

INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING

EAP Form 1.10 (Rev. 11/18)



STATE OF WISCONSIN
EDUCATIONAL APPROVAL PROGRAM
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The Educational Approval Program (EAP) is a postsecondary education agency that employs a regulatory model focused not only on compliance, but also institutional effectiveness. To facilitate an environment in which schools seek to be effective organizations that improve over time, the EAP requires schools to submit evidence that appropriate planning has been conducted. Although similar to a strategic or business plan, this information will enable the EAP and school officials to engage in a dialogue over time about the effectiveness and future of the school.

Schools that already have some type of strategic or business plan (e.g., schools that have either a corporate or accreditation plan) must adapt these documents to the following requirements and focus on Wisconsin operations and students. The EAP does not expect any school to divulge any sensitive, proprietary business information. The information must address the five elements identified below and provide the information requested.

I. SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name of School: South University

II. PLANNING ELEMENTS

A. MISSION. Describe your school's mission and vision, which identifies its purpose and its core values.

South University's mission statement purpose and core values remains unchanged. South University is a private academic institution dedicated to providing educational opportunities for the intellectual social, and professional development of a diverse student population. To achieve this purpose, the institution offers focused and balanced curricula at the associate's, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral levels. A broad-based core curriculum is offered promoting critical thinking, effective verbal and written communication, and skills for life-long learning. Additionally, the University focuses on developing the requisites to pursue and appreciate knowledge. South University's approach to higher education and the resulting varied academic experiences provide students with the intellectual acumen and pragmatic approach necessary to create the foundation for personal and professional fulfillment. South University attempts to provide a comprehensive education that instills within its students a philosophy that values not only learning and professionalism but also contribution and commitment to the advancement of community. Believing that qualified individuals should have the privilege of formal academic training, South University welcomes those who seek educational challenges. To this end, the University provides a learning environment, both on-campus and online, that helps students identify goals and the means to achieve them.

B. MARKET. Discuss the nature of your school and the business in which it is engaged. Describe who your existing and/or potential customers are and what motivates them to enroll in your school. Explain how you let these customers know you are in business. Finally, identify who your competitors are and how you are different from them.

As a private academic institution, South University has focused its curriculum on our ground campuses to focus on health profession clinical based and nursing programs. Our online focus continues to focus on business, criminal justice, healthcare, information technology, leadership, legal studies, mental health counseling, ministry, nursing, and public health. Most students are non-traditional students who are looking to advance their current careers or prepare for a new career in one of the aforementioned areas. These students are drawn to the university using different marketing techniques, as well as increasing our focus on clinical and practicum based programs for our ground campuses. While the majority of our students remain non-traditional students, we are seeing an increase in traditional student enrollment as well as first time financial aid students in 2023. As stated in the mission, "South University attempts to provide a comprehensive education that instills within its students a philosophy that values not only learning and professionalism but also contribution and commitment to the advancement of community." This statement sets South University apart from its online competitors.

C. MANAGEMENT. Describe your management team and how it functions to lead, administer and position the school. If your school has advisory boards, describe how the school uses them for program and school improvement.

The Chancellor of the University and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs provide overall leadership and direction for all of the strategic planning, implementation, evaluation, and improvement processes of the University. The Chancellor maintains responsibility for our annual updates to our three-year strategic plan. The Chancellor's oversight includes coordinating with the Vice Chancellors and their corresponding functional area appropriate area. The Vice Chancellors and their staff are responsible for implementing all necessary items within the strategic plan with the Chancellor monitoring the overall progress of the plan. The Chancellor also delegates overall operational oversight for the University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) as required by SACSCOC and the to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs who is assisted in that oversight by the Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, and our Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Vice Chancellor of Compliance as needed. The Associate Vice Chancellor provides ongoing logistical support and guidance for the implementation of the IIEP as well as relevant institutional data and research findings from University-wide surveys for assessments of Strategic Priorities and their associated metrics.

Program advisory boards meet two times per year to discuss elements of academic programs and to give suggestions for improvement in curriculum, course sequencing, and overall content. The boards consist of industry experts from Savannah, Georgia and around the United States. Our faculty and program directors also monitor any programmatic standards/changes, as well as any industry changes, to determine if program changes are needed. The faculty and PDs will present to the College Dean, Curriculum Committee, Academic Leadership Team, and University Leadership Teams as required by our institutional governance structure.

D. SWOT ANALYSIS. Identify your school's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). Based on the results of this SWOT analysis, provide the following:

- 3 to 5 goals for strengths/weaknesses and how they will be addressed by your school.
- 3 to 5 goals for opportunities/threats and how they will be addressed by your school.

The goals should have specific objectives, defined results, a timeline for completion and metrics (some type of evaluation or measurement) by which the institution can evaluate/measure their success. In developing its goals, the school may wish to refer to the Elements of Effective Institutions graphic that is included on the back page of this form.

Goal 1: Exceptional educational and administrative services for all learners.

To address this goal the University is in the process of reviewing how financial aid and advising services are provided to students. In July of 2023, South University continued to maintain the graduation team model for our ground campuses. For online, we removed the graduation team model and restructured our academic counselors and financial aid advisors to better serve our online population and provide additional assistance to students who are new to the online environment. We believe this change will allow us to increase our retention rate. Student persistence is an opportunity for South and we continue to make enhancements and track student progress weekly.

Goal 2: Quality educational programs.

In late 2022/early 2023, South University hired additional academic affairs staff to help us better manage our academic programs, new course development, and improved student persistence, retention, and graduation. The increased staff in academic affairs has enabled us to further strengthen our institutional assessment, develop a detailed programmatic assessment plan, and increase our institutional effectiveness team.

Goal 3: Strategic Plan

South University is undergoing its 10 year reaffirmation with SACSCOC (our institutional accreditor) in 2024. The reaffirmation process has allowed us to conduct indepth reviews in all functional areas of the University. As a result of this deep review, we have identified additional opportunities to improve our programs, student support, and staff support areas. These items are now included in our three year strategic plan.

OSAIRs are a regular component of the institution's assessment cycle and are also completed to address administrative and student services including but not limited to student services; human resources, marketing, admissions, career services and student affairs. This leads to assessment and revision of overall institutional efforts toward continuous improvement. For 2022, South University has

transplanted additional clinical based education programs with extremely high completion rates, placement rates, and licensure pass rates to ground locations.

Goal 4: Improved Student Success and Successful graduates

This goal is being addressed In our new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Our QEP them is Shaping Resilient Stingrays. Many adult learners are faced with pressures, struggles and unique challenges as they navigate their educational pathway, and both research and experience tell us that students are successful when they understand the depth and breadth of resources available to them. South University is committed to our student's wellness as they navigate and shape their overall self-efficacy, thus fostering a healthy University. The QEP goal is to **Shape Resilient Stingrays** and promote success by fostering the development of both educational resiliency and overall resilience. Where *resilience* is the process and outcome of successful adaptation to difficulty challenges, *educational resilience* is the heightened likelihood of success in school (and other life accomplishments), despite environmental adversities (Wang, et al., 1993). The five components of resiliency include 1) Self-Care, 2) Purpose, 3) Mindfulness, 4) Positive Relationships, and 5) Self-Awareness.

D. SWOT ANALYSIS *(continued)*

Goal 5: University reputation for quality

South University addressed this goal with its most recent change of control which allows South University total autonomy, without a parent organization, for the first time in 20 years. This allows South University the opportunity to refocus efforts on stronger community outreach. Our Chancellor is working with our faculty and staff to develop meaningful opportunities to develop community relationships through our students, our staff and faculty, and our alumni.

Goal 6: Strategic alignment and growth

We continue to review our programs, our courses, and student outcomes to make changes that positively impact our current students and improve the student experience for new and continuing students. We have most recently aligned our nursing programs with new programmatic accreditation standards. In addition, we have increased new learning and engagement features within our learning management system (LMS) to improve student engagement, retention, and success. South University has worked diligently over the last year to provide increasing reporting and data for each functional area which allows us to more closely monitor each area and to also create predictive models with student success.

E. FUTURE VISION. Describe your school 5 years from now. What will it look like and how will it be positioned in the marketplace.

On July 14, 2023, South's parent company Education Principle Foundation, a non-managing partner, relinquished 100% of its ownership of South University. As a result of this change, for the first time in 20 years, South University has full oversight and control and does not have a corporate owner or partner. As a result of this change, South University maintains its non-profit status with the IRS and Secretary's of State. South is anticipating it receives the approval from the US Department of Education in 2024, however, knowing we do not have control of the Department's timeline.

The University continues to move forward in becoming a premiere comprehensive university with first-rate healthcare programs. In late 2022, early 2023, the University leadership completed a new three year strategic plan focusing on exceptional academics, quality education programs, exceptional staff/employee support, successful retention to graduation, and enhancing university awareness, and enrollment growth. The leadership will continue to review and evaluate progress and impact of the three year strategic plan.

In five years, South University will have gained recognition as a non-profit institution that is engaged in its communities and will continue to provide first-rate educational programs that meet the needs of students and the professional communities we serve. South University hopes to begin adding new programs beginning in 2024 to allow us to further expand our clinical based programs

III. SUBMISSION

I hereby certify that the information contained on this form and any attachments to the form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Authorized School Official:

Deana Hopper

Print or Type Name and Title of Authorized School Official:

Deana Hopper, Vice Chancellor for Compliance

08/29/2023

INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS

