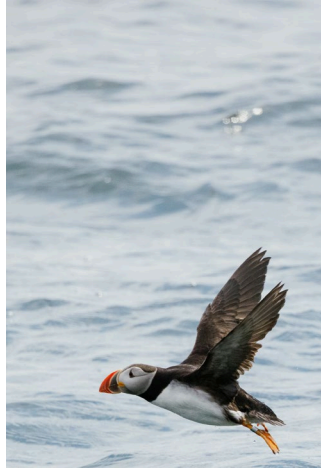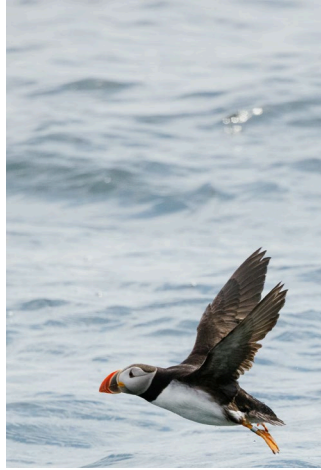# SOAR Analysis Activity

SOAR Overview

- Introduction
- Strengths
- Opportunities
- Quick Break

- Aspirations
- Results
- Wrap-up and Debrief
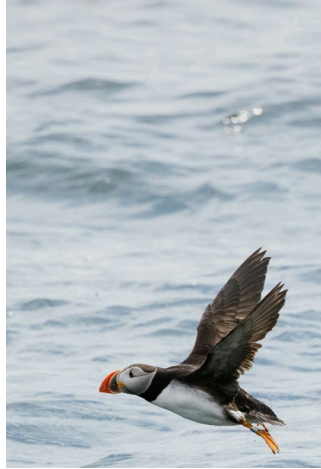
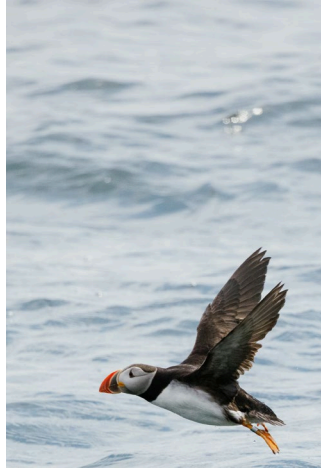# SOAR Framework

Appreciative Inquiry is:

- A collaborative approach of open dialogue designed to help programs create a shared vision for the future (Srivastava & Cooperrider, 1990).

- Positioned as a potential postcolonial approach to organizational development (Mir et al., 2003).

- Involves identifying and building on existing strengths and opportunities, rather than dwelling on problems, deficiencies, weaknesses, and threats.

- Focuses on determining which actions will bring the greatest benefit to all stakeholders.

SOAR Conversations

Strengths

What can we build on?

Opportunities

What are stakeholders asking for?

Aspirations

What do we care deeply about?

Results

How do we know we are succeeding?

SOAR Analysis Activity

- The purpose of the activity is to:
    - o share and create knowledge
    - o learn how to operate through conversation

- All voices are important.

- Everyone brings wisdom and experience, or new ideas, or challenges the status quo.

- All have the opportunity to be heard and to contribute.

SOAR Analysis Activity

Think-Pair-Share
(Lyman, 1981)

- Capture ideas on paper.

- Bring forward everyone's ideas.

- Share small group ideas with the larger group.

- Collapse similar ideas together – indicate their strength visually.
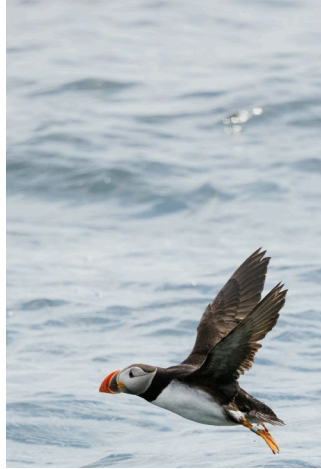
- Try not to think too far ahead.
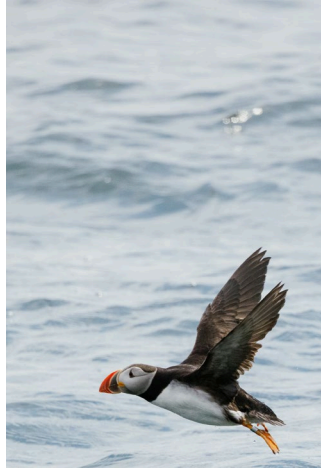
Strengths

What can we build on

30 minutes
Think-Pair-Share
(Lyman, 1981)

1. What have we done well so far?
2. What are we most proud of so far?
3. What positive aspects of the program have students/ faculty/ employers/ others commented on?
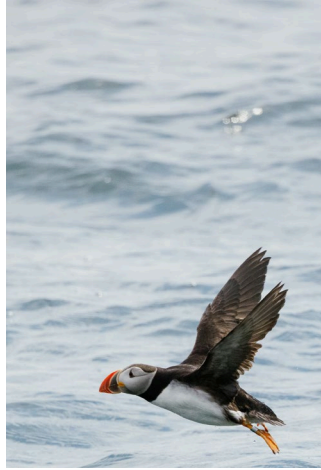4. What makes the department/program unique?

Opportunities

What are stakeholders asking for

30 minutes
Think-Pair-Share
(Lyman, 1981)

1. What changes do we expect to see in the next 3 - 5 years?
2. What external forces or trends may impact this model?
3. What opportunities exist for us?
4. What are students, faculty, and/or the community already asking for?

Aspirations

What do we care deeply about

30 minutes

Think-Pair-Share

(Lyman, 1981)

1. What are we deeply passionate about?

2. What difference do we hope to make for students, faculty, staff, and the community?

3. What does our preferred future look like?

4. What projects, programs, or processes support our aspirations?
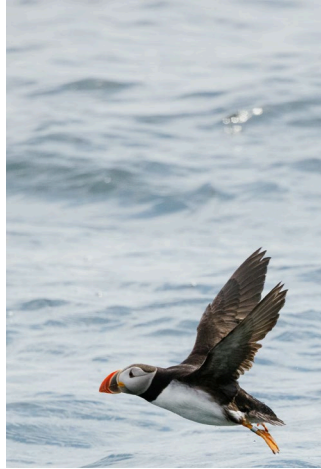
Results

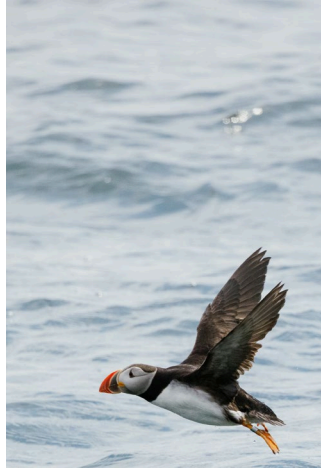How will we know if we are successful

30 minutes

Think-Pair-Share

(Lyman, 1981)

1. Considering our strengths, opportunities, and aspirations, what meaningful measures will indicate we are on track with achieving our goals?

2. What measurable results do we want to see?

3. What measurements will we be known for?

4. What resources are needed to implement our most vital projects and initiatives?
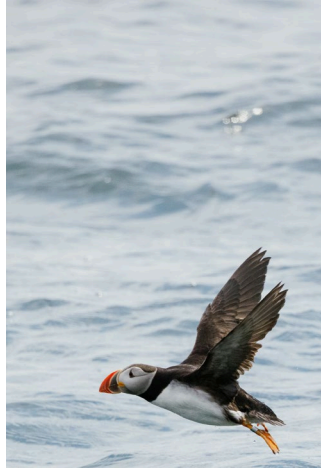
Next Steps

- SOAR Analysis Report prepared by a quality assurance practitioner or educational developer for the department

- Self-Study Report written collaboratively by the department

- External Review hosted by the department

- Action Planning and Goal-Setting Workshop facilitated by the Office of Quality Assurance

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Lyman, F. (1981). *The responsive classroom discussion: The inclusion of all students. Mainstreaming Digest*. University of Maryland, College Park, MD.

Mir, R. A., Mir, A., & Upadhyaya, P. (2003). Toward a postcolonial reading of organizational control. In *Postcolonial theory and organizational analysis: A critical engagement* (pp. 47-73). Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Srivastva, S., & Cooperrider, D. (1990). *Appreciative management and leadership: The power of positive thought and action in organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Stavros, J.M., Cooperrider, D L, & Kelley, D.L. (2003). Strategic inquiry appreciative intent: Inspiration to SOAR, a new framework for strategic planning. *AI Practitioner. November*, 10-17.

Stavros, J.M. & Hinrichs, G.(2009). *The thin book of SOAR: Building strengths- based strategy*. Bend, OR: Thin Book Publishing Co.