

STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Strategic Planning Environmental Scan Summary

STUDENT INTEREST AND ACCESS: *How do we get more students into the educational pipeline through community colleges?*

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordability • Offer variety of workforce-focused programs • Comprehensive Articulation Agreement • Career and College Promise (CCP) • Good learning environment • Open door policy • Geographic accessibility • Distance education opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost for students/ barriers to financial aid • Complexity of processes • Lack of flexibility in scheduling (particularly for non-traditional students) • Lack of effective marketing • Campuses look old and irrelevant • Hard to recruit talent due to uncompetitive salaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business and industry partnerships • CCs play key role in closing the skills gap • Partnerships with high schools (CCP) • Increased student concern about taking on student loan debt and college affordability • Build on the label of “free” community college that already exists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social stigma & lack of prestige • Interest gap • High schools push AP credit/4-year schools • Competition (esp. w/ proprietary and NC Promise/\$500 tuition schools) • Economic conditions (of both students and colleges) • Residency Determination Service

Critical Issues: Improving awareness and image of community colleges; building relationships with high schools (particularly with counselors); promoting affordability and access to financial aid; simplifying enrollment processes and improving customer service; offering more flexible scheduling options.

CLEAR AND SUPPORTED PATHWAYS FOR STUDENT PROGRESS AND COMPLETION: *How do we get more students successfully through the educational pipeline in a timely manner?*

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulation agreements (CAA, ICAA, HS, CE to CU, 2+2, reverse transfer) • Career and College Promise pathways • Quality instruction at an affordable price • Educational innovations (Completion by Design, Guided Pathways, etc.) • Online courses • Expanded summer course options (enabled by summer funding) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate advising and student supports • Need further improvements to articulation • How we do business is confusing to students • Programmatic silos • Dev. Ed. Redesign not working effectively for all students. • Scheduling challenges • Basic Skills structure and organization • Data challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competency-Based Education • Credit for prior learning • Focus on pathways • Opportunities for greater System collaboration • Students want more career exploration opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost to Students • “Life Happens” - life stressors impeding student progress • Funding limitations • Students encouraged to transfer prior to completing associate degree • Increased scrutiny and questions about dual enrollment (CCP)

Critical Issues: Strengthening articulation; improving advising and student services; creating simpler programs and pathways; expanding opportunities to award credit when credit is due; enabling and incentivizing students to take full loads and to complete credentials; improving developmental education; improving access to and use of data.

ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE IMPACT: *How do we ensure the educational pipeline produces students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to meet the state's economic and workforce needs?*

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customizable and responsive training to meet industry needs • Variety of programs offered • Strong relationships and partnerships with business and industry • High quality, low cost programming • Geographic coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource limitations and structural funding issues • Lack of cooperation within System and with workforce partners • Significant challenges to accessing and using needed data • Disconnect between programs and industry needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater acceptance of industry credentials • Expanded work-based learning opportunities • Opportunities to leverage relationships and enhance partnerships with industry • Continuing Education to Curriculum articulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of awareness and negative perceptions • Competition from other entities • Interest gap • Soft skill deficits • Changing economic conditions and demographics • Complexity of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Critical Issues: Better communicating value of community college workforce training options; expanding program offerings and work-based learning opportunities that meet employer needs; improving funding to better support workforce training; improving cooperation among colleges and with workforce partners; improving access to and use of data.

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS: *How do we improve System and organizational effectiveness, operations, and decision-making (i.e. professional development, data, IT, back office operations)?*

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission-driven and committed staff • System-level efficiencies • Collaboration/shared resources • Access to System Office • Local autonomy to be responsive to individual communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor data quality, access, and use • Inadequate technology • Lack of adequate guidance from System Office • Lack of training opportunities and succession planning • Difficulty recruiting staff • Funding instability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appetite for greater collaboration and standardization • Opportunities to economies of scale system-wide • New ERP • College demand for improved professional development/support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff turnover • State and federal mandates • Lack of resources • Initiative fatigue • Cyber security and other threats to business continuity • Lack of leadership

Critical Issues: Technology that better supports colleges' needs; improving data, data analysis, and applied research; creating operational efficiencies across the 58 colleges; improving professional development/support opportunities; focusing on a limited number of strategically identified initiatives.

Top Risks: **Funding:** continued erosion of state funding and support; **Technology:** inadequate technology and cybersecurity threats; **Talent:** turnover and difficulty recruiting, training, and retaining talent; **Change:** demographic, labor market, higher education.