

South Dakota State University

Working SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

- work ethic of students, faculty, staff and administrators; extremely committed
- land-grant mission and university's statewide presence; recognized as South Dakota's flagship university
- growing support from SDSU Foundation, alumni and friend base; growing group of accomplished alumni
- quality, affordable and accessible undergraduate education
- breadth of undergraduate and professional programs
- several new or renovated buildings added to campus in the past decade
- friendly, supportive environment/caring attitude toward students
- size of institution is ideal; personal touch yet not too small
- positive momentum on campus with recent growth
- industry-friendly institution
- strong reputation for grassroots connection to stakeholders
- collaborative faculty & administration across campus; growing interdisciplinary efforts
- proximity to Sioux Falls and I-29 corridor
- strong support from local officials and legislators; town/gown relationship strong
- recent reclassification by Carnegie to Research High Institution and to DI

Weaknesses:

- lack of depth and resources to support growing enrollment, new programs/projects
- heavy workloads for faculty and administrators
- average to below average salaries; over reliance on hiring our own
- geographic isolation and related lack of access to resources/services
- increase in unavoidable operating costs (insurance, utilities)
- aging physical plant and minimal state funding for maintenance and upgrades
- limited classroom facilities both in quantity and quality...more flexible learning, contemporary learning spaces are needed
- lack of campus beautification both grounds and buildings
- resistance to change/we don't change well
- fear of taking challenges
- lack of comprehensive research culture and infrastructure to support widespread campus buy-in
- lack of success in attracting/retaining minority students, faculty, staff, administrators
- insufficient private revenue
- noncompetitive start up packages
- lack of professional peer review of teaching and research
- organized as a primarily teaching university
- many Ph.D. programs in infancy; graduate programs are thin in curriculum/research
- library funding is inadequate to support research and graduate programs
- lack of access to technology, particularly wireless internet
- stagnant campus organizational structure that resists change
- media relations understaffed and falls far behind on publication schedule

- lack of comprehensive benefits package (i.e. spousal/partner hiring program; campus day care)
- lack of responsiveness to emerging learner populations including non-traditional aged, commuter and distance education students
- aging cohort of baby boomer faculty who will retire in large numbers over the next ten years

Opportunities:

- increased interest in and funding for research and graduate education by state government; openness among state entities to work together for a positive future
- higher education is viewed as a source of economic development
- ever-increasing need for lifelong learning of skills
- extending the land-grant mission to other areas of societal need (e.g., P-12 education, health care)
- ever-expanding instructional technologies
- technology transfer in established and emerging areas (e.g. bio-fuels, health care, etc.)
- our campus and community are perceived as a safe, personal environment
- relatively low cost of higher education for in and out of state students
- South Dakota is poised to grow economically
- innovation campus/research park; 2010 Centers
- Brookings community growing, many jobs available; strong connection to campus
- strong institutional reputation to build upon
- collaboration with Native American population and collaboration with tribal colleges
- adult market as a potential recruitment ground for degree completion, retirement enrichment opportunities, etc.
- quality of life (e.g. safety, natural resources, low traffic)

Threats:

- increased competition for quality students, faculty and administrators
- shortage of Ph.D.s in certain disciplines which hinders recruitment for faculty positions
- federal government's interest in playing an oversight role in accreditation
- potential losses in federal funding for AES and CES
- limited growth in state support for higher education; more competition for funding with K-12, health care, corrections.
- uncertain political environment and state economy
- decreasing number of high school graduates pushing us to expand our traditional recruitment area
- on-going emergence of non-traditional, for-profit suppliers of services
- more competition for research funding; increased scrutiny by federal agencies
- heavily regulated environment by BOR and concern of duplication of higher education programs
- other institutions have been more aggressive in marketing and media relations
- limited cultural and social options in Brookings to attract high quality students and employees
- societal demands that we don't react to; changing demographics of the overall population and today's learners

Sources: Environmental scan completed by Academic Council for an earlier planning document; External review of other university planning documents; Leadership summits