

SWOT stands for **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats**. A SWOT analysis identifies strengths and weaknesses within your organization, and outside opportunities and threats. The most important parts of a SWOT analysis specify the ideas or actions that correspond to the elements you identify. By using the results of the analysis to improve the situation of your organization, you can reduce the likelihood of developments that negatively impact your group. After all, the main focus should be on helping your members and organization thrive, right?

Take some time with your executive board and/or general membership to evaluate your organization using the SWOT analysis method. Then develop a plan complete with action steps on how your organization will address the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats that you have identified.

Strengths

Strengths are internal characteristics of your organization that place you at an advantage over other. For example, your organization has memorable programs and high name recognition on campus. When determining strengths of your group, consider these questions:

- What advantages does our organization have?
- What do we do better than anyone else?
- What do other organizations, students, faculty/staff, or community members see as our strengths?
- What resources can we access? What connections or networks can we take advantage of?
- What achievements are we most proud of?

Strengths	Ideas for building upon these strengths

Weaknesses

Weaknesses are internal characteristics that place your organization at a disadvantage. For example, why are the members of another organization participating more than members in your organization? To determine your organization's weaknesses, ask yourselves:

- What could we improve?
- What should we avoid?
- What are other organizations, students, faculty/staff, or community members likely to see as our weaknesses?
- Where do we have fewer resources than other organizations?
- Are we completely confident in our member development, skills, and training? If not, where are the weakest?

Weaknesses	Ideas for minimizing or repairing these weaknesses

Opportunities

Opportunities are external factors that your organization can take advantage of in growing and developing your group. Maybe your members can think of a unique recruiting or fundraising idea that no other organization on campus has thought of yet. The answers to these questions will help you to brainstorm opportunities and future successful programs/tactics/projects that will help your organization shine!

- What good opportunities can you spot?
- What interesting trends are you aware of?
- Do you have a network of strategic contacts and resources to help you, or offer good advice?
- Are any other organizations failing to do something important? If so, can you take advantage of their mistakes?
- Is there a need at UWM or in the surrounding community that no one is filling?
- How can you turn your strengths into opportunities?

Opportunities	Ideas for investigating or taking advantage of these opportunities

Threats

Threats are elements in the environment around you (for example, at UWM) that can cause trouble or barriers for your organization. Take a look at other organizations, current events, and the changing climate for possible threats to your group.

- What obstacles do you face?
- What are other organizations doing?
- Could any of your weaknesses seriously threaten your organization?
- Is the demand for your organization changing?

Threats	Ideas for minimizing or overcoming these threats

References

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