**PEST Analysis**

First, brainstorm the relevant factors that apply to you, using the prompts below.

Second, identify the information that applies to these factors.

Third, draw conclusions from this information.

* Political
* Economic
* Social-Cultural
* Technological