**Instructor Notes for Strategic Planning**

**Level:** College freshman or sophomore

**Class time required:** One 50 minute class period + homework to complete the activity

**Prior Work:** It is important that students have previously identified a position or career that they are interested in. The more specific their goal, the easier it will be to complete the SWOT analysis.

**Initial class brainstorming:** This is a good step to do so that it gets students in the mindset of considering an ideal candidate – how they meet those standards and what they need to do in the future to meet them.

**Strategic Plan**

1. Mission Statement: It helps to have some examples to provide students. If you don’t have any, give them some time in class to come up with something and then have them share with each other or the class. You can highlight good examples.
2. Vision Statement: This is a bit easier than the Mission statement, but you can use the same teaching strategies here (examples and/or sharing).
3. SWOT Analysis: Show the example table up on a screen and explain it to the class, along with examples. Have them start working on the table and walk around the room. Then, have them share with each other. Some things to keep in mind:
   * In general, students struggle to be specific with their bullets
   * The Threats category is the most difficult to conceptualize related to REU application, so additional assistance/discussion may be required.
   * The Strengths and Weaknesses categories can feed naturally into the Personal Statement. This may motivate some students to do a good job there.
   * Emphasize that being able to conduct a SWOT analysis in and of itself is a good skill in a business / administration context
4. Goal Setting: Students often struggle with the difference between goals and objectives or actions. Goals are more broad and over-arching, whereas objectives/actions are very specific things to do to accomplish those goals. It helps to provide an example for the students on the board.
5. Objectives: Emphasize the SMART acronym. Most students will not be specific enough or provide themselves with a deadline. These are particularly important steps for personal accountability. It helps to provide some examples of good objectives.

**Drafts and Revisions**

If this is something that you really want the students to do well, you will need to comment on their drafts for revision. Get the students to submit a first and final draft.