

National Student Nurses Association, Inc.

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Strategic Planning Guide for State Associations

This *Strategic Planning Guideline for State Associations* is designed to provide a framework for state association long-range planning.

For the most part, state associations are organized and managed by volunteers who serve for one term. These characteristics set the stage for the importance of strategic planning for state student nurses associations. A strategic plan will help the association focus on its mission and goals and serve as a tool for continuity.

What is strategic planning?

Strategic Planning for state student nurses' associations is a method of integrating the information that we have today to forecast the future. Through research and evaluation of available data, projections can be made to develop strategies for responding to current trends and issues. This process is of particular importance to student nurses' associations because of the rapid turnover in leadership. A Long-Range Strategic Plan provides a framework that connects leadership and association actions over a period of time.

What's involved in strategic planning?

The nursing process is an excellent model to use for strategic planning since it contains the elements of assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation. The state president or board designee should take responsibility for facilitating the planning process.

To begin, here are the steps in organizing a strategic planning workshop:

1. Set aside at least one full day, no more than two days, to do nothing but develop the strategic plan. Plan a time when participants are not pressured and are available to give their full attention to the planning process. Summer or school breaks may be ideal.
2. Find a suitable environment. Using a school of nursing or college facility will help save the cost of hotels. If two days are planned, perhaps dorm rooms may be available. You may find a school very willing to host the workshop.
3. The planning group should not be too large but should be large enough to insure diverse input and opportunities for all involved to make a contribution to the overall plan. Other than the current state board and committees, participation should be by invitation. Participants may include:
 - The current board of directors, state consultants, and state committee members (expected to participate)
 - By invitation:
 - One or two past presidents or past key association leaders.

- Three or four key school chapter leaders (try to have representatives from all types of nursing programs AD, Diploma, BSN).
- One or two school faculty advisors.
- Representatives from the state nurses association and state league for nursing (or other specialty nursing organization that is deemed appropriate).

4. Find a facilitator.

The facilitator role is key in strategic planning. Ideally, the facilitator is not involved in the group directly, knows something about group process and strategic planning, and is willing to volunteer his/her time to the cause. Some suggestions for finding a facilitator:

- Ask the state nurses' association or state league for nursing for a recommendation.
 - Ask the state society of association executives to recommend someone. For a contact in your state call the American Society of Association Executives in Washington, DC.
 - Use the resources at your college or university (i.e. school of management or business administration).
 - Ask your dean/director for guidance and referrals.
5. Work with the facilitator to develop the planning process for the strategic planning workshop. A model planning process is part of this document.
6. After securing the meeting place and engaging a facilitator, send invitations. Work with your local site-contact to make sure that the room arrangements (i.e. conference style set) are made; that either food can be brought in (paid for on an individual basis unless a sponsored meal function can be arranged) or is available locally. A lot will depend on the resources of the association and/or the host site. What is important here is that the time be utilized efficiently.
7. Pre-workshop preparation by participants will depend on what the facilitator thinks is appropriate. Some facilitators believe that spontaneity is lost if too much preparation takes place; others may feel that participation is enhanced by coming to the meeting with knowledge of current trends and issues.

The secretary of the state student nurses' association or someone with a laptop computer, should record the plan as it is developed. You will need blackboards and/or flip charts with markers to use during the meeting.

The Planning Process.

Very often, the facilitator may have his/own strategic planning process. However, the following may serve as a guideline for information gathering during group consensus building.

I. The Past: where has the organization come from over the past few years? What is the mission of the association? This will set the stage for the current state of the association. Do not spend a lot of time here. Perhaps a past president or a state consultant who has been involved for a few years can provide an overview.

II. The Present: what is the current state of the association? Much of this information should be gathered prior to the workshop. NSNA can assist your state to obtain this data. Consider the following:

Internal factors:

- number of members and breakdown (ie how many from AD, Diploma, BSN).
- demographic characteristics of members (age, ethnicity, gender, marital status, family status, economic status)
- number of students enrolled in nursing schools in your state and types of programs (ie number of AD, Diploma and BSN programs).
- cost of dues.
- number of school chapters and identification of schools with high involvement.
- financial status of the association.
- mission and goals of the national level of the association.
- status of leadership participation in the association.
- status of dean/director/faculty support.
- trends in nursing education.
- trends in the personal lives and professional development of nursing students.

External factors:

- the economy.
- trends in health care delivery.
- employment opportunities.
- support of the association from health-care institutions.
- support from non-health care institutions (ie corporations and consumer groups)
- political climate.

III The Future (assumptions):

In three years from now:

- health care will be....
- opportunities in nursing will be...

- nursing student characteristics (educational program, demographic characteristics) will be ...
- nursing education will be...

IV The State Student Nurses' Association's Strategic Plan:

A. *Mission (assessment):* should it stay the same or be redirected?

(Note: the association's mission will position the association to focus its efforts on serving the needs of its members and the profession; address issues which affect student nurses; and enhance the ability to the association to accomplish its purpose more effectively and efficiently. See Getting the Pieces to Fit fir NSNA's Mission statement.)

B. *Goals (planning):* to carry out its mission, the association must identify and pursue specific goals. These goals will drive the association's structure, governance, staffing (if available), and budgeting. The goals serve as a standard for basing evaluation of achievement and performance. The following is a sample of broad goals and action strategies.

- **Program and Services Goal:**

1. To Help student nurses prepare for professional careers, the state association will:

(add strategies here)

- **Membership Goal:**

2. To increase the value of (name of state association) for all students in the state, the association will:

(add strategies here)

- **Image Goal:**

3. To promote the positive image of student nurses, the (name of state association) will:

(add strategies here)

- **Fiscal Goal:**

4. To assure fiscal stability for (name of state association), it will:

(add strategies here)

- **Structure and Governance Goal:**

5. To assure effective and efficient structure and governance for the association, it will:

C. Implementation Strategies:

The who, what, when and where for each approved goal must be assigned. This can be the

board, committees, school chapters, faculty, state consultants, or staff (if available). Time limitations should be placed on goal achievement and progress should be tracked on a routine basis (i.e. at quarterly board meetings).

The recorder at the workshop should circulate the Strategic Plan to all participants and the facilitator and make any necessary revisions. The final Strategic Plan should be approved by the state board of directors. Once finalized, the plan should be sent to all school chapter presidents and to the NSNA headquarters. The plan should be reported to the state House of Delegates during the Report of the President.

D. Evaluation:

At the end of its term, the board of directors should provide a status report of the Strategic Plan for the incoming board. This report will reflect which goals have been accomplished; if goal has not been accomplished or is ongoing, what its current status is; and if a goal must be changed or eliminated, why and what goal will replace it. The board should be objective in its evaluation and should turn over a written report during the transition meeting of the old and new board. In addition, the outgoing president should give the incoming board a verbal report during the transition meeting. The new board should modify the Strategic Plan as needed. Ideally, the Strategic Plan should be renewed every three years.

Strategic Planning Resources

The following are available from the American Society of Association Executives, 1575 Eye Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20005-1168. Phone (202) 626-2748.
<http://www.asaenet.org/bookstore/>

Web Sites:

Strategic Planning (in nonprofit or for-profit organizations)

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http://www.mapnp.org/library/plan_dec/str_plan/str_plan.htm

Support Centers of America

The FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) listed on this site were inherited from Support Centers of America (SCA), following a merger between SCA and Nonprofit Management Association (NMA), and are now a product of the Alliance for Nonprofit Management.

<http://www.allianceonline.org/faqs.html>

Internet Nonprofit Center

<http://www.nonprofits.org/npofaq/03/22.html>