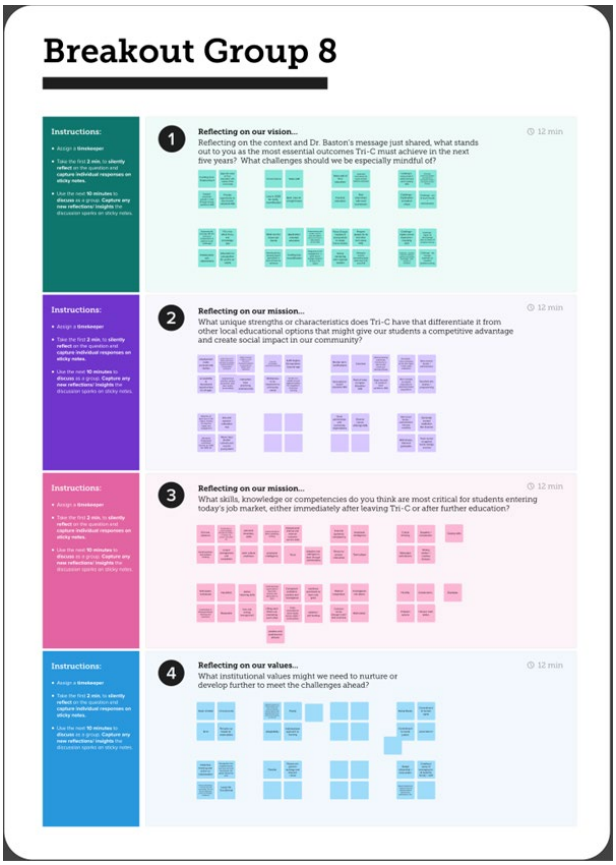
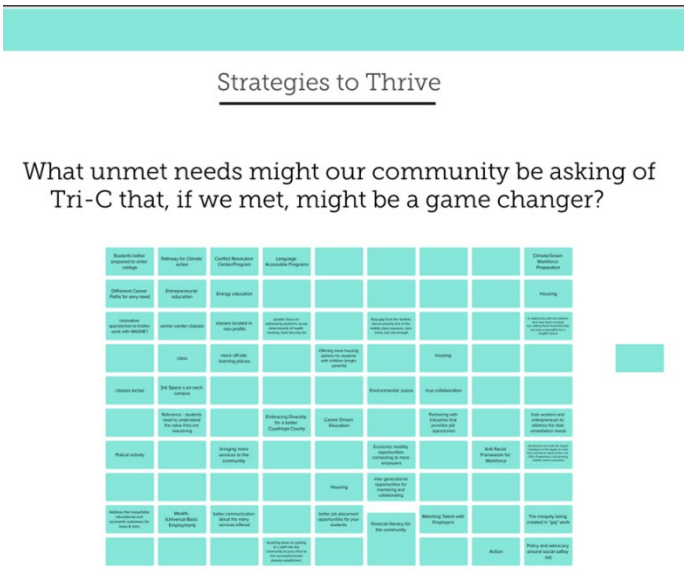
Listening Session Summary
Community and Strategic Partners
Thursday, March 20, 2025





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Question 1

Reflecting on our Vision: Reflecting on the context and Dr. Baston's message just shared, what stands out to you as the most essential outcomes Tri-C must achieve in the next five years? What challenges should we be especially mindful of?

Summary

Tri-C must focus on workforce development, enhancing student employment connections, and increasing enrollment and graduation rates. Strengthening partnerships with high schools, businesses, and the community is crucial.

Challenges include funding, declining population, negative perceptions of higher education, and adapting to market changes. Addressing affordability, accessibility, and relevance of courses, as well as providing diverse support services, are essential for success. Preparing for technological advancements, offering practical education, and engaging younger students are also important.

Overcoming structural issues and ensuring students' ideas are part of the college's evolution are key.

Responses

Career Education and Industry Alignment

Being mindful of available positions and the skill sets necessary to be qualified. Delivering appropriate skills that result in jobs.
Focus on short alternative careers
plumbing, carpentry, electric engineering
Strengthen their relationships with industries for in demand skilled jobs - career education focused
students are looking for short term certifications
What are the future job trends

Challenges in Higher Education Landscape

adjusting to population changes - only population growth comes from immigrants
Challenge - Capitulation to federal chaos
Challenge - Continued negative perceptions of community college + not higher ed more broadly
Challenge - higher ed decreasingly seen as places of problem-solving
Challenge - higher ed too expensive + mounting debt
Challenge - how to engage younger students to enroll when they don't view it as a way to meaningful employment
Challenge - not enough emphasis on "creative" problem-solving
Challenge - out of touch faculty + administration
challenge: making the case for college
Challenge: possible dismantling of Department of Education
Challenges - many youth (+ adult learners) aren't seeing ROI
Challenges: mindset of the status quo community
Challenges current state of national politics and the removal of resources for minority students and underserved.
Change negative perception of the need for Higher Ed
continued commitment to equity despite federal landscape

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Cost and lack of flexibility with debt
Declining population - being a partner to position the region for success.
Declining population in Cleveland/Cuyahoga County
Declining trust in "institutions"
Demographic Changes in neighborhoods
Funding from Federal Gov't
funding levy recertification
is college still a vehicle for achieving a middle class/upper middle class life for communities affected by structural issues?
State legislature undermining legitimacy in public education (k-12 space)
Tax Funding. Will this make the cut
Thoughts of larger institutions taking over community colleges
Threats to social safety net on federal and state level

Community Investment Initiatives

Bold idea for a bright future
Pass a Levy
Value add

Community Resource Allocation

Funding is a challenge
Need to figure out if there is a structural or societal problem, compared to a communications problem.
Needed staff and resources to serve the community

Enhancing Student Engagement and Recruitment

Change approach to recruiting - more 25+ students over high schoolers
Considering new student needs is critical
Enrolling younger students at 7th grade
improving education at the elementary school level
Increase student success
maintain enrollment levels
New customers (business & students) within no demographic growth

Enrollment Growth Strategies

Dismantling of Higher Education - Government
I feel improving enrollment is essential
Increase enrollment
outcome: increased enrollment

Future of Education Programs

Application oriented education
Course offering relevance
high real-world application of the curriculum offered
how will the transition to a 4-year degree transform over the years?
Lifelong learning should be a priority
Practical education
Start dates of programs leave people looking for other programs
That the interest of earning a degree will still be demand
Will courses be feasible within the next 5 years
will courses be relevant to the need of employment

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Will the programs that can be met by the school help individuals with their future needs?

Meeting Labor Market Demands

Meeting employer needs quickly is needed

Offering entrepreneurial resources can increase real world preparedness

Offering Financial Resources

Other

Attending children community events

Be especially mindful of the student population

Be proactive in conducting cost comparisons to 4 year institutions with job placement potential

Being adaptable to the needs of staff, students, employers and the community.

Cannot be stagnant

challenge - ensure that students' ideas are part of the way the college evolves

challenge: population decline

Holistic yet strategic focus on academic improvements but remain student-centric in providing diverse wraparound supports

Levy in 2028 be ready, recertification

Outcome - prepare more students for in-demand jobs

Outcome: More language accessible courses, programs and language as Cleveland's newcomers community grows

Strengthen relationships with high schools

Student Accessibility Challenges

Challenge - help ESOL students with access

challenge: transportation constraints for students

Workforce Development and Community Engagement

accessibility

Adapt to market dynamics & innovations, ie AI

Align the value of Tri-C education with needs of the community

Allocate time to speak with HS students and listen, guide and implement alternative careers

Artificial Intelligence

Attract new customers (businesses & students)

Avoid only being known and accessed by the usual suspects

be highly rated by county residents, particularly potential students, as highly relevant to their careers

Become widely known as a trusted resource to all demographic groups across the county

Build a flexible and adaptable Tri C institution that can thrive under any political circumstance

Build iron clad relationships with existing and potential partners

challenge - access to enrollment if outstanding balances

Childcare services

Collaboration with stakeholders

Community and public perceptions around the need and benefits of higher education.

Education to job pipeline for youths and adults

Engage with HS students through after school programs

engaging students younger to understand the benefits of higher education

Enhance student employment connections & outcomes

Expanding opportunities for more students to access paid internships with the private sector

Faculty voice in the work they do without DEI limitations

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Family Education starting with parents
Fill in the Work Force and knowledge gap
Financial responsibilities to go to school.
Focus Groups needed of young adults to shape future classes
focus on non-traditional workforces where there are employment opportunities
Group mentoring with regional leaders
Heightened CCP engagement, a great way to engage students to stay in the region
Helping students make tangible connections to career pathways
Helping students to feel more positively about College and the future.
Higher yield + higher completion rates
Housing services, or vouchers
How can Tri-C change with the changing interest like entrepreneurship
Improve enrollment
Increase enrollment
Increase student enrollment and thoughts centered around the need for higher education.
Innovative Strategic Plan
keep students enrolled in higher learning to be successful
Keeping educations affordable and accessible for everyone
Keeping the interest of the community in pursuing higher education
Keeping up with the times
Lifelong learning culture (stackable credentials to upskill continuously)
Need to focus on supporting first year students to ensure retention and success
Outcome - enroll and graduate more students
Outcome: Tri-C is universally recognized as the region's premier workforce development provider.
Outcomes: workforce development; job placement for grads
Paid internships with local businesses
Partnering with Community and Businesses
Pivoting to meet ever changing demands in industry and public
Prepare people for AI and other tech areas M.B.
Preparing for a successful review in the next few years
Prioritizing offering wraparound services
Promote additional student support services, community programming
Promoting transfer programs
Promoting work opportunities tied to programs
Provide in-demand training
Provide opportunity to low-income residents M.B.
Provide the most accessible on ramp into higher education in the county
Providing classes for an aging population for
Providing Opportunities to Youth
Solicit the voice of others in future decision making
Strategic Planning has to open to be prepared for upcoming events
Strategies around preventing brain drain from CLE area M.B.
Strengthen relationships with area high schools
Strengthen relationships with employers
Strengthen workforce Partnerships

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Student Success- Really meeting students where they at
Support economic growth in CLE through strong workforce M.B.
Systematically leverage HEI and local govt collaboration to address social challenges
Tech-Forward Education
Technology & Economy changes
The need to be innovative to address future needs and expectations within Higher Ed.
The social aspects of traditional 4-year colleges that "attract" students (balance that need with need of nontraditional student populations)
Transformational
Understanding that people need to work and attend school-continue to help remove barriers M.B.
Value add of Tri-C education
Workforce Skills Development
Challenge - students trained to interview well but lack practice knowledge + skills relevant to workforce
Interdisciplinary, develop expert generalists in each of them for resilience
Providing different paths (re-entering society, pivoting in the workforce, transferring)

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Question 2

Reflecting on our Mission: What unique strengths or characteristics does Tri-C have that differentiate it from other local educational options that might give our students a competitive advantage and create social impact in our community?

Summary

Tri-C is recognized for its strong connection with the community, affordability, accessibility, diverse educators and students, multiple convenient locations, and reputable name. It offers a range of programs, including short-term workforce training, early college options, and adult education.

Tri-C is known for its innovative leadership, community engagement, and ability to adapt quickly to workforce needs. The college provides numerous pathways to employment through partnerships with local industries and offers extensive support services.

Its smaller class sizes, diverse course offerings, and commitment to lifelong learning contribute to its reputation as a trusted institution with a significant social impact.

Responses

Community-Centric Programs and Services
Cost less
Ability to obtain certifications and credits before completing school and get college credits
Ability to offer a wide range of classes and curriculums
ability to receive credits at a lower cost and in convenient locations in preparation to attend 4 year institutions
Ability to support a broader mix of student needs - traditional and non-traditional academic pathways
Access (location & cost & nimbleness)
Access to a wealth of local/regional leaders for engaging in immersive learning
Access to varying programs and opportunities for populations with barriers
accessibility
accessibility to educational opportunities for all ages
Adult Diploma and HSE through Tri-C's Ohio Options adult education
Affordability
Affordable Professional certification training eg: LEED GA/ LEED AP
Affordable and easily accessible
Arts and passion cultivation hub
As Dr. B says, Tri-C accepts the top 100% of students.
Being affordable compared to other colleges
Brand Recognition
Centrally located creating better accessibility
certification programs
College Credit Plus
connection with the community
Cost and accessibility, physically and financially
Creation of programs that focus on improving access

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Credibility in social change
Depth and breadth of programming creates robust pipeline for workforce opportunities
Diverse healthcare pathways & certifications w/ ample entry points for individuals @ various stages of life & career
Diverse staff
Diversity
diversity of educators and students
Dynamic leadership that is pushing the boundaries and dreaming big
Early college
Early college paired with say yes saves time and money
Early exposure to K-12 students
Entre to college experience
Excellent arts studies + programming
Free course offerings to assist individuals obtain their GED/HS Diploma
from 3 - 93 there is something for everyone - Programs, Events, Recreation, Youth Programming, The Arts, Degrees, Certificates, Senior Programming, Working with Community Partners. Invested in relationship building
funding from the community through levies is successful because of proven track record
Good foray into a 4 year college if college is challenging
good mixture of in person and virtual education to Support students time and transportation constraints
Great partnerships with community organizations
Hands-on learning and training
Hyper focused on needs of local workforce. M.B.
Industry specific expertise
Innovative Leadership willing to try new things to make impact
instruction from practicing professionals
Internship opportunities that lead to employment post-graduation
accessible and open to everyone
Job Programs & Employer Connections
Legacy - You know someone who is connected to the college - student, employee, business affiliate
Lifelong learning community-Community is able to take continuous learning classes
Location
lower costs
Mandel Center for the Humanities
many Short term workforce training programs
More mentally accessible especially for disenfranchised populations
More nimble than other institutions to adapt to changing workforce needs.
More short-term options and stackable credentials for students who stop in and out of education throughout their career.
multicultural
multiple campuses
Multiple campuses that adapt to the communities they serve
Multiple locations
Multiple locations that are close to major highways
Music/Jazz/theater cultivate and nourish young talent
neighborhood oriented campus placement (east, west, metro) (accessibility)
Nimbleness to be responsive to community needs

option for first 2 years of college
Potential employment partners in multiple industries (healthcare, manufacturing, hospitality, etc)
Pride in community
Programs that look at and considers the needs of the community it serves.
Quantity of zero to low-cost certications that provide direct pathways to high wage employment opportunities
Relay on the needs on local entities to create programming that lead to employment and careers
Shorter term certifications
shorter-term credentialing/upskilling options
Smaller classrooms are a positive
stakeholder commitment - the folks in the room!
Successful Early college programing for HS students
Support services for educational barriers outside the classroom.
Tax Payers
The Access Office that addresses the needs of every student
The certification programs which have led to direct job placement
the name recognition: everyone knows what Tri-C is
The relatively low cost of a quality education
The significant number of collaborations with grass root training programs
They respond quickly to change, and opportunities compared to four year institution.
Track record of applied social change success
Variety programs to led to direct employment
Vast number of teaching modalities - online, in-person, 4 locations, Access
Visible presence within the community
visionary, charismatic leadership unapologetic about bold change
Well known faculty + administrators that give credibility
Well known, beloved graduates
Willingness to engage the community and their students in a thoughtful, transparent and meaningful way
Willingness to Expand physically to offer various curriculum

Distinct Campus Experience

85% of Graduates remain in the region
Access center as an extension
Accessible - many campuses across the region + within other institutions
Generally trusted institution like libraries
Lots of school pride that gives a similar experience to universities.
Retention of talent pool in the region, leading to long term impact and engagement
Robust Alumni network
Staff availability and accessibility
The physical design of the structures on each campus
Tri-c is in "your backyard" the home feel of the campuses can be used to ease angst of students not wanting the traditional University feel.
Tri-C should have satellite offices at community centers

Inclusive Higher Education

Diverse course offerings M.B.
Fulfill Higher-Ed aspiration beyond age
Many high school students have free access through Say Yes Scholarships

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Point of entry to higher Education M.B.

Other

Cleveland specific
collaborative approach to
committed staff
employment ready curricula and studies
great access and support for in person and distance learning
intergenerational study body
Partnering with other local workforce programs
respected leadership and proven track record
Tri-c working directly with Cleveland employers on credentialing/program creation
wrap around services

Practical Skill Development

A dedication by Tri C to addressing issues that are real to students and equipping them with the skills to be successful.
creating courses that are in workplace demand
Employer driven & curated training programs that provide students w/ intimate industry knowledge & connections
integrate into public schools for the pipeline of students and improve the education of children
Offering the technology programs that can take you to the workforce quickly
Public-Private Partnerships - NEORSD Ambassador Program; Health Industry Econ Dlvp Employers (CC, UH, MH, NEON, etc.)

Quality Education Access

Affordable, High Quality and Accessible educational opportunities
great nursing program
Life-long learning opportunities for everyone

Strong Brand Recognition

great brand
name brand

Support for Nontraditional Students

More diverse faculty + administrators
Nontraditional student population M.B.
vast array of resources and on-ramps

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Question 3

Reflecting on our Mission: What skills, knowledge or competencies do you think are most critical for students entering today's job market, either immediately after leaving Tri-C or after further education?

Summary

Critical skills for students entering today's job market include basic technology and computer literacy, strong communication abilities (both verbal and written), teamwork, emotional intelligence, adaptability, and resilience.

Additionally, students should possess project management, critical thinking, informed decision-making, financial literacy, and networking skills. Soft skills such as empathy, social awareness, conflict management, and a positive work ethic are also essential.

Proficiency in Microsoft products, AI, multilingual capabilities, and an understanding of professional etiquette and organizational processes are important.

Overall, students need to be self-starters, motivated, and eager to learn and grow.

Responses

Analytical and Executive Skills
Analytical Skills
Coping skills
executive functioning skills
Basic Technology Proficiency
Basic computers skills
Basic daily skills like writing checks
Basic Technology skills
Computer literacy
Computer literacy and ability to navigate various platforms
Leaving with technical skills in career field
limited computer skills
Microsoft Products
stronger computer skills knowledge of a broad range of skills
tech skills: AI!!!!
Civic Engagement Skills
Civics
how to participate in Democracy
how to run a meeting
how to sell your ideas
Communication Skills Development
Ability to communicate
Ability to communicate clearly
Comfortable in Communication through all modes - in person, on screen, call, email etc

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Communication
Communication - verbal
Communication skills in order to effectively collaborate and work in a team.
communications skills (speaking, writing)
Multilingual Spanish for specific business purposes
oral communication capabilities because new students are technology savvy
Public Speaking
speech etiquette
Creative and Urban Mindset
Committed - Subject Matter Experts
Strong writers + creative thinkers
Urban mindset with a suburban spice
Critical Thinking Skills
Critical problem solving
critical thinking
Critical thinking
informed decision making
Cultural Awareness and Adaptability
Adaptability
Community Awareness
Multicultural Awareness
Curiosity and Respectful Behavior
curiosity and inquiry
Inquisitive
Respectful
Digital and Financial Literacy
Being financially literate
Digital literacy
Financial Literacy
Effective Communication Skills
Active listening skills
conversational skills
Networking Skills
Effective Teamwork and Collaboration
ability to command and manage across differences
Comfortable in intergenerational learning and teamwork
effective team-building and organizational collaboration
learning skills from their community
the ability to collaborate and build teams
Emotional Intelligence and Empathy
effective, appropriate use of AI
Emotional Intelligence
emotional intelligence
Empathy + compassion
Essential Skills and Wealth Building

digital literacy (non-industry specific)
life skills
literacy and numeracy skills at the level of their occupation
Personal communication skills
The skill to separate the workplace from private life
Time management skills, ability to plan ahead, set, and achieve deadlines.
Wealth Building (Businesses ownership, home ownership, investment, etc.)

Innovative Thinking and Collaboration

Better together - We instead of Me mindset
Data analysis (and how to use a spreadsheet)
Folks committed to racial equity, human rights + social justice
Lifting each others up, mentoring each other
Radical imagination
To think beyond what "exists"; out of the box

Interpersonal Communication and Relationships

Ability to make and maintain relationships
Challenge is students may not stay on campus to make connections because they can go home after class. How do you encourage that.
Covid ramifications communication and social interaction
customer service
face to face interactions
interpersonal communication
Interpersonal relationships and friendships with different communities
Person to person interaction

Other

AI Knowledge
capacity to think critically over long-term projects
Coding
Common sense (though it isn't that common)
conflict resolution
Courage!
empathy
focus
Google Docs is not Microsoft
Having a clear understanding of the democratic process, how government works and understanding the importance of elected officials
Humility
Interdisciplinary and systems thinking
responsible and accountable

Personal Growth and Resilience

Competent confident, creative and courageous
Courageous risk takers
Curious
Honest, truth tellers
initiative / self-starting

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Motivated self-starters
resilience in face of challenges
Self-aware individuals
Problem-Solving and Conflict Management
Conflict Management
managing conflict
Problem solving
Problem-solvers
Professional Communication Skills
Business Writing Skills
Interviewing Skills
Presentation skills
Professional Skills
Professional Development Skills
constructive listening
financial (systems) competency
organizational skills
receptiveness to feedback and coaching
soft skills: EQ, problem solving
Professional Relationship Building
confidence, social skills, interpersonal relationships
interpersonal internal and external customer service skills
Networking/Social Capital/Relationship Building
Project and Time Management
Collaborators
Multi-tasker
project management
project management and completion
Team player
time and energy management
time management
Understanding organizations have their process and taking tiem to learn
Understanding the importance of getting to work on time and understanding other professional etiquette
Social and Networking Skills Enhancement
Social Skills
Social/Networking Skills
Social/people skills
Social Awareness and Empathy
ability to be vulnerable
empathy and taking focus off of self
social awareness and sensitivity
Soft Skills Development
personal boundary skills
Soft skills
soft skills - internal/external

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Soft skills - pre-employability skills

Work Ethic and Readiness

Adaptive and willingness to learn through self-discipline
Eagerness to work
good work ethic
Grit and patience
Maturity
readiness and desire to learn and grow
work culture readiness

Workplace Ethics and Values

Caring for the work they do
Loyalty to the mission of the organization
positive and professional attitude
Strong Value system - Respects others
Worker Rights

Workplace Professionalism

Commitment
Etiquette
Professionalism
Timeliness

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Question 4

Reflecting on our Values: What institutional values might we need to nurture or develop further to meet the challenges ahead?

Summary

To meet future challenges, we should nurture values such as inquiry, freedom of expression, student voice, accountability, cultural and mental health support, curriculum updates, transparency, continuous education, personal and career coaching, DEI, respect for diverse opinions, student empowerment, asset-driven mindset, entrepreneurship, data-driven decisions, collaborations, community engagement, qualified teaching, innovative and flexible learning, alumni engagement, valuing employees, meeting community needs, adaptability, integrity, workforce development, inclusivity, equity, global and local action, creating belonging, tailored education, and enhancing confidence and user experience.

Responses

Diverse Community Engagement
Cleveland centric
Community Awareness
Embracing and handling Change
Leave No One Behind
Nurture the feeling in youths that "you are enough" Do not let the institutional pressures interfere confidence
Respect for diverse opinions and experiences
Top-down decisions need to be better embedded into "implementors"
Educational Empowerment and Social Responsibility
Ability to be adaptable
Accessibility of language
Accountability
ACCOUNTABILITY
Adaptability
adaptive
adaptive learning tools
aggressive expansion of student population to be senior inclusive and inclusion of important curricula related to estate planning, Medicare and Medicaid access, senior service access, long term care planning
Asset Driven Mindset
Being aware of changes in the society and adapting
Cleveland commitment
Collective thinking and action vs individualism
Commitment to human rights
Commitment to social justice
Compassionate
Confidence (easy to get lost in the system)
continue to embrace the community at large
continue to serve the underserved populations
cultural

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Customer service oriented + user experience
data-driven decision-making
DEI
Empowered professors and staff = empowered students
encourage more entrepreneurship
Equity
Flexibility
Flexible
Freedom of Expression
Global citizenship + local action
go learn how to make some money!
Inquiry
Kind
leaning into the current generation's skills/focus
Loyalty Integrity
making an impact
meet the needs of students with families (whole family)
Meet the needs of the community
mental health services
Mentorship
More student centered
Nimble
Not give up based on externalities
offer service-learning and community engagement projects
Open minded
Pauses are good to recharge and relaunch career
personal development courses
personal/career coaching for students
Population tailored education
promote continuous education with upskilling and reskilling
Qualified Teaching Professionals
Racial Equity
Recognition that all global issues are local and and local issues are global. Break the silos.
respect
results driven
Special attention to + opportunities for disenfranchised staff (janitors, maintenance, etc.
specifically, Tri C holding itself accountable to specific metrics
Staying innovative
student voice is essential
STUDENTS FIRST
supporting the aging community of elders
transparency
Understanding the expectations of the students
updating curriculum to industry needs
value employees and reward them accordingly

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workforce development
Wrap around services due to populations serviced needing supports

Innovative Collaborative Partnerships

Alumni Partners and Mentors
Collaborations
Embrace Alumni and have them be more engaged as allies and donors
Partnerships (Not the typical ones)

Student Success and Diversity

Academic Achievement
community partnerships
Confidence to help alleviate the hopelessness described in the Google search Greg shared.
Creating a sense of belonging for all students, faculty + staff
Embrace Diversity
Every student is capable of succeeding
Individual goals - helping students to see their goals and pathway.
Individualized approach to learning
quality of
Removing Barriers to Success
understanding the importance of equity and equality

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Strategies to Thrive

What unmet needs might our community be asking of Tri-C that, if we met, might be a game changer?

Summary

The majority of initiatives from the Community and Strategic Partners focus on preparing students for college, offering classes at non-profits and senior centers, and addressing social determinants of health.

There are efforts to improve communication about services, provide financial literacy, and create language-accessible programs. The initiatives emphasize economic mobility, climate action, diverse career paths, and equitable outcomes for boys and men.

Collaboration with industries, housing options for single parents, and addressing environmental justice are also key. Workforce training aims to meet regional employer needs and promote anti-racist frameworks.

Other responses emphasize addressing the middle class squeeze by increasing earnings and providing better job placement opportunities. They highlight the importance of equitable gig work, community services, conflict resolution programs, entrepreneurial education, and career-driven education.

Additionally, they stress the need for more Tri-C staff engagement in the community to enhance the established brand's success.

Responses

Community Engagement
bringing more services to the community
Conflict Resolution Center/Program
doubling down on putting tri c staff into the community to put a face to the successful brand already established.
Education and Career Opportunities
better job placement opportunities for your students
Career Driven Education
classes loctae
Entrepreneurial education
Education and Housing
class
housing
Education and Workforce Development Initiatives
3rd Space s on each campus
A relationship with the children that have been counted out...letting them know that they too have a possibility for a brighter future.
Action
Address the inequitable educational and economic outcomes for boys & men.
Anti Racist Framework for Workforce

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better communication about the many services offered
classes located in non-profits
Climate/Green Workforce Preparation
Different Career Paths for every need
Economic mobility opportunities-connecting to more employers
Embracing Diversity for a better Cuyahoga County
Energy education
Environmental Justice
financial literacy for the community
greater focus on addressing student social determinants of health. housing, food security etc
Housing
innovative approaches to trades work with MAGNET
inter-generational opportunities for mentoring and collaborating
Language Accessible Programs
Matching Talent with Employers
more off-site learning places
Offering more housing options for students with children (single parents)
Partnering with industries that provides job opportunies
Pathway for Climate action
Political activity
Policy and advocacy around social saftey net
relentlessly work with the largest employers in the region to meet their workforce needs (Clinic, UH, Cliffs, Progressive,) and growing middle market companies
Relevance - students need to understand the value they are receiving
senior center classes
Students better prepared to enter college
train workers and entrepreneurs to address the lead remediation needs
true collaboration
Wealth. (Universal Basic Employment)
Income Disparity and Gig Economy
Stop gap from the families above poverty line in the middle-class squeeze, earn more, but not enough
The inequity being created in "gig" work