

# **Emerging Issues for the** **2004-08 Strategic Plan**

**Background Materials for Presentation on  
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**Jane Grosset  
Tom Hawk**

**The following information reflects a representative sample of findings that have emerged from the College's internal and external scanning activities during the Fall 2003 term. The information is in two parts:**

**(1) Assumptions/Current Conditions – These reflect circumstances which have been identified by participants in Fall 2003 planning discussions as the important environmental circumstances which need to be considered by the College in setting future planning priorities; and**

**(2) Concerns – These are potential internal or external problems for the College which if not addressed by the College may ultimately impair the College's ability to achieve its mission.**

## **Key Assumptions / Current Conditions**

### **a. Employer Expectations**

- Continuing education will be increasingly important for employees to stay current in their specific career fields and to upgrade skills and advance in their current occupations. Workers will require educational preparation that allows them to move easily from one employment situation to another.
- A growing number of students with previous college experience will enroll at Community College of Philadelphia to acquire additional course work, to update existing knowledge, or to enhance technology skills.
- Development of a more educated work force in Philadelphia will become essential in order to support employer needs and to attract new business and industry to the Philadelphia area.
- While CCP has many strong programs, there is not currently a set of characteristics that employers know they can expect from a CCP graduate.
- The traditional calendars and teaching methods of higher education will continue to cause many employers to turn to other sources for employee training.

### **b. Funding and Regulations**

- State policy makers will become increasingly more deliberate in their decisions about providing additional funds to higher education, and appear to be moving toward a greater expectation for student and family self-pay.
- A growing amount of staff time and institutional resources will be required to address externally-imposed accountability requirements.
- Tighter funding and increasing accountability demands will necessitate greater cooperation among Pennsylvania community colleges.
- The Philadelphia region and local government spending will remain under continuing financial pressure as a result of the current economic downturn.
- Pennsylvania community colleges do not have the same acceptance and visibility as the preferred source of economic development training programs as is the case in many other states.

### **c. Student Expectations**

- Federal financial aid will continue to be a dominant factor in facilitating student access to the College. Adequate, effective and well-designed resources for financial aid program management are essential to the College's financial success and effectiveness.
- The current trend for enrollment growth at the Regional Centers to outpace growth on the main campus will continue. As the Centers become more comprehensive in services and programs, this will add to their relative attractiveness to students as an enrollment site.
- A growing number of students will want to take some courses in a distance-learning format with little or no time on campus. However, most students enrolled in distance-learning classes will also enroll in traditional classroom-based courses.
- Growing numbers of students will want expanded off-campus learning opportunities, e.g., study abroad, internships, clinical experience and similar hands-on work opportunities.
- Students will expect easy college access via a customized set of services tailored to their specific needs and will not tolerate a "one size fits all" approach to service delivery.

### **d. Competitive Environment**

- The rising cost of education in all sectors of higher education will continue to provide a competitive advantage for community colleges, including CCP.
- Successful preparation of CCP students for transfer will become more complicated by the adoption of new general education models at four year colleges/universities.
- A growing number of the College's competitors will move to offer programs and services with more flexibility and more delivery options than the College has currently.
- The number of accredited institutions that are offering exclusively-online degree programs will continue to grow and their enrollments will increase as a result of their aggressive marketing.

<b>Concerns</b>
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**a. Funding**

- If higher education cannot meet employers' expectations with respect to work force education, than employers will find other options including offering their own in-house training or engaging private providers.
- New funding rules at the State level make it more difficult financially to offer non-credit programs in community based locations.
- Externally imposed performance measures are being explored at both the Federal and State level as a basis for making financial allocations to higher education. The College's low graduation rates and relatively low student persistence rates may place the College at a disadvantage if external performance standards are imposed.
- Less generous and different approaches to state funding will require an examination of the College's commitment to access since providing services to all students seeking services will no longer be feasible.

**b. Student Performance**

- Evolving employer expectations with respect to the entering capabilities of new employees may force a reconsideration of the College's general education goals for students. The continued internationalization of business will increase emphasis on the need for students to develop international business and multicultural skills. At the same time, employers consistently indicate that they value literacy, critical thinking, job behavior, and communication skills in addition to specific job related skills.
- New strategies to encourage student persistence need to be devised. Long-term student persistence is not a CCP characteristic. A small percentage of students who enroll at the College eventually graduate.
- Only a small percentage of students enrolled in CAP-A and adult literacy programs demonstrate successful outcomes.
- From both a persistence and an academic achievement perspective, there continues to be significant disparities in students' outcomes by sex and ethnic background.

### **c. Assessment and Accountability**

- Students are becoming more discriminating in their choice of educational services based upon cost-effectiveness, flexible delivery in condensed time periods, quality of services, as well as purported value. Nationally, students are demonstrating a greater willingness to employ litigation when services are not delivered as promised.
- The College does not have comprehensive policies and procedures in place for assessment of life experiences.
- Currently, there is no college-wide systematic model for assessing student learning and general education outcomes
- Many faculty members do not currently have the skill sets to undertake a well-designed and meaningful classroom based assessment process.
- Many administrative units have not comprehensively assessed their unit goals, processes and functions to determine if they are effective and appropriate in the context of current students' needs and college priorities.
- Currently, there is no organizational unit with complete oversight responsibility for general education. No faculty group has assumed responsibility for initiating general education reform and overseeing implementation and the necessary faculty development, as well as designing assessment instruments specific to general education.

### **d. Student Service Delivery**

- Increased distance education offerings are creating a critical need for improved and expanded online support services.
- The new portal, which will be implemented through the Banner process, has the potential to transform program and service delivery strategies for students – but only if faculty and staff are willing to reconsider how they approach the handling of their responsibilities.
- To be a full success, the OASIS project must greatly reduce the current levels of dissatisfaction that students have with the customer service aspects of several key college services, e.g. financial aid.

**e. Public Perception of the College**

- Development of an image that will make the College a first choice provider of business and industry educational programs for Philadelphia employers remains an unmet goal.
- New program planning and implementation remains complex and time consuming. The College lacks the agility to respond in the time frame often desired by potential partners.
- Among many of the College's constituents in the Philadelphia region, there is a perception that CCP delivers a lower quality of education.
- The commitment of the College to addressing the developmental education needs of adult students ( an acknowledged College strength) tends to over influence public perception of the College and results in a lack of appreciation for the College's success in achieving other aspects of its mission.