The Strategic Plan of Soran University

2023-2026

https://main.soran.edu.iq/strategic-plan

Motto:

From Human Building towards Nation Building

Soran University Vision:

Establishing an accredited educational, academic, and a pioneer counselling institution with the aim of actively contributing to facilitate substantial changes.

Soran University Mission:

Active involvement in creation and expansion of knowledge, nurturing individuals equipped with information, knowledge, skills and social values, and trained for the labour market through identifying and developing the talents, and conducting informed and directed research to develop the nation.

The objective:

The main goal of the strategic plan is to discern those aspects, prioritization and the cultivation of which would ensure the future success.

Main Values **Sagacity Openness Responsibility Academic Integrity**

Novelty, Quality & Sustainability

The objectives:

Soran University Strategic Plan for 2023-2026 encompasses the attainment of a multitude of significant and essential objectives through the execution of tasks and functions that require sustainable and inclusive mechanisms.

1. Introducing a Modern and Scholarly Learning Environment
2. Utilizing contemporary pedagogical practices
3. Designing, reviewing, and modifying the academic programs continuously
4. Obtaining official Accreditation from Kurdistan Accrediting Association for Education (KAAE)
5. Offering an effective and suitable system of Administration

6. Integration of university Endeavours with societal needs
7. Advancement of scientific research
8. Transforming Soran University into Soran University for Research and Applied Sciences
9. Sustainability
10. Institutional autonomy for the University

Analysis, Strategic Breakdown, and Action Plan for Achieving University Objectives

The First Objective: Introducing a Modern and Scholarly Learning Environment

1. **Attempting to construct new edifices that include the fundamental prerequisites for the facilitation of teaching and learning**
    1. The Commencement of a novel edifice intended to serve as the headquarters for the Presidency of Soran University
    2. The development and establishment of a contemporary facility specifically designed for the Faculty of Education
    3. Addressing the student accommodation challenges
    4. Establishing an enclosed sports facility
    5. Establishing an enclosed swimming pool
    6. Establishing a contemporary recreation centre
    7. Establishing a car park
    8. Establishing a library and a central reading space
    9. Establishing a conference hall for academic and other cultural activities
    10. Establishing the required physical infrastructure for the laboratories and newly introduced programs
    11. Establishing a contemporary central storage unit
2. **Emphasizing the enhancement of the workplace and leisure time environment for both students and staff, in addition to the provision of essential equipment.**
    1. Re-organization and the supply of teachers' workplace.
    2. Facilitating the provision of an enhanced learning environment for students.

3. Enhancing and expanding green areas as well as developing recreational opportunities for students
4. Designating precise locations for smoking
5. Establishing a central market within the confines of the University Campus

3. **Reconfiguring and upgrading the existing facilities for an enhanced teaching and learning experience, and academic life at large.**
    1. Repainting study halls and corridors as necessary
    2. The continuous maintenance of the air conditioning system
    3. Creating a museum and a University Cultural Centre
    4. Indicators for guiding and directing individuals in the campus
4. **Establishing the psychological counselling service and conducting student observations.**
    1. The establishment of a student counselling centre
    2. The establishment of a University health unit
    3. The establishment of a nursery facility

The Second Objective: Utilizing contemporary pedagogical practices

1. **Focusing on the expertise and proficiency of the academic staff through continuous academic development**
    1. Following contemporary pedagogy and teaching and learning practices
    2. providing continuous training and professional development programs
    3. Offering academic staff opportunities to engage in international academic endeavours.
    4. Inviting foreign experts in the realm of academic development
2. **prioritizing student-centred learning and concentrating on the enhanced implementation of Bologna Process**
    1. Implementation of ongoing awareness raising workshops
    2. Creating opportunities for students' involvement in decision-making in issues pertinent to their interests and concerns.

3. Creating a platform dedicated to disseminating information to students
4. Soliciting input from students about their level of contentment about University affairs
5. Focusing on the implementation of Bologna Process to all academic programs

3. Training students to develop the aptitudes and competencies to excel in the competitive job market

1. Provision of entrepreneurship education as a module in all academic curricula
2. Holding continuous training courses to develop the skills of leadership, problem solving and communication skills.
3. Development and expansion of student exchange programs with universities overseas.
4. Engaging with both local and international organizations and corporations to provide trainings and employment opportunities for our graduates
5. Focusing on field trips to deepen students learning and bridging the gap between theory and practice
6. Organizing an annual "Innovation Day" to provide the students with a platform to showcase their ideas, talents, projects and inventions on the anniversary of Soran University's establishment
7. Offering free foreign language learning courses for students

4. Paying increased attention to students' endeavours in their project work and scientific activities and their practical execution

1. The provision of seasonal activities to students for the purpose of presenting and marketing their ideas
2. Holding annual undergraduate students' research conference
3. Conducting employment expos where students can showcase their innovative ideas and projects in the presence of prospective employers

The Third Objective: Designing, reviewing, and modifying the academic programs continuously

1. **Designing new Programs such as:**
    - Modern Agricultural programs
    - Educational Arts
    - Medical Microbiology
    - Ecotourism
    - Physics
    - Journalism and communication
    - Landscape Architect
    - Archeology and Anthropology
    - Nursing
    - Financial Technologies
    - Special Education

2. **Integrating the aforementioned disciplines compatibly into the**
    - Environment science and engineering
    - Mining engineering
    - Renewable Energy
    - Bioinformatics and computational Biology
    - Entrepreneurship
    - Clinical Psychology
    - Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity
    - Modern Languages
    - Psychological guidance and special education
    - Social work

- Archaeological and Cultural Studies
- Applied Geography and Environmental Studies

3. **Establishing a program counselling board at the departmental level**

1. Preparing the internal guide for all counselling boards

2. Facilitating communication and collaboration with investors, employers, university alumni and subject matter experts

3. Holding workshops and continuous trainings aimed at fostering familiarity and enhancing the overall efficiency of the board

4. conducting this initiative as a pilot project within only one department at each faculty

The Fourth Objective: Obtaining official Accreditation from Kurdistan Accrediting Association for Education (KAAE)

1. **Establishment of the Directorate of Institutional Effectiveness operating directly under the auspices of the President**
    1. Preparing the internal guide of the Directorate
    2. Expanding the directorate's scope to encompass Teaching Quality Assurance
    3. Implementation of Training programs to equip staff with the necessary skills to fulfil their responsibilities
    4. Raising awareness about the functions and objectives of the directorate
2. **Placing emphasis on enhancing the quality assurance processes related to teaching and administration**
    1. Review of the feedback forms as well as the evaluation mechanisms
    2. Creation of a database to register all the academic activities
    3. Reorganization of the functions and objectives of quality assurance to obtain its goals
    4. Activating the quality assurance process at a departmental level
    5. Establishing administration quality assurance process

3. **Increasing focus on the Laboratories, research facilities and learning resources**
    1. A thorough examination of the current devices and equipment in the labs
    2. Identifying research priorities aligned with the objectives and plans of the university
    3. Identifying the necessities in terms of devices and materials according to international standards
    4. Endeavouring to allocate the costs of the researches
    5. Striving to establish connections with international journals and publishers
    6. Initiating the establishment of a journal for applied sciences called “Payari” meaning sustainability
4. **Promoting transparency and upholding academic integrity**
    1. Delivering all course catalogues for all the programs
    2. Delivering the profile of all academic staff
    3. Presenting the learning outcomes and course content, teaching methods, and assessment tools at the commencement of each semester
    4. Offering an overview of the main policies of the University
    5. Proving a breakdown of the particulars of the expenditure and income
    6. Facilitating involvement opportunities for all staff members to participate across diverse domains
5. **Facilitating the recruitment and training of the teaching staff**
    1. Assessing the requisites and the requirements in terms of staff and areas of expertise
    2. Delivering ongoing training courses and continuous development initiatives
    3. Offering tailored training courses in accordance with the quality assurance evaluation results
    4. Endeavouring to recruit experienced staff from external academic institutions

6. **The implementation of modern methods of assessment, and enhancing the learning process as well as impartation of skills to students**
    1. Having approved rubrics for various assessment methods
    2. Diversifying teaching methods and assessment, while aligning them with 21 century skills
    3. Implementation of Flipped Classroom methodology
7. **Responsibility and self-evaluation**
    1. Continuous evaluation of various components of the university through presenting a monthly review
    2. Annual evaluation of administrative and teaching staff
    3. Monthly and annual check of the infrastructure encompassing buildings and the laboratories
    4. Implementation of financial and administrative analysis to appraise the overall financial and administrative status of the university

The Fifth Objective: Offering an effective and suitable system of Administration

1. **Facilitating ongoing professional development for the teaching and administrative staff with the objective of familiarizing them with the modern standards and principles of management**
    1. Determining the requisite areas of training
    2. Offering courses pertaining to administrative, legal, and academic operational regulations and standards
    3. Providing training courses in administration, law, finance, management and IT for the newly employed staff
2. **The deployment of a data-base management system as well as e-management**
    1. Expansion of the IT directorate with regard to human resources and technical requisites
    2. Advancing the proficiency of staff in both administrative and electronic skills
    3. Reorganization of administrative framework and further integration of pertinent units

4. Employment of e-management system for all administrative affairs within the university
5. Directing all staff and students to exclusively communicate through the university email system

3. **Adhering to and enacting the stipulations outlined by ISO regarding administrative quality assurance**
    1. Establishing a dedicated committee tasked with conducting comprehensive studies on the regulations of ISO and their effective implementations
    2. Systematically documenting and maintain records of all meeting minutes from meeting held at the university, faculty and department levels
4. **Utilizing a contemporary and effective framework in the process of decision making**
5. **Providing opportunities for students to engage in the administration processes related to student affairs such as:**
    1. taking supervisory roles within student accommodation units
    2. coordinating and monitoring sports activities and sports venues
    3. participation in volunteering roles and activities associated with Carrier Development Centre (CDC)

The Sixth Objective: Integration of university Endeavours with societal needs

4. Establishing robust channels of communication and cooperation with institutions and organizations both within and beyond national borders
5. Facilitating the inclusion of pertinent stakeholders in the advisory boards of academic departments
6. Promoting societal awareness through cultural initiatives and the preservation of national and social values

1. Orchestrating purposeful cultural events such as festivals, university introduction days, holding book fairs, craft fairs, essay writing competitions, public speaking competitions, drawing competitions as well as marathons
2. Organizing purposeful national activities like National Flag day, Nawroz, National clothes day, Mother Tongue Day

3. Arranging sports activities and endorsing the sustenance of local sports

    1. **Enhancing collaboration with public and private sector to address labour market demands**

        1. Establishing a strategic research centre dedicated to humanities
        2. Hosting Design day
        3. Conducting annual fairs showcasing students' work and entrepreneurial ideas within the framework of the Entrepreneurship Education Module
        4. Implementing an internship system for students in companies
        5. Executing joint projects through the public-private partnership system
        6. Organizing fairs for the local farmers to exhibit their products
        7. Providing professional and scientific consultancy services to the public and private sectors

    2. **Conducting research for the benefit of public and private sectors**

        1. Conducting surveys to identify needs, issues and problems in various fields
        2. Formulating preliminary proposals for scientific research
        3. Presenting the proposals to the relevant parties through scientific activities
        4. Selecting the most viable proposal and allocating the necessary budget
        5. Confirming proposals and initiating research endeavours
        6. Authorizing the scientific research center to conduct regular follow-ups through scheduled meetings and presentations for researchers

    3. Offering training courses to enhance the competencies of the public and private sector staff

        1. Conducting surveys to assess the needs of the public and private sectors
        2. Assigning specific trainers in various expertise including:

1. University trainers
2. External professionals according to identified needs

4. Conducting continuous training courses aligned with the needs of the institutions
5. Conducting training courses for farmers to raise their awareness
6. Cultivating expert trainers through:
    1. Bringing in external trainers or
    2. Sending university staff for requisite training to become trainers

The Seventh Objective: Advancement of scientific research

1. **Guiding and encouraging academic staff, students and researchers to address societal problems and labour market demands**
    1. Identifying the research problems in terms of both quality and quantity
    2. Arranging ongoing workshops to augment the researching abilities of staff
    3. Facilitating translation, review and publication services
    4. Providing incentives to further motivate researchers
    5. Developing original and authentic research endeavours
2. **Expanding the academic relations network to enhance research efforts**
    1. Engaging in communication and collaboration with researchers and esteemed publishing centers
    2. Encouraging and assisting researchers to take part in international scientific activities
    3. Organizing joint activities with institutions with whom the university has signed a memorandum of Understanding
    4. Establishing research teams across various domains
    5. Endeavouring to secure membership in international organizations such as Erasmus, DAAD, Appraise, USAID
3. **Pursuing funding opportunities for research initiatives**
    1. Forming a dedicated team to target the institutions that provide research funds

2. Identifying the viable proposals with the potential to secure funds
3. Collaborating on joint proposals with other universities to enhance funding prospects
4. Drawing upon the expertise of universities and centres with a rich history of successfully obtaining funds
5. Implementing and promoting the research findings

The Eighth Objective: Transforming Soran University into Soran University for Research and Applied Sciences

1. Transition from a Traditional Educational Institute towards an epicentre for Applied Sciences
    1. Focusing on integration of practical experience and applied Research into Educational Programs
    2. Cooperating with Industrial Sector to provide training for the students
    3. Changing the traditional teaching based on the results and outcomes of the studies and researches
    4. Guaranteeing that the educational outcomes meet the social and economic needs
2. Focusing on the study of Applied Sciences
    1. Revising curricula to include more hands-on, project-based learning, internships and industry collaboration.
    2. Integrate vocational degree programs within programs to enhance employability and practical skills.
    3. Integrate the two Faculties of Science and Engineering into one academic center called the Faculty of Engineering and Natural Sciences.
    4. Merging the two Faculties of Law, Political Sciences, Management and the Faculty of Arts into one academic center called the Faculty of Management, Law and Social Sciences
    5. Establishment of Faculty of Medicine and Public Health.
    6. Establishment of Kurdish Studies Center

7. Establishment of the Center for Climate Change Research and Sustainable Development
8. Establishment of medical rehabilitation centers and stem-cell

The Ninth Objective: Commitment to the 17 United **.7**

Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

1. Prioritizing Mental and Physical Health
    1. Provision of public health services, including comprehensive mental health support.
    2. Promotion of physical activity through organized sports and mental health programs.
2. Achieving Family Equality and Empowering Women and Girls
    1. Implementation of policies ensuring equal opportunities for all individuals
    2. Development of specialized training courses for female learners
    3. Ensuring access to equal educational opportunities for all students
3. Promoting Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth
    1. Development of training programs and job creation initiatives within sustainable industries.
    2. Support for start-ups and administrative investment for students.
    3. Establishment of workshops focused on the practical application and marketing of scientific research products.
4. Ensuring Sustainable Consumption and Production Methods
    1. Construction and operation of waste treatment units.
    2. Establishment of workshops for material maintenance and repair.
5. Raising Awareness of the Importance of Sustainability
    1. Enhancement of curricula to integrate sustainability concepts.
    2. Organization of workshops and specialized training programs.
    3. Continuous improvement of curricula to reflect the importance of sustainability practices.

6. Developing Sustainable Campus Infrastructure to obtain Clean Energy and Innovation, Sustainable urban development, weather protection activities
    1. Creation of regional botanical gardens and museums to support biodiversity
    2. Construction of water treatment systems
    3. Implementation of rainwater harvesting systems
    4. Utilization of solar energy to generate electricity and power
    5. Investment in advanced research and innovation centers focusing on sustainable technologies and practices
    6. Promotion of interdisciplinary research addressing environmental challenges
    7. Development of industry partnerships to support innovation and sustainable practices.
    8. Implementation of sustainable transportation options, such as bike-sharing programs.
    9. Organization of educational programs and events to raise climate change awareness and promote sustainable practices
7. Establishment of a dedicated center for Sustainable Development

Tenth Objective: Institutional autonomy for the University

1. **Diversifying revenue resources**
    1. Implementation of language training courses, preparation courses, pedagogical teacher training courses
    2. Authorization for corporate advertising within the university campus
    3. Establishment of international sports facilities
    4. Development of touristic accommodations such as hotels
    5. Creation of contemporary market places
    6. Establishment of coffee shops
    7. Construction of a contemporary parking facilities

2. **Initiatives to amend policies for enhanced university autonomy, timely operations and decision-making**

Assessment of the Current Situation of Soran University A SWOT Analysis

The evaluation of any institution must be conducted either through an impartial external body or through an internal self-evaluation process. A widely adopted method for such assessments is the SWOT analysis, which identifies strengths (positive aspects), weaknesses (negative aspects), opportunities, and threats. This analysis aligns with management principles and offers a comprehensive evaluation of an institution's status. The following presents the SWOT analysis of Soran University.

Strengths

Soran University began with a forward-thinking vision, embodying numerous plans and ambitions for future growth, and exerted significant efforts to develop its staff, internationalize the institution, and establish its presence in the global academic arena. These efforts laid the foundation for several notable strengths, including:

1. The ambition and dedication of university members in promoting and enhancing institutional capabilities.
2. The presence of experienced, competent, honest, and loyal academic leaders.
3. Ongoing efforts to improve the quality of education and teaching across all fields.
4. Continuous initiatives to streamline and enhance the administrative processes of the university.
5. A commitment to transparency in the university's revenue and budget management.
6. Persistent efforts to complete and implement the university’s strategic plan.
7. An increasing number of staff with master’s and doctoral degrees.
8. The existence of a robust Research Center contributing significantly to the implementation of the strategic plan.
9. A broad network of international academic partnerships.
10. Adherence to the Bologna Process.
11. The operation of several active centers specializing in diverse fields.
12. The existence of a comprehensive university strategic plan.

Weaknesses

Like any institution, Soran University suffers from certain negative points that hinder its progress, which are identified in the following:

1. Insufficient or uncertain funding to fully implement the activities outlined in the strategic plan.
2. Inadequate facilities and learning environments that do not align with technological advancements.
3. A lack of effective coordination between the university, the community, and public and private sector institutions.
4. Absence of clear job descriptions for university employees.
5. Limited engagement with university alumni.
6. A lack of strategic planning at the faculty and departmental levels.
7. Shortages of specialized faculty members in certain fields.
8. The absence of a modern library connected to global academic resources.
9. Inadequate electronic infrastructure for administrative and managerial purposes.
10. Insufficient data infrastructure to assess community and labor market needs.
11. The absence of a systematic annual review process for evaluating and granting teaching credentials.
12. A lack of a high-impact scientific journal.
13. Financial and legal obligations to external parties.

Opportunities

Despite its weaknesses, Soran University is presented with significant opportunities for growth, especially in the context of its strategic plan. Key opportunities include:

1. Strong community trust and governmental support for the university.
2. The potential to transition into an applied sciences university.
3. Increasing demand for scientific research.
4. Opportunities for expansion through the opening of new faculties and academic programs.

5. Trust from international universities in Soran University's activities and collaborations.
6. Established cooperation agreements with numerous international universities and institutions.
7. Existing joint agreements between Soran University and several government institutions.
8. A continuous increase in the number of doctoral degree holders and the promotion of academic staff.
9. The absence of other universities in the immediate region.

Threats

The challenges facing Soran University, particularly those that may hinder the implementation of its strategic plan, include:

1. Ongoing financial crises affecting both staff salaries and university revenue.
2. Declining demand for certain academic programs and departments.
3. Pressure on certain departments to admit students beyond their planned capacity.
4. Instability in decision-making and guidelines from the Ministry of Higher Education, including some illogical directives.
5. Poor academic performance among newly admitted students.
6. Unhealthy competition between universities.
7. The centralization of the higher education system.
8. Limited opportunities for hiring additional staff.