

Strategic Transformation Planning Summary Community and Strategic Partners Listening Session April 1, 2025

Introduction

On April 1, 2025, Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) convened a listening session with community and strategic partners to gather valuable feedback aimed at informing the development of the College's mission statement, institutional values, and strategic transformation plan. This session was designed to capture diverse insights and foster bold, agile, and transformative strategies to position Tri-C as a vital educational and economic catalyst in the region.

Curricular and Market Relevance

Participants clearly articulated the need for Tri-C to align its curriculum and program offerings closely with the evolving demands of the local economy. There was strong consensus that the College must be nimble, identifying and swiftly responding to emerging trends. One participant stressed the importance of **“managing occupation and student career interest with market demand,”** while another emphasized the urgency of creating **“fast-track programs for high-paying jobs.”** This push for alignment is crucial, as participants repeatedly underscored that Tri-C must demonstrate the tangible relevance of higher education, addressing the skepticism among younger populations about its value.

Community Trust and Partnerships

An overarching theme from the listening session was the need for Tri-C to enhance community trust and deepen partnerships. Transparency and mutual engagement were noted as foundational values that must be nurtured to realize effective community integration. One participant succinctly stated, **“Community trust is essential,”** highlighting the College's role in transparently communicating decisions and outcomes. Another emphasized the need for true partnerships by advocating for **“a no wrong door approach”** to

student recruitment and community referrals, suggesting a seamless, integrated network for community interaction.

Robust Student Support

Participants underscored that student support services must be broadened to address life challenges that significantly impact student success. Critical issues such as childcare, transportation, mental health support, and basic needs like food insecurity were identified as barriers that the College must proactively address. One participant noted, “Challenges to be mindful of: how students can still achieve when life gets in the way,” while another pointedly observed the “despair that students feel around attending secondary school,” advocating for comprehensive and compassionate interventions that could transform student experiences and outcomes.

Flexible Learning and Accessibility

Flexibility and accessibility emerged as distinctive strengths that Tri-C must continue to leverage and expand upon. Partners recognized the College's existing capacity for adaptability and emphasized the necessity to maintain this flexibility to meet diverse student needs effectively. Highlighting this, one attendee stated, “Flexibility in accessibility,” noting that the institution must continue to offer adaptable educational options. Another participant praised the College’s “nimble capacity for new programming,” underscoring the critical need to maintain and enhance this agility to rapidly respond to changing educational and workforce landscapes.

Workforce Development and Economic Impact

Participants strongly advocated for Tri-C to play a transformative role in local workforce development and economic growth. They called for expanded workforce training programs, particularly short-term credentials that lead directly to meaningful employment. One participant passionately called for “offering short-term credentials for in-demand jobs,” while another suggested creating “robust internship programs, including paid internships,” emphasizing practical, hands-on experiences as critical components of workforce readiness.

Conclusion

The insights gathered from the community and strategic partners envision Tri-C as a proactive, transformative leader not merely within academia, but as a pivotal contributor to regional prosperity and societal advancement. By courageously committing to innovation, comprehensive student support, dynamic community collaboration, and responsive workforce training, Tri-C has the opportunity to significantly reshape the educational landscape of the region. With strategic clarity and decisive action, the cCollege can emerge as a powerful engine of economic growth, social mobility, and community revitalization, fundamentally enhancing quality of life and creating enduring pathways to success.

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For any questions regarding the listening session or this summary, please reach out to [Gregory Stoup](#), Vice President of Institutional Progress & Effectiveness.