

# Suffolk County Community College

## College Brief

NO. 44      January 26, 2012

TO:            The College Community

FROM:        Dr. Shaun L. McKay, President

SUBJECT:     Strategic Planning Update

I would like to welcome everyone back for the Spring semester. Since the holidays, we have maintained the forward momentum propelling our strategic planning effort, and I am delighted to bring you up to date with our progress.

The most important update I have to share with you is that over 55 faculty, administrators and staff were able to participate in a two-day Environmental Scanning and Strengths, Problems, Opportunities and Threats (SPOT) Analysis Retreat on January 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, which was facilitated by George Denninghoff, President of HR Synergy. Many of you may remember Mr. Denninghoff who has a history with the College's strategic planning activities, having led our discussions during 2003-2004. His knowledge of our organization was extremely helpful as he was able to guide our conversations once again.

The process we used for these sessions was as follows:

1. To create a shared model for the future, we explored what the group wanted to create in the next five to ten years.
2. To enable better dialogue about present and future conditions, the group discussed their current environment, identifying the complexities of the present environment identifying trends in education, community needs, government regulations, economic climate, student and partner needs, technology, workforce, competitive issues, etc.
3. To build a better understanding of the higher education environment, we discussed technology, competitors, innovations, services and delivery mechanisms.
4. To identify the existing and potential gaps we pursued a modified SPOT (SWOT) analysis.
  - Threats: The process began with the identification of future external threats.
  - Problems: We then followed with current internal problems.
  - Strengths: Identification of the elements which could be leveraged to overcome threats and lead to problem solving.

- Opportunities: The opportunities phase of classic SPOT analysis was modified. In this first pass effort, the group was asked to brainstorm “What do we need to do to succeed?” The intention was to capture both internal and external opportunities.
5. The results of the opportunities brainstorm were prioritized.
  6. At the conclusion of the sessions, we compared Institutional Goals with the outcomes to test for organizational alignment.

During these sessions, we successfully captured significant information about the College from an internal perspective, which will be critically important to the development of our Strategic Plan. I want to thank the participants for their efforts in thinking through the various topics and collaborating to help prioritize our next steps.

To give you a sense of how engaged our group was, individuals were commenting that they were impressed with the conversations and had not known what to expect when they arrived. Through Mr. Denninghoff's skill as a facilitator, we were able to engage in conversations that probed deeply into the reality of our current situation and creatively allowed us to envision our future.

I want to share with you the major outcomes from the January sessions. Attached to this email is a summary document that captures the conversations that took place. In recognition of the fact that many of our colleagues were not here at that time, we are planning to host campus forums to provide faculty and staff with the opportunity to share their input to this process and to address any questions. We plan to conduct a similar discussion with our Board of Trustees. Input from these additional sessions will be combined with our results from the January sessions and will be used to help us develop measurable objectives for each Institutional Goal. After that, we'll start writing our plan.

In addition, we began to conduct focus group conversations toward the end of last semester. These discussions will continue on our campuses and externally for the next several weeks.

You may recall that prior to the end of the Fall semester, the Strategic Planning Council completed its review of the College's proposed Institutional Goals. I have received the collective input from both the preliminary work groups, as well as the joint work groups that convened on December 1<sup>st</sup>. As the draft language currently stands, the Institutional Goals have been largely affirmed by these groups (please see the attached file). Shortly, we will solicit additional comments and input from other external and internal constituencies, including faculty governance and student leadership.

I encourage you to take advantage of the upcoming campus forums. As soon as dates and locations can be arranged, you will be notified. In the interim, you are invited to share your comments and suggestions regarding these strategic planning documents by forwarding them via email to Dr. Catherine Wynne in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness at [wynnec@sunysuffolk.edu](mailto:wynnec@sunysuffolk.edu).

Please know that your perspective is valuable and should be captured during this process. Only then will our College be prepared to launch the next iteration of its strategic plan and only then can we be confident that we have done everything possible to prepare this institution for its future success.



SWOT.doc



Institutional Goals  
Summary 12-20-11 re