AGENDA
State Board of Community Colleges
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
Virtual Meeting
Monday, March 14, 2022 - 2:00 p.m.
Ms. Ann Whitford, Chair

Call to Order

Roll Call

Ethics Awareness and Conflict of Interest

Approval of Agenda

For Information

- Synthesized Input, Proposed Planning Themes (Attachment PLAN 01)
- Student Survey and Focus Group Input (Attachment PLAN 02)
- Feedback from Presidents and Trustees at Regional Listening Sessions - Updated (Attachment PLAN 03)
- Feedback from Other Community College Stakeholders – Updated (Attachment PLAN 04)

New Business

Adjourn

Questions relating to items on the Agenda should be addressed to the Office of State Board Affairs at (919)807-6970 or by email at stateboard@nccommunitycolleges.edu
Synthesized Input, Proposed Planning Themes
--Potential “buckets” (plan themes) and focus areas

Background

Since September 2021, the State Board of Community Colleges and System Office have reviewed demographic and enrollment data and reached out to internal and external stakeholders to identify key issues for inclusion in the North Carolina Community College System Strategic Plan. Some of the major outreach mechanisms included a series of eight regional listening sessions with community college presidents and trustees; planning exercises with community college associations; conversations with statewide industry associations and the NC Community College Faculty Association; and a survey of students followed by focus groups, made possible by the N4CSGA (student government association).

Staff used the input (particularly challenges raised up by community college leaders) to develop a list of issues. At the February SBCC Strategic Planning Committee meeting, board members identified their top issues. This prioritizing exercise resulted in the following proposed themes:

- Supporting Top-Quality Faculty and Staff for Top-Quality Education and Career Preparation--Faculty and Staff Recruitment, Retention
- Expanding the Education and Training Pipeline (Enrollment)
- Boosting Student Success for All Students
- Addressing Employer Needs, Talent Development, and Economic Mobility
- Improving System Funding & Effectiveness

Next Steps

The next steps in the process are as follows:

- The Strategic Planning Committee will review and revise as needed the proposed planning themes (buckets).
- The themes will be used to structure planning teams to develop the goals, strategies and tactics for the strategic plan, with each team meeting an estimated three times this spring.
- In order to ensure the plan is strategic, the planning teams may propose further priorities to the Strategic Planning Committee as it plans how the System can achieve the overall goals. The thought process for objectives, strategies and especially tactics will draw upon criteria suggested by the Strategic Planning Committee, such as the balance between feasibility and impact. The Strategic Planning Committee has described an interest in developing a portfolio of tactics, some of which are shorter-term in nature/more feasible, as well as tactics that would be phased in later or would require a longer-term investment of time and energy to realize. The Committee has also identified some cross-cutting themes that may be found in each theme area, such as removing barriers and promoting diversity and inclusion.
Draft Planning Themes and Related Issues

As a part of synthesizing and condensing issues to produce a list of five major themes, some topics were collapsed under others. To follow are the same five proposed themes ("buckets"), with greater explanation offered and possible sub-topics identified. Some of these sub-topics may be drawn on to develop plan objectives, strategies, or tactics.

1. **Supporting Top-Quality Faculty and Staff for Top-Quality Education and Career Preparation -- Faculty and Staff Recruitment, Retention**
   (salary competition, equity, and growth; remote work; bandwidth; professional development/career development; salary equity and growth for both faculty and staff)
   - Funding for pay, benefits – for faculty and staff
   - Professional development, career growth opportunities
   - Other strategies to give employees flexibility in how they work or offer support or recognition to employees

2. **Expanding the Education and Training Pipeline (Enrollment)**
   (pandemic enrollment declines, potential declines in CCP, declining numbers of HS graduates, disengaged youth, credential attainment)
   - Statewide marketing, communications, other “first choice” strategies (greater engagement from colleges in marketing, balance with local marketing and recruitment; improved communication)
   - Free Community College? Or expanded scholarships, help accessing financial aid or communicating available resources to pay for tuition/fees, Open Educational Resources (OER) or help paying for textbooks, or other affordability efforts
   - Adult learner efforts, including addressing their interest in employability
   - Career and College Promise (role in college FTE, overall enrollment, post-CCP enrollment in community college, low enrollment of students of color)
   - Helping students balance college with work/family commitments (which is both an enrollment and student success issue)

3. **Boosting Student Success for All Students**
   - Meeting students' academic needs (core instructional efforts and supplies, as well as addressing advising, coaching, pandemic learning loss)
Meeting students’ non-academic needs (housing, food, transportation, childcare, mental health)

Supporting credential attainment/statewide attainment goal

Meeting the needs of a changing and more diverse student population (age, race/ethnicity, academic preparation, disengagement, mental health, disability status)

- National leader in diversity and inclusion (addressing opportunity gaps)

Addressing interest in increased flexibility and availability (scheduling of courses, modality of courses, availability of college services...especially for adult learners)

Technology access for students (cited more than transportation in student survey)

4. **Addressing Employer Needs, Talent Development, and Economic Mobility**
   (workforce/economic development, student interest, faculty availability, incentives for regional collaboration)

- Addressing skill shortages (worker shortages identified across industries)

- Supporting continued expansion of apprenticeships, other work-based learning, and Customized Training (with support for colleges to listen to employer needs together)

- Regional solutions (changing the relationships between colleges and between colleges and the system office; incentives for regional collaboration; convening college leaders to help develop)

- Further developing pathways, career advising

5. **Improving System Funding & Effectiveness**

- Funding model (Funding based on past FTE makes starting new programs difficult, FTE rate for high cost/high impact programs does not cover costs, large/small college funding considerations, services are delivered by headcount not FTE)

- Funding for capital construction and equipment (many buildings nearing end of life cycle, especially rural; variable ability to raise local funds; unique needs for buildings, equipment for high-demand fields)

- Data and innovation (improved K12 and workforce data sharing; System focus on sharing research and leading innovation)

- Technology and cybersecurity (broadband access, computer access, cybersecurity, ERP/technology systems)

- Enhanced leadership and supports from System Office (purchasing contracts, subject matter experts, convening colleges, more flexibility, quicker response)
N4CSGA Student Survey and Focus Group Input

Background

As the State Board and System Office were engaging in outreach for the System strategic plan and considering how to tap student input, System Office staff learned of plans by the N4CSGA (North Carolina Comprehensive Community Colleges Student Government Association) to develop a survey of students. The System Office Strategic Planning Team tapped the student-led survey under development for N4CSGA purposes for strategic planning, collaborating with the N4CSGA and its president and State Board member Nathan Vasquez. The N4CSGA’s student leaders and senior advisor engaged the System Office in review of the draft survey to address questions of interest for strategic planning. This is the first survey of all North Carolina community college students in recent memory conducted with a major purpose of informing a System strategic plan. The N4CSGA intends to repeat the survey on a periodic basis in the future.

Survey Questions, Responses, and Results

The student survey was conducted anonymously using Google Forms and included questions about student demographics, students’ community college experience, and how North Carolina community colleges could better serve special populations. Data were tabulated at the state level.

By 2/23/22, 3,104 survey responses (approximately 0.9% of students) had been collected from students from 49 community colleges. The survey responses overrepresented female students, but the racial/ethnic composition of the survey closely matched the composition of the North Carolina community college population. The survey overrepresented Curriculum students and under-represented Workforce Continuing Education (job training) students. In sum, the information provides an important glimpse into the perspectives of thousands of students and incorporates racial/ethnic diversity of students; care should just be taken in drawing conclusions, as the responses may not be representative of the student body.

Key questions and responses are as follows:

- **What three issues, if addressed, would make it easier for you to enroll?**
  - Top responses: 1) N/A (it was not difficult to enroll): 46%; 2) Balancing college with work or family commitments (44%); 3) Cost (34%); 4) FAFSA form for financial aid (hard to fill out or confusing (21%); 5) Transportation (14%).

- **Changes to what three issues would make it easier for you to succeed as a student?**
  - Top responses: 1) Balancing college with work or family commitments (54%); 2) Tuition and fees (39%); 3) Employability after graduation (24%); 4) Need for
more or different types of advising/support (17%); and tied for 5th most frequently cited issue at 13%: Technology challenges and Transportation challenges.

- Community College was my first choice for education or training over other alternatives such as four-year college or university, private two-year college, or private training provider.
  - Yes: 75%; No: 25%

- How much do you agree with the statement: “My college makes an effort to make me feel welcomed and valued”?
  - Agree or Strongly Agree: 82%
    (40% answered 10/10 on the rating scale)
  - Somewhat Agree: 12%
  - Disagree/Strongly Disagree: 6%

- Did your college give you adequate information about financial assistance? (Financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, etc.)
  - Yes: 81%; No: 19%

- My college provides me with helpful advising about careers and the right classes to reach my goals.
  - Agree/Strongly Agree: 76%
    (37% answered 10/10 on the rating scale)
  - Somewhat Agree: 15%
  - Disagree/Strongly Disagree: 8%

- Do you have any suggestions about how to improve the Community College System in North Carolina?
  - Examples of open-ended responses related to...
    - Addressing tuition, fees, living expenses, books
    - Faculty and staff communication, support, pay
    - Advising, counseling, communicating about supports
    - Classes for working adults, flexibility with students
    - Communication and promotion of community colleges
    - College offerings, standards and standardization
    - Transportation around colleges and between campuses
• What resources should colleges provide to promote minority male/female success?  
  (Two questions)  
  o Sample responses:  
    ▪ Mentoring (e.g., modeled after Big Sibling program or Boy Scouts)  
    ▪ Scholarships/grants and information about existing resources, including workforce scholarships  
    ▪ Social or support or empowerment clubs  
    ▪ Outreach to younger students  
    ▪ Success stories, role models  
    ▪ Workshops/assemblies/focus groups about the challenges they face  
    ▪ Help walking through the college process  
    ▪ Approachable faculty/staff  
    ▪ More minority faculty and staff  
    ▪ Responsiveness to hard times (e.g., temporarily slowing down the workload)  
    ▪ Flexibility to accommodate rotating work shifts, children’s school pick-ups, and other responsibilities  
    ▪ Child care while attending classes  
    ▪ Same resources as for other students to support them

See the end of this document for a presentation that shows key charts and statistics from the survey data.

Focus Group Input from Students

The N4CSGA held its Spring Division Meeting on February 26, 2022 and invited System Office Strategic Initiatives staff to participate. After Dr. Patrick Crane shared a presentation of the student survey results with all the N4CSGA students and staff participating, he and Anne Bacon facilitated focus groups on the top issues cited as barriers to student enrollment and success: cost factors (tuition/fees/other costs) and balancing community college with life (family/work/etc.).

In the cost factor focus group, students discussed specific issues that they found challenging:

• “Surprise costs” – high cost of textbooks, supplies, uniforms, with no information upfront to expect the costs  
• Technology costs  
• Challenges with completing the FAFSA form or being available on “FAFSA Day”  
• Difficulty qualifying for financial aid (e.g., if considered a dependent on parents’ tax form, just taking one class, or if an international student)  
• Availability of supports as well as costs (e.g., child care in the evening for night classes)

Possible solutions discussed included...
• Free college or free classes
• Help paying book costs or exploration of OER (Open Educational Resources)
• Free (not loaner) laptops
• Child care scholarships and drop-in child care on campus
• FAFSA assistance on more than one day of the semester
• More information about existing scholarships and supports, and sharing information on social media

In the balancing community college with life focus group, students discussed issues that were challenging for them:

• Negotiating work schedules (especially when they are not fixed) with class schedules, working with the employer and the college
• Lack of any free time... and high stress
• Doing both college and other aspects of life well – having to sacrifice one for the other
• Child care challenges
• Mental health, substance abuse problems
• More limited hours of libraries, other college facilities due to the pandemic
• Lack of flexibility or rigid late work grading policies
• Limitations for Early College students to leave campus (making it impossible to work)
• Limited housing in the area near the college, making it hard to get to college and succeed
• Violence or chronic illness affecting the family or student

Possible solutions discussed included...

• Assistance to negotiate college and employer expectations
• Flexibility in college scheduling
• Unofficial scheduling flexibility and teaching/tutoring assistance from faculty and staff*
• Child care on campus
• Wellness focus and wellness events; exam week support*
• Tutoring or writing centers, with encouragement or grade incentives for students to attend*
• Time management assistance and first-year seminars that help with college and future success* -- but for adult learners
• Continued increase in online offerings, which was expanded during the pandemic
• Involvement in Early College, the Student Government Association to help students understand how to navigate college and better understand its offerings and support*
• Open Wifi on campus*
• Extended campus hours, especially for libraries, study rooms*

*Some students in the focus groups said these already exist at their college.
N4CSGA Student Survey Results

N4CSGA Spring Division Meeting

February 26, 2022
Survey Responses

As of 2/23/2022, when data were pulled for analysis...

- 3,104 survey responses from 49 community colleges
- Similar racial/ethnic representation
- Some caveats:
  --low large-college representation relative to student enrollment in those colleges
  --more female students than student population
  --certain programs over- or under-represented
  --survey responses represent approximately 0.9% of students
Respondent Demographics

Race/Ethnicity
- White: 55%
- Black or African American: 24%
- Hispanic/Latino/LatinX: 11%
- Asian: 2%
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 2%
- Prefer not to say: 3%
- Other Response: 4%

Age
- 14 - 17 years old: 17%
- 18 - 24 years old: 38%
- 25 - 34 years old: 17%
- 35 - 44 years old: 13%
- 45 - 55 years old: 9%
- 55 or older: 5%
- Prefer not to say: 1%

Gender
- Female: 72%
- Male: 24%
- Non-Binary: 2%
- Prefer not to say: 2%
- Other Response: 2%
What programs or pathways are you currently enrolled in? (please choose all that apply to you)

- Applied Science Degree, 33%
- College Transfer, 26%
- High School & College, 22%
- College Credit Diploma/Certificate, 12%
- Workforce Continuing Education, 6%
- Adult High School or High School Equivalency, 2%
- English as a Second Language, 2%
- Co-Admission Student, 1%
- Other, 7%
What three issues, if addressed, would make it easier for you to enroll? Check up to three responses.

- N/A (it was not difficult to enroll) 46%
- Balancing college with work or family commitments 44%
- Cost 34%
- FAFSA form for financial aid (hard to fill out or confusing) 21%
- Transportation 14%
- Doubts about the quality of education 11%
- Challenges with child care or afterschool care 9%
- Residency Determination Service (RDS) - (hard to complete or confusing) 6%
- Other 6%
What three issues, if addressed, would make it easier for you to enroll? Check up to three responses. (By Age Range)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>14-17</th>
<th>18-24</th>
<th>25+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A (it was not difficult to enroll)</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balancing college with work or family commitments</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAFSA form for financial aid (hard to fill out or confusing)</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doubts about the quality of education</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges with child care or afterschool care</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residency Determination Service (RDS) - (hard to complete or confusing)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Changes to what three issues would make it easier for you to succeed as a student? Check up to three responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balancing college with work or family commitments</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition and fees</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employability after graduation</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Need for more or different types of advising/support</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology challenges</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation challenges</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty finding/accessing student resources</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doubts about the quality of education</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges with child care or afterschool care</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing insecurity</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunger/food insecurity</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language/communication barriers</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Security</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance abuse</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA/Other</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Changes to what three issues would make it easier for you to succeed as a student? Check up to three responses. (By Age Range)

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<th>14-17</th>
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<th>25+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balancing college with work or family commitments</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition and fees</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employability after graduation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for more or different types of advising/support</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology challenges</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation challenges</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty finding/accessing student resources</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doubts about the quality of education</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Challenges with child care or afterschool care</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing insecurity</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>6%</td>
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<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Security</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance abuse</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SBCC
03/14/2022
Community College was my first choice for education or training over other alternatives such as a four-year college or university, private two-year college, or private training provider.

Did your college give you adequate information about financial assistance? (Financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, etc.)

- Yes, 75%
- No, 25%

- Yes, 81%
- No, 19%
How much do you agree with the statement: "My college makes an effort to make me feel welcomed and valued."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (7-10)</th>
<th>82%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Agree (5-6)</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree/Strongly Disagree (1-4)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1%  1%  1%  3%  6%  6%  10%  17%  15%  40%
My college provides me with helpful advising about careers and the right classes to reach my goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree/Strongly Agree</td>
<td>(7-10) 76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>(5-6) 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree/Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>(1-4) 8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1% 2% 3% 4% 5% 6% 7% 8% 9% 10%
In summary

Multiple issues, with top two:
• Balancing college with work and family
• Cost

Some surprises

Caveats

CONGRATULATIONS!
Feedback from Presidents and Trustees at Regional Listening Sessions – Updated
(Includes input from all eight listening sessions, including the final meeting held 2/14/22)

Background

Beginning with the State Board Planning Meeting in September, staff have been collecting input from key stakeholders as a part of developing the next System strategic plan. In order for staff and State Board members to gain a better understanding of community colleges’ challenges and solutions, the System Office worked with community colleges to set up eight regional meetings between December 8, 2021 and February 14, 2022. The meetings were organized by Community College Trustee Region and were also configured so they would reach into the state’s eight Prosperity Zones. Due to the rapid rise in COVID cases since early December, seven of the meetings were shifted to virtual format.

The eight meetings are shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Date</th>
<th>Community College Trustee Region</th>
<th>Host College/Location</th>
<th>Participating Colleges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/8/2021</td>
<td>Region 6 – Northeastern NC</td>
<td>Pitt Community College Winterville</td>
<td>Beaufort Co. Community College College of the Albemarle Edgecombe Community College Martin Community College Nash Community College Pitt Community College Roanoke-Chowan Comm. College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/5/2022</td>
<td>Region 1 – Southwestern NC</td>
<td>Southwestern Community College -- Virtual</td>
<td>A-B Tech (Asheville-Buncombe) Blue Ridge Community College Cleveland Community College Isothermal Community College McDowell Tech Southwestern Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/6/2022</td>
<td>Region 2 – Northwestern NC</td>
<td>Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute – Virtual</td>
<td>Caldwell (CC&amp;TI) Catawba Valley Community College Mitchell Community College Rowan-Cabarrus Community College Surry Community College Western Piedmont Comm. College Wilkes Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/13/2022</td>
<td>Region 4 (part) – Southern/SW NC</td>
<td>Central Piedmont Community College – Virtual</td>
<td>Central Piedmont Comm. College Gaston College* Montgomery Community College Wilson Community College*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/14/2022</td>
<td>Region 4 (part) – Southern</td>
<td>Robeson Community College – Virtual</td>
<td>Bladen Community College* Fayetteville Tech Richmond Community College Robeson Community College Sandhills Community College Southeastern Community College*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Date</td>
<td>Community College Trustee Region</td>
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<td>Participating Colleges</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/1/2022</td>
<td>Region 5 – Southeastern NC</td>
<td>Coastal Carolina Community College – Virtual</td>
<td>Brunswick Community College, Cape Fear Community College, Carteret Community College, Coastal Carolina Community College, Craven Community College, James Sprunt Community College, Sampson Community College, Wayne Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/3/2022</td>
<td>Region 3 (part) – Piedmont Triad/ Central NC</td>
<td>Davidson-Davie Community College – Virtual</td>
<td>Alamance Community College, Davidson-Davie Community College, Forsyth Tech, Guilford Tech, Randolph Community College, Rockingham Community College, Stanly Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/14/2022</td>
<td>Region 3 (part)</td>
<td>Wake Tech – Virtual</td>
<td>Central Carolina Community College, Durham Tech, Lenoir Community College, Piedmont Community College, Vance-Granville Community College, Wake Tech</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*From a different community college region

Some colleges participated in a meeting of colleges from outside their trustee region due to time availability or other coordination issues. Each college was invited to bring a team of five including the college president, chair and vice-chair of each college’s board of trustees, and additional trustees or staff.

**Major Points Raised by Colleges**

The information listed below was provided by college leaders who communicated the following needs and requests. These requests are provided as they were presented by community college presidents, trustees, or other college leaders in the listening sessions. **These comments due not necessarily represent consensus among colleges and have not been compared for alignment with the applicable state and federal law, and/or State Board Code.**

Italicized questions to follow are the questions posed in the meeting, and the text or tables below summarize responses.

**What is the biggest challenge facing your college right now?**

Some colleges mentioned one challenge, some listed more. Themes raised in college responses are listed below, with “Y” for each Trustee Region meeting at which the response came up and a “#1” to indicate the challenge that was raised by the most colleges at the regional meeting.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Challenges Cited</th>
<th>Trustee Region*</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment/retention of community college faculty/staff – with focus on pay or overall benefits</td>
<td>#1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding – overall level</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding formula or funding priorities</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce development/fulfilling employer pipeline needs (including filling the pipeline, various CE/CU issues, data sharing to understand employment outcomes, etc.)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call for greater focus on adult learners (some considering this the original mission of the NCCS)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCP issues, such as financial dependence on CCP, difficulty of converting dually enrolled into further community college enrollment, or low enrollment of students of color</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other K-12 partnership issues - including data sharing to understand the future education and workforce pipeline</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges re: responsiveness to students’ needs: - free tuition or lower fees - comprehensive financial support/other support - flexibility with timing, length of terms, or location of education/training - mental health support</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing student population (in terms of demographics, pandemic learning loss, students with disabilities or mental health challenges, more part-time students)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disengaged (prospective) students and/or disaffected youth (including the increase in disengagement during the pandemic and understanding this group)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology or cybersecurity</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital funding for facilities</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pandemic (direct discussion)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in statewide marketing/message, and/or greater engagement of colleges in marketing</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to address barriers/increase flexibility</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Regions 3 and 4 were each split into two meetings to reach additional Prosperity Zones.
~Attended by at least one college from outside the Community College Trustee Region
What is one solution you want to highlight that is helping address a critical issue in your community or region?

The table below lists many of the solutions collected thus far, with one more Regional Listening Session planned. The college teams mentioned solutions ranging from strategically designed workforce training and apprenticeship programs to partnerships with community organizations or other educational institutions. Other solutions addressed college capacity issues or student support strategies.

### Sample Community College Solutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Solution</th>
<th>College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>College Capacity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved board diversity through board letter to appointing authorities requesting that board appointments represent the community</td>
<td>College of the Albemarle (COA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building up grant writing capacity to address licensing fees for software, program startup costs, childcare/transportation</td>
<td>Edgecombe Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and retention of IT staff via signing bonuses, piloting of working from home</td>
<td>Guilford Tech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New strategic plans, new directions</td>
<td>Piedmont Community College; WPCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various strategies to understand and address employee needs creatively, ranging from conducting a salary/equity study to allowing more teleworking/requiring fewer hours on campus to considering pet insurance for employees.</td>
<td>Rockingham Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quarter-cent sales tax</strong> approved by county commissioners in 2018, with all funding dedicated to the college</td>
<td>South Piedmont Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using HyFlex program modality as a way to provide a more personalized education for students and meet their needs better</td>
<td>Southeastern Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved to a One College model. Also government partnership/support for an entrepreneurship center and a STEM building and renovations.</td>
<td>Wilson Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing an area off-campus (Lee Technology Center) with buildings for technology, HVAC, and small business encircling an Early College High School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partnerships</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model partnerships, including with Carteret hospital to grow their own nurses. Partnerships with school systems, businesses, hospitals crucial.</td>
<td>Carteret Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging community champions to promote community college, including faith-based organizations, Sanford City Council member, Boys and Girls Club</td>
<td>Central Carolina Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Powers Promise</strong> and community partnerships with the McNair Foundation, county school systems, and Homeschool Association</td>
<td>Isothermal Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic alignment of its new strategic plan with area economic development, the school system, and other local partners</td>
<td>McDowell Tech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership with community, including work with the public schools, business, and the county to develop a shared vocational center</td>
<td>Montgomery Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofit collaboration: Strategic Twin Cities Ed. Partnership (STEP) --career exposure for K-12 students; Peacemakers -- underserved adults</td>
<td>Nash Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships— with other CCs (e.g., RAMP East certificate for advanced manufacturing) and community (reentry for justice-involved students)</td>
<td>Pitt Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Solution</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Rowan Education Collaborative/biweekly meetings with college, school, county</td>
<td>Rowan-Cabarrus Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leaders; NC Manufacturing Institute employer-paid training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach to students, the community, employers—hotspots/laptops for students,</td>
<td>Southwestern Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outreach via health clinics, Harrah’s Casinos partnership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paid internships and instructional programming,</strong> funded by two county</td>
<td>Surry Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commissions, involving four school systems in Surry, Yadkin counties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Partnership with Smithfield Foods (Industrial Systems) has been replicated in</td>
<td>Wayne Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>five states and at the college with swine management.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Working on partnership with a high school for HVAC, putting HVAC equipment at</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school, with the school allowing WCC to train on weekends.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Access, Support and Success</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment increases in recent semesters with the help of pandemic scholarship</td>
<td>Forsyth Tech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>funding for all high school graduates (Longleaf Commitment + other funds) and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multi-model learning opportunities (flexible in-person or online learning)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged Dogwood Health Trust to work with students so they wouldn’t be</td>
<td>A-B Tech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deregistered due to inability to pay bills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult learner work</strong> (highlighted at 12/2021 SBCC Issues Luncheon) including</td>
<td>Blue Ridge Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>free college, Success Coaches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement with Duplin County Transit provides free transportation for students</td>
<td>James Sprunt Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extensive student support: Single Stop referrals to community services; mental</td>
<td>Randolph Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>health first aid team; Student Assistance Program (SAP, similar to EAPs); Success</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaches, Career Coaches, and a health coach.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress on WCC plan’s aim to increase the graduation rate; launched their</td>
<td>Wilkes Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise program; revamping advising; Success Coach in each h.s.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workforce Development</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Accelerator Program – High school to community college pre-</td>
<td>Alamance Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apprenticeship to apprenticeship program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career pathways to grow the workforce/retain local talent. Also (pre)apprentices</td>
<td>Beaufort Co. Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ships with businesses, 4 school systems/14 high schools.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships with business stakeholders (listening to needs/having them be part</td>
<td>Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute (CCC&amp;TI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the solutions, and cultivating hiring from the college)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shifting of workforce training into academies, starting with the Furniture</td>
<td>Catawba Valley Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academy; now also manufacturing, construction, hospitality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short term training programs (particularly academies) introduced in recent years</td>
<td>Cleveland Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– electric lineman, others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater use of short courses to meet needs of employers and their need for initial</td>
<td>Durham Tech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>training for new workers and more regular upskilling of workers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building of Fiber Innovation Center, a world-class facility to develop and test</td>
<td>Gaston College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fibers (such as PPE) for industry. 2-yr. degree developed with NCSU.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding short-term workforce training, in partnership with trustees, county</td>
<td>Haywood Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commissioners, employers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making use of teacher preparation programming to homegrow their supply of</td>
<td>Lenoir Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers at a time when school systems are losing teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Current Solution | College
--- | ---
**Career in a Year** program, marketing all education offerings <=12 mos. (CE/CU) together. Also regional CC collaboration such as 1+1 programs. | Martin Community College
Strong growth in its apprenticeship program (Apprenticeship Iredell) | Mitchell Community College
Developing Continuing Ed. programs that have value to employers (such as pharmacy tech and electric line worker) and are cohort based. | Richmond Community College
Short-term industry training and apprenticeships, including several apprenticeship programs developing in healthcare | Roanoke-Chowan Community College
Top-tier truck driver training program, with strong collaboration with local industry (which donates trucks to the college). | Sampson Community College
**PACE** Apprenticeship program; building a Construction Trades Solutions Center. Also cites partnerships with CCs. | Western Piedmont Community College

Web links added by staff for illustration

**What can the State Board and System Office do to better support your students and institutions?**

College leaders communicated the following needs and requests:

- **Help community colleges attract/retain/support excellent faculty and staff**
  - Continue to advocate for (significantly) increased salaries for both faculty and staff. Pursue the new three-year legislative agenda aggressively.
    - Don’t let General Assembly distinguish between faculty and staff—both groups are critical and need to be paid better
    - Engage business to tell their story and how community college funding is needed to meet their needs *(See this and other strategies in separate advocacy section, below)*
    - Engage the Trustees’ Association, Presidents’ Association, community college family
  - Influence where possible about benefits as well (holidays, etc.)
  - Increase flexibility with local salary determination
  - Advocate for program funding that can pay more for special expertise
  - Explore hub and spoke model of program offerings that does not require each college to separately provide all program staffing
  - Provide professional development (e.g., re: online learning) – staffing and training capacity of colleges varies

- **Seek increases in funding and increased college budget flexibility**
  - Advocate for overall increased funding (an equitable allocation of education funding)
  - Advocate for specific needs – various priorities cited:
    - Funding for equipment and technology
    - Funding for program startup costs – and not limited to certain industries/occupations
    - Increased funding for infrastructure (e.g., via SCIF)
• Provide more funding for early alert services, virtual student support services
  o Address/help achieve free tuition and/or fees
    ▪ Or one alternative view on fees: allow for increased fees or other funding streams for more stable local budgets
    ▪ Some presidents seek NCCCS stance or support on concept of free college
    ▪ One president: replicate TN’s success with free college and free training – seek funding to continue/expand Longleaf Commitment and introduce statewide program for adult learners
  o Help colleges contain costs and seek grant funding
  o Consider a new role in Foundation fundraising
  o Be ready for need for fast program growth with new/expanding industry
  o Watch out for funding declines when pandemic funding disappears
  o Watch out for CCP policy changes that could undermine participation and funding

• Examine and address funding model or funding priorities
  o FTE funding formula (calculating funding based on previous year’s FTE) can hold back growth (program startup is difficult, slow); funding amount does not cover instruction and equipment costs of high-cost/high-demand programs
    ▪ One recommendation: ultimately pay for outcomes; in shorter-term, move to 3-year moving average to temper budget impact due to a drop in enrollment
  o Support high-cost, high-demand programs with a higher level of funding (some programs operate at a loss)
  o Provide more funding for short-term workforce programs and programs leading to employer-valued credentials
  o Create investment pools with public and private dollars to help us realize our goals
  o Take into consideration the cost and burden of implementing new initiatives (especially hard on rural/small colleges)
  o Recognize that urban/larger community colleges have access to funding sources that small rural colleges don’t (such as multi-campus funding and generally more support from county commissioners based on larger tax bases)
  o Reversion process needs to be revised so it doesn’t incentivize spend-down of funding and allows saving of funds for good purposes

• Enhance overall advocacy
  o Legislative agenda is good/ambitious – get it to the General Assembly and focus on it to get it across the finish line
  o Increase number of lobbyists
  o Bring on an ambassador or lobbyist for each region
  o Get businesses to tell our story for us and engage in advocacy on our behalf in the General Assembly
  o Continue to lobby to improve RDS and the application process
  o Seek support for broadband in rural areas
  o Allow undocumented individuals to receive in-state tuition
  o Watch legislative action/study bills related to K-12 and support continued funding for K-12 schools for Career and College Promise (dual enrollment) students
  o We need a strategic plan to work with the legislature
Need to make sure the legislature knows the depth of our talent in community colleges and the depth of their opportunities elsewhere (which is often greater than for university employees)

- **Support increases in enrollment through research, marketing, partnerships, processes:**
  - Research the causes of enrollment declines and possible solutions
  - Restart/reinvigorate statewide marketing campaign
    - More popular idea with smaller, rural colleges
    - Others may be more interested if individual colleges are engaged before marketing occurs and marketing aligns with their efforts
    - Define and promote the value of community colleges with business
    - Address the stigma of community colleges and share the jobs and pay that students can obtain as result
  - Create/expand intentional partnerships with K-12 education
    - Pursue data sharing at a statewide level (e.g., with K-12 partners) to understand the student pipeline
    - Align calendars of public schools with community colleges (one president)
    - Put more emphasis on community college courses vs. AP courses
  - Revise application/admissions/enrollment process
    - Review/revise or eliminate unnecessary questions in the application (e.g., education level of your father)
    - Enable CCP (dual enrollment) students to automatically be accepted as in-state students, without having to go through RDS (Residency Determination Service)
    - Make it possible for students to enroll and get schedules quickly. Make the experience more like Amazon (easy, quick).
      - Alternative view: add questions to the application so colleges know needs better/can serve more effectively
  - **Clear away barriers that are part of State Board Code/any policy we have control over; advocate with SACSCOC as well as General Assembly**
    - Make it easier to use shorter/ flexible-length terms
    - Create efficiencies in program approval process so there can be faster approval for quickly growing fields in an area
    - Pursue waiver option to make it easier for students to participate in CCP if not considered “academically gifted”; increase the number of pathways
    - Move toward more local autonomy on fee setting
    - Recognize that some SACS requirements (such as 18 graduate hours in a certain area) make it hard to recruit
    - Review athletics requirements – harder to do athletics in NC than in other states, and it can help with recruitment/enrollment
    - Review rules, requirements in partnership with college presidents to see which no longer serve a purpose (many antiquated)
    - Eliminate bureaucracy and jumping through hoops

- **Promote regional collaboration and innovation**
  - Provide incentives or flexibility for regional collaboration:
    - Allow flexibility of funding across service areas
• Help us create stronger business connections regionally and stronger partnerships
• Support “hub and spoke” arrangements in which a lead college partners with other colleges for broader delivery of curricula.
  o Pursue economies of scale (regional and state levels), including leveraging systemwide buying power to help colleges band together to access lower-cost purchases for technology and data, such as learning management systems (LMS), customer relations management (CRM) systems, or economic data packages
  o One college asked the State Board to keep program offerings (in a region) limited so the System has fewer great programs rather than many mediocre programs
  o Promote and reward innovation, starting with federal pandemic funding
  o Recognize that a heavy focus on compliance can reduce innovation and create a “fear factor”
  o Seek regional collaboration rather than consolidation
  o Keep the System decentralized and retain flexibility gains
  o Research best practices in other states
  o Research and tap emerging industries
• **Convene colleges for problem solving and build System-wide partnerships**
  o Tap our own colleges for issue identification and solutions to vexing System issues, such as redefining the value proposition of community college
  o Create a feedback loop for program or pilot implementation so colleges and their faculty/staff can provide input and help revise strategies based on implementation
  o Build partnerships with key stakeholders (e.g., the business community) and connect stakeholders to colleges
• **Clear away obstacles to coming to campus and being able to focus on education** – food, transportation, child care; counseling, etc.
  o Different strategies raised include more of a role for community colleges or more partnering with nonprofit/community partners
  o Recognize that part-time students require at least as much support as full-time students
• **Prepare for changing demographics and increase in challenges facing students**
  o Address the effects of pandemic learning losses
    ▪ Need to redefine “college readiness”
    ▪ Measure the current skills of those affected by the pandemic and ramp up compensatory/remedial education to address pandemic learning losses
  o Address mental health and academic challenges -- Expand resources for counselors (bring counselors back to campus), advisors, Success Coaches (make Success Coaches permanent part of funding formula/scale up)
  o Provide more funding for support services to reach part-time students (FTE model does not recognize that it takes as much to support a part-time student as a full-time student)
  o Support Real College survey for colleges
  o See below – address equity needs as the demographics change
• **Address equity**
  o Help us overcome achievement gaps and support students of color and other marginalized populations better
Recognize that equity is an ongoing process, not one initiative or strategy
Include in equity work the need to modernize rural colleges/provide the same amenities to students in low-wealth counties (differences in infrastructure are large, and high-speed internet access still does not exist in some rural areas)

**Increase articulation between community colleges and four-year colleges** (UNC System, NC Independent Colleges and Universities)
- Strengthen and enforce articulation agreements
- Work with universities to accept smaller bundles of credits
- Enhance Reverse Transfer

**Communicate more effectively with community colleges**
- Provide clear, quick communications on new information that comes out to ensure everyone has the same information at the same time
- One president: email us every other week, even if nothing to report
- Invite presidents or trustees to SBCC meetings to share what’s going on in their communities

**Minimize the creation of work for community colleges**
- Limit top-down initiatives
- Reduce number of resources (such as Minority Male Success Initiative) for which colleges have to apply – provide to all colleges
- Do consider small community colleges when opportunities come along
- Wherever possible, allow flexibility
- See “support” items below – System Office staffing, support, and processes

**System Office staffing, support, and processes**
- Reestablish use of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in IT to support colleges
- Offer colleges construction project support (”Sherpa” role)
- Address recruitment/retention at SO, as at the colleges
- Solidify/stabilize leadership team
- Produce college-level reports
- Get staff out to colleges more to visit to understand different strengths and challenges
- Possibly have dedicated Institutional Research leadership at a lead community college or at the System Office
- Increase uniformity of some processes all colleges have to do for compliance
- Provide legal and policy support on systemwide issues and templates/model policies/sample communications on common items such as HEERF that are technical or have legal implications
- Speed up purchasing processes
- Streamline/speed up process for construction projects

**Get community colleges on the same page; clarify our purposes**
- Use strategic plan to develop a shared vision for the System
- Shift back to the System’s founding purpose/mission (more technical training/adults)
- Set an action plan together, starting with SBCC, with the associations
- Don’t accept mediocre anymore – be proud and ask for our rightful share, based on what community colleges contribute to the state and economy
• **Consider our competition and adjust accordingly**
  o Be aware of strategies undertaken by private institutions, public universities, the private sector (such as Google Grow), and other providers of traditional and nontraditional education and training
  o Recognize that community colleges are also competing with a tight labor market (rising wages for jobs not requiring education/training) and disengagement
  o Tackle the population that is ours and ours alone – adults lacking a high school diploma or high school equivalency (HSE, formerly known as GED)
  o Recognize the competitive advantage that community colleges have as a result of being embedded in their local communities

• **Continue...**
  o Advocacy (see earlier section)
  o Data dashboards
  o Professional development for colleges (and train for innovation, not just compliance)
  o Communicating with colleges, including keeping up an ongoing dialogue with presidents (such as these listening sessions) and being present with us (as Pres. Stith has done)
  o Marketing support for colleges
  o Quick responses from System Office staff
  o Collaboration among Presidents’ Association, Trustees’ Association, SBCC

**Regional, Urban/Rural, or Large/Small College Themes**

Certain challenges arose in conversation more often in certain regional meetings or were raised by colleges as unique rural or urban issues. While not conclusive, these may suggest geographic and/or large college/small college differences to consider.

• Interest in a statewide marketing campaign or marketing support was raised more by small/rural colleges than more urban and larger colleges.

• Some smaller/more rural colleges cited their small-college status as leading to unique challenges:
  o faculty/staff turnover (such as having nobody qualified to fill in if a vacancy appears)
  o college infrastructure
  o need for support from the System Office (for everything from grant writing to IT support)
  o less access to certain community college and local government funding sources

• Challenges related to disaffected youth and disengaged prospective students arose more in meetings of western North Carolina community colleges, although it did arise in other areas, including a major urban area.
Feedback from Other Community College Stakeholders -- Updated

Stakeholder Engagement to Date

Beyond outreach to North Carolina community college presidents and trustees through Regional Listening Sessions, the System has engaged other stakeholders in planning exercises or discussion to better understand their perspectives.

Stakeholders within the Community College System (beyond presidents and trustees):

Chief Academic Officers

Major topics raised:

- Interest in addressing faculty/staff pay, overall and for specific disciplines
- Interest in streamlined program approval processes
- Some CAOs have an interest in a free tuition model
- Policies and budget formula characteristics can pit colleges against each other for funding
- Competition from public and private education and training providers, as well as publishers
- Interest in more diverse hiring to better serve diverse students
- Interest in clearing away administrative obstacles and working more effectively as a System

Adult Education and Workforce Continuing Education staff/faculty

Major topics raised:

- Attracting/retaining instructors and staff
- Low pay (lower than for Curriculum employees)
- Limited funding due to low enrollment/participation (lower FTE levels) caused by COVID
- Need funding opportunities for existing needs
- “One College” opportunities and challenges
- Interest in streamlining CE/CU (Continuing Education/Curriculum) functions at the State level and communications across programs
- Demand for training from business and industry are strong
- Multiple collaboration opportunities exist
- Opportunities/strengths with new technology system (Destiny One)

Student Development Administrators Association – Executive Board

Major topics raised:

- Transitions and transfer processes (whether Adult Education to other pathways, dual enrollment while in high school to community college, or transfer to four-year institutions)
- Simplifying the application and enrollment processes, including RDS (Residency Determination Services to determine if someone qualifies for in-state tuition)
- Addressing basic needs, support services and mental health
- Being intentional about Diversity/Inclusion/Equity work
• Current SDAA priorities/initiatives include advising models, career services, succession planning, and work by the Transfer Advisory Committee on a revision of the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement with the UNC System.

New Senior Administrators

• Strengths and opportunities to be “hyper-responsive to our local communities” and nimble
• Business and industry come to community colleges as the first choice for training, upskilling, and reskilling
• Opportunities exist with apprenticeship and other work-based learning opportunities
• Opportunities for the 58 to align to achieve a goal
• System strengths in supporting colleges through professional development, data dashboards
• “RDS is anti-diversity and anti-inclusion”
• There is competition between colleges and with other education/training providers
• Online training transcends service areas
• Suggest adding “equity” to Diversity and Inclusion goal
• Interest in providing more basic needs supports

Community College Planning and Research Organization (CCPRO)

• Generally consider the three pillars to reflect college priorities well. Also point out importance of successful completion, developing institutional talent, college aims regarding teaching/learning, and weaving equity aims throughout strategic plan goals.
• Reiterate other groups’ interest in more competitive pay for college employees.
• Interest in better access to data, such as post-college employment/wages.
• Interest in collection by the System Office of college strategic plans and publishing of this information. {Has now been collected and shared via CCPRO SharePoint site, with plan for annual updating by colleges.}
• Suggest also priorities re: centralized support for colleges (technology, reporting, online learning-- including guidance on “substantive interaction”) and professional development for colleges.

NC Community College System Leadership Team

• NCCCS is mission driven and national model for community colleges.
• Bipartisan support for community colleges is strong, and NCCCS has many stakeholders across the state to leverage.
• Modernizing systems provides opportunities to improve collaboration and communication.
• Staff resources to meet needs are limited and there is an interest in reviewing the way work is spread across staff.
• There is an interest in greater focus to better meet objectives and have greater impact.
• Turnover exacerbates challenges in meeting needs, clarity about roles.
• There are mixed emotions about change within the System Office.
• There is an interest in tying resources (financial and human) to strategic directions.
• COVID has provided opportunities for innovation.
Note: previous input from the State Board of Community Colleges at its September planning retreat can be found at https://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/sites/default/files/state-board/planning/plan_03_-_planning_meeting_input_and_strategic_planning_process.pdf.

Summary of Internal Stakeholder Perceptions (not including president/trustee feedback, captured in PLAN 01):

**Strengths:**

Dedicated faculty
- Typically from industry, not academia
- Often teach at other colleges/universities too - community college a fraction of the price

“58 Strong” or “Great 58” mottos/unity
Mission driven
Reputation as a national model – overall and in areas such as economic development
Bipartisan support
Course offerings for everyone
Access around the state/proximity
Affordability
Support for students
Ability of community colleges to be agile to meet community/workforce needs
Anchors in their communities
Existing partnerships
  - with business
  - with other agencies
  - with external partners to support students
Expertise/experience in System Office
Data dashboards
Apprenticeship opportunities and Sector Partnerships
Professional development opportunities (including from Student Success Center)
Continuous improvement mindset of colleges and System Office

**Weaknesses:**

Pay –
  “teachers cannot live on passion” – Adult Educators Conference participant
  “We can’t be the leader in training if we can’t keep well-qualified instructors and professionals at our college.” – CCPRO member
Pay scale especially low for Continuing Education, Adult Education instructors
Ability to fully staff programs
Need for more succession planning, career pathways within the Community College System
Lack of certain benefits for new hires
Limited staff diversity
Turnover at System Office
Complicated admissions process
Limited programming designed to address equity gaps
Funding level (CC funding model compared to UNC System)
Funding opportunities don’t allow focus on existing programming or time to collaborate with key stakeholders
Technology challenges (limited broadband, devices, knowledge of how to use technology)
Need more, clearer communication from System Office
Need better processes and strategic initiatives that connect the 58
Measurement goals don’t give consideration to different-sized colleges, different college populations
Outdated processes, systems
Lack of labor market data – where students go and post-completion wages 3-5 years out? How to collect post-secondary success stories?
Service areas – “Silly to keep artificial boundaries or complicated system to working together or sharing resources”

Opportunities:

Grants/funding opportunities (COVID/other)
NC members of Congress on key committees
Potential funding at federal level in free college? (?)
Interest in legislative support for everything from better pay to full funding of Small Business Centers to funding of colleges based on headcount
Interest in centralized relationships with large national employers such as Amazon, Google, Apple, Smithfield, Sanderson…
Interest in central office roles: reporting of data, legal guidance for colleges, achieving lower per-college costs through negotiated agreements/purchasing opportunities
Interest in incentives for regional partnerships among community colleges to serve business
Interest in increased flexibility for colleges and more streamlined programs so colleges can respond to their needs
Interest in college Strategic Enrollment Mgmt. plans, strategic plans (tied to System plan), DEI plans
Interest in conversations on equity
Some interest in community college role in citizenship development/personal development as well as workforce development
Collaboration opportunities…
--with businesses or industry associations (e.g., elevate Sector Partnerships)
--with mental health providers
--with contract work providers employing those in recovery or in transition from corrections centers
--with workforce development boards on communication, coordination of scholarship resources
Professional development (interest in more p.d. or resources for it)
Tapping existing talent and identifying Community College System career pathways
Opportunity to innovate based on COVID experience
**Threats:**

Uncertainty of pandemic
Shut-downs because of the pandemic or natural disasters
Difficulty in finding qualified instructors
Community colleges are not recommended for high school students if four-year college seems doable
Financial dependency on dual enrollment
Universities creating programs that compete with community colleges
Competition from commercial forms of higher education
Competition among community colleges; online education exacerbates this
Silos or a perception of silos...
  --between Curriculum and Continuing Education; between departments
  --between community colleges and workforce development boards (including the presence of federal money reducing referrals to NCWorks Centers for WIOA training support)
Concerns about centralization of education
Late budgets passed by the NCGA are very challenging for colleges that have to keep operating
Population decline in 85 counties
Threat of consolidation to smaller colleges and their local economies (although a few note benefits of regionalization)
Lack of clarity about authority of SBCC and the System Office

**Feedback from External Stakeholders**

The Community College System has sought input from various external stakeholders.

**Council of Associations for Engagement, or CAFÉ (statewide industry associations)**

The Council of Associations for Engagement (CAFÉ) has been convened by the System Office in recent years to better understand statewide patterns of need from industries, based on the input of industry association leaders. The focus is on listening to needs and letting the industry associations identify their priorities.

Feedback collected from the Council off Associations for Engagement at its February 11, 2022 meeting is as follows:

- Worker shortages were cited across the industries represented at the meeting. These sectors included Healthcare, Hospitality, Public Safety, Energy, Construction, Business Services, and Manufacturing.
- Certain industries represented at the meeting (Hospitality, Healthcare) reported a desperate need for workers. All agreed that, at a minimum, talent gaps are significant.
- Industries are trying to diversify their workforce and appreciate resources that can help them do that.
- Some statewide industry association representatives cited excellent collaboration with the System Office.
• There is an interest in deeper collaboration at the System Office, possibly with liaisons to specific industries or assistance in forming sector partnerships.
• Some industry associations were less clear on how to collaborate with community colleges, but are open to working on this with the System Office.
• Industry associations discussed general economic issues that affect their collaboration with community colleges and vice versa. For example, multiple associations reported inflation as a current challenge.
• Industry association representatives reported that supply issues (including faculty supply) constrain worker pipelines in their industries.
• An energy industry representative discussed the critical role community colleges play in training and retraining as industries evolve and innovate.
• A construction industry representative invited Dr. Matt Meyer (convener of the Council of Associations for Engagement) to sit on their foundation board for the expressed interest in further enhancing the System and association’s relationship.
• The energy industry has interest in jointly pursuing or planning strategies to address potential future funding from the federal infrastructure bill.

NC Workforce Development Directors Council and NC Association of Workforce Development Boards – Executive Board

As major partners in workforce development, input was sought from local workforce development board leaders and the association that represents workforce development boards.

Major topics shared:

• Even as many need retraining or career redirection, participation is down at NCWorks Career Centers (overseen by workforce development boards), as well as community colleges.
• Funding is down for workforce development boards/Career Centers based on the overall strength of the economy (unemployment rates, etc.).
• The influx of federal funding for community colleges has reduced community college collaboration with federally funded workforce programs (such as Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs that help pay for education, training, and support services).
• Internal community college service area issues/disputes can be obstacles to local collaboration with workforce development boards and Career Centers.
• There is interest in more coordination/collaboration/communication with workforce development boards, including around...
  o How to maximize use and impact of all funding to pay for education/training/supports
  o New program offerings, new funding sources, grant opportunities
• Strengths in the community college/workforce development board collaboration were noted around Sector Partnerships, coordinating local planning and activities, apprenticeships, and work-based learning
• Workforce development boards note further opportunities for colleges to leverage resources for their students re: NCWorks Online, On-the-Job Training/Work Experience (incentives/offsetting of costs for employers when they hire federal workforce program participants)
Hispanic/Latino Action Coalition

The Coalition involves stakeholders from multiple organizations that serve the Hispanic/Latino/Latinx community. Members cited the following as challenges, solutions, and suggestions:

- The biggest challenges noted were regarding financing education, RDS/out-of-state tuition, and cultural proficiency (offering a welcoming college environment).
- Current solutions raised up included partnerships with programs for first-generation students such as Juntos and GEAR UP.
- Suggestions included...
  - Promoting Workforce Continuing Education/non-degree programs and their value more to this population.
  - Allowing high school graduate in-state tuition to community colleges.
  - Providing a year long program for presidents and other leaders at community colleges about the issues Hispanic/Latino students encounter at the colleges.
  - Dedicated staff at the System Office to address the needs of this growing population.
  - Recruiting more Hispanic/Latino professionals into community college leadership roles.
  - Involving parents more in the student recruitment process, recognizing the elevated role of family in Hispanic/Latino student decision making.

Planned Engagement

Further engagement with internal and external stakeholders is planned, through targeted engagement and/or representation on the planning teams that will draft goals, objectives and strategies:

Community-based organizations
Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC)
Individual businesses
NC Association of County Commissioners
NC Chamber
NC Community College Faculty Association (NCCFCA)
NC Community College System Office (further engagement of leadership/staff)
NC Department of Commerce/NCWorks
NC Department of Public Instruction
UNC System Office